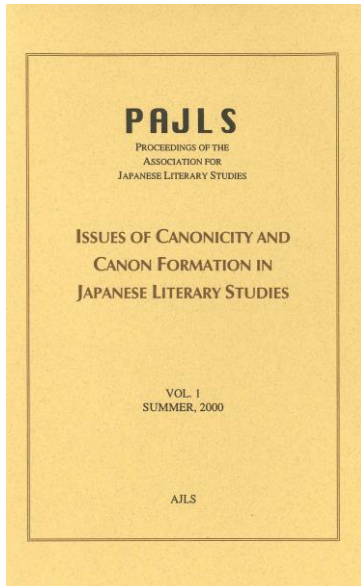


“‘Siting Translation’: Translation and Classical Japanese Literary Canon Formation in the United States”

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**“SITING TRANSLATION”:
TRANSLATION AND CLASSICAL JAPANESE LITERARY
CANON FORMATION IN THE UNITED STATES**

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In the seventies and eighties literary canons in the United States came under attack for being too exclusionary,¹ but in Japanese studies we have only begun to look at issues of canonicity—at how the Japanese canon² has been constructed, especially in the United States, at what role translation has played in that formation, and why our canon differs from that of the French or Germans.³ Many assume, as have writings and essays on translations from at least two symposia on Japanese translation,⁴ that the principal issue is equivalence. Accuracy, faithfulness to the “original” texts—in other words,

¹ As a result, English literature now includes works by Asian, Chicano/Latino, and African America authors, while Spanish considers Latin American literature standard. Works written by Spanish-speaking residents or recent immigrants to the U.S. are less acceptable, as is francophone (African or Caribbean) literature in some French departments.

² The question as to who constitutes a Japanese writer is an intriguing one. Are birth and citizenship essential? What about having to write in Japanese? In their conference presentations both Faye Kleeman and one keynote speaker, Keiko Yoneha, brought this issue to the fore, as do Ian Levy, an American writing in Japanese, and Fumiko Kometani, who resides in Los Angeles but writes and publishes in Japanese and in Japan.

³ My thanks to Robert Khan for this insight.

⁴ See Roy Andrew Miller, “Symposium: Translation and Japanese Studies,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 6.1 (Winter 1980), and other articles in the same issue, as well as “Meaning as Language: The Art of Translation—Papers from the Symposium ‘Japanese Literature in Translation,’” *Multiple Meanings: The Written Word in Japan—Past, Present, and Future: A Selection of Papers on Japanese Language and Culture and Their Translation Presented at the Library of Congress*, ed. J. Thomas Rimer (Washington: Library of Congress, 1986).

a belief that "transparency of representation" between source and target texts is possible—have been the central concerns. But are translations merely transparent transfers of information and knowledge or must we locate them, site them more carefully?

Recent studies in translations studies (cf. Bassnett-McGuire, 1980; Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990; Venuti, 1995; 1998) seem to indicate the latter. According to scholars like Tejaswini Niranjana, translation is "a significant site for raising questions of representation, power, and historicity." It highlights "contesting and contested stories attempting to account for, to recount, the asymmetry and inequality of relations between peoples, races, and languages" (Niranjana 1). Niranjana speaks primarily to the problematics of translation surrounding India, the British empire, and the post-colonial subject, but her study proves instructive for the historical moment of classical Japanese literary canonicity in the United States. Perhaps some would say that in the strictest sense the U.S. is not a colonial power, but an examination of its foreign policy vis-à-vis Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, and the Philippines, to name a few, in the twentieth century show that it has been shaped by concerns very similar to those of British and European imperialism. Thus it would be no great surprise to find that translation of Japanese works into English served/serve similar purposes in the United States. Thus examining the "effective history" of translations—asking who uses and interprets these texts, how they are utilized and why (Niranjana 35)—is no less imperative than interrogating Commodore Perry's "negotiations" with the last Tokugawa Shogunate or General MacArthur's "occupation" of Japan or Japanese "invasions" of corporate buildings and the walkways of Parisian high fashion in the boom eighties.

Translation, then, is not innocent. It wields enormous power in constructing representations of foreign cultures, what Lawrence Venuti in his *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* terms the formation of cultural identities. It does so on several fronts: through the selection of the works to be translated—always at the inclusion of some and the exclusion of others; through marketing, production, and reception; and through the development of translation strategies which conform foreign texts to domestic aesthetic values and fix them with specific stereotypes (Venuti 67). A striking example of how this phenomenon operates can be found in the formation of the modern Japanese literary canon in the United States. Edward Fowler, in his groundbreaking work on the modern Japanese literary canon, "Rendering Words, Traversing Cultures: On the Art and Politics of

Translating Modern Japanese Fiction," argues that translations of Japanese fiction in the 1950s and 1960s created a particular kind of image of Japan: Japan as "an exoticized, aestheticized, and quintessentially *foreign* land quite antithetical to its prewar image of a bellicose and imminently threatening power" (Fowler 3). According to Fowler, soon after the war several publishers—Alfred Knopf in particular—produced a number of translations of modern Japanese texts, but certain kinds of texts were favored, specifically those of three authors: Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, Kawabata Yasunari, and Mishima Yukio. Seven of the first nine published by Knopf in the 1950s were by these three authors (8) and the Big Three, as Fowler calls them, dominated the American scene to such an extent that an editor of the *Delos*, a journal devoted to literary translations, is quoted as saying, "For the average Western reader, [Kawabata's] *Snow Country* is perhaps what we think of as typically 'Japanese': 'elusive, misty, inconclusive'" (Kizer 80).

Perhaps the most ironic and telling statement of all, however, comes from the response of a Japanese critic, Miura Masashi,⁵ to Brad Leithauser's *New Yorker* review of Maruya Saiichi's *Singular Rebellion*. In the review, Leithauser is surprised by Maruya's novel in the comic tradition and wonders if "the novel of delicacy, taciturnity, elusiveness, and languishing melancholy" is less characteristically Japanese than was previously thought (Leithauser 105). In his own "tongue-in-cheek review," Miura assures Leithauser that Japanese literature is more than Kawabata, that the "'essence' of modern Japanese fiction" as delicate and elusive has much to do with the kind of literature translated into English, and that this so-called "essence" is actually truer of "a writer working in *English*: Kazuo Ishiguro" (Fowler 9) than of Japanese writers. Credited by many in the West as having "special access or insight into the Japanese 'style,'" Ishiguro in fact left Japan when he was five. The imaginary Japanese worlds he creates in his two books, *A Pale View of the Hills* and *An Artist of the Floating World*, have "an unmistakably British sensibility" about them and, according to Miura, the "so-called Japanese 'essence' in Ishiguro's writing may well be incomprehensible to Japanese readers!" (10).

⁵ The following information and quotations by Miura come from Fowler, 9-10. See Miura Masashi, "Nihon no shōsetsu no tokuchō?," *Shinchō* 86 (June 1989): 163 for further information.

Do translations of classical literary works carry similar cultural stereotypes? Before answering that question I should say a few words about the materials I used for my study. I primarily focused on translations of Heian and Kamakura works, because my field is primarily the former and because many of the earliest translations were from these two periods. My figures are not exhaustive: they include books and a very few journal publications but no dissertations, and they cover the periods from 1880 through 1989. My analysis is also largely based on translations done from the 1950s through the 1980s. Understandably, the figures for the earliest translations, 1880-1947, are sketchy at best. Many were done by the British, while the Americans entered the field more extensively after World War II. A much fuller study would necessitate an examination of translations of Muromachi and Tokugawa works and translations done in the 1990s.⁶ Another vital area of inquiry which I will not cover is the climate in Japan at the time the translations were completed and the Japanese scholars with whom the translators worked.⁷

Nonetheless, we can still ask whether the works translated from classical Japanese literature were also selected to "communicate an interpretation"—a sanitized, aestheticized, exotic view of Japan. The situation in the classical arena appears more complicated in part because I examined works produced before the war and because of the presence of war tale translations and the importance of poetry in classical Japanese literature, which I will discuss below. The earliest translation I was able to locate was completed in 1880 by Tōdai professor of literature Basil Hall Chamberlain. He produced another translation in 1910⁸ and was followed by other British scholars, like

⁶ I did not include translations from the 1990s because this period witnessed a sea change in literary analysis with the advent of feminism, poststructuralism, post-colonialism, and cultural studies which began to challenge many of the tenets under which the translations undertaken in the previous three decades were conducted. (See Lauter, 22-47, for information on the change in the theoretical approaches to literature.)

⁷ Comments and presentations by Kubota Jun, Suzuki Sadami, and Kinugasa Masaki during the conference were helpful in providing some hints as to what was occurring on the Japanese front.

⁸ Several works by such people as Murayama Toshio (*Open Sesame: Japanese and Chinese Classical Poems Translated*, 1903), Clara Walsh (*The Master-singers of*

Arthur Sadler (*The Heike Monogatari*, 1918, 1921 in *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*) and Arthur Waley (*The Tale of Genji* [1925, 1933] and *The Pillow-Book of Sei Shonagon* [1928]). The only exception among the earliest translators were the American and Japanese collaborators Annie Shepley Omori and Kochi Doi (*Diaries of Court Ladies of Old Japan* [1935]).

In the 1950s a total of six translations were published but, unlike modern Japanese literature translations, which began in the 1950s (15, according to Fowler), the major push in classical Japanese literature occurs in the 1960s with 13. The number rises to 17 in the 1970s and peaks in the 1980s at 22. Specifically, the 1950s produced such works as Edwin Reischauer's and Joseph Yamagiwa's *Translations from Early Japanese Literature* (1951), Donald Keene's edited volume *Anthology of Japanese Literature: From the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (1955), and two *gunki monogatari* tales from Helen and William McCullough, *Taiheiki: A Chronicle of Medieval Japan* (1959) and *Shōyūki as a Source for the Shōkyū War of 1221 A.D.: Scroll One* (1955), respectively. A professional poet, Kenneth Rexroth, publishes his first volume of poetry, while Edward Seidensticker's first attempt at *Kagerō nikki* appears in 1955 in *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*. The 1960s introduces us to the first wave of translators, household names in Japanese studies who also come almost exclusively from academia: Edward Seidensticker (*The Gossamer Years* [1964]), Wilfred Whitehouse and Eizo Yanagisawa (*The Tale of the Lady Ochikubo* [1965]), Robert Bower and Earl Miner (*Fujiwara Teika's Superior Poems* [1967], Miner, *Japanese Poetic Diaries* [1969]), and Edwin Cranston (*The Izumi Shikibu Diary* [1969]). Helen McCullough weighs in with two more *gunki monogatari* translations ("A Tale of Mutsu" [1964-65] and *Yoshitsune* [1966] which is a fifteenth-century chronicle, but I have included it because she is one of the major translators of the period).

Until the end of the 1960s, twenty of the first twenty-six translations were completed by those whom we consider the pioneers and the first wave

Japan, 1910), and Asataro Miyamori (*An Anthology of Japanese, Translated and Annotated*, 1938) were also found, but I have not included them in my study today

because more needs to be done in order to ascertain what role they played in the history of Japanese literary translations.

of translators. The 1970s bring Douglas Mills (*A Collection of Tales from Uji* [1970]), Ivan Morris (*As I Crossed the Bridge of Dreams* [1971]), William Wilson (*Hōgen Monogatari, Tale of the Disorder of Hōgen* [1971]), Marian Ury ("Recluses and Eccentric Monks: Tales from the *Hosshinshu* by Kamo no Chomei" [1972]), and Hiroshi Kitagawa and Bruce Tsuchida (*The Tale of Heike* [1975]). It is not until 1977, with Jennifer Brewster's *The Emperor Horikawa's Diary: Sanuki no Suke Nikki by Fujiwara no Nagako*, that we have what I would term the second wave of translators. From especially the 1980s on, most of the translations are produced by this latter group. They appear to be students of the first wave of translators and publish one translation each, most probably their dissertations. The one exception is Helen McCullough, who produces four works in the 1980s, including one in conjunction with her husband, William McCullough, and an anthology of the Heian through Tokugawa works, *Classical Japanese Prose: An Anthology*, in 1990. Of the early translators, all but McCullough publishes only one or two texts, although Waley worked in classical Chinese texts, while both Seidensticker and Keene were productive in modern Japanese translations as well. By far the most prolific translator of classical Japanese texts, Helen McCullough completed 9 of the 65 translations,⁹ if we count her 1990 anthology.

Looking closely at the translations produced in classical Japanese literature, we find that, except for the pre-war texts, which were about even, there is a preponderance of Heian over Kamakura texts. More than half, 30 out of 65 texts (60%) are Heian, while Kamakura texts number 19; 9 are a combination of Heian and Kamakura. In the 1960s, when American rather than

⁹ Very telling of their less-than-extensive public appeal, more than half of these classical translations were published by university presses (38 out of 65, which includes journals and Japanese university presses) and not the trade book publishers of Knopf, Grove, or New Directions, who played crucial roles in early modern Japanese literary translations. (These figures are even more startling if we look at post-1960 publications—41 of 50 are by university presses—and 11 of the 15 trade book publications from 1880-1989 are of poetry.) From my preliminary findings, Stanford takes top honors with 11 of the 38 university press publications. The main reason for its high numbers is the publication of one translator, Helen McCullough, who had six of her eight translations produced by Stanford, slightly over half of the total publications made by the press.

British translators become prominent, the figure is much higher—8 of the 9 texts are from the Heian period. Only in the 1970s, when three court lady diaries and two each of poetry collections and *setsuwa monogatari* tale collections are translated, are there more Kamakura (9) than Heian texts (6). This leaning toward Heian as opposed to Kamakura works, especially in the 1960s and immediately after World War II, may be due to the fact that there were more annotated Heian texts available for translation at the time. However, why Heian and why, especially then, in the 1960s? Fowler's assessment that the Americans were anxious to rid Japan of its warrior-like, aggressive military image in its overnight transformation from enemy to ally may well have been at work. With its predilection for elegance and muted beauty, classical Japanese was the perfect stratagem for banishing the recent past and embracing the "distant and non-threatening realm of 'tradition'" (Fowler 7). The Japanese may have been equally predisposed to present the aesthetic beauty and elegance of the Heian period as central to their cultural identity.

That being said, why the large number of war tales? This appears to fly in the face of an American attempt to recast Japan as less "bellicose," but closer examination reveals that even these tales were readily refashioned to fit a particular image. The early studies of *Heike monogatari*,¹⁰ for example, minimized the military content of the tale and emphasized the human

¹⁰ The history of the *Heike monogatari* translations is noteworthy. Three translations, partial and complete, by three different translators exist. One by Arthur Sadler first appeared in 1918 and 1921, in the midst of World War I, when the world was getting its first look at Japan in its military guise, and its abridged version was published in 1972, interestingly enough, with Sadler's translation of *Hōjōki*, a *zuihitsu* bemoaning the ills of war. Studies of *Heike* in the 1960s attempted to minimize its "military" message and emphasize its human tragedy dimensions, making it too lyrical and aesthete to measure up to the great tragedies of Western literature. *Heike* was thus characterized as a story delineating the defeat of the Heike rather than the military victory of the Genji and as emphasizing the tragedy of war rather than the glory of battle. The Kitagawa/Tsuchida translation, published in 1975, was the first full translation; it appeared at a time when Japan had shed its military image and was promoting its anti-nuclear stance. Helen McCullough's translation was published in 1988, after Japan had spent years marketing itself as pacifist, but the 1980s also marked the time when Japan's economic prowess was at its peak.

tragedy of war and defeat, thus restructuring it to fit the new postwar agenda. To make a long story short, several other military tales were translated, but they seem to have resulted mainly from the interest of one translator, Helen McCullough. McCullough produced three *gunki monogatari* besides *The Tale of Heike: Taiheki: A Chronicle of Medieval Japan* (1959), "A Tale of Mutsu" (1964-65), and *Yoshitsune: A Fifteenth Century Chronicle* (1966). One reason for McCullough's publishing of war tales at a time when the emphasis was on aestheticism may lie in how McCullough came to Japanese studies. As one of the first women, WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services), trained at the famed Naval Language School¹¹ to serve as desk duty translators for the World War II war effort, McCullough translated a variety of material, first in Washington, D.C. and then from 1946-50 in Tokyo as an Allied Translator and Interpreter (McCullough 1-2). Many of the texts she termed "of dubious utility to the intelligence-gathering" (McCullough 2), but nonetheless it must have included military information and language, albeit of the twentieth- rather than fourteenth-century variety, and sparked her interest in war tales.

In terms of the kinds of works which were translated from 1880-1989, we find that to a large extent American and British translators followed the lead of Japanese scholars (1) in privileging Heian over Kamakura works, 30 to 19; (2) in translating fictional *tsukuri monogatari*, *nikki bungaku* diary literature, and *zuihitsu* miscellany before the less-prominent historical *rekishi monogatari*, poetic *uta monogatari*, post-*Genji tsukuri monogatari*, and *setsuwa* short tales at the rate of 29 to 9; and (3) in completing the cen-

¹¹ The Naval Language School first began at the University of California at Berkeley and at Harvard University in 1941 but moved to Boulder, Colorado after one year. It was in operation until early 1945; women were not allowed entry until July 1943. Recruited from the top universities (those in Phi Beta Kappa were especially targeted), many of the students who attended the school went on to have stellar careers in government, journalism, business, and academia. In fact, many of the first scholars in Japanese literature, history, and politics at major universities in the country—and Helen McCullough is one of these—were graduates of this school. I am indebted to Pedro Louirero, "Boulder Boys": Naval Japanese Language School Graduates," presented at the Naval History Symposium, U.S. Naval Academy, September 24, 1999, 1-26, for the above information. See especially pages 3-4, 9-11, 22-23.

tral Heian *nikki bungaku* works before the Kamakura *nyōbō nikki*. However, some major differences are evident. The first difference is the aforementioned unusual number of *gunki monogatari* military tales. The second is the overall prominence accorded prose. Although *waka* poetry, especially the imperial commissioned *chokusenshū* anthologies, was considered a vital and indispensable part of the classical tradition, only two translations of one of these imperial anthologies, the *Kokinwakashū*, and an old, obscure translation of *Shinkokinshū* which is not even used today, are all that are in print.¹² To my knowledge, only two private poetry collections, *Murasaki Shikibu shū* and *Kenreimon'in ukyō no daibu shū* (The Poetic Memoirs of Lady Daibu), which I have counted as a diary in my study, have been published through the 1980s. The difficulty in translating poetry is no doubt a major factor. Edward Seidensticker describes the translator's dilemma: "The poetry of the early *chokusenshū* . . . which covers the period of the *Genji* must rank high on the list of untranslatable poetry. It is a poetry replete with decorations and contrivances, and the translator finds himself in a dilemma, 'a situation offering choice between equally unsatisfactory alternatives,' as Webster has it" ("Chiefly on Translating the *Genji*" 20-22). And we are sympathetic to the plight of the translator, but the result is nonetheless the creation of a canon which greatly minimizes classical poetry.

This low incidence of poetry translation, however, is also a consequence of privileging the nineteenth-century classic realist novel as the standard of excellence in literature in the United States. Realism, full-fledged characters, a good story and plot line were/still are the valued commodities. For Japanese literature this meant the canonization of *The Tale of Genji*—which by happy coincidence matched its esteemed position in Japan. Other works such as diaries and poetic tales fare less well. Edward Seidensticker's assessment of *Kagerō nikki* is instructive:

The *Kagerō Diary* is a remarkably frank personal confession and a strong attempt to describe a difficult relationship and a disturbed state of mind. As such it occupies, I think, an extremely

¹² The addition of four translations of Nara period *Man'yōshū* poetry such as the Gakujutsu Shinkōkai volume would tip the balance a little, but even with these inclusions, the effect would be negligible. The ration is still 48 to 16, a three-to-one margin.

important place in the development of Heian literature. The essential fact of Heian prose literature at its best (and by its best one of course means the *Genji Monogatari*) is that it represents an extraordinary flowering of *realistic expression*, an attempt, unique for its age, to treat of the human condition with frankness and honesty. (*The Gossamer Years* 13; italics mine)

What Seidensticker values is "realistic expression" and development of the solid plot line of "realistic fiction" (14).

Like his counterparts in Japan, Seidensticker appears to praise *Kagerō* for playing a crucial role in the development of Japanese classical prose, but he does so for very particularly Western literary reasons. He gives it high marks for being Japan's first attempt in narration "without evasion or idealization" (*The Gossamer Years* 14), crediting Michitsuna no haha with gesturing toward nineteenth-century classic realistic fiction, which in the end was inappropriately anachronistic to the diarist's time and really a reflection of the historical moment when Seidensticker completed his translation. Clearly for Seidensticker the strength of the diary lies in Book 3, when Michitsuna no haha attains "something like a novelist's detachment"; the earlier sections are merely "hurried" and "fragmentary," and he is disappointed with her "losing interest in her subject" just as she is "able to see beyond herself" and was poised to make "the imaginary jump to realistic fiction" (16). Lastly, Seidensticker lauds the diarist for her "frank personal confession"—her "realism"—but deems it a product of "a disturbed state of mind," reducing the trials of polygamous marriage politics to female hysteria.

Seidensticker's assessment of *Tosa nikki*, *Taketori monogatari*, and "the rest," as he puts it, is less than complimentary. *Tosa* is suppose to "tell of an actual journey, but the events are such that it is no more than an extravagant adventure story, a potpourri of storms and pirates and spells, designed to excite noble ladies who had never been beyond the city limits. . . . The *Taketori Monogatari* (Tale of the Bamboo Cutter) shows the faint beginnings of character portrayal, but it is frankly a fairy story. For the rest, there are the *uta monogatari*, the 'poem romances,' collections of anecdotes built around poems of uneven value; and there are Buddhist parables" (*The Gossamer Years* 13). Once again Seidensticker privileges realism—criticizing *Tosa* as nothing but "an extravagant adventure . . . to excite ladies" and *Taketori* as "frankly a fairy tale" with less than psychologically convincing character portrayal.

Seidensticker's comments are nonetheless closely echoed by Ivan Morris. Although Morris has high regard for Sei Shōnagon as a writer ("Sei Shonagon is among the greatest of writers of prose in the long history of Japanese literature" [*The Pillow Book* 9]), the non-linear, multi-faceted "story line" requires defending, and he does so in a way that can only be construed as a left-handed compliment: "The structural confusion of *The Pillow Book* is generally regarded as its main stylistic weakness; yet surely part of its charm lies precisely in its rather bizarre, haphazard arrangement in which a list of 'awkward things,' for example, is followed by an account of the Emperor's return from a shrine, after which comes a totally unrelated incident about the Chancellor that occurred a year or two earlier and then a short, lyrical description of the dew on a clear autumn morning" (13). The use of such terms as "structural confusion" and "haphazard arrangement" belie a prejudice against narratives which do not have identifiable beginnings, middles, and ends and which do not move smoothly and "naturally" from one event to the next in some kind of thematic and/or chronological manner. And it is the lists, which Morris claims are "interesting mainly to the specialists" (16), that he excises to fit the page requirements for his translation. What remains, then, are the anecdotal, diary-like entries, the more narrative, plot-driven textual moments—which most closely duplicate realistic prose fiction.

Marleigh Ryan, writing about translation, sheds light on the phenomenon which I have just described. Ryan's comments mainly refer to modern Japanese fiction, but she tangentially speaks to classical Japanese literature, and her insights apply equally to classical literature. Ryan describes modern Japanese fiction as not having a "clear structure or repetition of themes" but rather "consist[ing] of fragments—scenes, moments, thoughts—with no clear connection to time and space" (51). "[The] language [is also] consciously imprecise, enriched by suggestion and reveling in vagueness" (52). Finely crafted, logical progression of story/plot—the content—is not key. In short, the text in Japanese is to be inhaled, experienced, enjoyed through the texture of the very words on the page and not submitted to the "rigors of Western logic" (54). The central concern of Japanese literature, ancient or modern, according to Ryan, is the language and only secondarily the content. Japanese "write literature and read literature primarily for its language and only secondarily—if at all—for what it says." Japanese texts are read for their "aura or atmosphere" which "is perceived by the reader in a wash of emotion or feeling" (54, 55). Thus works dealing with ideas are more suc-

cessfully translated into English than those whose strengths lie in language, hence the proliferation of translations of fiction by Natsume Sōseki and Mishima (53, 56). This no doubt also explains the success of *Genji* over and above poetry, poetic tales, or diary literature in translation.

This English language preference for ideas also privileges full-fledged, active, and decisive characters. Ivan Morris' comparison of Sei Shōnagon and Takasue no musume reflects such a predilection, to the detriment of the latter.

Lady Sarashina's [as Morris sees fit to rename the diarist] unhappiness, however, was not the stylish melancholy affected by many of her courtly contemporaries but sprang from some deep well in her own timid, hypersensitive nature. . . . As time after time one finds Lady Sarashina wilted with grief one cannot help wishing her a modicum of Sei Shōnagon's tough insouciance and humor: it would have made her journey easier. In almost every respect she was the antithesis of her near-contemporary, Sei Shōnagon, the witty, ebullient author of *The Pillow Book*. They surely would have loathed each other had they met. Lady Sarashina was naive, timorous, introspective, solitary. Though kind and affectionate by nature, she had difficulty in asserting her emotions . . . [S]hy with men and intimidated by all strangers . . . [she] was clearly a failure in society." (*As I Crossed the Bridge of Dreams* 5, 10)

Not possessing the desired qualities of a "good" protagonist in Morris' eyes, Takasue no musume finds her style of writing directly transposed into negative traits of character—naive, timorous, a failure in society. The preference for Sei Shōnagon, whose "writing is free of the whining, querulous tone that often marks the work of her female contemporaries when they describe their relations with men" (10), is painfully obvious. Active, decisive women with agency are key. Thus Sei Shōnagon and Lady Nijō fare better than Takasue no musume and even Murasaki Shikibu. However, if women are too forceful, like Michitsuna no haha, their desirability drops several notches.

The image of Heian women and women writers suffers at the hands of other early translators as well. Edward Seidensticker sympathizes with their plight as pawns in the marriage politics of the time, but he also describes them as "shapeless and almost inert bundle[s] of clothes surrounded by . . .

spectral white face[s] and masses of streaming black hair" (*The Gossamer Years* 18-19, 22). Perhaps it is this image that Richard Bowring had in mind in his 1988 publication on *Genji*, when he describes women as constituting the passive centers of narratives, while men were the active intruders, committing *kaimi* or "visual rape" upon these unsuspecting women. In Bowring's sexual/textual grammar, "woman as text" remained barren wombs until men "read" them, condemning women to the worst kind of textual sterility (Bowring 12-13, 16).

The imaging of women as submissive and exotic plays a central role in shaping Japan's cultural identity in the United States. According to the orientalist political economy, Asia plays the female to the West's male. Selecting Heian literature as representative of Japanese literature participates in promoting this agenda, for those active in what is considered the best of Heian literature are primarily women. Earl Jackson, on one of his visits to the Claremont Colleges in the 1980s, once remarked that Mishima Yukio was so vigorously and quickly translated into English because of his homosexuality. According to Jackson, Mishima, as not "totally male," enabled Americans to commodify Japan as female and thus more readily accept its "foreignness." Japan became safe to consume—it had lost its military teeth through the war and now the very core of its culture—its literature—was disarmingly feminine.

I close with a startling example of the formation of the cultural identity of one Heian diarist. I am speaking of Ivan Morris' introduction to his 1971 translation of *Sarashina nikki*. On the second page of his preface Morris writes:

Sugawara no Takasue was a humdrum provincial official, whose name would soon have been buried in the slagheap of history had it not been for her gifted daughter and the chance circumstances that preserved her book. I prefer to call her Lady Sarashina; for, though she would never have recognized this name herself, Sarashina is the title that was given to her little book, and it is by her book that we know her. (*As I Crossed the Bridge of Dreams* 2)

This supposed "humdrum provincial official" in fact was the descendent of the famous poet and scholar Sugawara no Michizane, who had some serious pedigree, as my students would say. And Morris himself points this out on the next page, but he fails to register the significance of his statement and

simply renames the diarist Sarashina. "Sarashina," however, is the name of the diary, so *it* is now in need of a name. Morris is more than happy to oblige: he calls it *As I Crossed the Bridge of Dreams*—even though, he notes, the exact phrase "bridge of dreams" does not even figure in the book.

Another scandal of translation? Or perhaps an act of violence? Instances of asymmetries and inequalities of relations between peoples, races, and languages have occurred in the past, but how can we assure that such practices of subjection/subjectification not occur as we move into the twenty-first century?

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