“Gender, Geography, and Writing in Mabuchi’s Nativist Poetics: From *Masurao-buri* to *Taoyame-buri*”

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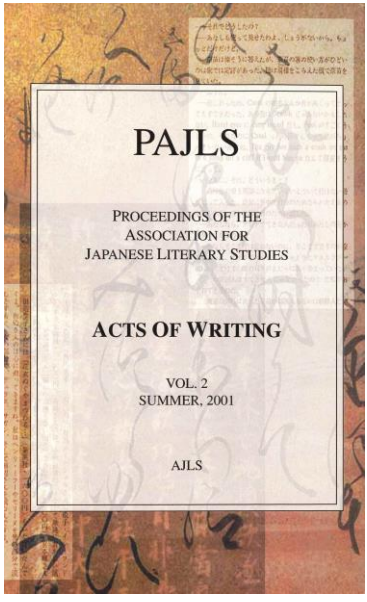

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GENDER, GEOGRAPHY, AND WRITING IN MABUCHI'S NATIVIST POETICS: FROM *MASURAO-BURI* TO *TAOYAME-BURI*

LAWRENCE E. MARCEAU

The phrase, *Azuma otoko ni Kyô onna* (東男に京女, loosely translated as, "For a man from the East, a woman from the Capital"), is well known, and goes along with other gender-laden sayings, such as, *Ichi hime ni Tarô* (一姫二太郎, or, "The first-born should be a daughter, while the second is a son") and even *Otoko wa damatte, Sapporo Biiru* (男は黙って、サッポロビール, "A real man does not speak, and drinks Sapporo Beer"). In examining the *azuma otoko/Kyô onna* phrase, however, we realize that this particular phrase links gender with geography. Men from the East country are identified as rough and rugged, while women from Kyôto are viewed as genteel and refined. A dictionary of sayings provides further examples of this kind of ideal, pairing, for example, a man from Echizen (越前, Fukui Prefecture) with a woman from Kaga (加賀, Ishikawa Prefecture/ Kanazawa), or a man from Chikuzen (筑前, northern Fukuoka Prefecture/Hakata) with a woman from Chikugo (筑後, southern Fukuoka Prefecture).[1] However, one example states that a man from Nara best matches a woman from Kyô (*Nara otoko ni Kyô nyôbô*). This attribution seems to date at least as far back as the Muromachi period, given that the dictionary cites the Gozan scholar-priest Kôsei Ryûha's (1375-1446) study of Tu Fu's *shih* poetry, the *To shi Zokusui shô*.[2]

Even today, scholars of Japanese literature tend to employ such sexually charged metaphors. We need go no further than the authoritative *Waka bungaku daijiten* (Encyclopedia of Japanese Waka Literature) to find such statements as the following (concerning the two greatest anthologies of Japanese poetry in the tradition): "It is the established consensus to consider the *Man'yôshû* as exhibiting the 'virile

[1] Shôgaku Tosho, ed., 30.

[2] *Ibid.*, 856. Also in *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, vol. 8, 342-43.

masculine style,' and in opposition to this, to view the *Kokinshû* as representing the 'delicate feminine' style."[3] Or, "by restraining the thoughts in one's breast and hesitating in one's composition, a feminine gentility appears..."[4] Such examples of broad generalization and categorization into simple sexual types are often accepted without question in Japanese academic circles.

In this paper, I would like to study the development of one expression of a particular approach toward a critique of the Japanese poetic tradition as it may be found in the writings of the eighteenth century scholar and poet, Kamo no Mabuchi (賀茂真淵, 1697-1769). Mabuchi's theories are especially significant in that they explicitly take up the question of femininity and masculinity in the Japanese poetic tradition, and then go on to link this question to a critique of Japan's historical relationship with the culture and political structure of China. We thus find a union of "poetics and politics."

Before entering into a discussion of Mabuchi's theories, we should briefly examine his position in the cultural and intellectual environment of his age. Mabuchi is universally considered to be one of the "Great Figures" of a movement that arose at the end of the seventeenth century and continued until about the end of the nineteenth. These scholars systematically unearthed, philologically annotated, and otherwise revitalized archaic and ancient Japanese texts, investing in them a prestige as representative of a proud "national" literature, which they had heretofore not possessed. This movement, called *Wagaku* (和学 ["Nativist Studies"]), owes a great deal in methodology, and, paradoxically, in ideology, to another movement that had arisen a couple of generations earlier. This Sinocentric movement, known as *kogaku* (古学 ["Ancient Studies"]), focuses on philological exegesis into Chinese canonical texts, with the aim of improving contemporary society through greater understanding—and, by extension, application—of the world found in an idyllic primal age as these texts present it. Both movements employ an empirical philological method, and aim to

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[3] *Waka bungaku daijiten*, 344. (Unless otherwise specified, all translations are mine).

[4] *Ibid.*

improve the individual by approaching those in the idealized age, through active adoption of the "spirit" (and the diction) of the writings of that age. For both movements, poetic expression was considered prior, and therefore superior, to prose narrative, although prose texts also served as objects of emulation.

Between 1760 and 1765, Mabuchi wrote a series of short critical tracts, outlining his views on the following: poetics (*uta* [歌 or 哥]), the nature of the Japanese state (*kuni* [国]), language (*kotoba* [語]), texts (*fumi* [書]), and rhetoric (*fumi* [文]). Together these have come to be referred to as the "Five Treatises on Essence" (*Go-i-kô* [五意考]). We should add to this group one more work that was probably an offshoot of Mabuchi's thesis on poetry, entitled, *New Learning* (*Niimanabi* [新学 or 邇 飛 麻 那 微(にひまなび)]), the title referring both to Mabuchi's attempt to propogate a new field of scholarly endeavor in Japan, as well as to its function as an introduction to the field for novices.[5] Three of these tracts (those on poetics, language, and *New Learning*) make explicit reference to masculinity and femininity as bases for formulating literary (and ultimately, cultural) value judgments. Let us examine these positions in detail.

In his *On the Essence of Waka* (*Kai-kô* [歌意考], drafted ca. 1760, widely circulated among his disciples in manuscript, and then posthumously published in 1800), Mabuchi outlines his theory of poetic ideals with examples from classical poetry.

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[5] These six texts are found in the following standard editions, listed chronologically. NKBT 94, *Kinsei bungaku-ron shû* (近世文学論集, Nakamura Yukihiko, comp. & annot., 1966), contains the most complete annotated version of Mabuchi's *Kai-kô* (歌意考). NST 39, *Kinsei Shintô-ron/Zenki kokugaku* (近世神道論・前期国学, Abe Akio, comp. & annot., 1972), includes annotated editions of four of Mabuchi's treatises, as well as *Niimanabi*, and an unannotated edition of his fifth treatise, *Shoi* (書意 ["On the Essence of Texts"]). NKBZ 50, *Karon shû* (歌論集, Fujihira Haruo, comp., annot., & trans., 1975), contains annotated versions of Mabuchi's *Kai-kô* (歌意考) and Kageki's *Niimanabi iken* (新学異見), together with modern Japanese translations. Finally, Vol. 19 of the KMZ (Inoue Minoru, comp., 1980) contains unannotated editions of all five of Mabuchi's treatises, including both expanded and condensed versions of *Kai-kô*, as well as *Niimanabi* (にひまなび).

> By aiming your spirits at the court style of the exalted Fujiwara of the deep purple (694-710) and Nara (710-794) periods, and forgetting the drab hues of the mountain woodcutter's acorns [an allusion to later "impure" poetic trends], after months and years of composition, your hearts and vitals will of themselves then be infused [with "purity"]. By that time it is certain that you will have come to know of the upright hearts and elegant words of the people of ancient times, and of their lofty and masculine [*wowoshiki* (をゝしき)] spirits, totally unblemished and untainted.[6]

The irony of this passage, as we shall find in further examples, lies in Mabuchi's embracing of so-called qualities of purity and spontaneity of emotive expression, couched in rhetoric that would seem to run counter to the gist of his argument. Here we find the forced use of "pillow words," or poetic epithets which in themselves do not directly add to the force of Mabuchi's argument. They include "*komurasaki*" (of the deep purple), an epithet for "*fuji*" (wisteria), extended to refer to the Fujiwara, and then "*yamagatsu no tsurubami*" (hues of the woodcutter's acorns), an epithet for "*ayashi*" (drab, or dubious). However stilted and unnatural these devices read to the modern Western reader (and they must have been as exotic to the uninitiated Japanese reader of the day), they were second nature to Mabuchi himself, he having spent his life in devoted study of the archaic language. We thus encounter a "signification gap" in eighteenth-century Japanese poetic discourse.

In *New Learning*, Mabuchi provides his most extended treatment of the relationship between geography and gender in waka poetics. He states:

> In order to come to know matters of ancient times, you must realize that the State of Yamato is one of rugged masculinity (*masurao no kuni* [丈夫国]) and that in ancient times women also learned from such rugged men. Therefore the *Man'yôshû* poems are generally in the rugged masculine style (*masurao no*

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[6] *Kamo no Mabuchi zenshû*, vol. 19, 42. (Hereafter referred to as *KMZ.*)

> *teburi* [丈夫の手ぶり]). (On the other hand), the State of Yamashiro is one of delicate femininity (*taoyame no kuni* [たをやめ国]), and men learned from the feminine. Thus the poems of the *Kokinshû* follow this delicate feminine form.[7]

Thus Mabuchi sets up the parameters for reading the two major anthologies of the Nara and the early Heian periods. The *Man'yôshû*, having been compiled during the Nara period, and composed mainly of poems from Nara, Asuka, and other locations in the state of Yamato, is, by virtue of its identity with that region, ruggedly virile by nature. Once the capital moves north to Heian-kyô, then presumably the *feng-shui* of this region takes effect, and the poetry becomes more and more "delicate" and "feminine" to Mabuchi's ears—even those poems composed by men.

Mabuchi then takes up the famous critiques of the *Kokinshû's* Six Poetic Immortals (*Rokkasen* [六歌仙]) found in the "Kana Preface" and interprets these critiques from his gender-geographic perspective.

> In critiquing the poems of the *Kokinshû*, those that are serene and clear [*nodoka, sayaka*] are referred to as "having attained form [*sugata wo etari*]," while those that are strong and hard [*tsuyoku kataki*] are classified as being "rustic [*hinabitari*]." Such conclusions fail to take into account distinctions of time and place that make up "form," and do not reflect broadly on [the environment of] ancient times."[8]

In a move reminiscent of the seasonal structure of Genji's Rokujô-in mansion in *Genji monogatari*, Mabuchi criticizes what he sees as the limitations of the *Kokinshû* mode.

> Given the fact that things appear in various guises over the four seasons, if you take the position of the *Kokinshû* compilers, this is akin to accepting only the serene days of spring, and

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[7] *KMZ* vol. 19, 200.

[8] *Ibid.*

> discarding summer and winter, or, in other words, privileging the delicate feminine style at the expense of the rugged masculine inspiration.[9]

Now, Mabuchi's six pedagogical texts were written late in his life, and it is clear that he intended for them to function as frameworks in future generations for his teachings. In this late period of his life Mabuchi served in his retirement as head of a private academy in Edo, the Agatai, or Kenmon (県居 or 県門 ["Rustic Abode"]). We should not forget, however, that Mabuchi had served the bakufu as *wagaku* advisor to the powerful Tayasu Munetake, son of the 8th Tokugawa Shogun, Yoshimune, and father, incidentally, to the future architect of the Kansei Reforms, Matsudaira Sadanobu. For Mabuchi, Ancient Learning was not an ideologically neutral matter, and poetic composition played an important normative function in this system. Mabuchi makes this point clearly in the following passage:

> After all, in the august reigns of ancient times, when the Palace was built in the State of Yamato, great fortune was achieved by exuding outward the awesome authority [*miizu* (御威稜)], while inwardly rule was promulgated with expansive gentility. The common people [*tami* (民)] single heartedly revered the rulers, and acted as individuals in an upright manner. However, with the transition to the State of Yamashiro, this awesome authority began to wane, and the common people worked to flatter and curry favor from those above. How could it be that their hearts would have grown warped [*kokoro yokoshima ni nariyuku ni shi wa, nanzo no yue to omou ran ya* (心邪に成行にしは、何ぞの故とおもふらんや)]?[10]

Mabuchi obviously knows the answer to this rhetorical question, and provides us with two, one of which reflects his clear preference for the "rugged masculinity" he recognizes in Man'yô-style poetry, while the

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[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*, 200-01.

other exposes his xenophobic distaste for the effects of what he sees as the continued Sinicization of Japanese court life during the Heian period.

> The rulers stopped following the Way of Rugged Masculinity and took up that state's atmosphere [*kuni-buri* (国ぶり)] of favoring delicately feminine forms. On top of this, Chinese modes were adopted, and the common people stopped revering their rulers, their spirits becoming warped.[11]

For Mabuchi, the composition of poetry not only has a cathartic effect on the individual; for a society it also serves a highly normative effect.

> Thus without the full range of serenity in spring, harshness in summer, transience in autumn, and stillness in winter, nothing is complete. With the appearance of the *Kokinshû* people came to believe that only the soft and gentle [*yawarabitaru*] was the proper realm of the poetic. It was a great error for people to belittle the strong and masculine.[12]

Mabuchi's remedy for restoring balance and bringing the "rugged virile style" back into poetry is of course through the study and emulation of poems in the *Man'yôshû*. He does not reject all *Kokinshû* poems, however; he believes that many of the *yomibito shirazu*, or anonymous poems reflect the earlier, more masculine sentiments associated with the State of Yamato.

Unfortunately, Mabuchi, in this primer for learning the "rugged masculine" and "gentle feminine" styles of Yamato and Yamashiro respectively, does not do us the favor of providing the "show me" examples that we require in order to grasp specifically what he means. We need to look at another of his works, the *Kai-kô*, or *On the Essence of Waka*, to get a sense of where he is coming from. Here we are in for a surprise. We might expect Mabuchi to direct us to his own teacher, Kada

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[11] *Ibid.*, 201.

[12] *Ibid.*

no Azumamaro of the Fushimi Inari Shrine south of Kyôto, as his inspiration for privileging Yamato and the *Man'yôshû*. Perhaps he would turn to the Shingon scholar-priest Keichû, who some three-quarters of a century earlier had, under the auspices of the bakufu administrator and daimyô of Mito, Tokugawa Mitsukuni, compiled the most complete and authoritative study of the *Man'yôshû* to date, the *Man'yô daishôki* (萬葉代匠記 ["Replacement Artisan's *Man'yô* Record"], 1690). Mabuchi directs us elsewhere, however.

It turns out that Mabuchi learned everything about masculinity from (who else?) his mother.[13] He provides examples of "lofty and masculine" verse that his mother (by no means a gifted poet, according to her son) had showed him as a boy, urging him to emulate them, even though people of her day did not compose verse in such a style. Mabuchi says that he did not heed her at that time, and it was much later in life that he realized the wisdom of her words, coming especially from one who was not a connoisseur.

Here are some examples of the *Man'yôshû* poems Mabuchi's mother had taught him.

(When her husband was a Grand August Escort on an imperial procession to [the shrine at] Ise)
Nagarafuru / tsuma fuku kaze no / samuki yo ni
Wa ga se no kimi wa / hitori ka nemuru
In the cold night, when winds blow at the edges of (my) long bedclothes,
Do you, my husband, sleep alone?
MYS I: 59[14]

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[13] Mabuchi's mother married his father, Okabe Masanobu, after the death of his first wife. She was the eldest daughter of Takeyama Shigeie, and died in Enkyô 2 (1745), but I have so far been unable to determine her given name. See Saigusa, 18-19, 314.

[14] *KMZ* vol. 19, 42. Poems are identified by volume and *Shinpen Kokka taikan* number in the *Man'yôshû*. Thus, *MYS* I:59 refers to poem no. 59 in Volume I. Regarding this poem, cf. Cranston, comp., annot., & trans. (hereafter referred to as *GGC*): #466. "The wind sweeps over,/Swirling, blowing where he lies—/In the cold night,/Will the husband of my heart/Be sleeping all alone?"

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(When returning to the Capital from Tsukushi, upon leaving a woman)

Masurao to / omoeru ware ya
Mizuguki no / mizuki no ue ni / namida nogowamu
Am I, considered to be a rugged man,
About to wipe my tears, here upon the water-stalked water fort?
MYS VI: 968[15]

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(Title unknown)

Shita ni nomi / koureba kurushi
Kurenaki no / suetsumu hana no / iro ni idenu beshi
Keeping my yearning to myself deep inside is painful;
All the better that the color of the crimson safflower would burst forth![16]

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(Journey)

Na kuwashiki / Inami no umi no / okitsu nami
Chie ni kakurinu / Yamato shimane wa
On the offing of the Inami Sea—beautiful its name—
Hidden by a thousand lapping waves, the island, Yamato.
MYS III: 303[17]

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Awaji no / Nushima ga saki no / hamakaze ni
Imo ga musubishi / himo fukikaesu
At Cape Nushima in Awaji, in the beach wind

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[15] Cf. *GGC* #1076. "What am I doing,/I who thought myself a valiant man,/Wiping my tears/Here on the Water Fortress,/This fortress steeped in water?" (Ôtomo no Tabito, leaving the courtesan [*otome*] Koshima.)

[16] Apparently this derives from portions of two poems in the 10th-century *Kokin waka rokujô* anthology. Cf. Nakamura, annot. & ed., 420, additional note 13.

[17] Levy, trans., 173.

The cords that my wife tied for me blow back
MYS III: 251[18]

The images depicted in these poems are clear, and seem to posit a balance between the rugged natural scene and interior emotions. Mabuchi was probably drawn to such clarity, and thus provides relatively simple examples of his "masculine" poetic ideal.

FÛDO AND THE CHARACTER OF PLACES

Our next question is, what was the prevailing image of the Japanese States of Yamato and Yamashiro for Mabuchi's contemporaries? Here we can benefit by looking at gazetteers and other descriptions of the states that were circulating in Japan during the eighteenth century. For purposes of military strategy, it was important to be aware of the regional geographical distinctions. Historian Asano Kenji speculates that, early in the Tenbun era (1532-1555), someone hailing from the State of Shinano compiled a gazetteer, called the *Jinkoku ki*, or *Record of the Human States* (人国記). Later, after peace had been established, a certain Seki Sokô (関祖衡) added woodblock illustrations for each state, publishing the work in Edo (where military administrators from all the provinces were represented) in Genroku 14 (1701), when Mabuchi was a small child. *Jinkoku ki* begins with a discussion of the State of Yamashiro, the Capital, followed by that of Yamato. After praising the beauty of the language, the water, and the complexions of Yamashiro inhabitants, the text criticizes the warriors stationed there. "The customs of the military, however, are overly gentle, and therefore unacceptable. The women, on the other hand, possess the bravery of rabbits running to escape, so one should not take these people lightly."[19] The author explains the reason for this, given the fact that Kyôto has thrived as the Capital for centuries. He states, "Since this has

[18] Adapted from Levy, trans, 157. Cf. *GGC* #305: "In the shore breeze/Off the Point of Noshima/On Awaji/My sash blows back toward home—/The sash my young love tied." (Kakinomoto no Asomi Hitomaro)

[19] Asano, ed. & annot., 107.

long been a wealthy state housing the Royal Castle [*ôjô* (王城)], people's hearts have by nature softened, and, without knowing it, they have engaged in an excess of luxury [*shabi* (奢美)], so this is a state in which sincerity [*jitsugi* (実義)] is in short supply. As a result, these people easily assent to intercourse with others, and easily change promises they have made. This is because they are lighthearted and frivolous."[20] In his comments added to the published edition, Sokô praises the ideal geomancy of the Capital, with its mountains on three sides, and water to the south and variety of climatic conditions. He recognizes some variation among the inhabitants, especially those in the mountains to the north, but concludes with a harsh and sweeping judgment: "...Nowhere in this state can you escape the fact that the people throughout are lascivious and indolent [*inran dajaku* (淫乱懦弱)]."[21]

With regard to the State of Yamato, the *Jinkoku-ki* divides it into two regions, the "Forelands" (*hyôgun* [表郡]—the lowland area adjacent to Yamashiro, and including the ancient Capital of Nara) and the "Hinterlands" (*okugun* [奥郡]—Yoshino and other mountainous areas to the south). The author remarks that, compared to the inhabitants of Yamashiro, those of Yamato are somewhat more active or direct (*sukoshi surudo naru tokoro mo ari*), that they are extremely skilled at lying, and have a tendency to exaggerate their accomplishments. "For this reason, their sincerity (*jitsugi*) is extremely limited."[22] The author continues, "In particular, the inhabitants of the Yoshino mountains are a breed apart. Of all the peoples in the Five Kinai Districts, they are fastidious [*keppaku*], but they are experts at craftiness, and lack any sense of duty [*giri*]. On the other hand, they do not fall into perverse habits, and have no interest in luxurious consumption [*shabi*]."[23]

Sokô comments, "Over half of this state is covered with mountains, having flatland only in the central region. The old Capital of Nara lies in this flatland. To the south are high mountains. Called

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[20] *Ibid.*

[21] *Ibid.*, 108.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*, 108-09.

Ômine [大峰], they are extermely deep and sacred mountains. The first of our human rulers, Jinmu Tennô, made his Capital here, and over the generations the rulers all established their Capitals in this place. Because of this, the people here naturally developed a character of ambition toward fame and success. As the book describes [the original manuscript of *Jinkoku ki*], the people of the mountainous areas of Yoshino and Uda follow extremely straightforward behavior [*fûzoku*]."[24]

Here I believe we can find some support for an image of the State of Yamashiro, assumed among Mabuchi's contemporaries, as being refined and genteel, with all the drawbacks such characteristics held. Yamato, on the other hand, especially in the Yoshino region, famous for its rich history of harboring resisters to the political status quo, carried with it an image in the eighteenth century as a more "rugged" environment, in which the inhibitants tended to be more "direct" in their social interactions.

RAMIFICATIONS

Mabuchi's notions regarding gender distinctions, geography, and poetic composition met with some resistance from rival poetic circles. Both his *New Learning* and *On the Essence of Waka* were edited and published by Mabuchi's disciple Arakida Hisaoyu (荒木田久老, 1746-1804) in Kansei 12 (1800). Eleven years later, in Bunka 8 (1811), the renowned leader of the Keien (桂園) School in Edo, Kagawa Kageki (香川景樹, 1768-1843), published a rebuttal to *New Learning* entitled, appropriately, *Niimanabi iken*, or *Disagreement with New Learning*. Kageki is well known as a champion of the *Kokinshû* mode, so it is to be expected that he would not appreciate Mabuchi's polemics against the first, and in his mind, the finest, imperially-sponsored waka anthology.

With regard to Mabuchi's praise of the State of Yamato as a region governed by an atmosphere of *masurao* "rugged masculinity," and concomitant portrayal of the State of Yamashiro as a *taoyame*, literally "weak-handed" effeminate area, Kageki states the following:

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[24] *Ibid.*, 109.

> To declare that the State of Yamato follows a rugged masculine style, while the State of Yamashiro follows a delicate feminine style is only to support what might sound right to people's ears in general, and to provide reasoning that seems supported by facts of some sort. However, for such a notion to hold true, then in later ages Yamato should still be ruggedly masculine, and in the ancient past Yamashiro should have been a delicate and effeminate place. In fact, though, both Yamato and Yamashiro were in ancient times infused with a rugged masculinity, and later both Yamashiro and Yamato have taken on the delicate feminine style.[25]

Kageki's rebuttal here seems to leave the discourse in Mabuchi's control, but his next point calls Mabuchi's premises themselves into question. He states:

> By saying that the strong and firm are indicative of *masuraoburi*, while the serene and clear indicate *taoyameburi*, you lose credibility. In fact, each age has its own style, and the poetry of the age of the *Man'yôshû* is simple yet strong, while the poetry of the *Kokinshû* age is clear and fresh [*sawayaka* (清柔)], because values had shifted to promote the flourishing of cultural embellishment [*bunka* (文華)]. You cannot identify poetic attributes to a particular state when (such attributes) actually deal with changes over time.[26]

Eventually Kageki's position comes to dominate Japanese poetics, and his school thrived to assume the role of the orthodox school of waka poetics and composition by the Meiji era. Mabuchi's poetics do not reappear again until the political mood of Japan's intellectual class moves in a much more nationalistic direction in the twentieth century.

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[25] Kagawa, in Taira, et al., ed., annot., & trans., 589.

[26] *Ibid.*, 589-590.

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