The Grand Old Man and the Great Tradition

Adriana Boscaro with a *Bun'ya ningyō*, Island of Sado, 1971.

The Grand Old Man and the Great Tradition

Essays on Tanizaki Jun'ichirō in Honor of Adriana Boscaro

Edited by
Luisa Bienati and Bonaventura Ruperti

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Luisa Bienati and Bonaventura Ruperti
Venice, April 2009

Adriana Boscaro, *Laurea honoris causa* to Professor Katō Shūichi, University Ca'Foscari of Venice, 9 June 2000.

Introduction

Luisa Bienati

Adriana Boscaro and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō: two names firmly linked in my mind and in those of many others who feel connected to Boscaro either on a personal level or through a shared devotion to the work of Tanizaki. This book is primarily conceived as an homage to both the work of the "grand old man," in all its inexhaustible richness, and to Boscaro's tireless contributions to the study of Tanizaki in Italy and around the world.

Recently, while in Tokyo, I was struck by the enduring impact of the international conference Boscaro organized in Venice in 1995 on the joint thirtieth anniversary of Tanizaki's death and of the founding of the Japanese Studies Institute at the University of Venice. This important event, which attracted scholars from all over the world, offered the chance to discuss Tanizaki and exchange ideas in this beautiful venue, Boscaro's favorite city. Thanks to Boscaro's energetic commitment, Venice became a center for Tanizaki studies that produced two volumes based on the conference proceedings. These two volumes are now cited in all scholarly works on Tanizaki, and are regarded as seminal publications in the field.[1]

While the Venice Conference is the best-known link between Boscaro and Tanizaki, she had already contributed actively to Tanizaki's literary success in Italy.[2] In the early 1980s, when Tanizaki's later works were already well known in Italy thanks to Suga Atsuko's translations, Boscaro was among those who exposed Italian readers to Tanizaki's earlier writings with translations of *Shisei*, *Majutsushi*, *Hōkan*, *Himitsu*, and *Ningyo no nageki.* In that same period, Boscaro edited the first major collection of Tanizaki's writings in Italian—sixteen works covering the entire span of the author's career, published in a series devoted to world classics—and contributed six translations to it.

1. The proceedings from the conference were published in English and Japanese: Adriana Boscaro and Anthony H. Chambers, eds., *A Tanizaki Feast: The International Symposium in Venice*, Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies 24 (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1998); *Tanizaki Jun'ichirō kokusai Symposium* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1997). Another important contribution to Tanizaki studies is Adriana Boscaro, ed., *Tanizaki in Western Languages: A Bibliography of Translations and Studies* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2000).
2. Adriana Boscaro has traced the literary success of Tanizaki in Italy in several of her articles, including: "La fortuna di Tanizaki in Italia," in Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *Opere* (Milano: Bompiani, 1988), pp. 1155–1168; "The Fortunes of Tanizaki in Italy," in Zdenka Svarcova and Cody Poulton, eds., *Dreams and Shadows: Tanizaki and Japanese Poetics in Prague: Essays in Honour of Anthony W. Liman*, Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Orientalia Pragensia XV, Philologica I, 2005 (Charles University in Prague, The Karolinum Press, 2006), pp. 71–80.

The years that followed the Venice Conference produced an abundance of works by Boscaro and her students. Boscaro's translation of *Yoshino kuzu* was published in 1998 as part of the "Mille gru" (Thousand Cranes) series on Japanese literature, a series which Boscaro supervised for the publishing house Marsilio. Her contribution to Tanizaki studies took the form of a variety of publications aimed at both academic and general readers (see the Bibliography at the end of this volume). Now retired from full-time teaching, Boscaro continues to be an active participant at conferences and other academic events.

The present volume is intended to link the two names—Adriana Boscaro and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō—through the contributions of colleagues and friends, each of whom provides a unique perspective from his or her field of interest.

A central theme of many of the essays presented in this volume is Tanizaki's position in relation to the "great tradition" of Japanese classical literature. It is significant that most contributors have chosen to discuss the classical aspects and themes found in the writing of Tanizaki, as if to confirm the author's "classical" place within the spectrum of Japanese literature.

The volume opens with an homage paid by Edward Seidensticker (1921–2007) to Adriana Boscaro. In sending me his article some years ago, Seidensticker expressly stated that I was not to remove its closing sentences. I would like to quote this passage here as an authoritative reminder of Boscaro's position in the world of international scholarship:

> Approaching the end of my say, I wish to change the subject and offer a few words of thanks to and for Adriana Boscaro. Energetic, intelligent, imaginative, she has been an enriching presence. She is genuinely cosmopolitan. Scholars on the European continent and scholars in the English-speaking countries tend not to pay much attention to other factions. This has not been true of Boscaro. She has always seemed interested in what we are doing. I have been very grateful, and I am glad that her retirement does not mean her disappearance from the scene.

Seidensticker's contribution is a provocative essay on literary styles and translation. He begins by describing his perspective on Tanizaki as "somewhat negative," but concludes that it is "outrageously subjective," for "the most important literary judgments are intuitive." An important point raised here is that "Murasaki Shikibu and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō are not closely akin as is commonly held to be the case." Seidensticker's argument is based on the language and literary style of Tanizaki, who produced three modern Japanese versions of the classic masterpiece by Murasaki Shikibu (1939–41; 1951–54; 1964–65). Tanizaki, Seidensticker argues, proved incapable of re-creating the same sense of lyric beauty in his own writing. Moreover, he suggests, "admiration for Tanizaki's attempt to modernize *Genji* is not universal."

Seidensticker's discussion includes memories of his long career as a translator. Seidensticker mentions an exchanges with Kawabata Yasunari concerning Tanizaki's modern Japanese translations of *Genji*, recalling two specific details: Kawa-

bata's copy of Tanizaki's translations, with its most questionable passages marked in red (it was, Seidensticker writes, a "very red copy"); and Kawabata's smile—both intriguing and unequivocal—in reply to Seidensticker's request for amplification on Kawabata's comment that Tanizaki's translations were a "*shōnin Genji*." Seidensticker states frankly that a great opportunity was missed when Kawabata failed to provide a modern rendering of *Genji*. In Seidensticker's opinion, only Kawabata's style would have been capable of conveying the charm of Murasaki's masterpiece to modern readers.

Drawing on his experience as a translator, Seidensticker engages the central issues surrounding the rendering of *Genji* into a modern language (including modern Western languages): if and how to maintain the length of the original sentences; how many words to employ to convey what Murasaki is saying; what to add, explicate, and elucidate and what to leave in the allusive and lyrical language of classical Japanese.[3] In reading such comments, one should not forget that Seidensticker has been the translator of Kawabata ("It has been said that Edward Seidensticker won the 1968 Nobel Prize in literature for Kawabata Yasunari").[4] But it is also worth bearing in mind that Seidensticker translated several works by Tanizaki, including one which many critics have regarded as his most "classical" work: *Sasame yuki.*[5] Moreover, Seidensticker was the first person to translate *Genji monogatari* (1976) into English after Arthur Waley, whose translation was abridged. (Seidensticker remarks that for someone like himself, who had been introduced to Japanese literature by reading the Waley *Genji*, producing a new translation was like "killing his own father.")[6]

Kawabata, Tanizaki, and Murasaki, therefore, are three authors whom Seidensticker discusses from personal experience. His essay offers the reader willing to entertain Seidensticker's "negative" perspective much food for thought on issues of translation. Our only regret is that Edward Seidensticker is no longer with us to continue this debate.

The second contribution to the volume provides further reflections on the Tanizaki *Genji*, though from a completely different point of view. Gaye Rowley and

3. In *Bunshō tokuhon* (1934), Tanizaki criticized Waley for making his English translation longer than the original. By retranslating one of Waley's passages back into Japanese, Tanizaki demonstrated that Waley had used twice as many words in his translation. Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *Bunshō tokuhon* (Chūōkōronsha, Chūkō bunpo, 1994), pp. 53–58.
4. Aileen Gatten, "Edward Seidensticker: A Biography," in A. Gatten and A. H. Chambers, eds., *New Leaves: Studies and Translations of Japanese Literature in Honor of Edward Seidensticker* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan), 1993, p. 1.
5. In an interview on "Tanizaki and *Genji monogatari*" and "Kawabata and *Genji monogatari*," Seidensticker claims to have found little stylistic or linguistic affinity between *Sasame yuki* and Murasaki's masterpiece. Seidensticker argues that the style of Kawabata's sentences and the "atmosphere" (*bunsho no fuiki*) they evoke more closely resemble the *Genji* style. Cf. E. Seidensticker and Ii Haruki, *Sekai bungaku to shite no Genji monogatari*: *Saidensutekka shi ni kiku*, Tokyo, Kasamashoin, 2005, pp. 128–135.
6. Kawazoe Fusao surveys *Genji* translations in Western languages. "'Nemureru mori no bijin' no yohanseiki: Sekai de *Genji* wa dō yomaretekita ka?" *Eureka,* Feb. 2002, p. 186.

Ibuki Kazuko (Tanizaki's amanuensis from 1953 to 1965) document Tanizaki's endeavors in making three separate translations of *Genji.* Ultimately, Tanizaki's work is presented as the "product of a highly complex corporate project involving great numbers of experts and assistants over long periods of time." Thanks to the documentary evidence provided about the formation of the translations (including Tanizaki's own remarks on that subject, here translated by Thomas Harper), and the parallels drawn between Tanizaki's and Yosano Akiko's respective attempts to render the text into modern Japanese, this essay represents an important contribution to the study of Tanizaki's work. Tanizaki's own observations and the conclusions reached by Rowley and Ibuki alternatively question and confirm Seidensticker's "intuitions." Concerning style, Tanizaki writes: "I've been unable to write with the daring economy of the original text; but if we posit that the original expresses ten units of meaning using five units of expression, then I have expressed them with seven. So a passage in the original that cannot be understood without reading it ten times over, in my translation should be understandable after two or three readings." Similar comments lend strength to Seidensticker's suggestion that Tanizaki might be too "clear" or "lucid" in his translation, that "he explains too well, as is not the Japanese way."

Curiously, there is one important point of agreement between Tanizaki and Seidensticker, both of whom devoted many years of their lives to reviving Murasaki Shikibu's *Genji monogatari* by translating the work into their respective languages: "I don't think it's such a great masterpiece!" (Tanizaki); "I am not convinced that Murasaki was a superbly good stylist. This is all right. It is possible for a novelist not to write superbly well and yet to be considered a very good novelist" (Seidensticker).

Despite the fact that, as Ibuki and Rowley note, Tanizaki denied the influence of *Genji* on his own work (particularly with respect to *Sasame yuki*), many modern critics have pointed to significant parallels between Tanizaki's and Murasaki Shikibu's writing. As Umberto Eco has shown, a written text often does not reflect the intentions of its author (*intentio auctoris*): the correct interpretation of a literary text depends not on the manifest intentions or biography of its author but on an engagement *with the text itself*; it is necessary, in other words, to examine what the work itself has to say, regardless of the intentions of its author or readers.

Further critical attempt to engage with Tanizaki's writing must be made: what "Tanizaki did not see fit to tell us, it is the reader's task to decide." Thus Aileen Gatten writes in highlighting the influence of Heian narrative methods on Tanizaki's fiction. Gatten regards Tanizaki's *Shōshō Shigemoto no haha* as a "neoclassical" work; she links it to *Genji*, arguing that Tanizaki's classicism, far from being superficial, "reflects a deep sensitivity to Heian narrative." Gatten begins by discussing the relation between *Shigemoto* and Tanizaki's second *Genji* translation; she suggests that "Tanizaki's preparations for a new *Genji* translation may indeed have directly influenced his decision to write *Shigemoto* by inspiring him to return to a favorite genre of his youth, fiction set in the Heian period."

Gatten continues her essay with an analysis of *Shigemoto*. Through specific references to *Genji* and other classical novels, she examines the influence of Heian

narrative techniques on Tanizaki's oeuvre, both structurally (the place of *waka* in the structure of the text, derived from *utamonogatari*) and in terms of Tanizaki's choice of imagery and themes (both of which were deeply influenced by classical aesthetic canons, as revealed by his use of spring and autumn imagery). The final part of her essay focuses on literary style. It emphasizes the narratorial aspects of the text by drawing parallels with the shifting narratorial distance that characterizes *Genji*. Gatten draws the reader's attention to Tanizaki's explicit and implicit references to classical texts, as well as to the importance of these references as a source of inspiration and creativity. She concludes by noting that "it is difficult to imagine that Tanizaki would have written so fine a work without the stimulation afforded by a profound contact with classical literature."

A different perspective on the connections between Tanizaki's work and Heian literature appears in Tzvetana Kristeva's essay, "Another Key to Tanizaki's Eroticism." Singling out specific aspects of Tanizaki's eroticism, Kristeva finds in them the "unmistakable imprint of the classical tradition." Kristeva observes that our ability to view Tanizaki as a "classical" writer—a highly controversial issue—is "suspended within the framework of our knowledge and understanding of classical literature." This assertion is particularly significant in the context of the present volume, comprised as it is of essays by scholars of classical literature who have much to contribute to Tanizaki studies. Kristeva writes that in her essay she will "concentrate on the level of expression itself and discuss its eroticism from the standpoint of my own background as a critical reader of classical Japanese literature."

Two points are worth emphasizing here. The first is that Kristeva, a scholar of *nikki bungaku*, here draws a parallel between the two diaries in *Kagi* (The Key) and the "lyrical diaries of classical literature written post-factum."[7] This game of hide-and-seek brings to mind the classical technique of *kaimami* ("double peeking") and reveals that the "key" of the title is the key "to the awakening of a woman's latent or suppressed sensuousness"—an awakening achieved through the process of writing. The second point concerns Kristeva's analysis of written language as a "sign." In her essay she emphasizes the close relation between the flow of writing and the flow of the senses, and concludes that, "as in classical Japanese literature exemplified by *The Tale of Genji,* the eroticism of *The Key* is not merely narrated or represented, it is an eroticism of the representation itself." Once more, there is a close link between the work of Tanizaki and *Genji*. *The Key* was published in 1956, and Tanizaki drafted the second *Genji* translation in the years immediately preceding that.

Two essays emphasize Tanizaki's experimental engagement with classical literary genres—Amy V. Heinrich's "Tanizaki's *Tanka*" (devoted to poetry) and

7. See also Kristeva's "Japanese Lyrical Diaries and the European Autobiographical Tradition," in Gordon Daniels, ed., *Europe Interprets Japan* (Tenterden, Kent: Paul Norbury Publications, 1984), pp. 155–162. Here Kristeva provides a definition of *nikki*: "In my opinion, they [Japanese diaries] are specific autobiographical works of art, created *post factum*, elaborately organised, underlaid by a general idea, and subject to the aesthetic intent of the authors to recreate the history of their own lives" (p. 155).

Bonaventura Ruperti's "Tanizaki and the Way of Art (*Geidō*): Traditional Arts and Performance Skills." In the preface to *A Tanizaki Feast,* written with Anthony H. Chambers, Adriana Boscaro included poetry and theater among the "still relatively neglected" subjects in Tanizaki studies. Heinrich's and Ruperti's essays should do much to correct this deficiency.[8]

Poetry is largely ignored in Tanizaki's literary production, not least, as Heinrich observes, because the author "wrote poetry all his life" but "published very little of it." Heinrich's essay presents the *tanka* of *Miyakowasure no ki* (Record of the "Forgetting-the-Capital" Flower), a collection of forty-three poems, some with brief headnotes, which was privately published in 1948. The collection was republished in 1977 by Tanizaki's wife Matsuko to mark the thirteenth anniversary of her husband's death. Tanizaki began writing these poems in 1944, at the very height of the war, with the last poems dating from 1946; yet nothing in their language suggests that "the writer is living in modern times, during a brutal war."

A context, however, for the classical images employed by Tanizaki can be found in the headnotes, which reveal details of the author's life: his evacuation from the Hanshin region and his family's frequent moves. Tanizaki marks the end of the war by quoting Bashō's famous *haiku*, "*Natsugusa ya tsuwamono domo ga yume no ato*" (The summer grasses— / For many brave warriors / The aftermath of dreams).[9] Heinrich concludes that by linking Bashō's warriors to those of the Second World War, Tanizaki "is seeing a kind of universal sorrow, a human futility."

Bonaventura Ruperti begins his article by noting the important role played by performance arts in Tanizaki's novels and short stories: "scenes, theater, music, cinema and performance very often figure as salient episodes; they enrich atmospheres and animate dialogue." Tanizaki, of course, also wrote essays on performance arts; Ruperti here focuses on *Geidan* (Conversation on Art), 1933. The publication date of this work is particularly important. Tanizaki's essay was written when the literary debate on the purpose of art and its relation to politics was at its peak, a debate influenced by Marxist thought and *puroretaria bungaku* (proletarian literature). Japan was about to embrace nationalism, and writers were forced to choose between supporting the regime and silence. Tanizaki, Ruperti notes, did not conceal his "delicate sense of national pride, which is in keeping with the thought of the times." Tanizaki's essay, as its title suggests, is not conceived as a systematic reflection on art, but rather as a conversation touching on various issues and making suggestions about several artistic disciplines: Kabuki, painting, cinema, theater, music, dance, and so forth. Ruperti's article presents numerous passages from *Geidan*, particularly those that concern "the formation of artistic man" and training in traditional arts, as well as general reflections on art. The latter include a passage on the distinction between *gei* and *geijutsu*—traditional Japanese art and art conceived in modern, Western terms. Tanizaki's conclusions in the essay are consistent with his acknowledged

8. Boscaro and Chambers, *A Tanizaki Feast*, p. viii.

9. The translation is by Donald Keene, *World Within Walls: Japanese Literature of the Pre-Modern Era, 1600–1867* (New York: Henry Holt, 1976), p. 104.

debt to tradition: "contemporary artists rather than abstract theories should respect the arts a little bit more, and put themselves in a state of mind that is a bit closer to the men of art from the past."

Another field of particular interest in Tanizaki studies is cinema. Not only was he personally and directly involved in cinema production (having worked, in his Yokohama years, as a scriptwriter for the Taikatsu production company), but many of his novels were filmed. This latter point was made by Roberta Novielli in the filmography included in *Tanizaki in Western Languages*, edited by Adriana Boscaro (see Bibliography). In "Translating Imaginary into Images: *Manji*," Novielli focuses on a specific novel by Tanizaki, *Manji*, and explores how it was recast for the screen by Masumura Yasuzō. *Manji*, Novielli writes, "has been selected as subject of the present paper because of its perfect aesthetic fusion between the literary work (1928) and the film (released only a year before the writer's death in 1965). The literary work is enriched by the director's tridimensional scenes because, as we can see, there is much more than a simple passion for the plot. Besides the idealization of the feminine topoi there is a true and pure image identification, an erotic universe with equally intense nuances, full of decadent sensuality."

Novielli illustrates how Masumura was able not only to portray the complexities that mark the chief female characters in the novel, but also to convey the charm of the female body through the interplay of light and shade: "The image is alternatively exposed and then hidden, thus best paraphrasing the dream-like drive of the erotic crescendo of Tanizaki's original work." Novielli's analysis confirms what Tanizaki had written in *In'ei raisan* (In Praise of Shadows, 1933): "One need only compare American, French, and German films to see how greatly nuances of shading and coloration can vary in motion pictures. In the photographic image itself, to say nothing of the acting and the script, there somehow emerge differences in national character. If this is true even when identical equipment, chemicals, and film are used, how much better our own photographic technology might have suited our complexion, our facial features, our climate, our land."[10]

The volume concludes with two contributions interpreting Tanizaki's works in the light of Western and Meiji literary traditions. Paul McCarthy focuses on the former in his essay, "Tanizaki's *Naomi* and Nabokov's *Lolita*." Both Tanizaki and Nabokov, McCarthy argues, were "highly prolific, producing works of startling variety in a number of genres, and each is known to the general public for allegedly scandalous works centering on the theme of sexual obsession." Each writer stood "in the very front rank of the novelists of his own period and country." McCarthy continues by comparing and contrasting the lives and experiences of Tanizaki and Nabokov, emphasizing the many analogies as well as differences. A central feature of this essay consists of the parallels he draws between the novels *Chijin no ai* and *Lolita*, particularly in terms of the roles played by their female protagonists (Naomi and Lolita). In the closing section of his essay, McCarthy focuses on a different

10. Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *In Praise of Shadows,* trans. Thomas Harper and Edward Seidensticker (New Haven, Conn.: Leete's Island Books, 1977), p. 9.

parallel, represented by the existence of two works that can be regarded as "pretexts" prefiguring Tanizaki's and Nabokov's more important novels. *Chijin no ai* and *Lolita* thus find a "final point of resemblance" in their very conception in their authors' minds.

In "Tanizaki's Reading of Sōseki: On the Subject of *Longing for Mother*," Jacqueline Pigeot draws a comparison between *Haha wo kouru ki* (Longing for Mother), written by Tanizaki in 1919, and *Kōfu* (The Miner), written by Natsume Sōseki in 1908. Pigeot's groundbreaking analysis emphasizes the similarities between these two novels and their substantial differences. Tanizaki claimed to have written his book under the influence of *Tsukikage* (Moonlight), a short prose composition by Satō Haruo. Indicating features shared by *Haha wo kouru ki* and *Tsukikage* with respect to narrative, moral dimension, description of everyday life and landscape, and imagery, Pigeot notes, "Though any of them, taken separately, might raise doubts, the ensemble forms such a compelling whole that it seems impossible to attribute them to chance." The author advances two hypotheses. The first is that Tanizaki might unconsciously have adapted some of the literary elements that formed his inner "encyclopedia": elements he absorbed from his reading of Sōseki. According to this view, *Longing for Mother* would be the product of an "internal alchemy and the involuntary workings of the memory." The second hypothesis advanced by Pigeot is that Tanizaki, as in many other works, might have adopted a subtle strategy in order alternatively to reveal and conceal his literary "borrowings." Readers of Tanizaki are familiar with his fondness for this device in describing the sources of his historical novels. In the case of *Longing for Mother,* Tanizaki may have explicitly identified Satō Haruo's novel as his source of inspiration while concealing the genuine source. Pigeot suggests that "although *The Miner* is not a source for *Longing for Mother* in the same sense that early documents are for his historical novels, it is quite conceivable that Tanizaki adopted the same strategy when he revealed the secret of his creation to his readers." Pigeot refrains from favoring one hypothesis over the other, and concludes: "Let readers make their own choice." For my part, as a reader, I would certainly be inclined to favor the second hypothesis.

Adriana Boscaro: A Biography

Luisa Bienati

Adriana Boscaro was born in Venice in August 1935, and Venice was where she was destined to spend most of her private and academic life. She remains deeply connected to her Venetian roots despite a willingness to travel frequently, as a citizen of the world, to further scholarly contacts and to meet new colleagues. Her roots are most easily seen in her love of irony; her manner of speaking, which shifts easily from Italian to Venetian; her islander's identity—she likes to quote the local saying that "without a bridge linking the mainland to Venice, Europe would be an island"; and, certainly not least, in the nature of her academic research. Despite the distance between Japan and Venice, Boscaro has always looked for connections between the two. For example, as part of a collective project on the affinities between certain Italian and Japanese cities in given historical periods—a project that unfortunately was never realized—Boscaro chose to focus on the parallels between Venice and Edo in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Edo and Venice: cities on the water, cities of commerce, cities with a similar urban structure, cities of entertainment, with their pleasure quarters, casinos, and beautiful women painted by artists and praised by poets.

Over the course of the years, the links between Edo and Venice led Boscaro to focus her attention on the Tokugawa period and the years immediately preceding it. Given the broad chronological span and artistic wealth of this period, she soon came to cultivate a range of interconnected interests. To use an analogy better fitted to the pleasure of discovery, the development of these interests was almost an unconscious reaction, an attraction of similarities.

Boscaro took her first steps toward a career in the field of Japanese studies in 1956, when she took courses given in Venice by the Mideast and East Asian Institute of Rome (IsMEO). She was introduced to Japan and Japanese culture by a gifted young teacher, Tsuji Shigeru, who later became a professor at Geidai University in Tokyo. Professor Tsuji was an art historian, a specialist on Giorgione, and a translator of Vasari who was in love with Venice. He communicated his love for Japanese culture so effectively that Boscaro continued to study Japan on her own; she even published some articles while waiting for the University of Venice to inaugurate its Japanese studies program in 1965. Since her grasp of Japanese culture was already substantial, her career as a university student progressed smoothly. In 1969 three major events occurred in her life: she received her degree, was appointed assistant professor at Ca' Foscari (University of Venice), and was awarded a Monbushō fellowship. During the eighteen months of her grant term she carried out research at

the Shiryō Hensanjo (Historiographical Institute) of the University of Tokyo under the guidance of Professors Numata Jirō and Kanai Madoka.

While in Tokyo, Boscaro met Professor Kanai twice a week to discuss her translation of the letters of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. These meetings frequently ended in a *yakitoriya* across from the Tokyo University campus. Boscaro has often said that she learned a great deal from her long conversations with her advisors. Not only did Professor Kanai answer her questions, he would fire off facts and anecdotes, thus earning him the nickname “Machine Gun of Tōdai.” Boscaro’s research on the letters was later published as *101 Letters of Hideyoshi* (1975).

No sooner had Boscaro returned to Italy—bringing with her much material on the history of the Warring States period (*sengoku jidai*), Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu, and eager to begin the new academic year—than a piece of news dampened her enthusiasm. She was told that the program she was assigned to had to focus more on literature, leaving history within a cultural framework. Boscaro therefore turned to an intensive study of Japanese literature, a field of interest that fortunately she had never quite abandoned but which she now sought to explore in greater depth. Having been asked to focus on a contemporary author, she chose Endō Shūsaku, whose *Chinmoku* (Silence) had recently been the subject of much acclaim. As she had already worked on “the Christian century” (see below), she was now able to cultivate her interest from a literary perspective. Her long friendship with Endō gave Boscaro privileged access to his literary world—one of the reasons she continues to be regarded as *the* Italian specialist on Endō.

In the course of the years she taught at the University of Venice (1969–2004), Boscaro held, among many positions, those of Director of the Institute of Japanese Studies, Director of the Department of East Asian Studies, and member of the Board of Directors. She taught courses on Japanese literature, the history of Euro-Japanese relations, and the cultural history of Tokugawa Japan (with specific focus on popular literature), as well as seminars on such Japanese writers as Kawabata Yasunari, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Endō Shūsaku, and Tanizaki Jun’ichirō.

Here follows a brief outline of Boscaro’s academic interests. Driven by a keen desire to learn more about the impact of the West on Japan, Boscaro began examining early European relations with Asian countries. She took as her starting point the accounts of Italian travelers—adventurous merchants and clerics who in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries followed the caravan trails east. Her interest in this subject fit well with her teaching program on “the century of discoveries,” when Portuguese vessels made the fortuitous crossing to Tanegashima and St. Francis Xavier reached Kagoshima in 1549. The roughly hundred-year period (1549–1636) of the Jesuits’ mission in Japan is called “the Christian century,” a never-ending source of discoveries.

Boscaro continued to study Jesuit letters and reports and to explore related issues (here mentioned at random), such as the introduction into Japan of the moveable-type printing press by the Jesuits; the menace of Hideyoshi; the sixteenth-century mission to Europe of four young Japanese men under the direction of Alessandro Valignano; and the Jesuit Gerolamo de Angelis’s discovery that Ezo (Hokkaidō) was an island rather than an extension of the continent.

The journey made by the four young Japanese converts and their Jesuit companions in the eight years between their departure from Nagasaki in 1580 and their return in 1588 was carefully reconstructed by Boscaro on the basis of printed sources of the period. A bibliography of the texts and frontispieces of all the pamphlets issued in Europe on that occasion appeared as *Sixteenth Century European Printed Works on the First Japanese Mission to Europe—A Descriptive Bibliography* (Leiden 1973). This work was followed by the publication of several articles detailing their travels to Italy, and an exhibition at the Marciana Library in Venice in 1985, the four-hundredth anniversary of the young men's visit to that city in 1585.

De Angelis's "discovery" of the island of Ezo triggered Boscaro's latent passion for cartography. She had already done some research on the representation of Japan in European cartography from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. She now turned her attention to a report and handwritten map in the Jesuit Archives in Rome. Boscaro examined the sources prior to de Angelis, and drew chronological comparisons between the various representations of Ezo on Italian, French, Portuguese, English, and Dutch maps, noting errors and discrepancies. She also produced a translation and commentary of de Angelis's 1621 *Report*, which was not published until 1981. Although this edition is no longer in print, a new one was published by de Angelis's hometown, Enna in Sicily, on the occasion of his being proclaimed a patron of Enna in 1987. All this reference material, used in classes for many years, will soon appear in print under the title *Ventura e sventura dei gesuiti in Giappone, 1549–1639* (Fortunes and misfortunes of the Jesuits in Japan, 1549–1639).

Despite the sealing of Japanese borders and the expulsion of Roman Catholic missionaries in 1639, the presence of Dutch merchants at Deshima led to a Japanese interest in Western learning (*rangaku*). Those Japanese who challenged bakufu authority were interested in the new knowledge and technologies brought by these "red-haired men" (*kōmōjin*): medicine, ballistics, telescopes, the compass, oil painting, perspective, and so on. These events attracted the interest of Boscaro, who examined a number of figures from this period: Shiba Kōkan, Takano Chōei, Hayashi Shihei, Honda Toshiaki, Sugita Genpaku, and especially Hiraga Gennai. Gennai's broad range of interests makes him an extraordinary figure for his time. Albeit not a genuine *rangakusha*, Gennai can be seen as a link between science and the spirit of Edo, for he was an imaginative, unpredictable, and ingenious inventor, a product of his time but endowed with a broad vision, as Boscaro observes in her annotated translation of Gennai's *Fūryū Shidōkenden* (1990).

In 1987, Boscaro organized the International Conference "Rethinking Japan," and in 1995 the International Symposium on Tanizaki Jun'ichirō. The latter was an epochal event that is still fondly remembered: Tanizaki experts from all over the world (with the exception of Edward Seidensticker, who was ill at the time) gathered in Venice to participate in the first international meeting devoted to a single Japanese author. The transactions from this conference were published in 1998 as *A Tanizaki Feast,* a volume jointly edited by Boscaro and Anthony H. Chambers.

Boscaro had already devoted many years to the study of Tanizaki, translating and editing his works, lecturing, and gathering bibliographic material. The result was the publication of *Tanizaki in Western Languages: A Bibliography of Translations and Studies* (2000), a list of 263 translations in seventeen languages and 224 articles and books on Tanizaki. One of Boscaro's distinguishing traits is the desire to have an overview of any subject she might be discussing; to inform herself, for instance, on everything about a given literary work: its composition, the chronological order of its translations in other languages, and the choices made by the translators. Hence Boscaro's decision to catalogue all Japanese literature translated into Italian, culminating in *Narrativa giapponese: cent'anni di traduzioni* (Japanese Fiction: One Hundred Years of Translations, 2000), which brought to light one little-known fact: that the works of many authors, including Tanizaki, were translated into Italian long before they were translated into other languages.

Boscaro's official positions are too numerous to list in their entirety. Suffice it to mention a few. She was a founding member in 1972 of the European Association for Japanese Studies (EAJS), served as president from 1991 to 1994, and has been an honorary member since 2005. Boscaro was also one of the founding members, in 1973, of AISTUGIA (Italian Association for Japanese Studies), served on the board of the Association for many years, and has been its president since 2005. In 1999 Boscaro was asked by Fosco Maraini to become academic director of the new Vieusseux-Asia Center of the Gabinetto P. G. Vieusseux in Florence, where Maraini's library and photo collection are now kept. Boscaro's role at the Center is to coordinate projects aimed at strengthening ties with Japan.

The position of which Boscaro is most proud, however, is one she has held since 1988, that of editor of a Japanese Literature series published by Marsilio in Venice. This is the first series in either Italy or Europe devoted to classical Japanese literature; it has published thirty-one translated volumes to date. Each volume is the work of a specialist scholar and includes a detailed introduction to the life and literary career of the author, an annotated translation, and a glossary. While primarily aimed at an academic readership, the series has attracted the interest of the wider public, and the volumes have been reprinted several times. As of 2008 it has been my honor to coedit the series with Adriana Boscaro.

In 2000, Boscaro sponsored the awarding of an honorary degree to the scholar and critic Katō Shūichi by the University of Ca' Foscari, Venice. Katō had been a visiting professor there in 1983–84. The Italian edition of his book *Nihon bungakushi josetsu* has been widely used in Italian departments of Japanese studies.

I wish to end this introduction by mentioning the most prestigious honors bestowed on Adriana Boscaro: the Okano Prize for the promotion of Japanese culture in Italy, 1990; the "Premio Cesmeo" for her translation of Katō Shūichi's *Nihon bungakushi josetsu*, 1999; and in the same year, the Japanese Order of the Rising Sun, Third Class.

The Modern Murasaki

Edward Seidensticker

This seems likely to be a somewhat negative piece—not the best sort, perhaps, for a festschrift. I will argue that Murasaki Shikibu and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō are not as closely akin as is commonly held to be the case.

There is nothing mysterious about the reasons for averring an affinity. Tanizaki spent three solid prewar years putting the *Genji monogatari* into modern Japanese. He was not doing a great deal else during those years, although what he did produce, and especially *A Cat, a Man, and Two Women* (*Neko to shōzō to futari no onna*), is very good.

The amount of time consumed on his other two *Genji* modernizations is not as easy to measure, but neither of them can have taken as long as the first one. Perhaps we may guess that the two of them together took as much time as the other. If this is the case then, still in the fullness of his capabilities as what is called a creative writer, he put a half dozen years into the work. This is about what it would take for a person not otherwise occupied and working full time to put it into a European language.

So it is clear that Tanizaki was very fond of Murasaki Shikibu and her work. This fact does not tell us much, however, about the extent to which he was influenced by her. It is quite possible to be long and intimately associated with a work of literature, or anything else, and not fully understand it.

And of course "understand" is one of the more difficult words and concepts in any language. When Japanese ask (and they are very fond of doing it) whether European sorts (and most Americans fall into that category) really understand Japanese literature, I generally respond with a question of my own: what is meant by "understand"? If that difficult word can be changed to something like "enjoy" or "find interesting," then the answer is most definitely positive. Can it be said with confidence that the Japanese understand Japanese literature?

It is to the point to note that admiration for the Tanizaki modernizations of the *Genji* is not universal. It is especially to the point with regard to a writer, Kawabata Yasunari, who will be of some importance in my discussion. He proposed to join the ranks of *Genji* modernizers but in the end did not.

Among his reasons for wanting to do it was that he found the Tanizaki versions unsatisfactory. He was, perhaps, as fond of the work as Tanizaki was:

> During the war, on trains to and from Tokyo and in bed in the dim light that was permitted, I read an old *Kogetsushō* version of the *Genji monogatari.* I feared that small print would be bad for my eyes in the darkness and the

> jolting. There was also a certain cynical pleasure in being so at odds with the times. It was peculiar to be reading a tale from a thousand years ago in an old wood-block edition as the Yokosuka Line took on more and more the color of war, but none of my fellow passengers seemed to detect the anachronism. In a whimsical mood, I would tell myself that if there was a raid and I was wounded it would be good to have the sturdy old paper to press against the wounds.
>
> I was at the twenty-third chapter, about half the distance through the work, when Japan surrendered. It was a strange way to read the *Genji*, but it left a deep impression on me. I would be aware in astonishment of the rapture and intoxication into which I had fallen. People who had been bombed out or who had taken refuge in the country came struggling aboard with luggage. I could not but be surprised at the disharmony between me and people wandering streets that smelled of ashes. I was still more astonished at the harmony between me and prose from a thousand years ago. . . . I was still more surprised at the number of consoling letters that came to me from soldiers at the front. Some were from strangers, but common to them was the fact that they had come upon my writings and been stirred to intense homesickness, and wished to thank me and wish me well. It seems that my writings make people think of Japan. I felt a similar homesickness when I read the *Genji monogatari*.[1]

This is from *Sorrow* (*Aishū*), an essay published in 1949.

Though he thought of translating the *Genji* into modern Japanese, he ran out of energy. He showed me the copy of the *Genji* on which he was making preparations for his modernization. It was toward the end of his life. He seemed to be paying little attention to modernizations other than the Tanizaki ones. He had marked in red Tanizaki passages which he thought questionable. It had turned into a very red text. He did not seem to like much of anything in the Tanizaki versions.

He said something rather remarkable of the Tanizaki *Genji*: "It is a *shōnin Genji*." *Shōnin* can be rendered "merchant" or "tradesman." Much interested and not ideally comprehending, I asked him to tell me in detail more what he meant. His response was characteristic. He smiled and said nothing more. The smile seemed to say: "With a bit of effort you can figure that out for yourself." If that is what was meant, it flattered me.

A part of his meaning is quite clear. He thought Tanizaki out of his class when he undertook to do the *Genji*. The word he chose has in every language I can think of connotations of vulgarity. It is hard to believe that Kawabata thought himself an aristocrat. Dark rumors about his ancestry have floated over the landscape, but his short-lived father was a physician and not a merchant. Tanizaki's family was definitely mercantile. Whether or not he thought his circumstances nearer those of Murasaki is not possible to say. It seems doubtful. Yet there was something about being from the merchant class that put Tanizaki at a distance from her.

1. Kawabata 1982a, pp

What was it? I wish I could say for certain, but it was not Kawabata's way to leave a person in certainty. It seems clear that Kawabata felt himself in some respect nearer Murasaki.

Tanizaki was in many ways a product of the European Enlightenment. He wrote an exceedingly famous essay about shadows, arguing that they are essential to Japanese culture and should be brought back, or at any rate preserved in such limited regions as literature, but those of us who saw how he lived may wonder whether he really was such a devotee of murkiness.

His was a bright, cheerful way of life. The world of *The Makioka Sisters* (*Sasame yuki*), essentially Tanizaki's own suburban Osaka, was bright, and westernized. I suspect that Tanizaki's way of calling a spade a spade had something to do with Kawabata's distaste for the translations. He seldom left the reader in doubt as to where he stood. Whatever it was, Kawabata did not think Tanizaki the right person to translate the *Genji*.

It would have been good if Kawabata had shaken off the work that so occupied him after the Nobel flurry and turned to modernizing the *Genji*. It was work that had little to do with his real work, and many feel that it caused his death. Quite possibly if we had a Kawabata *Genji* before us we still would not know precisely what he meant. That smile might well have passed over his countenance if we had asked.

So what might it mean when we are told that Tanizaki was close to Murasaki Shikibu? We must consider at least one attribute, the long sentence, that does not seem (to me, of course) so very essential.

One thing about Murasaki is that there does not seem to be anything inevitable about her long sentences. Long they are, but not inevitably so. Many of the longest of them contain a place or two or three at which she could have come to a stop and started a new sentence. They have about them a bit of the look of mannerism.

I am not sure I would go as far as the most extreme definition of "mannerism" in my favorite dictionary, a Scottish one (not an American one): "manner or style becoming wearisome by its sameness." Yet I think mannerism to be a trick or quirk of style which calls attention to itself, and which we would be happier without. I am not convinced that Murasaki was a superbly good stylist. This is all right. It is possible for a novelist not to write superbly well and yet to be considered a very good novelist. Russians tell me something which I cannot judge for myself—that Dostoevski did not write well. Certainly this is true of Dreiser. Henry James said of his own sentences that they were like a rubber ball which bounces from wall to floor and here and there and finally comes to a halt. There was little he could do but observe the process. I do not think this to be true of Murasaki. Very often she could have stopped once or several times in the course of a sentence before finally she did:

> 帝、かしこき御心に、倭相を仰せて思しよりにける筋なれば、今までこの君を親王にもなさせたまはざりけるを、相人はまことにかしこかりけり、と思して、無品親王の外戚の寄せなきにては漂はさじ、わが御世もいと定めなきを、ただ人にておほやけの御後見をするなむ、行く先も頼もしげなめることと思し定めて、いよいよ道々の才を習はさせたまふ。

The contents will reveal that this is from early in the *Genji*, when the hero was a small boy.[2] It is not to be seen, however, as the product of a beginning, tentative, hesitant writer. This first chapter is a rather difficult one, and there is strong evidence that it was written after chapters that follow it in the standard text.

Here, more or less, is my rendition:

> In the wisdom of his heart, the emperor had already analyzed the boy's physiognomy after the Japanese fashion and had formed tentative plans. He had thus far refrained from bestowing imperial rank on his son, and was delighted that the Korean view should so accord with his own. Lacking the support of maternal relatives, the boy would be most insecure as a prince without court rank, and the emperor could not be sure how long his own reign would last. As a commoner he could be of great service. The emperor therefore encouraged the boy in his studies, at which he was so proficient that it seemed a waste to reduce him to common rank.[3]

The reason for the qualification "more or less" is that the sentences do not coincide. Careful readers will observe that the translation runs past the original sentence. This establishes adequately enough that I have never been very careful about following the sentence pattern of an original. Perhaps this is careless and irresponsible, but to me the endeavor to follow the original pattern of full stops has always seemed useless.

It seemed especially so in the case of the *Genji*. Heian Japanese is a richly agglutinative language, and English is not agglutinative at all. Neither is any other European language with which I am familiar. I know very little Finnish or Magyar. It is not possible to imitate perfectly in English the rhythms of a document in modern Japanese, and it is far less so in the case of Heian Japanese.

Perusal of the three Tanizaki translations of the *Genji* establishes that Tanizaki worried most about verbs and adjectives, the highly agglutinative parts of speech, and the heart of its honorific propensities. Can it be said that he solved the problem perfectly? I am inclined to think that there is no perfection in such an endeavor. So let carelessness and irresponsibility, if such they be, prevail.

The sentence quoted tells us much about how Murasaki Shikibu made her sentences into long ones. She of course used the rich conjugations of her verbs and adjectives. It should be noted, however, that she twice uses the particle *wo*. Kenkyusha's definition is very brief and to the point. It gives seven monosyllabic English prepositions followed by examples.

It is not so with elaborate Japanese dictionaries of the language, ancient and modern. The *Daijirin*, for instance, offers upward of a dozen elaborate definitions covering upward of fifty lines. One might think that this would take care of the matter adequately. Perusal and thought, however, do not really take care of the two instances in the above sentence. If it seems frivolous of me to offer another definition,

2. *Genji monogatari* 1982, p. 117.
3. Seidensticker (trans.) 1978, p. 15.

very well, it seems frivolous: "Used by writers who do not, for somewhat mysterious and very private reasons, wish to end their sentences quite yet."

So the reasons for Murasaki's long sentences come to seem somewhat different from Henry James's. He had ponderous thoughts to put in order, and his sentences got longer and longer as he did it. Long though they are, they are tightly constructed. Murasaki's long sentences do not have quite the significance that his do. Thus Tanizaki's long sentences come to seem not so strong a bond with her. They may be important in themselves, but if her sentences are a bit dodgy, often longer than the content requires them to be, then the proclaimed affinity is dodgy, too. They seem to me on the whole better sentences than hers, and their length seems more in accord with the contents than hers. So how important are they in establishing close affinity?

I first read the *Genji* in the Waley translation during the Second World War. I did not have a try at reading it in the original until some years after the war. I was rather slow in deciding that I wanted to make a career in Japanese. Perhaps because of the slowness, my first impressions remain vivid. Much is wrong with the Waley translation, but it is triumphant in establishing that the work is a great one, and great in a way not to be seen, or at any rate very rare, in the literatures I had until then been familiar with.

I had never before read so lyrical a novel. I did not hesitate then, and I do not now, to use the word "novel." The novel is distinguished from other forms of narrative prose in that it succeeds or fails though characterization. So the novel is essentially a dramatic form. In the *Genji* fifty or so major characters are distinguished from one another with remarkable skill. But it also seemed an uncommonly lyrical piece of prose narrative.

It is thus in an obvious way and a not so obvious way. It contains a large amount of lyric poetry. I found this a bother to translate, and not hugely interesting to read. The poetry of the earlier court anthologies, which dominates it, does not, I must confess, seem to me compelling.

It was the other lyrical element that seemed to me then, and seems to me now, not far from unique. We are constantly aware of nature, of the passage of the seasons and the phases of the moon. Jane Austen will suddenly remind you of something you have quite possibly forgotten—that spring has come over whatever section of rural England she is speaking of. In the *Genji* the reader is not permitted to forget. The natural background is present on virtually every page.

For anything remotely resembling it in English literature, by which I mean literature in the English language, one must go to somewhat minor writers. At my first reading I was filled with wonder at the quality, and repeated readings—I could not give the count—have not persuaded me that I was wrong. I still do not know of a Western equivalent, save minor ones. Nominations will be welcome.

The prose of the Heian period formed one base (Chinese was the other) for later prose. This became increasingly divorced from the colloquial. So we lose sight of an extremely important fact, that the *Genji* is a very colloquial document, probably more so than the *kōgotai* (conversational writing style) of our day. This last is full

of conventions, perhaps most conspicuous among them the ubiquitous *de aru* and *no de aru* that keep the written language at a remove from the language we hear all about us.

When I was first interviewed by a Japanese newspaper, the interviewer asked whether I wished the results to be in *hanasu kotoba* or *kaku kotoba*.[4] Democracy, or perhaps "egalitarianism" would be better, was much in vogue in those days. We were not supposed to be aristocratic or exclusive. So I replied with the first of the two, which seemed to have in it less of these undesirable qualities. The interview, when it came out in *hanasu kotoba*, had a peculiar sound to it. So I was made aware of the discrepancy, and did not ask for *hanasu kotoba* thereafter. The discrepancy did not exist in at least the best narrative prose of Heian. Perhaps in this fact, and some closely allied facts, may be found the beginning of an explanation for the long Murasaki Shikibu sentence, a length that may sometimes seem, as in the example translated above, a bit gratuitous. The allied facts include the scarcity of paper and therefore of copies, the fact that the significant information in a sentence tends to come at the end of it, and the nature of the original audience.

We cannot be sure of the circumstances of publication, so to speak. It seems not unlikely—given that in the beginning and for rather a while afterward there was only one copy, and that the possible audience was very small, only a few hundred people in the capital and some of the provincial capitals—that it was read aloud.

The Heian sentence cannot have seemed as difficult to native speakers, so to speak, as it does to us. It is by its nature rather difficult, however. Most of the significant information is provided in the adjectives and verbs, so closely allied that they might be considered two versions of the same part of speech.

Matters are complicated by the fact that the crucial words come after everything else. Intense concentration is required for us to see this arrangement successfully through. It may not have been as intense for the original audience, which knew nothing else, but it was required all the same. An instant of inattention and everything was lost.

The scarcity of copies meant that there was a lector, whether the great novelist herself or someone else. We can assume that the audience was interested and tried to be attentive, but that it was not always successful. There would come a query from the audience. Murasaki, or someone, would oblige with a *wo* or an agglutination and add amplification. And so we would find ourselves with the long and loosely organized sentence that characterizes the work.

This is fanciful, of course, but the nature of the language and the nature of the initial audience suggest that something of the sort could have happened. And this also suggests that the length of the sentence does not matter so very much. Sentences can be broken up without doing serious damage to the meaning, and writing long sentences does not necessarily indicate close affinity with a forebear who also

4. *Hanasu kotoba* literally means "spoken language" and *kaku kotoba* "written language." The choice referred to here is between transcribing the interview exactly as recorded, in spoken Japanese *(hanasu kotoba)*, or editing it to conform to *kōgotai* (conversational writing style) conventions, which are used in most modern written Japanese.

wrote them.

Murasaki Shikibu is an obscure writer. It is easy to make too much of this tendency, since it is highly doubtful that she was as difficult for her initial audience as she is for us. Yet the language is obscure, and Murasaki does not go out of her way to explain her characters to us. She prefers to let them go their own way, and they do this obediently, for we are aware of their great individuality.

Murasaki Shikibu was also a writer of few words. This is a peculiar thing to say, it may well be remarked, of the author of a piece of fiction that runs to more than a thousand pages in translation. The point here is that she does not have a huge vocabulary, and she uses the same words over and over again in subtly different meanings. The most obvious such word is of course *aware*,[5] but it is not the only one. The reasons for the success of the characterization are not easy to define. There is surprisingly little dialogue, and there is not much by way of psychological analysis.

Aside from the long sentences, what in Tanizaki can be held to establish close affinity with Murasaki Shikibu? Not very much, really, would be my answer. I have wondered, whimsically, whether Tanizaki's long paragraphs, especially in *The Makioka Sisters*, might be held to speak of a bond with Murasaki Shikibu. I am sure that if she had them, they would be. The original *Genji* would seem to have been one long paragraph broken only by poems.

Mishima Yukio once said something which I had not thought of before and which much interested me: that Japanese writers pay attention to patterns of light and darkness across their pages. The relative airiness of Japanese *kana* makes for light, the density of Chinese characters for darkness. He especially admired Mori Ōgai's distribution of the two.

I do not know whether there is any truth in the Mishima view, but that does not keep it from being interesting. Certainly long, dark paragraphs can have an effect on the spirits. To turn over a leaf and see that the two pages opened contain but a single paragraph break, and even none at all, can have a dispiriting effect.

Tanizaki was not a strongly lyrical kind of writer. There are famous passages of natural description in his writing—the most famous ones, doubtless, the firefly hunt and visits to the Kyoto cherries, both in *The Makioka Sisters*. There are also glimpses and glimmerings, such as the smell of daphne in early spring, or the effect the Ashiya autumn has upon the scent of coffee.

Nature is not the constant presence in his writing that is in the *Genji*. Indeed, the Makioka family, living with the garden spread out before it through all the seasons, pays precious little attention to it. I wonder if this might have been one of the attributes of the "merchant's" *Genji* which Kawabata saw emerging from the Tanizaki hand.

The moon is of such extreme importance to Murasaki Shikibu that she arranges to have important characters die near its fullness, that their funerals may be conducted under it. Tanizaki seldom mentions it except to complain, usually about how the

5. This central aesthetic concept of the Heian period is defined by Helen Craig McCullough as "deep but controlled emotional sensitivity, especially to beauty and to the tyranny of time." McCullough 1999, p. 414.

bright lights of the modern world have mistreated it. We should probably assume that Tanizaki's complaints are genuine, from the heart, but, as in the larger matter of shadows, there is room for doubt.

The most important matter by far has to do with Tanizaki's ideas on literature itself, or on the art of expression. We cannot be sure how Murasaki Shikibu viewed her writing. Perhaps she was short-tempered with those persons in her audience who (we may imagine) asked for clarification. "Such fools," she may have said of these. "I have told them everything they need to know." Yet she must have been in some measure obscure in her day as she is in ours. Some of the obscurity must have been unintentional, but she must have liked much of it.

I am fond of saying, largely to shock and surprise, that Tanizaki is no fun to translate. It is the truth. To be interesting, translation must be difficult. Tanizaki is very easy. One can let one's mind wander off and he will take care of himself. Japanese are always saying how very Japanese he is. Certainly his material is Japanese, but the expression of it is rather English. I am by no means alone in this view, and do not claim it to be original. Even when his matter is rather complicated, the expression of it is pellucid. He can sometimes be a touch wordy and discursive, but even then, what he is saying is clear. The reader or translator is almost never in doubt about the meaning. This does not, as I have suggested, make for very interesting work.

When their material is stuffy, novelists must perforce write a bit stuffily, or resort to satire. Tanizaki can sometimes be a touch stuffy:

> 事態が既にかうなってから何を申上げる事もないし、未練がましいやうだけれども、小生として一言貴下に釋明させて戴かなければ立つ瀬がない。貴下は或は、小生等夫婦が妹の心中を十分確かめても見ずに此の縁談を進めたやうにお考へかも知れないが、事實は、あの妹は決して貴下を嫌いってゐなかったのみならず、寧ろその反對であったと信じる。それでは先日來の貴下に對するあの消極的な曖昧な態度、電話での應對などを如何に説明するかと仰せられるでもあらうが、あれは持ち前の異性に對する怯懦と羞恥心とがさせたことで、貴下を嫌ってゐた證據にはならない。三十を越した女がそんな馬鹿らしいことが、と、他人は誰しもさう思ふところだけれども、彼女の平生をよく知ってゐる肉身の者たちには不思議でも何でもなく、あゝ云ふ場合に彼女としてあゝ云ふ風になるのが常で、あれでも昔よりは幾分か人みしりをしなくなったのである.[6]

> He had no apologies to offer, he wrote, and he knew his letter might sound querulous, but there was one thing at least that he must be allowed to explain. Perhaps Hashidera thought that they, his wife and Teinosuke himself, had pushed the marriage talks without attempting to learn Yukiko's views. That was far from the case. Yukiko did not dislike Hashidera, and they had cause to believe that her feelings were the opposite. If Hashidera wanted an explanation for her strange manner of a

6. Tanizaki 1943–47, p. 696.

> few days before, or for her manner over the telephone, then her general shyness before men was explanation enough. There was no evidence of any dislike for him. Though it would seem ridiculous to outsiders that a woman past thirty should be so shy, her family, those who knew her well, saw nothing whatsoever to be surprised at. She had always behaved thus, and her fear of strangers had if anything begun to leave her.[7]

This is not Tanizaki at his best. It is somewhat pompous and somewhat empty. Yukiko, the third of the four sisters, finding a husband for whom has become the chief concern of the family, has just ruined another possibility by refusing to take a telephone call from a prospective husband. The passage above is the letter that Teinosuke, Yukiko's brother-in-law and the most important male character in the novel, writes to apologize for her. It tells us nothing we do not already know, and seems to serve little purpose except to assure Teinosuke (and Tanizaki, whose surrogate he is) that he has done something high-minded. The point is, however, that even when not very satisfying, Tanizaki is always lucidity itself. There is nothing in the letter that need give the reader the slightest pause.

In an article entitled "Tanizaki Matsuko as a Critic," the novelist Maruya Saiichi describes a feeling he has long had that the third Mrs. Tanizaki was a gifted critic and an influence on her husband's style.[8] The article is followed by two letters from Tanizaki to Mrs. Tanizaki that confirm Maruya's view. Both are from 1934. The second, dated July 11, contains the clearest statement:

> While I was writing *A Textbook in Style* (*Bunshō tokuhon*) I became aware of something you have always scolded me for, the fact that the style is bald and wanting in suggestiveness. My style is prolix, you have warned me, and makes things too clear.

In a word, he is too lucid. He explains too well, as is not the Japanese way. Mr. Maruya finds that the Tanizaki style changed during the years of the China Incident. I am not sure that I detect significant change, or that the contents of the fiction become more obscure. I have quoted from *The Makioka Sisters*, to argue that lucidity is of the essence. The point is that, though Mr. Maruya detects a change, he recognizes what seems to me essential. It is very different from Murasaki Shikibu. I can with confidence say that I understand everything in the big Tanizaki novel. The reader who says that of the big Murasaki one is lying.

I do not doubt that Tanizaki got his lucidity from the English. I do not wish to be understood as saying that it is a defect. My point is that he was a very lucid sort of writer, and Murasaki Shikibu was not. Translating Tanizaki does not feel like translating Murasaki.

And so translation of writing by whom does? Whom, I reply, if not Kawabata? Many a reader of Kawabata in translation, and especially of *Snow Country* (*Yukiguni*), has remarked upon the wraith-like quality of the characters. This I take to

7. Seidensticker (trans.) 1993, p. 418.
8. Maruya 1996, pp. 134–144.

mean not so much that the characterization is inadequate as that the characters seem so fragile against the natural background. They are very isolated characters in an isolated society. The heroine remarks that things have improved since, not so very long ago, the railway came through.

Paintings of the premodern village certainly do suggest it to be an unsociable place, especially in the winter, before skiing became a national craze. The story is set at the beginning of the craze. Given the nature of the characterization, it seems right that at the end we do not know whether the girl Yōko, the lesser of the two main female characters, is alive or dead. It seems worth pointing out that we cannot be sure whether or not the *Genji* is finished.

Some have dismissed the essay on weaving, near the end of the novel (to the extent that it has an end), as pointless. It is, however, as much about loneliness and fragility as about weaving. A very important thing, all through the novel, is that nature always seems ready to overwhelm.

Kawabata is, like Murasaki, a writer of few words. He is by no means as voluminous a writer as she. None of his novels is of more than medium length. Like her, he had favorite words which he put to all manner of uses. In her case, the big favorite is probably *aware*. In his it may well be *omou*.

More than one Japanese—and the Japanese, more than any other people I am familiar with, are interested in and critical of translation from their language—has pointed out the abundance of ways in which the verb *omou* is rendered in my Kawabata translations. Thirty verbs is a good round count of my renditions. These are only verbs. The Japanese verb is also rendered into other parts of speech.

The primary meaning, of course, is "to think." This is a complex expression in all languages, and it is perhaps more so in Japanese than in most. *Omou* conveys meanings, such as "to be sad," which the English does not. Yet thirty is a surprising count. I may confess that I was not aware of the variety when I was doing the translations, though I was vaguely aware of the complexity of the word and Kawabata's fondness for it. Like *aware*, it has sad overtones. The writings of both authors are replete with sadness. Tanizaki, for all his "satanism" (and he once told me that he disliked the expression), was a much sunnier writer.

Like Murasaki, Kawabata is frequently difficult to understand. The passage that has puzzled more readers than any other is that in *Snow Country* in which Shimamura, the chief male character, enrages his geisha friend, the chief female one, by saying that she is "a good girl" and then unconsciously shifting to "good woman." After much thought I translated it literally and thereby caused puzzlement. Asked to explain, I have usually replied that the intelligent reader, in which category the inquirer without question falls, can figure it out for himself or herself. And he or she does. The point is that Kawabata is frequently difficult to understand, as Tanizaki is not.

Like Murasaki, Kawabata prefers to let the conjugated parts of speech do the work. He is sparing in his use of nominatives. The opening sentences of *Snow Country* are probably the most famous in modern Japanese literature. They have been the most frequently noticed by Japanese who are suspicious of all translations from their

language. Some of the criticism seems rather silly. I am criticized, for instance, for giving the first sentence a subject when there is none in the original. The answer is easy: concessions must be made to the target language, and English demands subjects as Japanese does not.

I think the demand that the first sentence do without a subject is unreasonable, but Kawabata's refusal to name his subjects has led me to blunder. Toward the end of *The Izu Dancer* (*Izu no odoriko*), someone waves a cap. I identified the waver incorrectly. Now that I know the correct identity, it seems a stupid blunder; but Kawabata could so easily have prevented it.

I have heard rumors that there is a Kawabata story containing no subjects at all. I have been unable to find it, and suspect that it does not exist. In some early Kawabata stories, however, one can go the better part of the way and find no subject indicators. With her more richly agglutinative language Murasaki can go greater distances, but the two are alike in preferring to let the verbs and adjectives do the work.

Translating Kawabata feels more like translating Murasaki than does translating Tanizaki. Doubtless this will seem an outrageously subjective and intuitive statement to rationalists who find all the answers in literary theory. So be it. I am convinced that the most important literary judgments are intuitive. Is this not true of the most fundamental one—whether a work and an author are worth talking about?

Approaching the end of my say, I wish to change the subject and offer a few words of thanks to and for Adriana Boscaro. Energetic, intelligent, imaginative, she has been an enriching presence. She is genuinely cosmopolitan. Scholars on the European continent and scholars in the English-speaking countries tend not to pay much attention to the other faction. This has not been true of Adriana. She has always seemed interested in what we are doing. I have been very grateful, and I am glad that her retirement does not mean her disappearance from the scene.

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The "Tanizaki Genji": Inception, Process, and Afterthoughts

Ibuki Kazuko and G. G. Rowley

With translations by Thomas Harper of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's
"On Translating *The Tale of Genji* into Modern Japanese" (1938)
and "Some Malicious Remarks" (1965)

Among the many translations of *The Tale of Genji* into modern Japanese, the best known and most widely read remain "the Tanizaki *Genji*" and its immediate predecessor, "the Yosano *Genji*."[1] Both are the work of writers at the forefront of their arts, the poet Yosano Akiko (1878–1942) and the novelist Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (1886–1965); both writers made multiple translations; and the extent to which both translations are identified with their writers is apparent in their informal titles. But there the resemblance ends.

The two versions of "the Yosano *Genji*" are entirely the work of a solitary artist who tells us very little of how she worked or the principles that guided her in her work. By contrast, the production of "the Tanizaki *Genji*," in all three versions, was a major project involving several eminent scholars of Japanese literature, the staff and graduate students of the departments of Japanese Language and Literature at both Kyoto and Tokyo Universities, the editorial department of one of Japan's largest publishing companies, and Tanizaki's longtime personal amanuensis, Ibuki Kazuko (1929–).[2] The aim of this essay is to reconstruct this complex process, in as much detail as possible, from inception to completion, and then to suggest how the very complexity of the process calls into question certain long-cherished views of Tanizaki's relationship with *Genji* and its importance to his work. Perhaps the best place to begin is with Tanizaki's own description of how his first translation came into being.[3]

On Translating *The Tale of Genji* into Modern Japanese

By Tanizaki Jun'ichirō

Translated by Thomas Harper

> [1.] I think it must have been young Shimanaka, president of Chūōkōronsha,[4] who had the idea of getting me to translate *The Tale of*

1. For bibliographical details, see Tanizaki 1939–41, Tanizaki 1951–54, Tanizaki 1964–65; and Yosano 1912–13, Yosano 1938–39.
2. Ibuki recalls her twelve years working for Tanizaki in Ibuki 2001a. For her essays on the "Tanizaki *Genji*," see Ibuki 2001b, Ibuki 2003, Ibuki 2005, and Ibuki 2009, pp. 213-310.
3. The essay translated below by Thomas Harper is not the same as Tanizaki's preface to his first translation of *Genji*. For the preface, see Tanizaki 1939.
4. Shimanaka Yūsaku 嶋中雄作 (1887–1949), president of Chūōkōronsha from 1928 until his death.

Genji. I'm not at all the sort of person to accept at the drop of a hat a plan dreamt up and set before me by a magazine publisher. But this proposal interested me enormously right from the start. Whether a disinterested observer would consider me qualified for the task I cannot say; but even supposing I should decide on my own to translate a work of classical literature, there could be no other choice but *Genji*. I am fully aware, of course, that transforming the original text into modern Japanese is no easy task. But because it has long been considered such a difficult work, commentaries, digests, and other such aids abound. From as early as the Kamakura period, and on into the Muromachi and Tokugawa eras, a truly vast variety of academic studies and reference works has been produced; so many, one might say, that the meaning of virtually every word, every phrase, has been explicated. And from the Meiji period through to the present day, the trend has been toward ever greater attention to fine points of detail. We now have several different editions equipped with modern language glosses; and just since I have undertaken this project, our younger scholars of National Learning have published a wealth of new work.[5] With the possible exception of the *Man'yōshū*, no other work possesses such an abundance of exegetical commentary as does *Genji*. With the aid of the work of these scholars, both ancient and modern, one should experience little difficulty in ascertaining the meaning of the text. This is not to say that there are no doubtful or unclear passages whatever; but these are passages that no scholar in the past has been able to decipher, so I'm not worried that anyone will take me to task for coming up with an interpretation of my own. This being the case, one might say that *Genji* is, in a certain sense, the easiest of all the classics to translate—far easier, at least, than Saikaku or Chikamatsu; just as, in English literature, Shakespeare is easier to translate than Hardy or Meredith.[6] Assuming, then, that there is no difficulty in ascertaining the meaning of the text, how is one to render it in the most literary manner possible? That is the task to which one must devote the whole of one's energy; and the sort of work that I myself find immensely satisfying. If *Genji* were not such an enormous work, I might well have had the idea and finished the job long before Chūōkōron suggested it. Indeed, the one and only reason for my initial hesitation when they put the proposal to me is that I am such an exceptionally slow writer, four or five pages a day being my maximum rate of progress. How many years would it take me to finish translating such an enormous work? Once begun, I would have no choice but to abandon everything else and give myself up entirely to the task. Yet it was not as if I had no commitments to other magazine publishers; would I be able to spend that many years in such a manner? That was my one and only cause for concern.

[2.] It was three years ago, in September 1935, that I first began work in earnest. Since then I have published nothing except *Neko to Shōzō to*

5. In this essay, Tanizaki does not use the word *kokubungakusha*, "scholars of National Literature," preferring instead the older *kokugakusha*, "scholars of National Learning."
6. The English novelists Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) and George Meredith (1828–1909).

futari no onna in the magazine *Kaizō*, and I have written no new fiction or essays. The way I work is this. First I send the manuscript of my draft translation to Chūōkōronsha. There they make two sets of galleys, one of which I have sent to my collaborator Professor Yamada Yoshio,[7] and one to me. Then, as Yamada's pages, corrected in red ink, come in, I have them sent to me as well. These, which sometimes seem dyed bright red with the professor's corrections, I refer to from time to time; but revision I leave until later and forge ahead without worrying about it. At first I left the headnotes for someone else to do; but then I realized I could never be content not doing them myself, so since then I have appended them one by one as I go along. Proceeding in this manner until a draft translation is complete, I shall then review the entire text from the very beginning with reference to Yamada's advice, and with the intention of incorporating 80 to 90 percent of his suggestions. At present, I have reached a point midway through the Uji chapters in my work on the draft translation. This has taken two years and four months spread over three calendar years, at which rate the draft, albeit a rough one, should be complete by about April. If it is not to be published all at once but at the rate of two- or three-hundred pages per month over the span of a year or so, then I should be able to make my corrections while it is being produced. Thus once I have completed at least a draft, I shall finally feel secure.

[3.] For me to have studied on my own the multitude of commentaries that have come down to us from old would have been all but impossible. It was essential, therefore, to find a collaborator who is an authority on this subject. It was I who insisted that they importune some major figure, but it was on the initiative of Chūōkōronsha that we approached Professor Yamada. Thus it was that in the spring of 1935, accompanied by Mr. Amemiya[8] of Chūōkōron, I called at the professor's home in Sendai and first met him. I asked his opinion on several matters, and I can say with total sincerity how extraordinarily grateful I am to have found such a fine collaborator. I have no desire merely to borrow the professor's good name; I really do want him to point out, unsparingly, all of my errors. Which indeed the professor does: wielding his vermilion brush with the most painstaking precision, he has made many valuable suggestions and corrections, not only concerning academic matters but points of style and expression as well. The professor likewise has told me in person how very important he considers this task and has been unstinting in his encouragement. That I should be the beneficiary of someone who

7. Yamada Yoshio 山田孝雄 (1875–1958) was professor of Japanese language and literature at Tōhoku University from 1925 until 1933. In 1940, when the Jingū Kōgakukan 神宮皇學館 in Ise, a government institute devoted to the promotion of National Shinto, was granted university status, Yamada was appointed president. The university was closed by GHQ order during the Allied Occupation of Japan and Yamada was purged. Known more for his studies of Japanese grammar than of literature, Yamada's most notable work on *Genji* is entitled *Genji monogatari no ongaku* (Music in *The Tale of Genji*, 1934, reprinted 1969).

8. Amemiya Yōzō 雨宮庸蔵 (1903–99), head of the publishing department (*shuppan buchō*) at Chūōkōronsha between 1932 and 1937.

would scrutinize my work so obligingly and with such extraordinary attentiveness was something I never expected. I feel quite as if an ally a million strong has come to my aid. Over these past three years, it has been a source of no small sustenance to me that the professor has participated in this project with such unwavering interest and zeal, start to finish.

[4.] Professor Yamada suggested that I use the *Kogetsushō* as my text.[9] And since my own knowledge of the *Genji* was acquired through the *Kogetsushō*, I decided to base my translation upon it entirely. Of the old commentaries, I found *Mingō nisso* the most helpful.[10] But for a modern person translating into the modern language, the most helpful of all are the vernacular translations published since the Meiji period—such as Yosano Akiko's; Miyata Waichirō's, as revised by Professor Yoshizawa; the seven-volume edition in *Zen'yaku ōchō bungaku sōsho*; Kubota Utsuho's translation; the *Genji monogatari sōshaku* published by Rakurō Shoin; and Shimazu Hisamoto's *Genji monogatari kōwa*.[11] Those that are already complete, I have, of course; and those currently in process of publication, I place on my shelves as soon as they appear. Waley's work is so riddled with errors that it is not of much help; but its considerable virtues as a literary translation are a stimulus to effort, so I peruse it from time to time as a source of inspiration. As I said before, my principal aim is to produce a literary translation, a translation that can itself be read as literature without reference to the original text—a translation from which one derives the same fascination that an ancient reader would derive from reading the original. It is not to be a free translation, unfettered by the original, but, in keeping with my aim, one that adheres to the original as closely as possible. At the very least, I intend there should be no phrase in the original text for which there is no corresponding passage in the translation. It may be impossible to achieve perfection in this, but I shall try my best to do so. In short, I mean to work in such a manner that my translation may also be of use as a reference in reading the original text.

[5.] There shall, I am sure, be other opportunities to discuss the style (*bun* 文) of *The Tale of Genji*, so I'll not discuss the matter in any detail here. Were I to venture just one observation, however, I should say that the charm of the original lies, more than anything else, in its "eroticism" (*iroke* 色気). The text of *Genji* is truly, to an uncanny degree, erotic. Of all the classics, it is first of all *Genji* and, much later, Saikaku's works that stand out for their eroticism. Is not this one of the reasons *Genji* so utterly outshines the many other fictions of the Heian period? Thus in rendering

9. The *Kogetsushō* is a complete text of *Genji* with selected commentary, compiled by Kitamura Kigin 北村季吟 (1624–1705). First published in 1673, the *Kogetsushō* became the most widely circulated edition of *Genji* throughout the Edo period and, as Tanizaki's remarks confirm, continued to be used well into the twentieth century.

10. The *Mingō nisso* is a commentary on *Genji* by Nakanoin Michikatsu 中院通勝 (1556–1610), completed in 1598.

11. See Yosano 1912–13; Miyata 1938; Yoshizawa et al. 1924–27; Kubota and Yosano 1936–38; Shimazu 1937–39; and Shimazu 1930–42, left incomplete upon the author's death in April 1949.

it in the modern language, I try as hard as I can not to lose that eroticism. To what extent I have succeeded only an expert can judge; but to that end it has been essential to emulate the vagueness of the original—that indirect manner of speaking, fraught with implications, yet so understated that it can be taken in several different senses. I've been unable to write with the daring economy of the original text; but if we posit that the original expresses ten units of meaning using five units of expression, then I have expressed them with seven. So a passage in the original that cannot be understood without reading it ten times over, in my translation should be understandable after two or three readings. This much of the "difficulty" and "impenetrability," I should like it to be understood, has been preserved. And one further point: I have endeavored to keep my vocabulary small. This is something that strikes everyone when they read the *Genji*; but for such a long work and such a sweeping narrative, the variety of words used in it is not great. The adjectives used in describing scenery, describing persons, describing feelings are for the most part unvarying, with *omoshiroshi*, *okashi*, *namamekashi*, and the like repeated over and over again. (Though in the process, extremely fine shades of nuance do emerge.) This may well be due to the importance attached to what I have previously described as words fraught with implication; but I think, too, that the number of words in general use at that time must have been small. These characteristics of the original text I have of course done my best to preserve.

[6.] If modern persons reading works of modern literature were to delve into the meaning of every word and every phrase the way one does in deciphering a classical text, I am sure they would encounter a great many passages that are quite incomprehensible. But since the text is written in the modern language, they feel they have understood and read on. This sort of reading presents no obstacles to literary appreciation. The relentless pursuit of every word and every phrase is academically indispensible, but it may actually be a hindrance to literary response. By reading on past what is incomprehensible, making no concerted attempt to understand it completely on the first go, we come in the course of repeated readings to a natural understanding of it. I've meant the text of my translation to be more readily understandable than the works of Izumi Kyōka,[12] and hope that my readers will not be deterred by the idea that it is a classic but will read it in the same frame of mind as they would an ordinary novel.[13]

Inception

Tanizaki tells us that he got the idea of translating *Genji* when Shimanaka Yūsaku, president of the publishing company Chūōkōronsha, proposed the project.

12. Izumi Kyōka 泉鏡花 (1873–1939), the novelist and playwright.
13. "Genji monogatari no gendaigoyaku ni tsuite," first published in the February 1938 issue of *Chūō kōron*. Translated from the text in *TJZ* 21, pp. 323–328. For ease of reference, section numbers have been added by the translator.

Correspondence between the two enables us to date Shimanaka's proposal to late 1933, when he first learned of Arthur Waley's translation of *The Tale of Genji* into English.[14] Shimanaka immediately ordered a copy of Waley's *Genji* sent to Tanizaki,[15] which, "for its considerable virtues as a literary translation" Tanizaki found "a source of inspiration." But it was not until September 1935, Tanizaki recalls, that he began work in earnest. He hesitated, he confesses, because he was "such an exceptionally slow writer" and *Genji* was "such an enormous work." If not, he states with characteristic immodesty, "I might well have had the idea and finished the job long before Chūōkōron suggested it."

We know from another source, however, that Tanizaki also had a more personal motive for agreeing to produce a modern-language version of *Genji*. In January 1935, the year he began work on the translation, Tanizaki married Morita Matsuko 森田松子 (1903–91); it was his third marriage and her second. Three years earlier, in December 1932, Tanizaki and his second wife, Furukawa Tomiko 古川丁未子, had separated just as Tanizaki's romantic relationship with Matsuko, then still married to Nezu Seitarō 根津清太郎, was developing. In the spring of 1934, Matsuko and Nezu were divorced, Matsuko returned to her maiden name of Morita, and she and Tanizaki began living together. In October of the same year, Tanizaki and Tomiko concluded their own divorce proceedings. Tanizaki and Matsuko were finally married in January 1935. When Tanizaki began work on his first translation of *Genji* later that year, in September, he was forty-nine years old.

In later years, Matsuko liked to think that she and not Shimanaka was the driving force behind the translation:

> I told him that I wished I could read *The Tale of Genji*—as a polite accomplishment, like learning flower arranging, or tea ceremony, or piano. But it's too difficult to read it in the original, and the translations are so academic; I haven't found a one that's easy enough to understand. And the famous "Yosano *Genji*" is only a digest version. If only there were a complete modern translation that my younger sisters could enjoy reading when they get married, a beautiful edition just like the ones young ladies in the past used to have in their trousseaux!—it was my telling him this that got him started.[16]

The "famous Yosano *Genji* . . . digest version" to which Matsuko refers is Yosano Akiko's widely circulated and well-regarded first modern translation of *Genji*, *Shin'yaku Genji monogatari* (1912–13).[17] As Akiko herself acknowledges in her afterword to the translation, she had indeed made cuts along the way:

14. See Tanizaki's letters to Shimanaka dated 16 January, 24 January, 4 February, 12 February, 16 February, and 27 February 1934, in Minakami and Chiba 2008, pp. 105–109, 345–346, 351–352.

15. On Shimanaka Yūsaku's decision to commission a translation, see Chiba 2007, pp. 20–22, and Minakami and Chiba 2008, pp. 346–351.

16. Personal communication from Tanizaki Matsuko to Ibuki Kazuko, cited in Ibuki 2003, p. 180. For Matsuko's own account of her relationship with *Genji*, see Tanizaki 1998, pp. 337–340.

17. The *Shin'yaku* was favorably reviewed in contemporary newspapers and literary journals; reprinted many times in a variety of formats, it remained in print until Akiko's second translation began to

> I eliminated those details which being far removed from modern life we can neither identify nor sympathize with, and thus only resent for their needless nicety. My principal aim has been to bring forth as directly as possible the spirit of the original through the instrument of the modern language. I have endeavored to be both scrupulous and bold. I did not always adhere to the expressions of the original author; I did not always translate literally. Having made the spirit of the original my own, I then ventured a free translation.[18]

Drastically reducing the length of the tale and translating freely, Akiko in effect rewrote *Genji* in the language of the modern novel, producing a translation that bore her own distinctive personality.[19] Her translation could be read from cover to cover, though not quite in a single go; and readers found it irresistibly appealing. Tanizaki Matsuko recalls her experience of reading Akiko's translation in the mid-Taisho period: "By day and by night, waking and in dreams, I was completely possessed by *Genji* / Genji."[20]

By the time Matsuko told her new husband of her desire for a *Genji* suitable for her and her sisters to read, more than twenty years had passed since the publication of Akiko's *Shin'yaku*. The number of girls' higher schools, both public and private, and their enrollments had increased dramatically since the latter years of the Meiji period, and reading was one of the principal ways graduates of girls' higher schools sought to achieve "self-cultivation" (*shūyō* 修養) as they prepared for married life.[21] Matsuko's desire to provide her sisters with a complete *Genji* as a wedding gift reflects, at least in part, the period's concern with self-cultivation. Moreover, knowledge of *Genji* "as a polite accomplishment," to borrow Matsuko's phrase, had long been de rigueur for Japanese women, and especially, though not exclusively, upper-class women. From the famous "Hatsune accoutrements" of the early Edo period on, items decorated with motifs drawn from *The Tale of Genji* had been fashioned for the trousseaux of daimyo daughters.[22] Even in the Taisho and early Showa periods, *Genji* scent motifs[23] continued to be used in kimono and obi patterns.

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appear in October 1938. After a sixty-year hiatus, the *Shin'yaku* has been reprinted twice in recent years: see Yosano 2001, Yosano 2002.

18. Yosano 1913, pp. 2–3. For a complete English translation, see Rowley 2000, pp. 186–188. The extent of Akiko's cuts is tabulated in Seki 2003, pp. 306–307.

19. For more on the personal resonances in Akiko's first translation, see Rowley 2000, pp. 112–131.

20. Tanizaki 1998, p. 337.

21. Sato 2003, pp. 134–135.

22. "Hatsune accoutrements" are the *Hatsune no chōdo* 初音の調度, a set of forty-some gold-lacquered items (censer, go board, inkstone box, mirror-stand, picture-stand, shelves, etc.) decorated with motifs from the "Hatsune" and "Kochō" chapters of *Genji*, made for the trousseau of Chiyo (1637–98), daughter of third Tokugawa shogun Iemitsu (1604–51; r. 1623–51), when in 1639 she was bethrothed to Mitsutomo (1625–1700), heir to the Owari Tokugawa house. See photographs 95–97 and 102–104 in Yoshioka 1983, pp. 78–80, 85–86.

23. The so-called *Genji* scent (*Genji-kō* 源氏香) motifs depict combinations of fragrances, one each for 52 of the tale's 54 chapters. (There are no motifs for the first or the last chapters.) Each motif consists of five vertical lines: one line represents one scent; lines linked by horizontal bars represent the same scent.

The commemorative poster commissioned by Chūōkōronsha to advertise the launch of Tanizaki's translation certainly suggests that the publishing company envisaged a largely female readership of just the sort described by Matsuko. Designed by the artist Kaburaki Kiyokata 鏑木清方 (1878–1972), it depicts a beautiful young woman, clad in kimono but seated on a Western-style sofa, intently reading a volume of the Tanizaki *Genji*.[24] Chūōkōron's beautiful, elegantly produced new edition of *The Tale of Genji*—designed, it would seem, specifically for these young women—demonstrates how unerring Shimanaka's acumen as publisher and marketer was in realizing the translator's own desire to fulfill Matsuko's request.

Process: First Translation

Tanizaki began work on his modern-language translation of *Genji* a little more than two years after Akiko, in the autumn of 1932, embarked upon her second version. In "On Translating *The Tale of Genji* into Modern Japanese," Tanizaki records that in the spring of 1935, he went to visit Yamada Yoshio, one of the country's most esteemed scholars of Japanese language and literature, to ask him to be his *kōetsusha* 校閲者, or supervisor.[25] In November 1935, Tanizaki and family moved to Tantakabayashi 反高林 in the village of Sumiyoshi 住吉村, Muko-gun 武庫郡, Hyōgo Prefecture; their life there would later be depicted in his long novel *Sasameyuki* (1948). The figure of Teinosuke, the husband in *Sasameyuki* who is endlessly disappearing off into his study, is surely a portrait of Tanizaki himself, hard at work on his translation of *Genji*.

By September 1938, only six months later than projected in his article "On Translating *The Tale of Genji* into Modern Japanese," Tanizaki completed the first draft of his translation. The feat was reported in the *Tokyo Asahi shinbun*, not on the literary pages but as breaking news, along with the latest air raid in China and a forced love suicide in Tokyo.[26] The placement of the article is itself a measure of the acclaim his accomplishment generated. Not long thereafter, on 23 January 1939, the first volume of the translation was published, and "the Tanizaki *Genji*" was everywhere.

The completion of the manuscript also resulted in an invitation to address the Kyoto University Department of Japanese Literature. Tanizaki declined to give a lecture but said he would be happy to participate in a group discussion of his translation. Tamagami Takuya (1915–96), then a second-year graduate student, was told it would be his task, as a scholar of *Genji*, to ask a question of Tanizaki. Tamagami asked: "Having completed your translation, how great a work do you consider *The Tale of Genji* to be?" At first Tanizaki mistook Tamagami, thinking he referred to his

24. "Tanizaki-bon *Genji monogatari* o yomu shōjo," (Young woman reading the Tanizaki *Genji*). Color on silk (126.4 x 36 cm), c. 1939. See the reproduction in Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Memorial Museum 2003, p. 7.
25. Tanizaki 1938, p. 325.
26. *Tokyo Asahi shinbun* 11 September 1938, p. 11.

own *Genji*, but then realized his error. "Oh, the original you mean? I don't think it's such a great masterpiece."[27]

On 1 September 1964, the day Tanizaki's third version of *Genji* went on sale, an anonymous Chūōkōronsha employee, writing in the in-house magazine *Chūō shahō*, recalled the flurry of activity twenty-five years earlier, as Tanizaki's first translation was launched:

> All at once we had 50,000 new orders to fill and there was a huge panic about materials and printing. . . . In September 1941, when the last of the twenty-six volumes was published, Tanizaki Sensei came up to Tokyo from Ashiya and thanked us employees for our help; the company history records that he invited us all to the Kabuki theater.[28]

Was it simply a coincidence that only one month before the first volume of Yosano Akiko's second translation was published in October 1938, the completion of Tanizaki's draft translation was given such great play in the newspapers? And that when his first volume appeared in January 1939, Akiko's translation was still coming out? There is no evidence that the publication of Akiko's second translation provoked the response in society that the appearance of Tanizaki's first translation did. Akiko's publisher Kanao Tanejirō 金尾種次郎 (1879–1947) could not afford to advertise extensively, and the *Shin-shin'yaku* was assumed by some to be merely a reprint of her earlier translation.[29]

There are of course several reasons why the publication of Tanizaki's translation attracted such widespread acclaim. It was the first time that a novelist (*sakka* 作家) had translated *The Tale of Genji* into the modern language; and Tanizaki was no ordinary writer: he was a major novelist, the author of a succession of sensational novels. There was a sense of anticipation that he of all people would definitely be able to satisfy the desire for an elegant, flowing translation, and his translation lived up to expectations. In the fourth section of "On Translating *The Tale of Genji* into Modern Japanese," Tanizaki records that he aimed to produce "a literary translation . . . a translation from which one derives the same fascination that an ancient reader would derive from reading the original."[30] And apparently he felt he had achieved this aim. In the preface to his second version of the translation, *Jun'ichirō shin'yaku Genji monogatari,* he writes:

> Even now, as I reread my translation, I feel hardly any sense of dissatisfaction. . . . Since it is, after all, a literary translation, meant to convey the sensuality, the fragrance, the elegance, the implications of the original, I am confident there could be no style superior to the one I have chosen.[31]

27. "Sore hodo no kessaku to omoimasen ga ne," Tamagami 1986a, p. 117.
28. Ibuki 2003, pp. 184–185.
29. Yuasa 1974, p. 6.
30. Tanizaki 1938, p. 326.
31. Tanizaki 1951, pp. 253–254.

Another notable feature of Tanizaki's first translation was the extravagance of the production. The overall "look" of the set was the responsibility of prominent Nihonga artist Nagano Sōfū 長野草風 (1885–1949), who also provided the background illustrations, printed in pale orange and different for each chapter. The individual volumes were bound in Japanese-style covers made of deep green paper patterned in traditional motifs, with calligraphy on the covers, title-pages, and chapter title-pages by the poet Onoe Saishū 尾上柴舟 (1876–1957). Large print, averaging twelve lines to a page, made the text exceptionally easy to read. No expense was spared. At about 160 pages in length, the volumes were light to hold, and each installment contained two volumes in their own box. Simply as an objet d'art, Tanizaki's translation was epoch-making. Nor should we overlook the fact that, despite this extravagance, the list price of each installment was held down to 1 yen. As a marketing tactic, this was unbeatable. At the same time, a special collector's edition, packaged in paulownia-wood boxes and limited to a thousand sets, was produced—precisely the "beautiful edition just like the ones young ladies in the past used to have in their trousseaux" that Matsuko had wished for.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the appearance of Akiko's second translation was somewhat overwhelmed by Chūōkōronsha's lavish production. Then, in May 1940, less than a year after the final volume of her *Shin-shin'yaku* appeared, Akiko herself disappeared from the scene when she had a stroke that left her an invalid for the last two years of her life. She died in May 1942, at the age of sixty-three.

It is well known that Tanizaki's first translation of *Genji* was heavily expurgated.[32] Sections relating Genji's illicit liaison with Fujitsubo, the accession of their child Reizei to the throne, and, in the "Fuji no Uraba" chapter, the elevation of Genji, a commoner, to the rank of honorary retired emperor (Jun-Daijō Tennō) were excised in their entirety, without even the usual ellipsis points (*fuseji* 伏せ字) to indicate the deletions. By contrast, Akiko's *Shin-shin'yaku*, the publication of which in 1938–39 overlapped with the publication of Tanizaki's translation in 1939–41, contained only a single niggling cut—in the first line of the text, the two characters *tennō* (emperor) were deleted and replaced with ellipsis points: "*Dono ... ...* [sic] *sama no miyo de atta ka*" (In which . . . reign was it).[33] How can this disparity be explained?

Nishino Atsushi has shown in a painstaking and subtle examination of the Tanizaki-Yamada relationship that the translation was not censored by the military, nor did Tanizaki merely acquiesce to conditions laid down by his collaborator. Nishino demonstrates that in fact Tanizaki had agreed with his publishers at the outset to omit any and all passages that might cause the translation to be accused of sedition.[34] In his preface to the translation, Tanizaki admitted that he had made cuts to the tale:

32. See, for example, Rubin 1984, pp. 258–260; and Kobayashi 1997. The extent and exact location of the cuts is detailed in Kobayashi 1997, note 36, pp. 225–226.

33. Yosano 1938–39, vol. 1, p. 3.

34. Nishino 2007. See also the discussion in Minakami and Chiba 2008, pp. 367–369.

> To tell the truth, the plot of the original work contains elements that, transplanted unaltered into the contemporary world, might be considered improper. I have thus excised precisely those passages in their entirety. (In actual fact, these constitute but minor elements of the plot, and, as Professor Yamada has pointed out, do not form the basis of the story; indeed, eradicating them completely has almost no effect on the development of the tale as a whole. In terms of volume, they amount to less than 5 percent of the three-thousand-and-several-hundred-page manuscript).[35]

Any reader of *Genji* will recognize immediately that this argument is absurd and completely unsustainable. "What baldfaced lies!" Tamagami Takuya thought to himself when he read this. "I'd bought the book, but I no longer had any desire to read it."[36] At the same time, Okazaki Yoshie—a professor at the same Tōhoku University where Yamada Yoshio had worked—courageously pointed out in a review that Tanizaki had "cut out the spinal cord of this classic of world literature," and had done so without even indicating where cuts had been made; that no matter how neatly the "surgery" had been tidied up, this was "a great atrocity" that raised the question—delicately phrased, of course—"to what extent [Tanizaki] had exercised sound judgment (*yōi* 用意) as an artist."[37]

In the preface to his second translation, published after the Second World War, Tanizaki explained away these cuts in the following manner:

> This was time when the bigotry of militaristic minds was rampant in every corner of life . . . , and so I did it in order to avoid the censure of those ignorant soldiers.[38]

Tanizaki steadfastly refrained from blaming Yamada for forcing the cuts, reserving his contempt for the military authorities. As Tanizaki states in section three of "On Translating *The Tale of Genji* into Modern Japanese," it was he himself who had insisted that Chūōkōronsha "importune some major figure" to "point out, unsparingly, all of my errors."[39] Yamada agreed to help, and his assistance is prominently acknowledged on the title page of each volume, where his name appears before the translator's. Both publisher and translator realized that the deployment of an ultranationalist such as Yamada would serve to shield them from official condemnation and ensure that the translation was not banned; he might also help to deflect disapproval from the wartime reading public.[40]

35. Tanizaki 1939, p. 167.
36. Tamagami 1986a, p. 120.
37. Okazaki Yoshie, "Tanizaki *Genji* ron (4)," *Tokyo Asahi shinbun*, 26 May 1939, p. 7. A revised and expanded version of Okazaki's four-part review is found in Okazaki 1960, pp. 451–471.
38. Tanizaki 1951, p. 253.
39. Tanizaki 1938, p. 325.
40. See the letters from Tanizaki to Yamada quoted in Ibuki 2005 and the detailed account in Nishino 2007. Shimanaka Hōji 嶋中鵬二 (1923–97), president of Chūōkōronsha from 1949 until his death, told Rowley that during the war the Shimanaka family "received postcards daily" demanding that the company cease publication of the Tanizaki *Genji* (conversation 7 April 1995).

Despite these ulterior motives, Tanizaki appears to have been sincerely grateful for Yamada's advice: in "On Translating *The Tale of Genji* into Modern Japanese," as well as in the prefaces to his first and his second translations, Tanizaki frankly admits his indebtedness to Yamada's "many valuable suggestions and corrections" and expresses his gratitude for the professor's unstinting encouragement and enthusiastic participation in the translation project.[41] In 1959, the year after Yamada's death, Tanizaki wrote a short essay entitled "Back Then (Mourning the Death of Yamada Yoshio)." In it, he claims that the professor had only agreed to assist him on the condition that the "improper" sections be cut. Even here, however, Tanizaki is careful to avoid criticizing his collaborator, remarking:

> It was an era when the military was all-powerful, and therefore, *even if the professor had not counseled me to do so*, I had already resigned myself to making the cuts.[42]

Process: Second Translation

After the end of the war, in October 1949, Tanizaki published his translation of the omitted portions of the "Sakaki" chapter, under the title "Fujitsubo," in a special issue of *Chūō kōron*.[43] His revised translation of the entire novel, rewritten in the *desu* style, rather than the *de aru* style he had used for his first translation, was published in twelve volumes between May 1951 and December 1954. As before, his collaborator was Yamada Yoshio. And as before, Yamada's assistance is acknowledged on the title page of each volume, where his name appears before the translator's.

This time, however, Tanizaki had the help of several other scholars as well. In his preface to the *Shin'yaku*, he notes that he consulted Shinmura Izuru 新村出 (1876–1967), who had by then retired from Kyoto University and was fully occupied editing the *Kōjien* dictionary. Shinmura had first suggested Tamagami Takuya, but Tanizaki had demurred. He remembered Tamagami from their meeting ten years earlier, and felt that he would now be too senior to do some of the more prosaic tasks that would be asked of him. And so Shinmura introduced him to Omodaka Hisataka 澤瀉久孝 (1890–1968), who in turn assigned Enoki Katsuaki (1920–98) to assist Tanizaki with the new translation. Beginning in September 1948, Enoki called at Tanizaki's residence two or three times a week. At first Tanizaki assigned Enoki a series of research tasks in connection with the historical fiction he was at work on; then, in May 1949, asked him to identify all passages that he had excised from his first translation.[44]

Suddenly, in June, Tanizaki asked Enoki to accompany him on a trip to Ise, where Yamada Yoshio was living in humble circumstances. Since the end of the

41. Tanizaki 1938, p. 326, Tanizaki 1939, p. 166, Tanizaki 1951, p. 256.
42. Tanizaki 1959b, p. 357; emphasis added. For reasons that are still unclear, this piece remained unpublished until after Tanizaki's death. See Nishino 2007, pp. 133–134.
43. Tanizaki 1949.
44. Tamagami 1986a, p. 119; Enoki 1968, pp. 6–7.

war, Yamada had been barred from holding any teaching post or government position; but Tanizaki was no fair-weather friend. After they arrived, Tanizaki changed into formal Japanese garb, *haori* and *hakama*, presented himself at Yamada’s home, and asked if he would be so kind as to “point out any errors I may have made in my previous translation.” “There are no errors,” Yamada snapped back. “I supervised that project.” Yet despite his arrogance, he did agree to assist Tanizaki again.[45] “The New Tanizaki *Genji*” was officially underway.

In May 1950, however, Enoki was forced on account of illness to resign as Tanizaki’s assistant. Tamagami then arranged for Miyaji Yutaka 宮地裕 (1924–) to fill the gap, and as a result became involved in the project himself in a supervisory role. This change of personnel also marked a fresh start of sorts, for at about this time Tanizaki decided that the revisions should be far more thoroughgoing than he had originally envisioned. Tamagami recalls that he divided the work between himself, Miyaji, graduate students, and other staff of the Department of Japanese Language and Literature. It was decided that emendations would be written directly onto the pages of the old translation. (Generous margins and widely spaced text made this task easier.) As each volume of the translation was completed, it was returned to Tamagami for final checking. Corrections and recommendations were then incorporated in yet another copy of the old translation and forwarded to Tanizaki.[46]

The revised translation, then, was not written out anew by the translator on fresh squared manuscript paper. Rather, Tanizaki’s task was to collate the suggestions made by others. This he did by emending his own copy of the old translation in vermilion ink. These volumes he then sent to Chūōkōronsha, where they were retyped in four copies: one for Yamada, one for Tanizaki, one for Tamagami, and one to be kept in the company. Again, both Yamada and the Kyoto group would note any further suggestions and return the typescript to the publishers. By this time, one might imagine that there would have been little to change; but as Tamagami points out, Yamada was always severely critical of any suggestions made by the Kyoto scholars.[47] A fresh copy was made, therefore, incorporating all suggestions on a single copy, which Tanizaki would use in preparing his final version for the printer.[48] At this stage in the process, upon completing each volume of the new translation, Tanizaki would reward his Kyoto collaborators by inviting them to his home for a lavish dinner, at which all manner of exotic dishes were served to the scholars by Tanizaki’s wife Matsuko and her younger sister Shigeko 重子.[49]

For Takizawa Hirō 滝沢博夫, the Chūōkōronsha employee whose task it was to expedite the process, this was the most demanding stage in the production of each volume. In the early stages, the various versions could be sent back and forth by mail; but as the printer’s deadline approached, time grew too short to trust to the mails. Takizawa would then board the 8:45 a.m. express for Sendai, where Yamada

45. Tamagami 1986a, p. 120; Enoki 1968, p. 8.
46. Tamagami 1986b, p. 27.
47. Tamagami 1986a, p. 120.
48. Tanizaki 1951, pp. 255–256; Tamagami 1986b, p. 27.
49. Tamagami 1986b, p. 2.

Yoshio had retired, and at the end of the seven-hour trip hurry to the professor's home to deliver the typescript by hand. He would spend the night in Sendai, return to Yamada's home at midday the following day to pick up the corrected text, and board the 1:36 p.m. train for Ueno. From there he would transit to Tokyo Station and board the night train for Kyoto, where he would deliver his parcel to Tanizaki. He repeated this trip with every succeeding volume through "Yume no ukihashi."[50]

It is not difficult to imagine what an immense paper trail was left in the wake of this project. Fortunately, as Tamagami points out, copies of the old translation were piled high in Kyoto bookshops.[51] Complete sets were selling for only 10 yen; there were plenty of spare volumes to pass around to all concerned. Much of this glut of paper, from all stages of the process, still survives—in the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Memorial Museum, the archives of Chūōkōronsha, and private collections.

The contrast with Yosano Akiko's way of working could not be more marked. When in 1932 she at last had time to begin work on the new translation of *Genji* she had long felt it her "responsibility" to prepare,[52] she worked alone. The death of her husband, Yosano Hiroshi 与謝野寛 (1873–1935), was a huge setback, but in the autumn of 1937 she went back to work on the translation. One of her disciples, Yuasa Mitsuo (1903–89), describes visiting her after she resumed work:

> After two or three words of greeting, Sensei quickly took up the *Nihon koten zenshū* edition of *Genji* and her pen raced across the paper. Saying nothing, we sat there stiffly by the desk gazing in admiration at the awesome figure intent on the translation.[53]

Akiko took in the original with a glance to the left, and with barely a pause, recast what she had read as modern Japanese with her right hand. No pauses to ponder what the correct word might be, or how the words might best be ordered. No dictionaries or commentaries, apparently, and certainly no collaborator, no team of Kyoto University scholars and students.

Publication of the *Shin'yaku* fell behind schedule when Tanizaki suffered a stroke in April 1952 while on a trip to Tokyo. He lost the use of his right hand, and his eyesight, too, was impaired. Thenceforward he needed help entering revisions in the text, and after false starts with four or five potential assistants, he decided on Ibuki Kazuko, who had been employed in the office of the Department of Japanese Language and Literature at Kyoto University since 1950, and had herself worked on revisions to the Tanizaki *Genji* there. When Ibuki first called upon Tanizaki on 17 May 1953 at his home in the Shimokamo district of Kyoto, he was sixty-seven and she was twenty-four. She was the only child of a well-known but deceased Kyoto dealer in fine kimono fabrics, whose widow and daughter the war had left in

50. Tamagami 1986b, p. 24.
51. Tamagami 1986a, p. 124.
52. Yosano 1939, p. 2. For a complete translation of Akiko's preface to her second translation of *Genji*, see Rowley 2000, pp. 188–192.
53. Yuasa 1974, p. 5.

straitened circumstances. Tanizaki needed an assistant who was sufficiently well-educated to read and take dictation following the rules of classical *kana* orthography (*kyū kanazukai* 旧仮名遣い). Ibuki managed this without difficulty. Moreover, having been born and brought up in the old capital, she was a speaker of unadulterated Kyoto women’s Japanese. Ibuki began work on 25 May, when Tanizaki was revising the “Kashiwagi” chapter. Her salary of 6,000 yen per month was paid by Chūōkōronsha.

Like Tanizaki’s first translation, the *Shin’yaku* too was a lavish production. The bindings and paper were designed by the Nihonga artist Maeda Seison 前田青邨 (1885–1977), who also did the title-page calligraphy for each volume. The commemorative poster advertising the launch of the new translation suggests that the *Shin’yaku*, like its predecessor, was marketed as a woman’s book. Designed by Itō Shinsui 伊東深水 (1898–1972), who was a student of Kaburaki Kiyokata, designer of the 1939 poster, his picture likewise shows a beautiful kimono-clad young woman reading the Tanizaki *Genji*. This time, however, she is seated at a table rather than on a sofa, and her 1950s permanent wave is held back from her face with a barrette.[54]

According to *Chūō shahō*, more than 60,000 orders for complete sets had been received before publication began;[55] after the first volume appeared, orders quickly doubled to more than 120,000 sets, and a “*Genji* boom” ensued. The translation was broadcast to the entire nation by Nippon Cultural Broadcasting Company, read by actress Yamamoto Yasue 山本安英 (1902–93) to the accompaniment of koto music by Miyagi Michio 宮城道雄 (1894–1956). It was also adapted for the Kabuki stage, and a film version was produced by Daiei.[56]

Over the next ten years, the *Shin’yaku* was regularly reprinted in a variety of different formats. To commemorate Chūōkōronsha’s seventieth anniversary, fourteen prominent artists were each commissioned to produce four illustrations to the *Shin’yaku*. In October 1955, these were published with the translation in a limited edition of one thousand five-volume sets, each costing 15,000 yen. In this way, Matsuko’s “beautiful edition just like the ones young ladies in the past used to have in their trousseaux” lived on into the postwar period. In January 1956, the illustrations were published separately as *Tanizaki Genji gafu* 画譜 (Tanizaki *Genji* picture album), priced at 5,000 yen per set. A six-volume edition of the translation was published in 1956; and an eight-volume edition, in the same format and selling for the same price as individual volumes of his 1958–59 *Complete Works*, followed in 1959. The word “*Shin’yaku*” was removed from the title of this edition; as Tanizaki noted in his preface, there was no longer any need to specify that this was a “new”

54. “*Jun’ichirō Shin’yaku Genji monogatari*.” Color on silk (51.6 x 58 cm), 1951. See the reproduction in Tanizaki Jun’ichirō Memorial Museum 2003, p. 7.

55. Ibuki 2003, p. 186.

56. “Genji monogatari,” directed by Yoshimura Kōzaburō 吉村公三郎, screenplay by Shindō Kanetō 新藤兼人, with Tanizaki Jun’ichirō acting as technical consultant (*kanshū* 監修). The film starred Hasegawa Kazuo 長谷川一夫 as Hikaru Genji, Kogure Michiyo 木暮実千代 as Fujitsubo, and Otowa Nobuko 乙羽信子 as Murasaki no Ue, and in 1952 won first prize for cinematographer Sugiyama Kōhei 杉山公平 at the fifth Cannes Film Festival. See Boscaro 2000, pp. 68–69, and http://www.festival-cannes.fr/archives/, accessed 18 November 2004.

version.[57] At this stage Tanizaki had no intention of producing another translation of *Genji*.

Process: Third Translation

Nonetheless, in what was to be the last year of Tanizaki's life, it was decided to put out yet another "Tanizaki *Genji*." Whether the idea was Tanizaki's or originated with his publisher is unclear, even to Ibuki, who was by that time living in Tokyo and employed full time in the editorial department of Chūōkōronsha. In his preface to the *Shin-shin'yaku*, Tanizaki states that the desire to attract younger readers was behind his decision to permit the publication of a third version of the translation:

> A selection of my writings, redone in modern *kana* orthography, has already appeared as one volume of the *Nihon no bungaku* series, and a second volume will shortly appear. So long as the Tanizaki *Genji* remained available only in its old state, however, thus alienating the younger generation of readers, I, as the translator, felt left out. For myself, in my heart of hearts, I would like as many people as possible to read the Tanizaki *Genji*. If not, what a waste of all that work.[58]

This new version used the simplified *kanji* and pronunciation-based *kana* orthography that had become standard in the postwar period. It also simplified the use of respect language (*keigo* 敬語). In accordance with Tanizaki's wishes, no major revisions were made to the translation itself. Tokyo University professor of Heian-period literature Akiyama Ken and his graduate students were paid by Chūōkōronsha to go over the translation and suggest simplifications to both *kanji* and *keigo*. These were collated by staff in the editorial offices of the publishing company, then sent to Tanizaki for his approval.[59]

Like earlier versions of the Tanizaki *Genji*, this third translation has appeared in a variety of different editions over the years. In the autumn of 1970, when the eight-volume "deluxe popular edition" (*gōka fukyū-ban* 豪華普及版) went on sale, "*Shin-shin'yaku*" was finally dropped from the title. Renamed simply *Jun'ichirō yaku Genji monogatari*, the translation now forms part of the standard edition of Tanizaki's *Complete Works*; it also remains in print in a five-volume paperback edition and a single-volume large-format paperback. Sales of all three versions of the Tanizaki *Genji* generated enormous income for both publishing company and translator, and the successful marketing of the translations to a mass readership has recently become the subject of intense interest.[60]

57. Tanizaki 1959a, p. 349.
58. Tanizaki 1964, pp. 401–402.
59. Ibuki 2001a, vol. 2, pp. 267–268; Ibuki 2003, p. 187.
60. On this subject, see Iwasaki 2007 and Tateishi 2008.

Afterthoughts

This account of the process by which Tanizaki's three translations of *Genji* were produced inevitably prompts afterthoughts and reappraisals. We have noted the striking contrasts that emerge between "the Tanizaki *Genji*" and "the Yosano *Genji*," so often spoken of as if they were comparable in most ways other than their translators' individual styles, whereas in fact the former was the product of a well-funded corporate project involving large numbers of experts and assistants over long periods of time, and the latter a solitary labor of love involving just the writer herself. Here we need only add that the qualitative differences such a contrast yields go far deeper than style—differences that Enchi Fumiko (1905–86), novelist and fellow translator of *Genji*, sums up eloquently when she describes the Tanizaki *Genji* as an "extremely well-mannered translation," and then adds that "Mrs. Yosano's is much more the blood kin" of Murasaki's original, "sometimes straying far from it, sometimes doing it violence, but penetrating far more deeply into the interior of *Genji*."[61]

Nor do such afterthoughts emerge only in a comparative context. What, for example, are we now to make of Tanizaki's great "reverence" (*keichō* 敬重) for *Genji* "as a major classic of the highest order" that inspired in him such "zeal that he completed three modern-language translations with never a complaint of the rigors involved"[62]—translations the very existence of which underwrite "the fundamental importance of *The Tale of Genji* to the man and his art"?[63] And what of the view that "for Tanizaki the novelist, his relationship with *The Tale of Genji* far transcends the level of a mere source, but possesses more fundamental significance; for only through *The Tale of Genji* was Tanizaki able to give concrete shape to his own inner self in a world of words"?[64]

Our purpose in pointing to these views is not to pillory those who propound them. It is only natural to suppose that a novelist who undertakes to translate a work of the magnitude of *Genji*, written in the language of a millennium past, should have a major emotional investment in that work, and that those emotions should be a major force in the shaping of his own fictions. But, alas, the facts of Tanizaki's involvement with the *Genji* do not offer much support for these assumptions. When we examine the record, we find not a translator whose inspiration was a literary work so dear that (like Enchi Fumiko) he kept a copy perpetually at his bedside, but one who undertook the project at the behest of the president of a publishing company. Nor do we find a translator who (like Yosano Akiko) had a "stubborn confidence" in his or her command of the language of *Genji*,[65] but one who insisted upon the help of a specialist as a condition of his acceptance of the proposal, and who, as the project progressed, left more and more of the work to specialists while he himself lapsed

61. Enchi 1974, p. 253.
62. Hata 1976, p. 46.
63. Hata 1976, p. 37.
64. Ikeda 2001, p. 48.
65. Yosano 1913, p. 2.

into the role of a supervising editor. As for the importance of *Genji* to Tanizaki's own work, he expressed displeasure at critics who thought they could detect the influence of *Genji* in his long novel *Sasameyuki*.[66] And his "reverence" for *Genji*, as we have seen, was not so overwhelming that it gave him second thoughts about slashing the "spinal cord" of the plot.

In pointing out these discrepancies between received opinion and actual evidence, it must be emphasized that none of them is in any way the result of false pretensions on Tanizaki's part. His sense of "inadequacy" (*chikara ga tarinai*)[67] to a task of this magnitude, as well as the help given him by others more learned, are openly and graciously acknowledged. His assessment of *Genji* as "not all that great," and his disappointment that critics should think his *Sasameyuki* heavily under the influence of *Genji*, come unbidden from his own lips. "People seem to think I'm just mad about *Genji*," Tanizaki grumbles in the preface to his third translation, "but in fact I don't spend all that much time thinking about *Genji*. There have been long periods in my life when I've quite forgotten about *Genji*."[68] It seems fitting, therefore, that our suggestions for reappraisal should be followed by Tanizaki's own afterthoughts on translating *The Tale of Genji*. These were dictated to a secretary in the summer of 1965 and published in *Fujin kōron* in September, a little over a month after Tanizaki's death on 30 July 1965.[69] "Nikumareguchi" (Some Malicious Remarks), he calls them. These last words of his long career leave us with a clearly stated, authentic standard by which to judge both the assertions of some of his more wishful critics and the tentative conclusions drawn in this essay.

Some Malicious Remarks
By Tanizaki Jun'ichirō

Translated by Thomas Harper

> Howard Hibbett, who translated my novel *The Key*, teaches Japanese literature at Harvard University. He and his wife arrived on a visit to Japan in the autumn of last year and will remain, I am told, through the present year. The English of *The Key* is considered a model of fine translation. I had heard of Hibbett some time ago, but this was my first meeting with him. Our conversation chanced to turn to *The Tale of Genji*; whereupon Hibbett told me that American students, for the most part, are fonder of the Lady Murasaki than of the Shining Genji, who is not much liked.[70] This may be because his is a country that reveres women, and thus many

66. Ibuki 2003, p. 194.
67. Tamagami 1988, p. 7.
68. Tanizaki 1964, p. 401.
69. Ibuki 2001a, vol. 2, p. 307.
70. In a discussion (*taidan*) with Tanizaki, Hibbett notes that these opinions emerged from a questionnaire he asked his American students to complete. In response, Tanizaki agrees, and remarks that he intends to write an essay setting forth his criticisms of Hikaru Genji in the near future. "Nikumareguchi" would appear to be that essay. See Tanizaki and Hibbett 1964, pp. 4–5.

people automatically take the side of a woman; but what of we Japanese readers of *Genji*? In the present day at least, even if one distinguishes between male and female readers, I think one would find their attitudes much same as those of American readers.

I first read *Genji* in my fourth or fifth year of middle school. I don't think Mrs. Yosano's modern language translation had appeared at that time; but I read it [*Genji*] nonetheless, understanding very little, to be sure, with the help of the annotations in the *Kogetsushō*. This first time, needless to say, I hadn't the perseverance to read on to the end. I tried several times to read it through, and every time gave up somewhere along the way. As I recall, it was when I was at the First Higher School that somehow or other I finally managed to finish it. From my very first reading, however, I've been struck by that passage toward the end of "Hahakigi" where Genji sneaks into Utsusemi's bedroom. The ability to depict so risqué a scene so erotically and yet so tastefully seemed to me such a tremendous talent. But in that scene, where Genji is trying to seduce Utsusemi, we find the following speech:

> This is so terribly sudden that you may well take it for a thoughtless whim; but I want you to know that you have been in my thoughts continuously for years. The fact that at long last I have seized this opportunity, I beg you to understand, shows how far from shallow the bond between us is.
>
> (This and all subsequent quotations from my *Shin-shin'yaku*)
> ["Hahakigi" 1: 175][71]

This woman, Utsusemi, is the wife of a provincial official who is far inferior in rank to Genji. Her husband is off in the country on official business, and she has come home on her own to the house in Kyoto. Whereupon Genji happens to arrive, asking to be put up for the night on account of a directional taboo. Such is the situation of these events. Genji could not previously have known the woman Utsusemi. He might possibly have heard her name, but the fact that she had left her husband in the country and come alone to Kyoto, and the fact that she was sleeping in this house, he could only have learnt after he arrived there. He himself reckons "there is nothing exceptional about her; but, pleasingly done-out woman that she is, she must surely count as a member of that 'middle rank'" ["Hahakigi" 1: 181]. From this it would seem she was no great beauty; yet she is depicted, not surprisingly perhaps, as a strangely

71. Since, as Tanizaki notes, he quotes not from the original text but his own translation of *Genji*, I here translate Tanizaki's translation, as provided by him in "Nikumareguchi," rather than the corresponding text in the original. This is done in the hope that it will better capture the interpretation of *Genji* on which Tanizaki bases the opinions he expresses in the essay. For the convenience of those who wish to consult the original text, volume and page numbers of the Shōgakukan edition of *Genji* are given following each quotation (Abe, Akiyama, and Imai 1970–76).

alluring woman. Genji, at that point, is sixteen or seventeen years old. No matter how exalted his station, it is nonetheless an outrage for him to force his way into the bedroom of a married woman and take her for his own. So what are we to make of it when he says, "This is terribly sudden . . . but I want you to know that you have been in my thoughts continuously for years, which is why I've seized this opportunity. Please don't, by any means, think the bond between us shallow." His words are mere clichés used to seduce women; but coming from a youth of noble breeding, who presumably is no jaded cynic, they hardly make a favorable impression. It may be that young men of that era matured sooner than they do nowadays; but those glib lies, flowing from his mouth with never an instant's hesitation, somehow leave one feeling that this young man is more worldly-wise than becomes his years. Nor is Utsusemi the only one. Even to Nokiba no Ogi, whom he mistakes for Utsusemi and ends up in a strange relationship with, he sends Kogimi bearing a note saying, "Do you know that I yearn for you so much I could die?" He attaches his "Had I never tied that knot, ever so briefly, about the reeds beneath the eaves" poem to a tall reed,[72] telling the boy to "deliver it with caution." But even if the boy should blunder, he tells himself, and the woman's husband Shōshō should discover the note and realize that it was I who sent it, well, surely he'll forgive me. Even if the husband does find out, my station being what it is, nothing much should come of it. He just dismisses the matter in a manner the author describes as "unspeakably vain." She is absolutely right ["Yūgao" 1: 264–65].

Amorous escapades of this sort are something that anyone might get up to in his younger years, and are almost inevitable in the case of a young nobleman like Genji, so if it amounted to nothing more than that, we ought not, perhaps, take him to task too severely. But in Genji's case, at this point in his life, there is another very dear person to whom his affections ought to have been devoted. In this same chapter, "Hahakigi," there is a passage in which Genji overhears the women in the next room gossiping about him, and "he, whose thoughts were occupied solely by her for whom he so longed, was shocked that on such an occasion as this he himself might chance to hear someone spreading rumors of her" ["Hahakigi" 1: 171]. When the relationship between Fujitsubo and Genji begins is unclear, but this mention of a person "he so longed for" must refer to Fujitsubo. How it is that while "his thoughts are occupied solely" by this person, he is dallying with Utsusemi, Nokiba no Ogi, and Yūgao is a bit difficult to fathom. But even letting that pass, it is not easy to forgive him when he grabs hold of a married woman he encounters by mere chance and tells her, "You have been in my thoughts continuously for years," or glibly proclaims, "I yearn for you so much I could die." Historical differences notwithstanding, how can someone, while in love with a woman of such substance as Fujitsubo, take it into his head to say,

72. *honoka ni mo nokiba no ogi o musubazu wa / tsuyu no kagoto o nani ni kakemashi:* "Had I never tied that knot, ever so briefly, about the reeds beneath the eaves, / how should I now dare voice even a dewdrop of complaint?"

with total nonchalance, to a woman who has caught his fancy on nothing more than a passing whim, that he has been thinking of her for years, or that he yearns for her so much he could die? Even assuming that he says such things only in jest, it is still a terrible insult to Fujitsubo. The author of *The Tale of Genji* apparently is an unqualified admirer of the Shining Genji, and means to portray him as paragon of manhood; but for my own part, I just can’t stomach the man’s appalling smoothness.

Genji, by nature, seems not to have been well matched with his principal wife, Aoi no Ue. As he himself admits, quite frankly, “To my great discomfort, she is so decorous she somehow puts me to shame” [“Hahakigi” 1: 167]. In Aoi no Ue’s entourage, however, there are some “extraordinarily beautiful young” gentlewomen, such as Chūnagon no Kimi and Nakatsukasa, with whom Genji banters quite casually [“Hahakigi” 1: 171]. Nor do they only banter. He has them massage his legs and his hips, and occasionally they go a bit further, which apparently delights the young ladies.

At some point, his relationship with the Rokujō Consort seems to have developed into a bond no less profound than that with Aoi no Ue. Yet in “Yūgao” there is a passage that reads:

> Her gentlewoman Chūjō raised one of the shutters and pulled the curtain stand aside so that her ladyship could see him off. She [the Rokujō Consort] raised her head and looked out at the garden. The sight of him lingering there, as if loath to pass by the beauty of all the flowers and plants so radiantly in bloom, simply was not to be matched. Then, as he proceeded on toward the gallery, Chūjō accompanied him. She wore an aster-colored robe, well suited to the season, and the movement of her hips, about which she had neatly tied her sheer silk train, was gracefully enticing. Genji glanced back, drew her aside, and sat her down for a moment by the base of the rail outside the corner room. The great care with which she had done herself out, the drape of her hair—he was awed by the sight:
>
> *saku hana ni utsuru chō na wa tsutsumedomo*
> *orade sugiuki kesa no asagao*
>
> Though loath to be known as one who flits to whatever flower is in bloom,
> what a shame to pass by without plucking this morning face.
>
> “So what shall we do?” he said, taking her hand in his. She was an experienced woman, and replied immediately, without missing a beat,

asagiri no harema mo matanu keshiki nite
hana ni kokoro o tomenu to zo miru

From the sight of you not waiting even for morning mists to clear,
it would appear your thoughts linger not upon your flower.

—purposely speaking with reference to her mistress.
["Yūgao" 1: 221–222]

Thus this gentlewoman Chūjō is treated just like the gentlewomen in the service of Aoi no Ue. Genji says, "What a shame to pass by without plucking this morning face," draws her aside, and sits her down by the railing; and in the moment of hesitation that follows she realizes what is happening and says, "It would appear your thoughts linger not upon your flower," adroitly taking "flower" as a reference to the Consort, and makes her escape. He carries on like this in full view of the Consort. Be it his lover or be it some woman he encounters merely by chance, such is Genji's ingrained nature that he will banter with any woman he happens upon. If the delighted object of these attentions is someone's gentlewoman, then a gentlewoman; if the Consort, then the Consort.

I think the thesis propounded by the venerable Motoori[73] is highly perspicacious—that *The Tale of Genji* was not written with the aim of "commending virtue and condemning vice"; that it is a book written principally to depict the varieties of human emotion (*mono no aware*); and thus that it is wrong to deal with it on the basis of distinctions between right and wrong, virtue and vice, such as those made by Confucian scholars; and that one must not judge the good and evil of the characters in the novel in a Confucianist's frame of mind. But these men, such as I have just described, who spew forth this glib nonsense, are numerous even in the present day, and no matter by what measure one judges them, one can never admire them. To carry on a secret affair with the love of one's own father, who happens also to be the sovereign ruler of the land, may be something one can sympathize with when viewed from the perspective of "the varieties of human emotion." We may excuse that much, but to be striking up affairs with other lovers at the same time, and to be lavishing such honeyed lies upon these women, seems to me simply unforgivable. Being a feminist, I feel very strongly about this; so if the tables were turned in these relationships, it might not worry me so much. But in reading *Genji*, I always find this aspect of it distasteful.

And then there is the woman Oborozukiyo, the Palace Attendant. This woman is the beloved of Genji's elder half-brother, who is also the heir to their father's throne; yet with her, too, Genji carries on an illicit affair. The scene in which their affair is discovered by her father the Minister of the Right, the author describes in the following manner:

73. Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), in his commentary *Genji monogatari Tama no ogushi* (1796).

> [The Minister of the Right] suddenly burst in and lifting the blind said, “How were you last night? The weather was so dreadful, I was worried about you, but somehow didn’t manage to come by and see you. Chūjō and Miya no Suke would have been with you, surely?” He rambled on aimlessly, at a great rate; and the Commandant [Genji], even in this compromising situation, found himself comparing the man with the Minister of the Left, which he found indescribably amusing. Really, he thought, he might at least have come all the way in before he spoke.
>
> [“Sakaki” 2: 136–137]

Even here, Genji’s great admirer Murasaki Shikibu takes the side of Genji the philanderer and describes the father, the Minister of the Right, as thoughtless, and says he should at least have come all the way in before he spoke—malicious remarks (*nikumareguchi*) she might better have left unsaid. And this incident precipitates Genji’s banishment to Suma.

Strangely enough, after he is banished to Suma, Genji composes the following poems:

kumo chikaku tobikau tazu mo sora o miyo
ware wa harubi no kumori naki mi zo

Look down from the sky, ye cranes, who fly close
by that realm in the clouds,
for I am as free of taint as a cloudless day in spring.
[“Suma” 2: 207]

And:

yao yorozu kami mo aware to omouran
okaseru tsumi no sore to nakereba

The gods in their myriads of millions must take pity
upon me,
for naught have I done that could count as committing a crime.
[“Suma” 2: 209]

“I am as free of taint as the sunshine on a day in spring,” he says; “I have done nothing that could be called a crime; and thus the myriad gods surely must feel sorry for me.” Can he really, in his heart of hearts, believe this? Or might he just be feigning innocence for the benefit of the Akashi Novice and the Akashi Lady? If the former, he has lost all sense of shame; and if the latter, one feels like telling him that even hypocrisy can be carried too far. If he were to look back and examine his own past life, he could hardly utter the words, “I have committed no crime.” Nor,

for that matter, is Genji the only one. Even the Kiritsubo emperor, who is no longer of this world but who has, we presume, returned to Heaven, accuses his second son Genji of no sin; instead, he appears in a dream to his eldest son the Suzaku emperor and berates him for behaving high-handedly toward his second son ["Akashi" 2: 241].

As regards Genji's personal life, once one begins this sort of carping and probing, there is no limit to it. But in the end it does irritate me a bit that the author Murasaki Shikibu goes to such extremes to defend Genji that even the deities that appear in the tale seem timorous of Genji and take his side.

Well, in that case, you may well ask, don't you like *The Tale of Genji*? And if you don't like it, why did you translate it into the modern language? I cannot bring myself to like the man Genji who appears in the tale; and I cannot but harbor a certain antagonism toward Murasaki Shikibu for consistently taking the side of Genji. But viewed as a whole, one must, really, acknowledge the magnificence of the tale. Over the years there have been all manner of tales, but none of them even approaches this one. I am in complete agreement with the venerable Motoori's encomium that "Every time I read this tale, it seems new to me; every time I read it, I am struck with wonder."[74]

Mori Ōgai has said that *Genji* is an example of bad writing; but the writing in *Genji*, it seems to me, is of the sort least likely to appeal to someone of Ōgai's character.[75] Ōgai's writing, in which each and every word is clear and distinct, and meshes in a precise pattern with no waste or excess, is the very antithesis of the writing in *Genji*.[76]

74. Tanizaki here translates a passage from Motoori Norinaga's commentary *Genji monogatari Tama no ogushi*. See Motoori 1969, p. 234.

75. In fact it was not Ōgai, but the conservative poet Matsunami Sukeyuki 松波資之 (1830–1906), as quoted by Ōgai, who described *The Tale of Genji* as *akubun*, "bad writing." See Ōgai's preface to Yosano Akiko's *Shin'yaku Genji monogatari* (Mori 1912, p. 5). As Ōgai goes on to explain, however, "he [Matsunami] was an old gentleman who often spoke with considerable irony, and so his words should not be taken at face value as an attack on the style of *The Tale of Genji*" (Mori 1912, pp. 5–6).

76. "Nikumareguchi," first published in the September 1965 issue of *Fujin kōron*. Translated from the text in *TJZ*, 21, pp. 513–520.

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