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The Sense of an Ending in Mishima

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It has been about 35 years since Yukio Mishima died, during which time a great deal of research about his life and works has been published in Japan and overseas, but Mishima still remains a riddle to be solved. The objective of this paper is to investigate the intrinsic relation between the structure of his works and Mishima's death, and to try to make clear the meaning of the end of his life through an analytical interpretation of the endings of his novels.

In 1967, three years before Mishima's death, Frank Kermode published his famous book *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*,¹ which contains paradoxical insights into the endings of modern fiction. What Kermode says in this book is very suggestive when we think of the structure of Mishima's novels, though they are not among the works he discusses. He refers to "the falsification of one's expectation of the end"² as one aspect of literary plots, and writes as follows: "The story that proceeded very simply to its obviously predestined end would be nearer myth than novel or drama. Peripeteia, which has been called the equivalent, in narrative, of irony in rhetoric, is present in every story of the least structural sophistication. Now peripeteia depends on our confidence of the end; it is a disconfirmation followed by a consonance; the interest of having our expectations falsified is obviously related to our wish to reach the discovery or recognition by an unexpected and instructive route."³ As he says here, peripeteia is to narrative what irony is to rhetoric. So peripeteia often contains ironical changes and presupposes "our confidence of the end." And the greater the discrepancy becomes, the greater the effect the story evokes, and this process of "having our expectations

falsified" is exactly true of the structure of Mishima's novels. Moreover, in Mishima's novels, there is always "the discovery or recognition" of reality following, in Kermode's words, an "unexpected and instructive route."

Understandably, since the death of Mishima, not only literary critics but also scholars in many other fields, including psychoanalysts, have attempted to explain the true motive of his suicide, and consequently we have a plethora of different theories. What I am most interested in, however, is the opinion that Mishima's death, which was carefully premeditated, can be considered part of his work. This is because some of the endings of his novels seem to be symbolic of what happened to Mishima at the last moment of his life. The idea that death, especially by suicide, means destroying everything one has built up in one's life seems to figure in a number of Mishima's novels. The most outstanding example is *The Decay of Angel*, which is the last book in the tetralogy *The Sea of Fertility*. So before entering into a concrete discussion of the ending of *The Decay of Angel*, I would like briefly to introduce the other three novels so that the reader can grasp the whole structure of *The Sea of Fertility*.

The first book, *Spring Snow*, is a kind of love romance set in the Meiji period that deals with the tragic love affair between two physically attractive members of the aristocracy, Satoko Ayakura and Kiyooki Matsugae. Kiyooki at first shows a cold attitude to Satoko, knowing that she loves him, but after learning that she has been forced by political considerations to marry the Emperor's son, he suddenly realizes the depth of his passion and his desire to win Satoko back flares up. The two secretly meet with the help of Honda, who is the third-person narrator throughout this tetralogy. Soon this prohibited love comes to an end due to Satoko's pregnancy by Kiyooki. When the fact becomes known, the Ayakura and Matsugae family fall into a panic, feeling ashamed of themselves with respect to the Imperial family. The Ayakura family in particular is driven to force Satoko to become a nun to atone for what has happened, which means that Satoko must break off with everything in the real world. After Satoko becomes a nun, Kiyooki makes every effort

to see her again, but Satoko stubbornly declines to see him. Kiyooki soon becomes seriously ill and dies in despair at the age of twenty.

The plot itself is rather simple, but Mishima describes this tragic affair in a brilliantly beautiful style, which reminds us of Heian literature. Actually, Mishima says in the postscript to *Spring Snow* that this story is based on *The Tale of the Captain of Hamamatsu*,¹ which was written in the twelfth century as a story about dreams and reincarnations. So *The Sea of Fertility*, too, develops as a story about dreams and reincarnations. In *Spring Snow*, Kiyooki's diary of dreams is often referred to, and we are told he has moles on his left breast, a fact that becomes the key evidence for reincarnation in the other three novels.

In the second book, *Runaway Horses*, Isao Inuma appears as the reincarnation of Kiyooki Matsugae. Isao is the son of the butler of the Matsugae family and has a mole in exactly the same position as Kiyooki's. This hero rather reminds us of Mishima himself, because he becomes a right-wing political leader during the Showa period and revolts against the corrupt government to bring about the establishment of an ideal Japanese society. But he fails in the attempt, and performs *seppuku*. This book is a kind of political fiction and does not have any direct connection with the love romance described in *Spring Snow*. But the characters in *Runaway Horses* are, in some way or other, connected with those in *Spring Snow*. Of course, the dead Kiyooki does not appear in *Runaway Horses*. Nor does Satoko. But Honda begins to assume prominence as the third-person narrator, becoming a central figure along with Isao.

The third book, *The Temple of Dawn*, is a story about a young princess in Thailand, who believes herself to be a reincarnated Japanese. Honda, who has witnessed the tragic romance and suicide described in the previous novels, has now lost his vigor and youth. He meets the princess in Thailand and believes her to be the reincarnated Kiyooki. The princess, Ying Chan, visits Japan when she grows up and meets Honda again. But she seems to have forgotten that she once insisted on being a reincarnated Japanese. Honda, on the other hand, tries to confirm whether she has

Kiyoaki's moles on her breast. Honda grows attracted to Chin Chan's sensual beauty, and from this time he begins to be a sexual pervert who enjoys spying on couples in the park at night. Honda finally succeeds in using the peephole in his study to observe Yin Chan's naked body, discovering three moles to the left of her breast. But at the same time, he discovers that Ying Chan has a lesbian relationship with Honda's friend Keiko. This conclusion to Honda's love seems to take on a special meaning in the plot of this novel. Anyway, Ying Chan soon returns to her home country, but later Honda learns that she has died at the age of twenty, after being bitten by a cobra — the same age that Matugae Kiyoaki was when he died.

This is the outline of the three novels preceeding *The Decay of the Angel*. Of course, I have omitted a lot of details for the purpose of saving space, so the actual plots are much more complicated and more characters appear than I have mentioned. And I would also like to point out that Buddhist concepts are scattered throughout the tetralogy. Actually, Mishima seemed to have made a thorough study of Buddhism before beginning to write this tetralogy. So it may be helpful to our understanding of the tetralogy to consider it in connection with the Buddhist concept of death and rebirth. And at the same time, it should be noted that the setting for *The Sea of Fertility* spans three modern periods, Meiji, Taisho, and Showa. Of course, in each volume of the tetralogy, each main character plays a decisive role in the development of the plot, but what must not be forgotten is that Honda, the third-person narrator, always witnesses what is happening. According to the structure of a Noh play, which Mishima often applies to his novels, Honda can be considered to be a *waki* (deuteragonist). A *waki* does not wear a mask, which means that he is excluded from the mainstream of the plot. This is basically true of Honda in this tetralogy. He is a seer, not a doer. But we cannot overlook the change that takes place in Honda.

In the first book, *Spring Snow*, Honda was a close friend of Kiyoaki's, and he himself was young and promising. In the second book, *Runaway Horses*, he still has enough vigor and passion for life to make him quit the

post of judge and defend Isao as his lawyer. In the third book, *The Temple of Dawn*, the aging Honda begins to expose his ugliness and show sexual perversion as a peeping Tom. And in the fourth book, *The Decay of the Angel*, Honda becomes a wretched old man who finds himself at the mercy of a wicked adopted son named Toru. These changes in Honda seem to reflect the Buddhist concept of *mujo* (transience or impermanence), but this notion is understandable enough even if you do not have a deep knowledge of Buddhism. Honda's change is very shocking especially because his former life was so full of glory and honor. He belonged to the elite of society and was blessed with everything. But Buddhism tells us that all this means nothing. Honda's decline gives us the impression that it is not Honda but our consciousness that has changed. That is, it gives the impression that what is happening in this world — or more correctly, what one thinks is happening — is just a matter of consciousness. The recognition of the world changes with one's own consciousness. In short, this notion of human existence more or less reminds us of the Buddhist concept of the emptiness of the world.

In the final scene of this tetralogy, the aged Honda visits Gesshujii Temple for the first time in 60 years to see the abbess and talk with her about Kiyooki Matsugae. As I briefly explained, in the first book, *Spring Snow*, Kiyooki had deeply fallen in love with Satoko, who is now the abbess of the temple. Honda is, however, stunned by the abbess's remark that she has never heard the name Kiyooki Matsugae and the attendant suggestion that there never was such a person. So in the nihilistic climax, Honda is forced to say, "If there was no Kiyooki, then there was no Isao. There was no Ying Chan, and who knows, there has been no I."⁵ Kiyooki's reality for Honda thus serves as the essential matrix of the tetralogy without which the other parts would become meaningless. And this controversial ending is all the more effective and impressive because *The Sea of Fertility* is a very long novel that interposes an interval of 60 years between events in the first volume and the reunion of Honda and Satoko. It is possible to say that this ending is understandable in terms of Mishima's

psychological motivation, if one chooses to believe that on the very day of his death he had written the final lines of his tetralogy, though Donald Keene notes that when he met Mishima on August 12, 1970, Mishima himself told he had already finished the last lines of *The Sea of Fertility*. But regardless of the truth of this particular fact, we can say that the impulse to deny the basic structure of the story — what Kerrmode calls “the interest of having our expectations falsified” is hidden within this novel. However, we can not categorize this impulse as one of “the problems created by the divergence of comfortable story and the non-narrative contingencies of modern reality,”⁶ as Kerrmode does about Robert Musil. Musil is an experimental writer who even denies the acceptable chain of causality which what are normally called stories presuppose, but Mishima, in that sense, is an orthodox story-teller who attaches great importance to the conventions of the traditional story. Therefore, such “divergence of comfortable story” as seen in the ending of the tetralogy is all the more enigmatic.

We can acknowledge this tendency in some other works by Mishima. Let me point out another example. In the final scene of *The Play of Beasts*,⁷ the narrator “I” meets the heroine Yuko in prison and is stunned by her dull and common appearance. *The Play of Beasts* is basically a third-person novel, and the narrator, who appears only in the last chapter, is excluded from the mainstream of the story more clearly than Honda in *The Sea of Fertility*. The “I” has absolutely nothing to do with the main story, while Honda plays a secondary role in the main story. Anyway, it is clear that this novel has been written according to the structure of Japanese Noh play, especially if we accept the analysis of a famous Japanese scholar of Japanese classical literature, Jin'ichi Konishi.⁵ Konishi asserts that the last chapter should be placed first according to the conventions of *mugen* Noh, and that Yuko in prison plays the role of *mae-shite*, noting that when *mugen* Noh is actually performed on the Noh stage, the *mae-shite* generally wears a mask which is a little less noble than the one worn by the *nochi-shite*. In this way, Yuko's plainness (in the

original the word *iyashi* is used to describe her features) is explained on the basis of the actual rules for a Noh performance.⁹ But even without such a professional knowledge as Konishi has, it is rather easy to recognize the influence of Noh in this novel. First of all, we can clearly locate the influence of Noh in the facial expressions of the characters, especially Yuko. The thin lips and eyebrows, the gaudy but ambiguous facial features — these are the descriptions of Yuko's facial features, which remind us of the characteristics of a Noh mask.¹⁰ And seen through the parallel with Noh, the closure of this novel takes on a very suggestive meaning. A quite varied range of impressions can be achieved just by changing the angle at which the masks are seen.

The Play of Beasts uses brilliant metaphors, though they are sometimes idiosyncratic. Furthermore, unusually philosophical and even metaphysical conversations are set within a plot that might be called trashy, quite similar to that of a third-rate popular novel. Here we should remember again Kermode's comments on the popular story. He says that "broadly speaking, it is the popular story that sticks most closely to established conventions."¹¹ But in this novel, Mishima varies established conventions by his extremely self-conscious style, while using a plot that is often seen in the popular story. This imbalance may in fact be one of the novel's premeditated effects. In other words, this imbalance itself can be considered a kind of trap setting up the peripeteia in the ending scene.

This novel is, as it were, a distorted type of love-triangle story. The heroine Yuko is married to Ippei, who is a dilettante of literature sometimes contributing to literary magazines, though he is a wealthy owner of a pottery shop in Ginza. This husband is a playboy who enjoys flirting with other women. His excuse for flirting, however, is a little different from that of the other men in the world. He insists that he flirts just to make his wife jealous of him because he believes she never experiences feelings of jealousy. Then Koji, a young student who works part-time at Ippei's pottery shop, is attracted to Yuko merely because he feels sorry for her, or rather, he sympathizes with her unhappiness. One day, Koji takes

Yuko to the apartment where her husband keeps another woman. It is not easy to tell the motivation for his action in specific terms, but Koji seems filled with hatred toward Ippei, Yuko, and himself. And when Koji sees Yuko beaten by her husband in front of Ippei's mistress, Koji gets mad and strikes Ippei on the head with a wrench. Ippei is seriously injured and becomes a mental cripple, completely losing his power of speech, while Koji is arrested and sent to prison. Once Koji has completed his sentence, Yuko decides to take care of both her crippled husband and Koji, and two years after the tragic incident, the three main characters begin to live together and start a new and unusual life in a small fishing village named Iro on the Izu Peninsula. Catastrophe soon visits them again, however. One day, Koji and Yuko strangle Ippei and tell the police that they murdered the victim at his own request, despite the fact that Ippei was already a mental cripple and did not seem to express any volition at all. Naturally their excuse is not accepted by the authorities, and at the trial Yuko is sentenced to life imprisonment, while Koji receives the death penalty and is actually hanged.

In the last chapter, this main plot is joined to the subplot introduced by the appearance of the unnamed "I," who is a student of folklore and hears about the murder case from the priest living in the local temple. This murder case corresponds to the main plot, which the readers have already been following. The unnamed "I" is asked by the priest, who is well acquainted with and respected by both Yuko and Ippei, to meet Yuko in prison and give her a picture of the tombstones which have been set up for Yuko, Koji, and Ippei. Here the "I" learns that, at the request of Yuko the three tombstones have been erected side by side against the strong opposition of the villagers. Agreeing to the priest's request, the "I" visits the prison in Tochigi prefecture. Before he meets Yuko, he gives full play to his imagination with regard to Yuko's beauty on the basis of the story he has heard from the priest. And it may be said that the readers are also expecting at this point that his imagination will be confirmed by Yuko's actual beauty. However, as I have already mentioned, what actually

happens in the interview room in the prison is completely contrary to what is expected. Yuko is neither beautiful nor even merely attractive, but quite plain. The first impression the "I" had when he saw Yuko's face was that she was not "young."

Mishima seems to have been unable to overcome the impulse to make meaningless everything he has built up in the novel, just as children scatter the building blocks they have painstakingly stacked up. I admit that this is a kind of writing technique that Mishima uses consciously. Mishima once said in an interview with a literary critic, that he did not begin to write a drama until he had decided on its last line, and it seems to me that his remark is sometimes true of his novels, too. At least it can be said that Mishima is very sensitive about the endings of his novels.

In most of Mishima's novels, there is a failure of expectations, which in Kermode's words is "the falsification of one's expectation of the end." But at the same time, there is always the recovery of reality. It can certainly be said that Mishima describes the nihilistic void in almost all his novels by bringing some kind of deconstructive strategy into the ending scene, but what is important here is that the void belongs to this world and is rooted in very concrete and realistic feelings and situations. So it can be said that, in a sense, Mishima's novels are paradoxically realistic, contrary to the general belief that Mishima is typically an anti-realistic novelist. In other words, the nihilistic world his novel evokes does not give a sense of the metaphysical void, but that of the realistic void. And it seems to me that this analysis of the endings of his novels more or less explains the relation between his engagement with politics and his novels, because politics always presupposes reality, and that this contributes to a persuasive interpretation of his death.

But I am sure my interpretation will be criticized for not taking into consideration Mishima's personal problems and for a lack of psychoanalytical insight into the problem of the dichotomy of body and soul. Psychoanalysts attach more importance to biographical facts about Mishima. Actually, when Mishima died, many critics pointed out that the inferiority

complex he had concerning his body was partly responsible for his suicide. I do not think that it is fair to ascribe too great a role to private afflictions in Mishima's death, but it is true that Mishima was a very small man even for a Japanese, and he had kind of inferiority complex about his weak body. When Mishima was young, he excelled in every subject except one — physical education. He seems to have taken it very seriously, but from the standpoint of ordinary people, Mishima's sufferings were indeed too extravagant. He belonged to the elite class of society. He entered the law department of Tokyo University, and after graduating he worked for Finance Ministry, which meant that his grades in the examination set for top-level civil servants were at the highest level. Before Mishima, there was a very strange tradition in Japanese literature according to which some first-rate writers had despised getting high grades in school. They tended to emphasize how low their school grades were. Osamu Dazai was a typical example. Mishima thought that this form of academic self-denial in some Japanese writers was stupid. Mishima especially despised and rejected Dazai, who seemed to him to affect the self-sacrificed martyr. Mishima openly stated that Dazai's neurosis could have been cured by practicing body building, which Mishima himself earnestly took up in his later years. Actually, Mishima practiced not only body-building; he also practiced boxing, *kendo*, and *karate*.

Of course, there was malicious criticism of all these efforts on the part of Mishima. Indeed, Mishima did not seem to have any genuine talent in that direction at all. But it might be said that Mishima was an exceptional Japanese writer in that he had an adoration of physical strength, which in the tradition of Japanese literature was also a thing that was normally despised.

Confessions of a Mask is a very important work by which we can come to know Mishima's problems about the human physique. Mishima had already won a certain amount of fame, especially because Yasunari Kawabata had acknowledged his works as first-rate, but this work brought him universal recognition. Even now, some literary critics

regard this work as his best. I do not necessarily agree with this opinion, but I have to admit that it is a very important work for grasping the essence of Mishima's literature. *Confessions of a Mask* is an autobiographical novel whose first-person narrator more or less reminds us of Mishima himself. In that sense, it occupies an exceptional position among works by Mishima because most of Mishima's works do not contain any autobiographical elements at all. But it should not be assumed that this work is a normal type of autobiography. It is also a distorted type of psychological novel that contains a psychoanalytical explanation of the narrator's response to the outer world. It is rather difficult to sum up the plot in specific terms because the novel gives the impression that it is an essay rather than a novel. But in broadest terms, the narrator awakens to his homosexuality, momentarily forgets his fiance's existence, and finally breaks off with her.

Here we would do well to remember Terry Eagleton's discourse¹² about "What is literature?" He writes as follows: "A distinction between 'fact' and 'fiction,' then, seems unlikely to get us very far, not least because the distinction itself is often a questionable one." Further, he claims that we need "a different kind of approach altogether" to answer the question "What is literature?" In his opinion, "literature is definable not according to whether it is fictional or 'imaginative,' but because it uses language in peculiar ways." And he supports Roman Jakobson's definition of literature by saying that "literature is a kind of writing which ... represents an 'organized violence committed on ordinary speech.'" What Eagleton is saying here is very suggestive when we think of the nature of the discourse in *Confessions of a Mask*, because this novel can be called such only if we accept the definition of literature as "organized violence committed on ordinary speech."

In this novel, too, Mishima's style is very elaborate as well as complicated. At the same time, it has a mystifying clarity. But the most important aspect of this novel is that it contains the essential element relating to Mishima's recognition of his body. Mishima in this novel seems to

confess his problem concerning his body, regardless of whether it is true or not. I am especially interested in the narrator's confessions about his experience in the army. In the novel, the narrator is not drafted into the army because of a severe cold. And this experience corresponds to Mishima's actual experience. But after this humiliating experience for Mishima, he seems to have developed a kind of obsession about the army, which led later to his right-wing convictions. Mishima voluntarily joined the Self-Defense Forces and underwent training with regular soldiers. Of course, since he was a celebrity, he was undoubtedly given special treatment, but he did not seem to take much notice of it.

When I made a speech about Mishima at Stanford University at the request of the Center for East Asian Studies, one student asked me a very good question referring to *Confessions of a Mask*. He asked me if the "I" in the novel corresponding to Mishima himself *couldn't* join the army or *didn't* join the army. I think he was saying that in the novel the main character was not drafted into the army because he had a fever on the day of his physical, but that the situation — purely in terms of autobiography — meant that Mishima intentionally avoided joining the army. The implication was that the incident became a fatal trauma that affected Mishima's later life. I think this opinion is quite probably right. Considering Mishima's metamorphosis from a weak and sensitive genius of the pen to a strong and muscular warrior of the sword, this speculation seems to have a firm basis. And the accuracy of the speculation is, I think, proved by the novel itself. Mishima describes in this novel how he felt when the Pacific War ended. He writes as follows: "It was not the reality of defeat. Instead, for me — for me alone — it meant that fearful days were beginning. It meant that, whether I would or no, and despite everything that had deceived me into believing such a day would never come, the very next day I must begin that "everyday life" of a member of the human society. How the mere words made me tremble."¹³

Most Japanese of course felt sad when they realized they had lost the war, but at the same time they must have felt relieved because they knew

that now they could live on. What happened to the main character in the novel was exactly the opposite. He could believe in the end of this world before the war ended.¹⁴ But when the rug was pulled out from under this belief, his suffering began to take a different form. It is easy to superimpose Mishima's change on the main character's psychological process. I think that this traumatic experience of not being drafted into the army was a decisive factor in Mishima's life. Of course, every potential soldier hoped at the bottom of his heart that he would not be drafted, but there were very few who expressed their feelings freely. Those who were drafted had to show their courage in the face of approaching death. Of course, it is rather difficult to tell whether Mishima intentionally avoided being drafted or not. But there is at least some possibility that Mishima felt that he had intentionally done so, and this doubt lingered with him for the rest of his life. If Dazai had been in Mishima's place, he would not have minded such a thing at all. On the contrary, he might have boasted of his being a coward. It may sound paradoxical, but in view of the atmosphere that obtained during the war, it took more courage to be a coward than to be a hero in those days. But Mishima felt differently. After the war, he seemed to make every effort to restore his lost confidence in his courage and his strength. He often said that Japanese should excel both in intellect and in strength, just like the samurai of the Edo period. He sometimes used the phrase *bun-bu-ryodo*, and tried to put it into practice in his own life. His bodybuilding, boxing, and *karate* — all these should be considered in the context mentioned above. But their end turned out to be a very tragic one.

I believe that these biographical facts should not be ignored when we conduct research on Mishima from a literary as well as a political standpoint. But at the same time, too much dependence by literary research on the psychology of personal problems can lead to a misunderstanding of the writer and his works. The most orthodox method, needless to say, is to analyze the works themselves, and then to compare the analysis of the works with biographical or personal information about the writer. In

Mishima's case, the structure of his works, especially the meaning of the end, is decisively important because it represents the whole Mishima in the literary sense as well as in the personal sense. Moreover, there is the possibility that a deconstructive analysis of "the sense of an ending" in his novels would go beyond Mishima's intention and broaden the horizon of new interpretations. However, another paper would be necessary to carry out a Derrida-like analysis of "the sense of an ending in Mishima."¹⁵

Notes

- 1 *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- 4 It is thought that this novel was written in the twelfth century by an author known only as the Daughter of Takasue Sugawara.
- 5 Yukio Mishima, *The Decay of the Angel*, trans. Edward G. Seidensticker (New York: Washington Square Press, 1971), p. 245.
- 6 *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*, p. 128.
- 7 No English translation is available. "Kemono no Tawamure," in Mishima Yukio Zenshu, v. 13.
- 8 Konishi Jin'ichi, "Mishima Bungaku e no Koten no Suijaku: Kemono no Tawamure to Motomezuka," *Kokubunngaku Kaishaku to Kansho*, Aug. 1968, pp. 26-30.
- 9 Konishi refers to a concrete Noh play as the source of *The Play of Beasts*, which is the *mugen* Noh titled *The Sought-for Grave*. The Japanese title of this play is *Motomezuka*. The English title is taken from Barry Jackman's translation of the play in *Twenty Plays of the No Theater*, edited by Donald Keene (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1970), pp. 35-50. For further details regarding the relation between *The Play of Beasts* and *The Sought-for Grave*, see my analysis in "The Realistic Void in Mishima: *The Play of Beasts* and *The Sought-for Grave*," *Hikaku Bungaku Kenkyu*, Nov. 1991, pp. 34-44.
- 10 In the postscript to the Shincho Bunko version of *the Play of Beasts*, Miyoko Tanaka mentions the facial expressions of the characters. See "Kaisetsu" by Miyoko Tanaka, in *Kemono no Tawamure* (Tokyo: Shinchobunko, 1966), p.178.
- 11 *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*, p. 17.
- 12 Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction, Second Edition*

- (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1996) p.p 1-2.
- 13 Yukio Mishima, *Confessions of a Mask*, trans. Meredith Weatherby (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1970) p. 218.
 - 14 The main character in *The Temple of the Golden Pavillion*, trans. Ivan Morris (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1959), expresses the same feelings about the end of the world.
 - 15 See my analysis of *The Play of Beasts* in "A Study of Yukio Mishima: The Aesthetics of Closure in His Novels," *Bulletin of the Faculty of Liberal Arts*, Hosei University, Feb. 1991, pp. 17-25.

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