SEIJO ENGLISH MONOGRAPHS

NO. 33

TRADITION AND MODERNITY

IN THE FICTION OF ENCHI FUMIKO

BY
FRANCES CAUSER
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I owe a debt of thanks to everyone who has taught me about Japanese literature, and also to my family, for making it possible for me to write this paper. In addition, I am particularly grateful to Keizô Kaneko (金子桂三) for allowing me to reproduce his magnificent photographs. I also wish to thank the following for their kind permission to use photographs: Keizô Kaneko, Umewaka-Ke (梅若六郎家), and Mainichi Shinbunsha for Figure 1; Keizô Kaneko, Kita Roppeita (喜多六平太) and Mainichi Shinbunsha for Figure 2; Ota Kinen Bijutsukan (太田記念美術館) for Figure 3; Keizô Kaneko, Kanze-Ke (観世家) and Kodansha for Figure 4.

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Tradition and Modernity in the Fiction of Enchi Fumiko

Introduction

A wide-ranging and usually controversial rethinking of women's roles and status took place throughout the twentieth century, sharpened by the advocates of feminism who publicised their views from the late 1960s onwards. The definition of feminism is problematic; for the purposes of this paper it will be restricted to a willingness to recognise the full humanity of women, and refusal to consider women as possessing characteristics making them inferior to men, or less worthy of consideration and respect. Progress towards equal rights has varied from country to country, and from East to West. Women activists in Japan and England, for instance, were roughly contemporaneous, but the women associated with *Seitôsha* (Bluestocking Society, 1911-1916) and British suffragettes emerged from different women's movements and aimed at different goals. Nevertheless in most countries the social oppression of women has become increasingly unacceptable, and some women and some men have been inspired to work against it. During this continuing struggle female writers have commented upon the conditions detrimental to women or pressed for social advances in favour of women. In doing so, these writers have themselves become influential factors for further change. Thus feminist activists and writers can be one and the same, or mutually inspirational.

The increased prominence of women in public affairs has also been matched by a general refocusing of literary attention on women's work. This includes recent Western interest in modern

Japanese women writers.[1] The increase of interest in women's literature and accompanying increase in status of some women writers is to be welcomed. However, the trend is not wholly beneficial: there is no such category as 'men's literature', and the ludicrousness of such a tag indicates how women's literature continues as a minority literature, by which I mean a literature whose adherents fail to gain full recognition. In 1949 Simone de Beauvoir wrote,

> man represents both the positive and the neutral ... whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria ...[2]

This situation is under attack, but has not yet been transcended. Enchi Fumiko (1905-1986) was chosen as the subject of this paper because she was one of the most talented Japanese women writers of the twentieth century, and because her works explore the dilemma described by de Beauvoir, illuminating it in a way that is crucially relevant at this historical stage in the change of gender (power) relations at the crossover to the third millenium. By pinpointing her as a female writer it is not my intention to belittle her literary achievements; on the contrary, I believe she deserves greater recognition both within and outside Japan.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have described the enormous difficulty nineteenth and twentieth century Western female authors have had in confronting the patriarchal conviction that "the male quality is the creative gift."[3] In addition to external objections to the propriety of women writing at all and the lack of role models,

Western women themselves face an anxiety about their own authorship and the difficulty of finding a female identity that has not been defined by men. It is of course a truism that Japanese women writers have not been as handicapped by the latter three of these constraints, because Heian women writers are acknowledged to have created a golden age of Japanese literature. From the Heian era until the present the prestige and influence of Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji* (c.1010) has been unparalleled in Japan, and her eminence as a female author has been unmatched in other national literatures. Interestingly, in the twentieth century three female and two male writers felt it necessary to render *The Tale of Genji* into modern Japanese: Yosano Akiko (publication in 1913), Kubota Utsuho (partial translation, 1936), Tanizaki Junichirô (three versions, the latest published in 1965), Enchi herself (who spent six years on her translation and finished in 1973) and Setouchi Jakuchô (whose translation appeared 1996-1998).

In *A Room of One's Own*, a feminist polemic that is both a plea for and a rallying cry to women, Virginia Woolf wrote "For we think back through our mothers if we are women." [4] Throughout her career Enchi publicised the literary credit due to women. She began a lecture entitled 'Ochô josei bungaku to gendai bungaku' ('Heian Women's Literature and Contemporary Literature', 1965) by emphasising the debt owed by the accomplished female writers of the Heian court to their literary predecessors, the *kataribe*, or professional storytellers, many of whom, she states, were women.[5] Fortuitously denied written expression in the prestigious but clumsy Chinese intended for men, Heian women were free to express themselves in the vernacular's kana. Japan's uniqueness in having

women as the predominant shapers of its literary language is well enough known, but Enchi highlights the narrative faculty derived from their "literary mothers" as an important if less well known factor in Heian women's success.

Moreover, the oral tradition is personally important for Enchi. In her childhood her grandmother awakened her passion for literature.[6] Also, in her autobiography Enchi relates how her original idea for the novel *The Waiting Years* (*Onnazaka*, 1957) flourished after her mother came to live with her after the war. Both women enjoyed talking until late at night, Enchi listening to the old lady's flow of stories, then effecting their transmutation into literature.[7] Narrators frequently participate in and present Enchi's fictions, so that the reader is aware of the process of changing gossip or dreams or the other myriad aspects of experience into literature.

Enchi's formidable erudition in Japanese literature means that her evocation of the classics invite comparison between her and past mistresses of writing. Although she places herself in the tradition of Japanese women's literature she does not restrict herself to this, as male writers are as much part of her creative heritage as female ones. Among living writers her primary influence was Tanizaki Junichirô (1886-1965), but she also expressed her admiration for others such as Akutagawa Ryûnosuke (1892-1927) and Nagai Kafû (1879-1959). She stated her artistic priority succinctly in an interview with her German translator in 1984: "For me it is not important whether a work is by a woman or a man. The only thing that counts is whether it has literary allure."[8]

This makes the question of whether Enchi can be claimed as a

feminist writer intriguing. Analysts of her work hold contradictory opinions: Naoko Alisa Rieger states that "Enchi does not belong to the Feminist writer movement" [9], whereas S. Yumiko Hulvey believes that she explored "paths of feminism before the concept became widely disseminated in Japan." [10] To a certain extent the work she chose to commit herself to, sometimes for a considerable period of years, speaks for itself: she for example edited and contributed to two Shûeisha series (each comprising 12 volumes): *Jimbutsu Nihon no Josei Shi* (*Japanese Women in History*, 1978) and *Kindai Nihon no Josei Shi* (*Women in Recent Japanese History*, 1980) and, together with Sata Ineko, edited the 8 volumes of Mainichi Shinbunsha's *Gendai no Joryû Bungaku* (*Women's Literature of Today*, 1975). This series was one of various projects initiated by the Joryû Bungakukai (Association of Women Writers), chaired by Enchi.[11] As for her fiction, Enchi's major characters, particularly those eliciting the reader's sympathy, are usually women, and all her works deal with women's roles, and their difficulties and power relationships with men. Perhaps Enchi can be described as a kind of proto-feminist - not a campaigner for clearly defined goals, but someone profoundly concerned with describing women's circumstances and suggesting women's potential.

The recentness of the interest in Japanese women's writing means that there is still much uncovered ground for commentators. Enchi's psychological insights into women balance those offered by better known Japanese male writers, and for this reason alone Enchi's fiction repays study. Hélène Cixous comments on the "infinite richness" which is lost in a general consideration of 'woman', and goes on to say,

> you can't talk about a female sexuality, uniform, homogeneous, classifiable into codes - any more than you can talk about one unconscious resembling another. Women's imaginary is inexhaustible, like music, painting, writing: their stream of phantasms is incredible.[12]

It is arguable that until recently the inadequate portrayal of women by Japanese male authors met with an orientalist Western readership (that is, viewing Japan as an exotic culture whose beautiful women are dedicated to gratifying male romantic and sensual requirements) to result in such stereotypes as Madam Butterfly or the Western notion of the geisha. Tanizaki is renowned for his "woman worship"[13], but ultimately his depictions of women are jeopardised by their limitations as creatures of male fantasy; more satisfying portraits are to be found in works by writers such as Enchi, who describes such matters as the alliances and enmities between women with psychological accuracy.

So Enchi is important in her role as interpreter and representative of Japanese women, and this role can only grow as more of her works are translated. I suspect, however, that Enchi wrote to please herself - which entailed her exploration of some highly idiosyncratic themes - rather than set out to give a faithful portrait of Japanese womanhood. Yet the richness of her imaginative universe qualifies her for a wider readership. There are more obviously modern and feminist writers than Enchi, but I also hope to show that Enchi can be startlingly up to date, even ahead of our time, in the issues she presents. Some of these are manifestly not just relevant to women: for example, the question of sexuality in

old age [14], and the phenomenon of extremist factions, which Enchi explored in *Shokutaku no Nai Ie* (*Home With No Dining Table*, 1978), following the Asama villa incident when a Japanese Red Army group murdered several of their own members.[15]

Enchi has received a certain amount of critical attention in the West, and academic trends suggest she will continue to receive such attention. Over her long career Enchi won many literary awards, and she and Nogami Yaeko (1885-1985) remain the only two women writers to have ever won the prestigious *Bunka Kunshô* (Order of Culture). Interest in Enchi in Japan, however, seems to have dwindled. Her collected works [16] were issued in 1978, making them incomplete, as she continued to write until her death in 1986. Moreover, the collected works are out of print, and there seem to be no plans to issue an updated edition. It has to be admitted that Enchi's brilliance is not consistent, and that some of her novels, *Watashi Mo Moeteiru* (*I'm Also Burning*, 1960) being a representative example, seem to have been written more as *taishûshôsetsu* (popular novels) than as serious literature. Even if the quality of Enchi's prolific oeuvre still lacks firm evaluation, novels of the standard of *Masks* (*Onnamen*, 1958) or *Kikujidô* (*Chrysanthemum Youth*, 1984) deserve acclaim.

One reason for her neglect seems to be the uneasiness that she provokes. This can sometimes be accounted for by her choice to explore the dark and mysterious territory of the female psyche, particularly that holding a threat (or so it is perceived) to men. Also, although Enchi is adept at eluding such categorisation, a case can be made for her subversiveness as a woman writer. Rosemary Jackson writes that

> Literary fantasies ... frequently show in graphic forms a tension between the 'laws of human society' and the resistance of the unconscious mind to those laws.[17]

Enchi's novels of psychological realism leavened with fantasy are provocative in their approach to gender relations. Enchi also highlights the distribution of power in Japanese society both historically, and, more controversially, in the way she shows that past traditions still exert their grip on modern lives. Thus her fiction points to some potentially disturbing cultural and political issues which transgress pure literary considerations, and will consequently unsettle readers, both male and female, who do not wish to forgo the comforts of the status quo.

In addition to feminist critics, many other critics such as Terry Eagleton and Edward Said, whose primary interest is not feminism, have made it impossible to isolate literature from political issues. It is however regrettable that only a condescending nod towards women's literature is given by such commentators as Masao Miyoshi, who typically bundle all women writers together in their surveys, regardless of their disparate genres. Miyoshi starts off promisingly, acknowledging literary discrimination, when he remarks that

> In the last forty years, a good number of its [Japan's] literary products have been made available in English, with male writers' prose fiction prominent among them until very recently.[18]

Yet he feels entitled to dismiss Enchi, whose remarkable works of fantasy did not stop her from producing novels of historical

realism, not to mention solid critical commentary on drama and literature, with merely two pages of comment, concluding,

> She is thus finally incomplete, inasmuch as she refuses to confront the material historicity of contemporary Japan, taking refuge instead in erotic daydreaming and unresolved discomfiture located in a transcendental personalism and aesthetic culturalism.[19]

However, Enchi's writing follows a different format to the male writers critics are more familiar with. Later I hope to prove the imperceptiveness of Miyoshi's judgment by showing how Enchi makes sophisticated use of intertextuality, and combines emotional/intuitive with intellectual/aesthetic appeal to create effects on the receptive reader akin to those of Nô drama. Miyoshi at least acknowledges the existence of women writers; if one were to rely on Oe Kenzaburô, increasingly regarded as world spokesman for Japanese literature, one would not know they existed. Oe's 1986 lecture 'Japan's Dual Identity: A Writer's Dilemma' voices his concern over the decline of *junbungaku* (translated in his text as "sincere" or alternatively "serious" literature) but fails to mention a single female writer, although it could be argued that the work of women writers represents a strongly revitalising trend for Japanese literature. All this is an inducement to see how both Enchi's fiction and various interpretations of it could attack the traditional shackles of society and culture, and work towards the free and equal ideal of modernity (however ultimately unattainable this may be).

Part 1: Enchi's feminist themes

Patriarchy, and the slight possibility of redemption

Enchi's clearest condemnation of patriarchy is found in *The Waiting Years.* Shirakawa Yukitomo is a domestic tyrant who lives "like a feudal lord" [20], blind to others' wellbeing in the gratification of his carnality, thus causing a lifetime of suffering to his wife, Tomo, and to the concubines he forces her to procure for him. Furthermore, he goes so far in his neglect of social decorum as to seduce his own son's wife. The character Toshi functions as chorus as she voices her sympathy for Tomo, Tomo's daughter, and the first, very young, concubine: "That Mr. Shirakawa is a wicked man, isn't he? ... I felt so sorry for all three of them - the mistress and the young lady, and Suga - that I cried ..." [21] Later novels are subtler in their censure of patriarchy, but on this occasion Enchi is explicit. Tomo appears to have been brought up in accordance with the precepts of Kaibara Ekken's *Onna Daigaku* (*The Greater Learning for Women,* 1672);

> the feminine ethic that had taught her to yield to her husband's wishes in every respect, however unreasonable they might seem. Born in a country district of Kyûshû near the end of the feudal period and barely able to read or write, she had no shield to defend herself other than the existing moral code.[22]

The agony occasioned by his infidelity gradually kills Tomo's love for Yukitomo, but she suppresses protest until she is on her deathbed, expending a lifetime of loyal service on an undeserving

husband.

Enchi registers the women's suffering made inevitable by an inequitable social structure, placing blame on both the feudal code and the education it denied to women. She underlines Yukitomo's reprehensibility by showing how his regressive behaviour extends beyond his household into society, weaving historical facts with her fiction. When the story opens Yukitomo is an important government official, ranking second to the Governor of Fukushima Prefecture. Both are of the faction opposing the *jiyûminken undô* (popular rights movement), and Yukitomo's activities include breaking up meetings of the Liberal Party, on one such occasion killing a Liberal Party member.[23] He also backs his superior in seizing houses, regardless of their occupants, to make way for a prefectural road, and refusing to regulate the Ashio copper mine, resulting in the fatal pollution of wide areas adjoining the Watarase river.[24]

Yukitomo's cruelty is clearly associated with the repressive factors present in Japanese society after the 1868 Meiji Restoration. Mieko, the major female protagonist of *Masks*, marries in the 1930s. Nevertheless, her twentieth century husband continues the Toganô family feudal traditions; when Mieko arrives at her new home she finds Aguri, a combined maid and mistress for Masatsugu, already in residence. The pattern of almost intolerable suffering for wife and mistress is repeated: Aguri is forced to undergo two abortions, and her jealousy of the legitimate wife's pregnancy drives her to bring about Mieko's miscarriage. The long chain of suffering depicted in *Masks* has its origin in the unthinking but dangerously selfish assumption of male privilege by Masatsugu - without this the acts of

revenge plotted by Aguri and Mieko would never have occurred. This novel can be viewed as a meditation upon the nature of human evil; nevertheless the sense of vituperation against Masatsugu is not as strong as that against Yukitomo. This may be because the situation in *The Waiting Years* is modelled on the marriage of Enchi's grandmother Ine, who lived in the Meiji era and suffered as a result of her samurai husband's philandering. Enchi loved her grandmother deeply, and her colouring of *The Waiting Years* may have been influenced by her strong emotional involvement with Ine's predicament.[25]

The plot of the short story 'Skeletons of Men' ('Otoko no Hone', 1956) is similar to *The Waiting Years*, but ends differently. In this story Ritsu (equivalent to Tomo) tells bedtime stories to her granddaughter Shizuko, one of them being the Edo period tale of Katô Saemon Shigeuji. He is pleased to have a beautiful wife and beautiful mistress living in the same house, harmoniously - or so he believes. One day he is appalled to find the two women together, having fallen asleep over a game of go:

> Their black hair was standing on end, and the tips had turned into serpents that glared at each other with inflamed eyes. The serpents were undulating, intertwined, spitting flame-like tongues and biting at each other.

The climax of the tale is that,

> Shigeuji realized the evil of his ways and recognised the terrible hidden jealousy between the women. Immediately he abandoned

his household and entered the priesthood.[26]

Shigeuji, unlike Enchi's anti-heroes, has the grace to repent of his wrongdoing, but in choosing to retell this vignette Enchi indicates that men are not wholly to blame for their treatment of women; the problem lies rather in their normal unquestioning adherence to social codes. The codes, rather than individual human beings, are to blame for suffering; ordinary men and women, those not fated to change history, are not equipped with the character or intellect to rebel against these codes. Thus the sense of moral indignation is very evident in Enchi's fiction, but identifying her moral judgments is something to approach warily. Her work presents patterns of iniquity occurring at some time in the past, and repeated in a modified form with other characters at a later date. The comparison of past and present this entails raises various questions - has there been any improvement in the relations between men and women over the ages? if there has not, have generations of ill deeds compounded the harm? is there any hope of breaking the vicious cycle?

The weight of evidence seems to suggest pessimistic answers to these questions, but negativity is never allowed to take over completely. Suffering teaches Tomo cynical wisdom, so that for her the consolation of Buddhism loses its validity, yet, at one of the many nadirs of her life, Tomo looks out over the moonlit sea:

> With a sense of wonder, Tomo recalled how she had been told as a child that the forms of Amida and his two divine attendants were visible to the faithful, borne upon that thin golden semicircle.

> Was it really nonsense, that the shining forms of the Trinity, riding on the rays of moonlight, should manifest themselves to men's eyes? No, just occasionally, Tomo felt, it must be true, for the present world was too ugly, too full of sorrow. Yet as she gazed at the moon it was no Buddha-figure that emerged from its light, but two white butterflies fluttering close about each other in the pale-shining haze.[27]

A closer look at this passage shows how Enchi creates her effects. Dialogue and narration of events form the bulk of the structure of her tales, but at certain turning points, like here, there are moments of lyrical description. This episode suggests that even in the bleakest of conditions the human spirit is ultimately irrepressible, or some supernatural force reaches into the human sphere with a talisman of hope. Or so the talisman could be interpreted; its significance is elusive. Tomo's butterflies could appear coincidentally, signifying nothing, or merely the presence of other natural entities, their lives simultaneous with and indifferent to Tomo's predicament. In her longing for spiritual consolation she may have imagined them fluttering in the haze, or they may represent the denial of religious consolation; instead of the Buddha, what is vouchsafed to Tomo is only short-lived, fragile butterflies. The symbol could even be read as a complete dashing of Tomo's hopes to transcend her circumstances: instead of seeing the Buddhist trinity, the pair of butterflies fluttering close to each other are reminiscent of the embraces of the human pair Tomo has just been hearing of, her husband and their daughter-in-law. Enchi offers no clue as to which of these interpretations is valid, but, taking into consideration the

sense of vitality and also of human continuity, even in adversity, that she is at pains to convey, I choose to take a positive reading. Yet I acknowledge that this is a subjective choice, and that it is Enchi's gifts as a novelist that would make it possible for another reader to choose a different reading - the novel is rich enough to permit alternative but valid readings.[28]

Women's blood and women's stories

Elusiveness and ambiguity hallmark Enchi's stories, although their depiction of the inevitability of human suffering is certainly clear. An Enchi leitmotif is that amidst suffering something of human worth is transmitted down the generations. In *The Waiting Years* it may be nothing more than the will to endure - or frail but immortal and beautiful hope. In the above episode it is not clear who told the child Tomo about golden Amida, but elsewhere Enchi often makes it clear that transmission is through the female line: grandmothers and mothers tell stories to entertain, or pass on family history. The lengthening of the line, and its twining of the threads of biography, autobiography, history and fiction are seen in 'Skeletons of Men': Grandmother Ritsu who tells bedtime stories to Shizuko dies, and Shizuko in turn relates Ritsu's life story to her friend, the fictional narrator of the story we read, which is actually brought to a wider audience by Enchi - who has of course transmuted her grandmother Ine's life story into fiction.

Women do not only transmit stories, but also blood, and in *Masks* Enchi reminds her reader in no uncertain terms that the bloodline of the mother is the only one that can be relied on to pass to a child.[29]

With simultaneous paradoxical seriousness and irony Enchi suggests the commonality of women: "... the sin [the power women exert over men] is inseparable from a woman's being. It is a stream of blood flowing on and on, unbroken, from generation to generation." [30] Rather than women possessing inherently tainted natures, society is structured so that sin and sorrow are transmitted through the female line. Enchi's fiction shows how women's blood can signify both their positive, creative force and the sinister nature that has been imposed on them.

An example of the mingling of the female bequest of tales and blood is found in 'Skeletons of Men'. An obi (broad kimono sash) is passed down by Ritsu to Shizuko's mother, who in turn bequeaths it to Shizuko. Shizuko wants to remove the padding which makes the obi stiff and heavy, and finds a letter sewn inside, labelled "Chise's blood-letter". It seems that a woman named Chise wrote it in an agonised but vain attempt to win back the love of Ritsu's husband/Shizuko's grandfather, and Ritsu, although the wronged party in this love triangle, instead of throwing the letter away, wears it next to her body in some kind of mute acknowledgment of the other woman's suffering. Ritsu's sorrow has led to wisdom and compassion, and this is shared with her female descendants. Recounting the details to her friend, Shizuko somewhat enigmatically says that she has "been manipulated by the spirit of the sash." [31]

'Herstory'; the necessary ambiguity of the female point of view

Given that Enchi's stories are interpreted and related from a female point of view, and that readers are more accustomed to

'histories', that is, the male view of the world, it becomes more understandable that Enchi can have a disturbing effect on readers because of her novelty. Once it is clear that there is a woman's way, or, more accurately, a multiplicity of women's ways of looking at the world, it also becomes clear that the objectivity which has been assumed to belong to the traditional male viewpoint is a chimera. Records, whether they are family or national histories, will always bear the slant imposed on them by their recorders. Enchi's grasp of the impossibility of objective judgment is perhaps why judgment in her novels is so guarded, and why her work can be difficult and alienating. Contrary to accepting Miyoshi's verdict of Enchi's incompleteness, the reader needs to learn to appreciate Enchi's unwillingness to commit herself as one of her strengths, however initially frustrating this may be. One of the most prevalent (and male-dominated) genres of twentieth century Japanese literature was the *shishosetsu* (I-novel). Enchi stated, with cryptic tact, that she felt unable to write this kind of personal novel, even when she drew on autobiographical material, because her work was a wayward combination of truth and fiction.[32] Enchi chose to go beyond the limited certainties of the author's personal experience and imagination, which means that the territories she explores may be uncharted for her as well as the reader.

Masks gradually divulges the information the reader requires in the manner of a detective novel, but has no such neat resolution. The reader longs to establish whether Mieko is an evil woman who manipulates all those around her, or whether she is a woman more sinned against than sinning, but Enchi offers no easy answers. Readers must interpret the events and conversations as if they

were mute onlookers, with no authorial intermediary present. The endings of both *The Waiting Years* and *Masks* are ambivalent. In *Masks*, despite her modesty, Mieko proves to be a woman of great psychic power, able to make others fall in with her devious schemes of vengeance, painstakingly orchestrated over two decades. An unfavourable view of her actions would have her driving her son to his death, making a whore out of her daughter-in-law Yasuko, so as to seduce Ibuki (a married man) and deceive him into impregnating Harume, her own, mentally handicapped, daughter. Harume dies immediately after giving birth, leaving Mieko and Yasuko to bring up her baby son. Doris Bargen suggests that Mieko is a female shaman. She follows Mircea Eliade in defining a shaman as a sick person who has been cured, by their own agency, and thus interprets *Masks*, tentatively, as a pursuit of healing. Bargen is more definite when she makes a darker interpretation, that Mieko passes on her curse to Yasuko, her surrogate daughter.[33] Wayne Pounds declares that restricting *Masks'* scope to a tale of vengeance is not satisfactory, and prefers to read it as "a self-reflective tale about female creativity, the artist as woman." [34] Bargen veers towards a negative reading; Pounds opts to be on the positive side, but both are representative of Western commentators in that they seem anxious to capture a unified and consistent reading.

It would perhaps be more satisfying to adopt a "willing suspension of disbelief" [35] and accept a multiplicity of interpretations, even conflicting ones, as Enchi herself suggested. She agreed with Mishima Yukio's perception of the moral and amoral portraits (respectively Tomo and Mieko) in her novels, but felt that her works should be viewed on another level beyond this one.[36] Surely

Enchi is gently pointing out the obvious, that any human being is a composite of good and evil, ethical and amoral, and that this applies to Tomo and Mieko too. In Western eyes the contrived impregnation of the defenceless Harume by those who should be her protectors is heinous, but the Japanese commentator Uesaka Nobuo takes the radically opposite view; understanding Yasuko's willingness to cooperate with Mieko's plot because she sympathises with Mieko's wish to make it possible for Harume to experience sexual pleasure[37], and because Mieko's desire for a blood link with her descendants is as strong as any man's.[38] As the mixture of human motives is bound to be contradictory both interpretations can be correct: all too human Mieko acts from both base and noble motives.

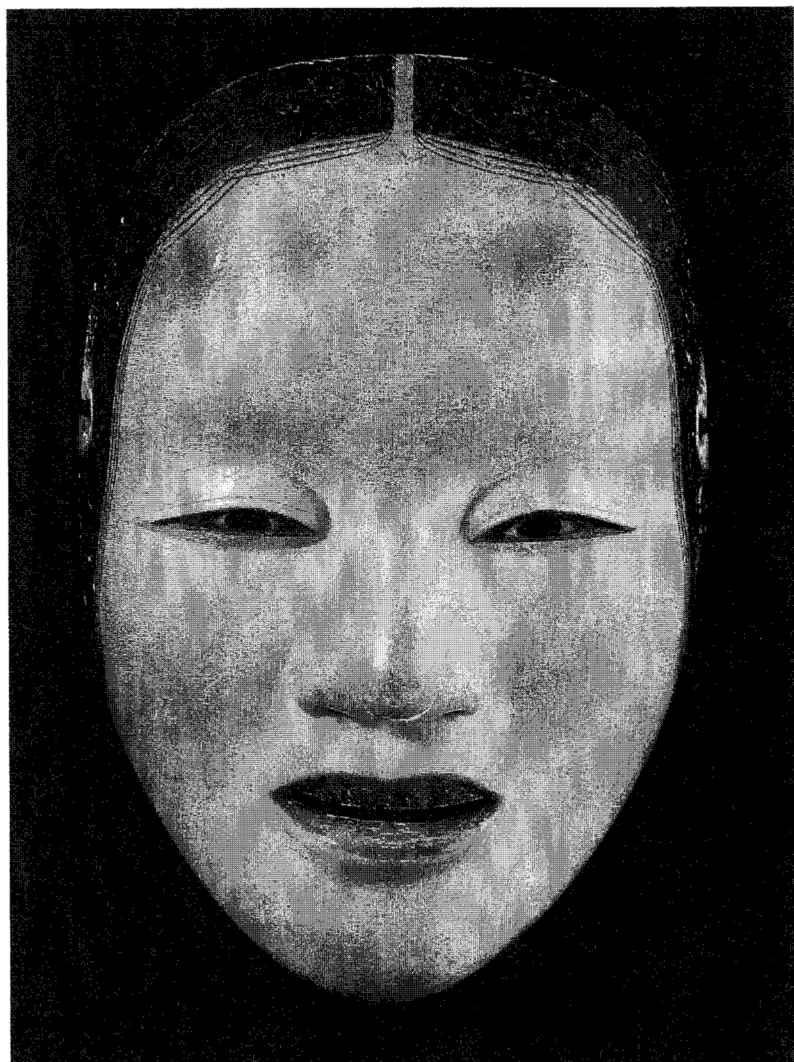
Part 2: The Past in the Present - Enchi's debt to Nô and *The Tale of Genji*

Aspects of Nô in Enchi's fiction

The redundancy of conventional interpretation in Enchi's case is demonstrated by the finale of *Masks*. This is a tour de force which destroys the expected movement of the novel towards resolution, and throws open infinite possibilities of significance. Mieko is gazing pensively at the Nô mask of fukai she has been given, but, startled by the crying of Harume's baby, drops the mask and pauses as if struck immobile. Previously the Nô master's daughter Yakushiji Toe has explained that "fukai" (see Figure 1, p. 23)

> can be written either of two ways: with the characters for 'deep well' [深井] or 'deep woman'. [深女] It's used in roles depicting middle-aged women, especially mothers. The Kanze school takes the name to mean a woman of 'exceedingly deep heart' - that is, someone mature not only in years, but also in experience and understanding. My father had his own interpretation, though. He liked to think of it as a metaphor comparing the heart of an older woman to the depths of a bottomless well - a well so deep that its water would seem totally without color.[39]

Komparu Kunio describes how "the cheeks droop somewhat, giving the impression of a woman lost in thought" [40], and Shirasu Masako adds "this mask is replete with deep sorrow ... The Fukai mask is used in Noh to portray a mother who has been parted from



a beloved child." [41] However, Mieko and this poignant mask, which have appeared in the gathering dusk "like twin blossoms on a single branch" [42], are abruptly sundered as she drops it. This mysterious climax is the culmination of all the novel's intertwined themes of masks, which have been used to show the complementary nature of what are usually considered dualities: life and death, art and life, appearance and reality, male and female, past and present, emotion and intellect, the roles we play and are made to play for ourselves and others.

The scene shows how Enchi draws on the resources of Nô to add dramatic effect and imaginative richness to her novel. Obviously she borrows the stage prop of the Nô mask, and thus adds a powerful visual dimension to her narrative, at least for the reader familiar with Nô. Enchi also echoes the Nô convention that before the *shite* (actor playing the main role in a Nô play) goes on stage he spends several minutes contemplating his mask, so that he may truly "become" the character he is to play. Mieko studies her mask as if she were a *shite*, and the reader attuned to Nô is suddenly made to feel that the novel until now has merely been an off-stage prologue, but is given no clue by Enchi as to the nature of the drama that is to be enacted next. The sense of the lack of closure again derives from Nô, which is deliberately structured to be unfinished, so that each play takes its place in a cycle, and each cycle closes looking ahead to the next cycle. There is however a difference between Enchi's ending and a Nô play; Nô plays are cathartic, and Enchi's reader feels uneasy because it is uncertain whether *Masks* ends with catharsis or further crisis.

Although Enchi sometimes bends Nô in unexpected directions

to achieve her novelistic purposes, she adheres closely to it when she takes advantage of its dramatic and visual impressiveness to work effects on her readers that transcend the rational. Enchi attempts to build her stage in the reader's mind, a theatre far more precarious than that of Nô. What Komparu says about Nô is relevant to the subliminal techniques she is attempting to transfer from the Nô theatre to her novel:

> Noh plays take place in a dimension of fantasy that transcends the normal bounds of time and space, so that one cannot become absorbed in a Noh play if one is attempting to make what is happening conform to logic and common sense. By extinguishing momentarily the bright flame of realistic consciousness and darkening the mind, one will enable the deeper consciousness to surface. This is very close to a state of sleep, but the state of being half awake and half asleep, this feeling of being halfway between dreaming and reality is the territory of time and space where the nonrealistic consciousness of Noh dwells. This is where the participant can attune himself to the Noh consciousness, and past experiences sleeping in the depths of one's psyche will reverberate sympathetically with emotions expressed in the play.[43]

The relationship between Nô, *The Tale of Genji*, and Enchi's fiction

Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443) was the probable author of the Nô play *Nonomiya* (*The Shrine in the Fields*), whose *shite* is the ghost of

Lady Rokujô (see Figure 2, p. 27), originally a character in *The Tale of Genji.* Rokujô in *Nonomiya* is a more sympathetic character than Murasaki Shikibu's original, or Rokujô in the Nô play *Aoi no Ue* (*Lady Aoi*). Likewise Enchi emphasises the suffering of Rokujô more than the vengeful qualities that have been more immediately associated with her in Japanese literature. Enchi links Mieko with the figure of Rokujô so closely as to make Mieko seem a present day incarnation of her. Mieko is no ghost, but the affinity between the two women renders her the twentieth century novel's equivalent of the Nô play's spirit.

In *Aoi no Ue* Rokujô's ghost takes the form of an evil spirit, but she suffers as much as those she torments, so that the "salvation and spiritual release" [44] she is granted are not incongruous. The main theme of *Nonomiya* is "nothing can escape the balancing of karma".[45] In both plays the *shite* often wears robes with a carriage and wheel design (as can be seen in Figure 2), recalling the tussle of carriages with Aoi when both Rokujô and Aoi came to watch Genji in a procession. Janet Goff states that the carriage "serves as a sign of the deep-seated obsession preventing her from escaping the bonds of transmigration in later lives." [46] Like Rokujô, Mieko's frustrated passion and obsession with vengeance mean that her karma, wheel-like, must repeat its turns through suffering. These two Nô plays use karma to explore suffering and salvation in a Buddhist universe; Enchi slants her emphasis to explore women's destinies. Karen Brazell comments, "The art of interweaving texts in new and ever changing contexts expresses the basic message and the basic aesthetic of phantom noh: nothing is ever what it seems" [47], and in turn Enchi skilfully interweaves aspects of fourteenth and fifteenth

century Nô with her modern novel.

In Nô Brazell finds that art, artists, and their chosen images are "both the givers and the receivers of enlightenment." [48] Nô's focus on enlightenment has an earlier impetus; as Enchi draws on Nô, so previously did a large number of Nô plays seek their initial inspiration in *The Tale of Genji*. There is a famous passage in Murasaki Shikibu's novel when Genji finds Tamakazura and her ladies whiling away the dull hours of the rainy season over romances. He at first teases them for their frivolity, but proceeds to a long speech in the defence of fiction. In the process he relays Murasaki Shikibu's justification of her craft of storytelling, which undoubtedly underwent censure in the comparison with sacred texts. That Murasaki won the argument becomes clear upon reference to the Nô play *Genji Kuyô* (*A Memorial Service for Genji*), whose climax reveals that

> Murasaki was in reality the incarnation of the bodhisattva Kannon enshrined at Ishiyama Temple, who appeared on earth to transmit *Genji monogatari* as a parable about the ephemeral nature of the world.[49]

Here the role of the artist is unequivocally recognised as including the functions of entertainer and bringer of enlightenment. The original Genji's speech describes how art claims the artist;

> the storyteller's own experience of men and things, whether for good or ill - not only what he has passed through himself, but even events which he has only witnessed or been told of - has

moved him to an emotion so passionate that he can no longer keep it shut up in his heart.[50]

This could be applied directly to Enchi, a novelist impassioned as much by the characters in Japanese literature as real human beings. Genji goes on to say that it is the storyteller's role to be inclusive, to describe vice as well as beauty and virtue in the recreation of "this mundane life." Such is the nature of true art; it does not deal with matters "in some fairyland beyond our human ken." Nô obeys this rule - for its ghosts are drawn back to the human world - and so does Enchi; her phantasms add imaginative richness to her works, but can be traced as having their origin in human psychology. Genji ends his lecture to Tamakazura by vindicating fiction as "an art of real importance", because (although both may be clouded by unintentional human error) it shares with Buddhist texts the purpose of "the compassing of our Salvation".[51] Unlike Murasaki Shikibu and the great Nô dramatists Enchi lived in a century whose conviction in great ultimate truths had been shaken. Yet the typical pattern of her fiction brings the psychological disequilibrium experienced by her characters to some kind of stasis, often involving some kind of spiritual enlightenment. In a manner appropriate to the twentieth century Enchi offers art's entertainment and enlightenment - this last perhaps better rephrased in contemporary terms as insight into the human condition.

Part 3: Consequences of love and desire

Negative aspects of sexuality in Enchi's fiction

Art's material to entertain is, more often than not, love. Literature, even devotional literature, is fascinated by love's equivocal nature, source of bliss and despair. However, in a simplified Buddhist analysis, it can be said that enlightenment is impossible for human beings as long as they suffer attachments to worldly things. Unfortunately, to be created human seems inevitably to entail being created with the spiritual, emotional and physical needs that are only satisfied by love, which equally inevitably means that humans must suffer the negative consequences of sexual desire, the most dangerous of attachments. In 'Onna no himitsu' Enchi wrote,

> I believe that there is an insurmountable difference between men and women, and that its unfathomable secret is the motive which draws the two sexes together.[52]

The play and counterplay of love and desire between men and women, and the suffering caused thereby, are the basic themes running through Enchi's fiction. (These are also the aspects of classical literature which fascinate Enchi and which she cites or reworks in her own fiction.) Sometimes the binding force is homoerotic: the relationship between Mieko and Yasuko in *Masks* contains lesbian elements, and Sakarauchi Yûsen, the aging Nô actor in *Kikujidô*, has a longstanding homosexual relationship with the artist Izumite Shûji. However, the attractions that cause the most

friction and hence the most novelistic potential occur between people of opposite sexes, and, at least in Enchi's earlier fiction, it tends to be women who bear the brunt of the suffering. Another important characteristic of her novels is that their narrative is given its impetus by the formation and reconfiguration of triangular relationships.

This pattern is of course a staple of literature, but is particularly evident in *The Tale of Genji*. In his youth Genji holds the advantage in the triangles he creates or finds himself in. One example of many is the triangle of Genji, Fujitsubo (his mother-in-law and first great love) and the Kiritsubo emperor (the father he cuckolds). However, later in life he tends to lose the advantage, often when poetic justice reverses the situation. To follow through the above example, Genji is the wronged party when there is a liaison between his principal wife, the Third Princess, and Kashiwagi. In both cases a child is fathered by a lover but passed off as the child of the woman's legitimate husband. The outcomes mingle sorrow and joy, but the weight of the implications of sin and retribution settles on the novel, and the whole process is explained as the result of the karmic destiny of the individuals concerned.[53]

Enchi also evokes this sense of tragic karmic weight in *Masks*, associating it with the evolution of triangular relationships, and again sin and retribution run their course through two generations of illegitimate children. The novel twist that Enchi gives to the situation is that whereas the Heian children were conceived unintentionally, Mieko deliberately plans the birth of her own children and her grandchild as sensational but concealed acts of revenge on her husband, a pattern traced by Jackson in her *Fantasy* :

The Literature of Subversion : "The fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'." [54] Enchi is also able to infuse added bleakness in *Masks* by making Mieko a strongly self-determinant agent, appropriate to the existentialist twentieth century. Mieko's power to manipulate other people's lives is remarkable, and yet she is ultimately powerless to orchestrate her own destiny, with fate dealing her a succession of blows in the form of the deaths of her lover, her son and lastly her daughter.

Positive aspects of sexuality in Enchi's fiction

Masks may portray the negative consequences of sexuality, but Enchi ensures that she also presents sexuality's positive contribution to human experience. The nature of her views means that her fiction illuminates the boundary between sexualities that society finds acceptable or disquieting. Sometimes society catches up with Enchi. When 'A Bond for Two Lifetimes - Gleanings' (1957) first appeared it achieved notoriety for its sentence "My very womb cried out in longing" [55], with its frank avowal of female desire. This would not now be considered extraordinary, but in other areas society still lags behind Enchi. The sexuality of the mentally handicapped is even now an uncomfortable issue, but, as Hulvey points out, characters who are intellectually and socially incompetent but sexually robust tend to appear in Enchi's fiction.[56] This demonstrates her interest in the wellsprings of human identity, and in how sexuality, intellect, emotions and spirit are entwined to form the self.

Sexuality and the aged is another combination that society still

prefers to avoid thinking about, but for Enchi sexuality is an integral part of humanity - regardless of age. As she herself aged her novels depicted characters whose age kept pace with her own: Mieko in *Masks* remains attractive but is beginning to show physical signs of aging appropriate to a woman in her late fifties, whereas *Yûkon* and *Saimu* deal with the sexuality of women in their sixties and seventies. *Kikujidô* was Enchi's last full length novel, written two years before her death at the age of 81 in 1986. She uses the figure of the Kikujidô [57] to counterpoint mortality and immortality, and confront the sweep of Japanese history, but most poignant is her realisation of a dignified and beautiful sexuality in old age. This contrasts enormously with the aging men portrayed by Tanizaki in *The Key* (*Kagi*, 1956) and *Diary of A Mad Old Man* (*Fûten rôjin nikki*, 1962), whose sexuality is gross or even ridiculous. In *The Twilight Years* (*Kôkotsu no hito*, 1972) Ariyoshi Sawako (1931-84) confronts old age as a set of problems. Her senile protagonist has no sexual outlet, and consequently adds to his daughter-in-law's vexations. Ariyoshi's novel was effective as a vehicle of social reform, succeeding in goading Japanese society into rethinking care of the elderly, but its treatment of old age takes a completely opposite approach to Enchi's quiet acknowledgment of the diminishment of age, which nevertheless does not prevent the last beautiful flowering of the human spirit.

One of *Kikujidô*'s most memorable episodes is the dream of the aged heroine Shigeno. She climbs a mountain in search of the Kikujidô. When she finds him he answers her many questions graciously. They discuss history's terrible events (including the atomic bomb), and the dispassionateness that comes after many

years of living in this world, which can nevertheless coexist with a sense of the preciousness of being alive. He states that the human quest for immortality is natural, and that although humans are doomed to die their defiantly beautiful images will live on in art, and in this way humans can triumph over death. The Kikujidô sprinkles the chrysanthemum dew which bestows longevity and vigour over Shigeno, and she wakes up with its scent in the air, from the plant by her bed. She is left exhilarated by her dream, so much so that in her rejoicing at being alive she spontaneously waves her arms and cries out "banzai!" (hurray!) [58]

Part 4: Intertextuality

Cultural cross currents

Enchi's fiction conveys a zest for life, which, despite its vicissitudes, holds possibilities for fulfilment. *Kikujidô* explores fulfilment in love and art. The evidence in the totality of Enchi's writing suggests that for her, art, in all its forms, was what made life most worth living. Enchi found enormous pleasure in the culture of the past, and takes it for granted that her readers should share this pleasure. She acted as intermediary for classical literature with her translations into modern Japanese [59], constantly refers to literary classics, and reworks their themes, images and personae. However, she wrote as a twentieth century woman, with the benefit of the knowledge of the centuries that followed Heian times, which she used to make past questions relevant to the present, probing and provoking her readers' sensibilities, and transforming literary tradition to serve modern artistic requirements.

Japanese literature has a long tradition of intertextuality. One example, the poetic technique of *honkadori* (本歌取り, allusive variation), is defined by Robert Brower and Earl Miner as

> primarily an echoing of an older poem or poems, not just to borrow material or phrasing, but to raise the atmosphere - something of the situation, the tone, and the meaning - of the original.[60]

Honkadori is prestigious, without any of the connotations of

plagiarism or lack of originality that it might risk in Western literature. Recontextualisation pays a tribute to the prior author and then adds to the original effect, or uses the first text as a springboard to move in a different direction. Enchi profits from her use of intertextuality to intensify the effect of her own fiction.

Many other Japanese writers have drawn on the classics [61], but it can be argued that Enchi was the one to whom such references came most naturally and habitually. The plethora of her references shows how she was indeed as intellectually and spiritually at home in pre-twentieth century literature as in modern literature. With other writers use of the classics often seems a matter of conscious artifice, whereas the classics were an integral part of Enchi's mental library. The contrast is particularly obvious if one looks at Hiraiwa Yumie's short story 'Lady of the Evening Faces' ('Yûgao no onna', 1979). Hiraiwa is a highly successful writer of television drama, whose work often explores the ramifications of women's lives, and she presumably decided that she also could exploit the resonance lent by the classics in her tale of a modern mother and daughter. The story is well written, and justifies its references to Yûgao and Tamakazura in *The Tale of Genji*. However, it simply lacks the power of Enchi's recontextualisations.

The freedom to draw on other artistic resources is evident in Japanese culture, and not just restricted to literature. Nô drama derives its power from the dense poetic magic of its language combined with the visual sumptuousness of its masks and costumes, and would be incomplete without its music and dances. The link between art and literature is also traditional. In the Heian era it was the ultimate accolade for a poet to have a *waka* commissioned

as a *byôbu-uta*[62] (屏風歌, screen poem), and even now the calligraphy of a Japanese poem is integral to its being.

Enchi's cultural sophistication meant that the breadth of her allusions was vast. A musical example is her story 'Fuyu no tabi' (冬の旅, 'Winter Journey', 1971), which takes its title from Schubert's *Winterreise* (*Winter Journey*, 1827).[63] Enchi's story takes the form of reminiscences of Mishima Yukio, and was written shortly after his death in 1970, following an acquaintance between the two writers which had lasted more than ten years. Schubert's composition is renowned for its mood of desolation, and although Enchi's story is written in an upbeat style her choice of Schubert's title suggests the passing of hope that led Mishima to take his own life.

Enchi's artistic references

Art probably came second to literature in Enchi's affections - her descriptions show her strong sense of visual appreciation, and she makes frequent references to art and artists in her fiction. Her artistic allusions and references to masks are a vital mode of appeal to the reader. Early in *Masks*, the triple artistic analogy applied by Ibuki to Mieko and Yasuko presents striking images in their own right, but also performs the dual function of showing firstly how the male characters envisage the female characters, and secondly how the reader can begin to interpret Mieko and her daughter-in-law:

> In T'ang and Sung paintings of beautiful women or in a Moronobu print of a courtesan [see Figure 3, p. 38], the main figure is always twice the size of her attendants. It's the same with

Buddhist triads: the sheer size of the main image makes the smaller bodhisattvas on either side that much more approachable ... to me Mieko is the large-sized courtesan, and Yasuko is the little-girl attendant at her side.[64]

Masks is a subtle and complex exploration of female stereotypes, and here Enchi begins by likening her twentieth century characters to T'ang (618-907) and Sung (960-1279) women of ancient China - Chinese culture always having, until recent times, inspired and influenced Japanese culture. Mieko and Yasuko are next identified with the sacred and the profane, a paradoxical dual identity for women that has persisted throughout history, and whose ramifications Enchi will draw out in the course of the novel. Mieko, a poet, and Yasuko, engaged in academic study, are cultured women, but Enchi's courtesan image suggests their sublimated female sensuality. This is of course an integral part of female being, but female sexuality seen through male eyes is often denigrated as an attribute of prostitutes, as Ibuki's attitude to Yasuko (occasionally also Mieko and Harume) sometimes makes clear.[65] Enchi is of course aware that astute women can turn this male tendency to their own advantage. Lastly Mieko and Yasuko are seen in a relatively positive light in a Buddhist context; elsewhere in *Masks* the negative role in which women are trapped by Buddhism is foregrounded.[66]

Enchi also investigates the roles assigned to women within Shintô: intermediary with the divine both as exalted priestess and as debased medium or shrine prostitute.[67] In *Masks* Mieko and Yasuko respectively represent the *miko* (shamaness/medium) in her possessing and possessed forms, and the figure of the *miko*,

embodying female power and sexuality in various guises, was developed in many of the works of Enchi's later years.[68] In *Masks* the figures of goddess, priestess and prostitute are shuffled and overlapped with the female characters. At Mieko's firefly party (incidentally meant to evoke the Fireflies chapter of *The Tale of Genji*) Yasuko wears

> a Chinese-style gown of white brocade, worn with green jade earrings that were shiny drops of melting softness. Standing there in front of the arbor, the lines of her body plainly revealed by the drape of the sleeveless white gown, she seemed a delicate image of the Buddha sheltering the woman [her mentally handicapped sister-in-law] behind her.[69]

Her appearance is provocatively attractive, but also designed to evoke comparison with Kannon, the female bodhisattva[70] who traditionally wears a white robe. This is also a characteristic ploy of Enchi's to suggest the continuity of her twentieth century characters with women of the past, whether real or mythical, and their status as modern women, acting to control their own destinies.

Enchi's literary references

Despite her affinity for art, Enchi however turned most naturally to literary references. Her love of the classics began early; she describes in her essay 'Koten to tomoni' ('In Company with the Classics', 1968) how she grew up in a house full of books.[71] She read her favourites, including *The Tale of Genji*, *Hôjôki* (c.1212),

Ueda Akinari (1734-1809) and Takizawa Bakin (1767-1848), time and time again, until she knew passages by heart. Her childhood habit of seeking consolation in books persisted throughout adulthood, and she ends the essay by saying that although she grew up in Tokyo she does not consider it to be her native place - instead she declares; "The world of books is clearly my natural home, and I have to acknowledge that I am most at home with the classics of Japanese literature." [72] Critics have taken Enchi at her word and concentrated on her affinities for *The Tale of Genji* and the rest of the classic canon. However, in a consideration of Enchi's intertextuality the diversity of her reading, from high to popular literature of earlier eras, should be recognised. Both types of literature exerted equally important influences on her. Indeed, before Enchi began her acquaintance with the acknowledged classics she had read and enjoyed Ryûtei Tanehiko's *Nise Murasaki Inaka Genji* (偐紫田舎源氏, *The Fake Murasaki and Country Genji*, 1829), a Genji parody set in the Muromachi era, which does in fact possess some literary charms of its own. Her omnivorous tastes meant that she was familiar with more obscure works such as this, or *Morning-glory Diary*[73], and that her liking for sensational literature often led her to reproduce its attributes.

It should also be noted that Enchi approached literature as a scholar as well as a novelist. Various critics have commented on the intertextuality of her short story 'A Bond for Two Lifetimes: Gleanings' ('Nise no en - shûi', 1957), but have not remarked on the up to date scholarship that enabled Enchi to draw on Ueda Akinari's tale 'The Destiny That Spanned Two Lifetimes' ('Nise no en'), one of the collection of stories in *Harusame Monogatari* (*Tales of the Spring Rain*).

Enchi relates the story of a modern woman, widowed during the Second World War, and interweaves it with Ueda Akinari's lurid tale of Jôsuke, the priest buried and then revived from his meditative trance years later. In Enchi's recontextualisation Ueda's tale is being translated into modern Japanese by an invalid professor. He dictates his translation to the widow, and a large proportion of Enchi's story is formed of these translated segments from Ueda's original tale. In fact, in real life Enchi made a modern rendition of *Harusame Monogatari.* This story collection was completed by Ueda around 1802, but half of its stories went missing. The incomplete *Harusame Monogatari* was first published in 1907. The missing five stories (including 'The Destiny That Spanned Two Lifetimes') were then found in the 1940's in the library of Tenri-Kyô, Nara Prefecture, by Nakamura Yukihiko. His edition, the first complete edition of *Harusame Monogatari*, was published in 1947 [74], and Enchi must have used this for her translation, and for her recontextualisation of Ueda's story, which appeared just a decade later. Enchi combined her talents as a scholar and writer of fiction to produce her story, which is a powerful examination of how love is linked with the inexorable drive of sexuality, for both women and men. For the widow narrator its force is paradoxically "an unsettling agitation that warmed my heart." [75]

The majority of Enchi's references are to Japanese literature, but she is also capable of alluding to Western and Chinese literature. In her semi-autobiographical novel *Ake o ubau mono* (*That Which Steals Red*, 1956), the heroine Shigeko rallies herself when she is dejected by thinking of the encouraging example of the Chinese historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien (司馬遷, B.C. ?145-86) [76], quotes William

Blake in the original English [77], and finds that her predicament is reminiscent of a memorable scene on the edge of quicksands, described in one of Robert Louis Stevenson's short stories.[78]

Enchi sometimes slips fake references into her fiction, almost as if she wished to test the reader's knowledge, and so it is advisable to scrutinise her allusions carefully. In *Kikujidô* when Shigeno meets the Chrysanthemum Youth she finds that his face is not like the Nô mask used to portray him, but like the face painted by the *bunjinga* artist Tomioka Tessai (富岡鉄斎, 1837-1924).[79] In *Masks* Enchi cites the distinguished Nô scholar Nogami Toyoichirô (野上豊一郎, 1883-1950).[80] These two references are authentic, but the poet Kawabe Junryô (川辺順良) and the artist Shimojô Minoru (下条実) [81] of *Masks* are invented personages.

It remains to be considered why Enchi should employ such a wealth of references. Perhaps some parallels can be found between Enchi and Murasaki Shikibu, both being serious and learned women who revelled in forms of intellectual pleasure of their own devising.[82] Enchi moreover seems to offer a teasing challenge to readers to recognise the signposts on the literary byways she is leading them down. More importantly, Enchi undoubtedly constantly sought to develop herself as a novelist, and in this was bound to have recourse to what she had read. One of her conscious efforts to broaden her range can be seen in her essay 'Koten to watashi' ('The Classics and Myself'), when she writes that she was baffled by the language construction she found in English literature, so different to that in Asian literature, which led her to temporarily put aside her engagement with Japanese classics in the struggle to master this alien style and incorporate it in her own work.[83]

Literary allusions centring around Mieko

The central importance of Mieko in *Masks* has already emerged in previous discussion, but I would like to take a further look at the literary personalities with whom she is associated, in order to elucidate Enchi's views on human nature, morality and women's place in society. The literary lineage of *Masks* stretches back through Nô drama and *The Tale of Genji* to *The Gossamer Years* (*Kagerô nikki*, 974), a sombre diary written by a nameless noblewoman who became known as Michitsuna's Mother. In 'Onna no himitsu' Enchi wrote of her feeling that Michitsuna's Mother "casts her shadow" over Lady Rokujô.[84] She states in addition that *The Gossamer Years* became the wellspring for the whole tradition of women's writing in Japanese literature, despite not being able to compete in literary merit with *The Tale of Genji*. Moreover, *The Gossamer Years* is so "full of the rank odour of blood, and a spite which blinded its author" that Enchi cannot read it without being made to feel acutely uneasy, and reluctant to face the book again.[85]

Other critics have also felt discomfort over the raw, vindictive passion that has retained its power to disturb over the centuries, marking *The Gossamer Years* as a personal testimony rather than a work that has succeeded in shaping its obsessions into art. Enchi censured Michitsuna's Mother's chronicle but was also drawn to it to recreate some of its ominous effects in *Masks*. Mieko, however, is a modern woman who can find at least partial relief for her feelings, by acting in response to her frustration, whereas Michitsuna's Mother is left with no option but passivity, and internalisation of her griefs and resentments. Michitsuna's Mother and Rokujô in *The Tale of*

Genji are respectively real-life and fictional antecedents of Mieko. In contrast to her disquiet over Michitsuna's Mother's work, Enchi praises Murasaki Shikibu for her success in transporting her readers to another dimension, and creating a totally absorbing, unified and harmonious world.[86] However, the creative worlds of *The Gossamer Years* and *Masks* deliberately lack this seductiveness, evoking no golden age, but instead a bleakness in tune with the sensibilities of the twentieth century. Enchi states that she is interested in female archetypes, and of the gallery of characters in *The Tale of Genji* who have come to represent archetypes of Japanese womanhood Enchi chooses Rokujô, wounded and wounding, as the one most deserving of contemporary attention.

Enchi's accomplished psychological portrait of Mieko, a frustrated and unhappy woman, is perhaps so disturbing because she shows that not very much has changed in women's situation over the past millennium. On the only occasion in *Masks* that she makes an authentic citation (rather than a passing reference) Enchi chooses a *waka* from the private collection of Murasaki Shikibu:

> On seeing a painting wherein the vengeful ghost of the first wife, having seized the second, is exorcised by prayers:
>
> Suffering from the rancor of the dead -
> Or might it be the devil in one's own heart? [87]

This *waka* has none of the serene beauty or *mono no aware* (lacrimae rerum) more usually associated with classical poetry. It indicts the Heian cultural codes that prescribed suppression of female jealousy and male guilt as a result of the aristocratic system

of polygamy and concubinage.[88] The Heian phenomenon of spirit possession (憑霊, hyôrei) was a bizarre if predictable response to the tensions of this society.

The poem just quoted appears in Mieko's essay, 'An Account of the Shrine in the Fields', an apologia for Lady Rokujô. The conventional interpretation of the malevolent force that attacks Genji's wives is that it is Rokujô's vindictive spirit. Through Mieko Enchi makes the counter-argument that it could be some kind of emanation of Genji's guilty conscience.[89] Interestingly, years later Enchi wrote an essay entitled 'Rokujô miyasudokoro-kô' ('Thoughts on Lady Rokujô'), which is very similar to Mieko's fictitious essay, and Enchi in fact points out that this is so.[90] Enchi also admits the validity of the conventional interpretation of the spirit possession:

> Inhibited by the upbringing given to all young Heian princesses (one firmly discouraging any sort of direct action), the Rokujô lady turned unconsciously to spirit possession as the only available outlet for her strong will.[91]

It is important to note that Rokujô is driven to this by her extreme psychic torment, but it is not an act of her conscious will. It does however result from her particular type of proud and passionate character;

> whereas Fujitsubo and Murasaki are women who dissolve their whole beings in the anguish of forgiving men, and thereby create an image of eternal love and beauty in the hearts of the men they love, the Rokujô lady is instead a Ryô no onna: one who

chafes at her inability to sublimate her strong ego in deference to any man, but who can carry out her will only by forcing it upon others - and that indirectly, through the possessive capacity of her spirit.[92]

Murasaki also suffers from jealousy, but it is not the "insensate passion" [93] which will not allow Rokujô's spirit to rest even after death. Social codes do not permit any relief for Rokujô's frustration, with dire consequences for her and those in her sphere. Tomo, similar in character and predicament, finds no relief during her lifetime, but at least has the satisfaction of revenge on her deathbed. Mieko's dignity prevents her from openly protesting to her husband, but in the twentieth century she has at least more room to manoeuvre than her forebears in enacting her revenge.

Enchi's sympathy for these women is obvious, but she is not so partial as not to make clear how their jealousy is also self-destructive. It is ironic that Enchi makes Mieko able to see this self-corrosion in Rokujô's case but not her own. Thus Mieko writes in her essay that Rokujô has been "squandering her mental energy in spirit possession." [94] She identifies Rokujô as a "Ryô no onna" (see Figure 4, p. 48), but this mask also becomes associated with Mieko herself. Ryô no onna (霊女), meaning "spirit woman", is, according to Donald Keene,

> the effigy of a dead woman, [which] depicts a woman who has died because of an infatuation which still tortures her. Suffering has made her features haggard, but they still possess something of her former beauty.[95]

Komparu classifies it in the category of "Masks of insane or jealous characters, vengeful ghosts, and demonesses".[96] The ryô no onna woman is then someone whose extreme experiences and temperament evoke mingled horror and pity.

Another kind of female temperament is successful in finding an outlet for frustration - Mieko finds that in *The Tale of Genji* Rokujô and the Akashi lady share literary talent, but the latter possesses "intellectual pragmatism"[97] lacked by the former, and finds solace in writing a novel, just as Murasaki Shikibu and Enchi do. The act of female writing is of course charged. Although the Heian privileging of a refined aesthetic sensibility perhaps leaves the most immediately vivid impression on a present day reader, the shadows around Radiant Genji yield darker readings, if one accepts Haruo Shirane's opinion that "in highly allusive, poetic, aesthetic, and less than apparent ways, the *Genji* dilates on the question of political power."[98]

In addition to political and social aspects of the status of women Enchi explores their role in both Shintô and Buddhism. She shows how archaisms like the notion of female impurity survive in modern society. If not as sustained a comparison as with Rokujô, the analogy drawn between Mieko and Izanami, the primeval goddess of the *Kojiki*, is as important for Enchi's reconstruction of female archetypes, in her linking of the role of the human female with ambivalent goddesses, both the givers of life and vessels of death and decay. Mieko, about to press ahead with her terrible scheme to risk Harume's life in pregnancy, has a vision of

> an ancient goddess lying stretched out in the underworld, prey of death. Her flesh was putrid and swarming with maggots, her

decaying form covered with all manner of festering sores that smoldered and gave off black sparks. The luridness of the sight sent the goddess's lover fleeing in horror, and the moment that he turned and ran, she arose and swept after him in fury, all the love that she had borne him transformed utterly into blinding hatred. A woman's love is quick to turn into a passion for revenge - an obsession that becomes an endless river of blood, flowing on from generation to generation.

A faint tear wet Mieko's eye, so slight a bit of moisture that it passed unseen by Yasuko. Yet all the anguish of which she never spoke was compressed into that single drop.[99]

Commentators have recognised the similarity between this passage and a similar episode in the *Kojiki*, but not pursued its ramifications. According to the *Kojiki*, Izanami and her spouse Izanagi were the original divine procreators, bringing forth the islands and deities of Japan. However, giving birth to the fire deity caused Izanami's death. Izanagi sought to reclaim her from the underworld, but she could not bear the shame of being seen in the state of decomposition. Enchi follows the *Kojiki* as far as Izanami's frenzied pursuit of Izanagi, but does not relate its outcome: Izanagi halts her by closing the pass between the lands of the living and the dead with an enormous boulder. They break their troth to each other, and Izanami vows to exact her revenge by strangling a thousand of Izanagi's human subjects daily - he ripostes that he will cause one thousand five hundred new humans to be born daily. The myth was an early attempt to confront the awesome mysteries of birth and death, so intricately entangled with the female body.

As if nothing has changed over the centuries Enchi casts Mieko in the intermingling roles of visionary/goddess/mortal woman, possessed of awesome power yet mired in impurity, dominating and being dominated by matters of birth and death.

This figure of mythic paradox is not confined to Japan: Izanami resonates with Europe's Persephone, queen of Hades, allowed to return to the living world for half the year so spring may come and life can continue its cycle; or the consort of Shiva, Hindu god of creation and destruction, who is worshipped in her many aspects, including the beneficent (Uma, Parvati, Shakti), or the deadly (Kali), or an amalgam of the fierce and gentle (Durga). The terrible power associated with these figures is often matched by their terrible sorrow, which, as it is on another plane from ordinary human experience, often goes unremarked. Enchi successfully renders Mieko's grief on an individual and a mythic scale. Yasuko and the family servant who has been with Mieko all her life are Mieko's loyal acolytes, but even they are unable to comprehend the full extent of Mieko's anguish.

A clue to this anguish is provided by the passage immediately preceding the evocation of the *Kojiki*: Mieko is

> wondering silently what power on earth might deliver her from the heavy load of karma that weighed upon her. The road down which she must blindly grope her way, helplessly laden with that unending and inescapable burden, seemed to stretch before her with a foul and terrifying blackness.[100]

Looking at the passage in Japanese shows that Enchi has deliberately

used Buddhist terms such as “karma” (業) and the “darkness” (冥く) of the unenlightened and tormented soul:

> 「何ものかこの黒い業を断ち切る力があるか．断ち切れないものを手さぐって生きていく道の何と，冥く，生ぐさい匂いに満ちていることか.」[101]

This raises echoes of *Shakkyôka* (釈教歌, Buddhist poems) by Izumi Shikibu (c.970-c.1030) and Daisaiin Senshi (964-1035), both inspired by a well known line from the Lotus Sutra. Izumi Shikibu's poem probably appeared first:

くらきより　くらき道にぞ　入りぬべき　はるかにてらせ　山のはの月

kuraki yori	From darkness
kuraki michi ni zo	on a still darker path
irinubeki	I must go.
haruka ni terase	Light the long way before me,
yama no ha no tsuki	Moon on the mountain ridge! [102]

In her *Hosshinwakashû* (発心和歌集, *A Collection of Poems for the Awakening of Faith*) Daisaiin Senshi wrote:

くらきより　暗きにながく　入りぬとも　尋ねて誰に　とはんとすらん

kuraki yori	From darkness
kuraki ni nagaku	into darkness,
irinutomo	on and on I'll plunge -

tazunete tare ni	but whom can I turn to
towan to suran	to show me the way? [103]

Mieko, like the early poets, faces eternal darkness, but her situation is by far bleaker than theirs. They have some hope of enlightenment or a guide, but she is completely alone in the darkness with her burden. Enchi has added an overwhelming sense of twentieth century nihilism and despair to the ancient weight of sin and misery. Enchi suggests that this dark fate of women is the consequence of their designation as corrupt beings. This concept derives from Buddhism, and is a belief voiced by Genji, who ponders, "But what was the good of trying to please women? If they were not fundamentally evil, they would not have been born as women at all." [104]

Women throughout the ages have been oppressed by this religious dogma, but Enchi undermines it with the astute conclusion to Mieko's essay on Rokujô and Genji's other ladies:

> Just as there is an archetype of woman as the object of man's eternal love, so there must be an archetype of her as his eternal fear, representing, perhaps, the shadow of his own evil actions. The Rokujô lady is an embodiment of this archetype.[105]

Women who (attempt to) openly act in fulfilment of their own desires, rather than acquiesce to male wishes, are perceived as threatening, and some mechanism, religious, political or social, is found to subordinate them. Yet, despite the odds in favour of men, male dominance is perpetually unstable; Mieko's perfidious

husband is paid back in his own coin, and even heroic Genji cannot achieve perfect harmony with the women he assembles in the Rokujôin palace. Enchi also uses the situation of the twins Harume and Akio to show how in the struggle of the sexes man may damage woman more, but that in so doing cannot evade storing up harm for himself. The twins are represented as so alike that they as it were form a unified human being, but in the womb Akio's feet press on Harume to cause her brain damage. Akio as an infant shows antipathy to Harume, but years after she is sent away something lacking in his life makes him seek his death on Mount Fuji. His body is covered by an avalanche, so that the "mountain seemed like a snow goddess, clutching Akio tightly to her and refusing to give him up." [106] Pointedly, on two of Harume's appearances she sings a haunting snow country ballad;

雪こんこ	Snow is falling,
雪こんこ	snow is falling;
あの小路消えた	the lane is gone,
あの橋消えた	the bridge is gone,
真白に埋んだ ...	buried in white ...
うたちゃ，うたちゃ	alas, alas,
兄者に通う	the road to my sweetheart's house,
道みんな消えた ...	vanished from sight.[107]

In the battle of the sexes both sides are diminished.

Other literary allusions in *Masks*

The literary allusions discussed so far have involved supernatural planes but functioned primarily to enrich Enchi's psychological portrait of women. Four other texts are referred to in *Masks.* Ibuki refers to the Heian texts *Midnight Awakening* (*Yoru no Nezame*) [108] and *The Tales of Ise* (*Ise Monogatari*) [109] , which serves to give the reader a broader picture of spirit possession and the role of the *miko.* After Mikame takes Yasuko and Mieko on an outing to Atami, Ibuki, his rival for Yasuko, mocks Mikame for behaving like a character in Ozaki Kôyô's novel *Demon of Gold* (*Konjiki Yasha*, 1903).[110] This novel's most famous scene, when the hero loses his beloved to a villainous rival, is set on the beach in Atami. Enchi is adopting Atami as a modern *utamakura* (famous place codified for literary allusion), to ironically reinforce her themes of jealousy and the tragic outcome of romance.

The Tales of Ise are mentioned again when Yasuko quotes the high priestess of Ise's poem to Ariwara no Narihira, the first half of a poetic dialogue;

君や来し われや行きけむ おもほえず 夢かうつつか 寝てか覚めてか

Kimi ya koshi	Did you come, I wonder,
Ware ya yukiken	Or was it I who went?
Omôezu	I scarcely know -
Yume ka utsutsu ka	Was it dream or reality,
Nete ka samete ka	Did I sleep or wake? [111]

Her literary reference to a famous and refined love affair serves to elevate the triangular relationship between Yasuko, Ibuki and Harume, which might otherwise risk being viewed as degenerate by the reader. By recalling *The Tales of Ise* Enchi also enriches her themes of love and loss, love and deception, and the confusions and convergences of appearance and reality. Yasuko does not follow through with Narihira's poetic reply, but his poem is invariably placed in conjunction with the Ise Priestess's poem, and Enchi presumes that her literate reader will recall it:

かきくらす 心の闇に まどひにき 夢うつつとは 世人さだめよ

Kakikurasu	I am lost in the
Kokoro no yami ni	total darkness of my heart -
Madoiniki	people of this world
Yume utsutsu to wa	you decide for me if love
Yohito sadameyo.	was dream or reality.[112]

The vocabulary of this poem is full of Buddhist significance, in keeping with the themes of darkness/unenlightenment (kokoro no yami) and confusion/suffering (madou), which have previously been associated with Mieko. In Buddhist terms it is necessary to awaken from the world of appearances/illusions/dreams (yume) to gain the world of truth/reality (utsutsu). In the course of the novel Enchi leads all her major characters along the painful trajectory from (self) illusion towards full knowledge of reality.

In contrast to the refined allusions to *The Tales of Ise*, Enchi's references to *Peony Lantern* (*Botan tôki*), a melodramatic tale of a

"youth seduced by a dead beauty" [113], add a pure storyteller's frisson. This legend was originally Chinese, but exists in multiple versions, including several with Japanese characters. In 'Watashi to koten' Enchi relates how in her youth she saw *Botan dôrô* on stage, the version by the famous rakugo raconteur Sanyûtei Enchô (1839-1901), and was then told by the bookworm cousin who lodged with them that Ueda Akinari adapted elements of the tale in his *Kibitsu no kama* (*The Cauldron of Kibitsu*). Ueda was one of Enchi's favourite authors, so she then read Ueda's tale repeatedly. Even though her youth precluded any real understanding of the passion between men and women she found the story's unnerving beauty irresistible, and it continued to draw shivers from her for years after.[114] She succeeded in recreating its effect. Ibuki, caught up in a strange double affair with Yasuko and her sister-in-law, knows that he is entangled in a situation that threatens to wreck his life, and yet he does not wish it to end. The hero of *Peony Lantern* pines for his lost love, regains her and is blissfully happy. He does not care that she is a ghost and that his love is causing him to waste away. Eventually the ghost steals away his spirit, and the next morning his servant finds only the mortal husk of his master. Ibuki's friend Mikame not only draws the parallel between Ibuki's situation and *Peony Lantern*, but remarks repeatedly on how similarly emaciated his friend has become.[115] Ibuki has been lured into Mieko's enchanted, poisoned world, which turns increasingly ominous as its events diverge from the normal social code.

Conclusion

In her essay 'Onna no himitsu' Enchi wrote

> It was after Japan's defeat when women's lives changed fundamentally. What we can thank the American Occupation for after all is the implementation of co-education and the establishment of women's rights on a level equal to those of men ... Young women nowadays are indeed eloquent in asserting themselves in person and on paper.
>
> On the other hand, however, I wonder if the young women of the post-war era have not lost something ... to define that loss would be to say that they lack shadows; they lack the secrets that belonged to women only, welling forth deep in their hearts and never allowed to flow outside themselves.
>
> It is of course impossible to expect young women of the present day to have the Nô female mask style of submerged identity, but I hope that they do not become so absorbed in asserting themselves, participating in public debates and solving problems that they become too obvious and insubstantial. I would like them to realise that converting all emotion and wisdom into words makes dreary things of women.[116]

The title of this essay is significant: 'Women's secrets'. Enchi writes with a dual purpose. She writes with respect and compassion to cast light on some of women's secrets, and uses her lyric gifts to indicate where other secrets remain in the shadows, unknown and unknowable. Unknowable, but not unapproachable, and so Enchi's

writing celebrates the mysterious realms of the psyche. Literature dedicated to exploring such enigmatic territory will inevitably preclude finite interpretation. This again is a cause for celebration, and Enchi's fiction constantly incites the reader to go beyond the confines of its pages - to look at a Nô mask, remember a grandmother's story, or read a poet of a thousand years ago, and to find pleasure in a myriad of things.

As a person and a writer Enchi is steeped in her country's literature. The literary effects she prizes are beauty and ambiguity, tinged with darkness, and she attempts to reproduce these in her own works. To do this it comes as second nature to evoke the literary works of her predecessors. For Enchi literature is both the result and the expression of a passion for life. Her recreation of the romance of the past gives priority to aesthetic values, and Enchi is adept at describing the masks - beautiful, cruel, deluded, dispassionate, forlorn - that humans wear as they play out their roles in life.

Enchi writes to sway both the heart and the mind. The acute awareness of historical and modern social realities (particularly as they affect women) that Enchi conveys adds vital significance to her work. She was alert to the changes in the circumstances of Japanese women that took place during her own lifetime, especially after the Pacific war [117], and usually gave her tales contemporary settings in order to speak with more direct force to her readers. Yet her fiction is a constant reminder of the historical continuum between past and present, and forms a triumphant link between literature and life, tradition and modernity.

Notes

1. For instance, six collections of Japanese women writers' fiction translated into English have appeared since 1982: Yukiko Tanaka's and Elizabeth Hanson's *This Kind of Woman* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982); Phyllis Birnbaum's *Rabbits, Crabs, Etc.* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1982); Makoto Ueda's *The Mother of Dreams* (Tokyo/New York: Kodansha, 1986), which also includes works by male authors; Yukiko Tanaka's *To Live and To Write* (Seattle: The Seal Press, 1987); Yukiko Tanaka's third collection, *Unmapped Territories* (Seattle: Women in Translation, 1991); and Noriko Mizuta Lippit's and Kyoko Iriye Selden's *Japanese Women Writers* (Armonk: M.E.Sharpe, 1991). More full length novels by Japanese women are also being translated, ranging from Uno Chiyo (born in 1897) to Yoshimoto Banana (born in 1964). See Chieko I. Mulhern's *Japanese Women Writers: A Bio-critical Sourcebook* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994) for comprehensive details of Japanese women writers whose work has been translated into English.
2. De Beauvoir, p. 15.
3. See Gilbert and Gubar, p. 3. They take this quotation from Gerard Manley Hopkins's letter to Richard Watson Dixon, 30 June 1896, in Abbott, C.C. (ed.), *The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon* (London, 1935).
4. Woolf, p. 114.
5. 'Ochô josei bungaku to gendai bungaku', p. 208.
6. See Hijiya-Kirschnereit, p. 146.
7. See *Uso makoto nanajûyonen*, pp. 111-113.
8. "Für mich zählt nicht, ob ein Werk von einer Frau oder von einem Mann stammt. Wichtig ist nur, ob es literarischen Reiz hat." cited by Hijiya-Kirschnereit, p. 147.
9. Rieger, p. 5.

10. Hulvey (1995), p. 169.
11. The forerunner of the Association of Women Writers was founded in 1922 by Hasegawa Shigure, who also published *Nyonin Geijutsu*, the women's cultural journal which gave a start to many promising female authors. Hasegawa's society was suppressed during the war, and afterwards the Association was established with Uno Chiyo as chairperson in 1951. Hirabayashi Taiko took over in 1955, followed by Enchi in 1959, who led it for more than a decade.
12. Cixous, p. 246.
13. Tanizaki, p. 8.
14. *Kikujidô* (*Chrysanthemum Youth*, 1984) uses a male character to investigate the theme; *Yûkon* (*Wandering Spirit*, 1970) and *Saimu* (*Coloured Mist*, 1975) use female characters.
15. This novel, made into a film directed by Kobayashi Masaki in 1985, is one of Enchi's better known works in Japan. See Uesaka, pp. 351-368, for further details.
16. *Enchi Fumiko zenshû*, 16 vols (Tokyo: Shinchôsha, 1978).
17. Jackson, pp. 6-7.
18. Miyoshi, p. 11. Also relevant is Edward Fowler's interesting indication of the exclusionary factors affecting the transmission of female writers - see Fowler, p. 2 and p. 27.
19. Miyoshi, pp. 209-210.
20. *The Waiting Years*, p. 11.
21. Ibid, p. 30.
22. Ibid, p. 43.
23. Ibid, pp. 45-46.
24. Ibid, pp. 77-78. Enchi follows historical facts closely but not identically. Yukitomo's superior, the fictional governor of Fukushima, is called Kawashima Michiaki, whereas the historical governor, appointed in 1883, was Mishima Michitsune. Mishima was indeed authoritarian, and repeatedly closed down public lectures sponsored

by the Liberal Party chapter in Fukushima. (Enchi has Yukitomo kill the Liberal Party member at a secret meeting.) Mishima's road-building project, to be implemented by forced labour and tax increases, aroused popular opposition. It can be noted how Enchi teasingly challenges her readers' knowledge of history in the way she names her characters: the historical Mishima's name (三島) is literally given a new twist when he becomes the fictional Kawashima (川島), and the historical Kôno Hironaka (河野広中) almost playfully becomes *The Waiting Years'* Unno Takachû (海野高中). Unno, one of the *jiyûminken undô* dissidents punished by Yukitomo, turns up later as a member of Itagaki Taisuke's Liberal Party, and Itagaki (1836-1919) was indeed the historical leader of the Liberal Party.

The *Ashio kôdoku jiken* (Ashio copper poisoning case) was of course the first of Japan's long-running industrial pollution tragedies. Deforestation around the mine, reopened in 1871, caused repeated flooding, with the floodwaters carrying pollutants over residential and agricultural land. (Although the mine closed in 1973 rice from the affected areas still contains high levels of dangerous residues.) Smoke from the copper refinery destroyed crops and also villagers' livelihoods, resulting in the forced abandonment of several villages. Pollution affected the prefectures of Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, Ibaragi and Chiba. Moreover, the mine's exploitation of its workers was so severe that they were driven to revolt in 1907.

25. See *Uso makoto nanajûyonen*, p.112. Also see Enchi's essay 'Onna no hisohisobanashi', p. 97.
26. 'Skeletons of Men', p. 422.
27. *The Waiting Years*, p. 105.
28. If Enchi's use of symbols is consistent, the positive reading is probably correct. A yellow butterfly is used as a symbol of life and hope in *Aijô no keifu* (愛情の系譜, *Lineage of Love*, 1961), cited by Rieger, p. 123.

29. As Mikame says, "A man may try as hard as he likes, but he'll never know what schemes a woman may be slowly and quietly carrying out behind his back. Children - think what endless trouble men have gone to over the ages to persuade themselves that the children their women bore belonged to them! ..." *Masks*, p. 133.
30. *Masks*, p. 57.
31. 'Skeletons of Men', p. 418.
32. Quoted by Okuno Takeo in his afterword to *Ake o ubau mono*, p. 180.
33. See Bargen, pp. 170-171.
34. Pounds, p. 175.
35. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ch. 14.
36. See Sunaga, p. 257-258.
37. The proof for this can be found in *Masks*, p. 110: after making love with Ibuki Harume's masugami mask face has "a smile of physical satiety curving her mouth."
38. See Uesaka, p. 149. NB. By giving Tomo the *kanji* 倫 (meaning ethics/morals) for her name, Enchi makes the desired reading of her character very plain.
39. *Masks*, p. 138.
40. Komparu, p. 238.
41. Shirasu, p. 9.
42. *Masks*, p. 141.
43. Komparu, pp. xxiii-xxiv.
44. From the final speech in *Aoi no Ue*, translated by Goff, p. 139.
45. Komparu quotes from the Nô text of *Nonomiya*, p. 323. Goff's version of the same line is "nothing ever escapes the bonds of retribution", Goff, p. 144.
46. Goff, p. 129.
47. Brazell, p. 221.
48. Ibid.

49. Goff, pp. 198-199.
50. Waley, p. 501.
51. All the quotations by Genji can be found in Waley, p. 502. It is interesting to compare Murasaki Shikibu's defence of fiction with the justification for writing poetry in the preface written by Daisaiin Senshi (964-1035) to her poetry collection *Hosshin Wakashû* - for this refer to Kamens.
52. 「私はおんなと男という性の間には必ず越えがたい差があり，その解けない秘密が二つの性を牽引しあうモチーフになっていることを信じている.」 'Onna no himitsu', p. 86.
53. For a fuller discussion see Shirane, pp. 172-177.
54. Jackson, p. 4. It is not invariably women who are silenced; Tanizaki had to self-censor his wartime translation of *The Tale of Genji* because no hint of illegitimate claims upon the throne (Fujitsubo's son by Genji) could accrue to the Japanese imperial line.
55. 'A Bond for Two Lifetimes - Gleanings', p. 44.
56. Hulvey (1995), p. 189. Examples of such characters are Jôsuke in 'A Bond for Two Lifetimes - Gleanings', Harume in *Masks* and Ichige Masatoshi in 'Boxcar of Chrysanthemums'.
57. The original Kikujidô was the favourite of an eighth century B.C. Chinese ruler, who accidentally committed lèse majesty. The ruler refused to allow his execution, but was forced to banish his favourite to the mountains. Before the boy left his master vouchsafed him two Buddhist verses, the recital of which would ensure not only his safety but also his eternal salvation. To ensure he would not forget the verses, the Kikujidô wrote them on the leaves of a chrysanthemum plant, with the result that the dew from the plant became as sweet as honey and conferred long life. The Kikujidô did not become immortal, but lived content for many generations alone on his mountain, drinking chrysanthemum dew and retaining his youthful beauty. The Kikujidô legend is part of Chinese and Japanese folklore.

There is, incidentally, a poignant reference to the Nô play *Kikujidô* in *Masks* (p. 20), relating the story of the Nishijin weaver who worked so hard to complete a robe in time for the play's performance that he died. His ghost came to watch the performance. The episode is a beautiful illustration of the sacrifice of life for art, a theme that also pervades Enchi's novel *Kikujidô.*

58. For the account of Shigeno's dream see *Kikujidô,* pp. 26-29.
59. In addition to her modern rendering of *The Tale of Genji* she translated or wrote commentaries on *Taketori monogatari, Kagerô nikki, Izumi Shikibu nikki, Yowa no nezame,* and *Tsutsumi Chûnagon monogatari* from Heian literature; *Otogizôshi, Gikeiki,* and *Soga monogatari* from medieval literature; *Ugetsu monogatari* and *Harusame monogatari* from the Edo period; and various Nô, jôruri and Kabuki plays.
60. Brower and Miner, p. 14.
61. A brief selection of twentieth century writers drawing on Japanese classical literature (not in order of merit): Hori Tatsuo (1904-1953) published *Kagerô no nikki* in 1937, a modernised and reshaped version of Michitsuna no haha's original, and again extrapolated from it in his *Hototogisu* (1938). Hori's *Arano* (*Wasteland,* 1941) is derived from the late Heian setsuwa collection *Konjaku monogatari.* Setouchi Harumi (1922-) translated *The Confessions of Lady Nijô* (*Towazugatari,* c.1313) into modern Japanese, and draws from *The Tale of Genji,* Matsuo Bashô (1644-1694), Ihara Saikaku (1642-1693) and Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724) in writing her stories, which have contemporary settings. Mishima Yukio (1925-1970) wrote modern Nô plays, retaining elements from original Nô plays, but adding twists appropriate to the twentieth century. Tanabe Seiko (1928-) has written many books with historical themes, has translated and revised *The Tale of Genji* to give it a modern flavour, and written a parody of it in Osaka dialect. Oba Minako (1930-) used Urashima Tarô, a figure long familiar to all Japanese through setsuwa

and folklore, in her novel *Urashimasô* (1977). Ariyoshi Sawako (1931-1984) loved traditional performing arts. Her *Ichi no ito* (1964) and *Izumo no Okuni* (1967) reflect her knowledge of jôruri and Kabuki.

62. For a discussion of *byôbu-uta*, see Rodd and Henkenius, p. 10.
63. The character of the writer - not named but obviously Mishima - specifically identifies *Winter Journey* and Schubert. See 'Fuyu no tabi', p. 119.
64. *Masks*, p. 13, and *Onnamen*, p. 853. Note that the original Japanese for Juliet Winters Carpenter's translated phrase "a Moronobu print of a courtesan" in *Onnamen* is actually 「菱川派の浮世絵の花魁」(ie. an ukiyoe painting by the Hishikawa school of an oiran, or grand courtesan).
65. For example, see *Masks* p. 79, when Ibuki takes his leave of Mieko and Yasuko at their house: "He felt like a man being escorted by two prostitutes down the hall of a brothel in some long-ago time."
66. For example, see Mieko's essay in *Masks*, p. 57, "Perhaps it is true, as Buddhism teaches us, that this power [that women have over men] constitutes woman's greatest burden and delusion - and ultimately her greatest sin. But the sin is inseparable from a woman's being. It is a stream of blood flowing on and on, unbroken, from generation to generation."
67. See, for example, Ibuki's exposition on this subject in *Masks*, p. 77, "Shamanesses do tend to go from being strictly mediums into being prostitutes as well. The state of inspiration itself is intensely physical, heightening a person's sensuality to the furthest degree (unlike intellectual labor, which dimishes sexuality), so that the body of a medium in a trance comes to seem the very incarnation of sex.

    There is an episode in the *Tales of Ise* in which Ariwara no Narihira visits his younger cousin the high priestess of Ise and exchanges a vow of love with her. The fact that of her own accord she goes into Narihira's bedchamber at night, despite her supposed

chastity, is interesting because it shows that she took a shamaness's view of sex, as something intrinsically sinless. That's why it seems to me that in order to bribe those Heian servant women who acted as mediums, not only material goods but also romance might have been used to win them over. The shamaness's decline in fortune as she falls into a mixture of eroticism and psychic power would make a fascinating study."

68. Works with *miko* as figures of central importance include: *Namamiko monogatari* (*The Tale of the False Shamaness*, 1965), which is set at the time of the Heian emperor Ichijô and his empress Teishi, with power in the hands of the regent Fujiwara Michinaga. The classical work that Enchi draws on for her own purposes in this novel is *Eiga Monogatari* (*The Tale of Flowering Splendour*, c.1028), attributed to Akazome Emon, another accomplished female writer. *Yûkon* (遊魂, *Wandering Spirit*, 1970) and *Saimu* (彩霧, *Glowing Mist*, 1975) also feature *miko*.
69. *Masks*, p. 39.
70. Kannon in Japan and Kuan-yin, her equivalent in China, are usually depicted as female, but probably descend from the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara in Indian Buddhism (which preceded East Asian Buddhism), and who was male - see Paul, pp. 245-278, for an account of this bodhisattva. Androgyny, mainly associated with Harume and Akio, and also Nô, is a pervasive theme of this novel, so it is significant that Yasuko should be linked with a bodhisattva of indeterminate gender.
71. Her father, Ueda Mannen, was a well known professor of linguistics at Tokyo University.
72. 「読書の世界では, 私には明らかに故郷があり, それが日本文学の古典であることを認めないではいられない.」 'Koten to tomoni', p. 50.
73. Referred to by Ibuki in *Masks*, p. 38. The original *Asagao Nikki* (朝顔日記) was a *yomihon* by Yamada Kakashi (the pen name of

Chikamatsu Tokuzo (1751-1810), which became the source for both a Kabuki and a jôruri play.

74. See Barry Jackman's bibliography, pp. 241-242, and introduction, pp. xii-xxiii to his edition of Ueda Akinari's *Tales of the Spring Rain.*
75. 'A Bond for Two Lifetimes: Gleanings', p. 47.
76. See *Ake o ubau mono*, p. 9. Ssu-ma Ch'ien suffered castration as a political punishment, but resolved not to despair, and found consolation in the writing of his *Shih Chi* (史記, Japanese reading *Shiki*, *Records Compiled by the Historian*), a classic which retains importance even now. The reference is appropriate because Shigeko has been depressed by the loss, as she sees it, of her female identity, following operations to remove her breast and uterus. The reference is probably pertinent to Enchi too, throwing herself into creative writing to counterbalance the negative feelings occasioned by her own mastectomy and hysterectomy.
77. "No bird soars too high if he soars with his own wings", *Ake o ubau mono*, p. 91, quoted by Enchi from William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793), 'Proverbs of Hell' section, line 15. At this point in the novel Shigeko is contemplating moving out of her guardian's house, as she fears her political activities may compromise his official position. She wishes to explore possibilities in her life to the full, without being held back by scruples on the behalf of others. Again there are parallels with Enchi's life; when she was young she had left-wing political sympathies, which she restrained so as not to cause her father embarassment. She did however maintain a lifelong friendship with the proletarian novelist Hirabayashi Taiko (1905-1972).
78. See *Ake o ubau mono*, p. 111. Shigeko recalls 'Ryûsa no hanareya' (流砂の離屋), which I identify as Stevenson's 'The Pavilion on the Links', first published in 1880.
79. 「それが慈童であることは確かであるが，顔は能面のそれではなく，富

岡鉄斎の描いた慈童であった.」, *Kikujidô*, p. 27.

80. The description of the masugami mask which opens the second chapter is taken from Nogami's *Nô Mask Commentary* (能面解説, *Nômen kaisetsu*, c.1937).
81. Kawabe is mentioned in *Masks*, p. 4 and p. 75, and Shimôjo on p. 107.
82. There are diverse and intriguing parallels between Enchi and Murasaki Shikibu. Both women came from cultured families (for details of Murasaki's literary lineage, see Bowring (1996), p. xxxiii) and were studious by nature, fitting them, in Murasaki's case, to master both Chinese and Japanese classics (see Bowring (1996), pp. 57-58), and, in Enchi's case, to range over world literature in addition to being as at home in classical as modern Japanese. In an unassuming way both liked to display their erudition (for an example of Murasaki's see Bowring (1996), pp. 5-6). Murasaki found solace in books (see Bowring (1996), p. 34 and p. 55), a tendency shared by Enchi. Murasaki remarks on the contrast of black hair and white dresses or white skin (see Bowring (1996), p. 19), and Enchi also inclines to this colour combination in, for example, her striking descriptions of Harume's pallor and luxuriant black hair (one of many examples is *Masks*, p. 73), or the snow scene at Kinomiya shrine (see *Masks*, p. 95). Bowring remarks on Murasaki's sophisticated treatment of time (see Bowring (1996), pp. li-lii), and many of Enchi's fictions have a complex double or triple time scheme. Both women had one daughter; Murasaki's achieved literary success as a poet (known as Daini no Sanmi), but so far Enchi's daughter has only ventured into print with recollections of her mother.
83. 「私は，漢文学の場合には殆ど思想と言葉だけを味わっただけだったが，英文学の場合には東洋の言葉の構成とはっきり違うものをその中に見て戸惑いし，一時は，そういう文章で自分の小説などをつくって行こうと，苦労した時代がある.」, 'Koten to watashi', pp. 170-171.

84. 「現実的にモデル探しをすると，私は六条御息所の中に「かげろふ日記」の作家，右大将道綱の母の投影しているのを感じる.」'Onna no himitsu', p. 83.
85. Enchi's opinion is first summarised, then quoted from 'Ochô josei bungaku to gendai bungaku', pp. 209-210.
86. See 'Ochô josei bungaku to gendai bungaku', p. 210.
87. *Masks*, p. 56. This is Juliet Winters Carpenter's translation of poem 44 of *Murasaki Shikibu-shû*. Bowring's translation is as follows:

    "Someone had drawn on a scroll the grotesque form of a woman who was possessed. Behind her a young priest was binding down a former wife who had become a devil. The husband was exorcising the spirit by reading sutras. I wrote:

Naki hito ni	Although his dead wife
Kagoto wa kakete	Becomes the pretext,
Wazurau mo	Is he not in fact
Ono ga kokoro no	Wracked by devils
Oni ni ya wa aranu	That lie within?"

    Bowring (1982), p. 231.
88. See Shirane's discussion of this poem, p. 115-116.
89. See *Masks*, pp. 51-52. (Enchi's and Mieko's argument could indeed be justified; reference to *The Tale of Genji* shows that the malevolent spirit attacks on Yugao, Aoi and Murasaki take place when Genji is present, and during periods of psychological vulnerability for him, when he is wracked by guilt, grief or other kinds of mental anguish.)
90. See 'Rokujômiyasudokoro-kô', p. 346 and p. 350.
91. *Masks*, p. 51.
92. Ibid, p. 52.
93. *The Tale of Genji*, p. 664.
94. *Masks*, p. 55.
95. Keene (1966), p. 196.
96. Komparu, p. 238.

97. *Masks*, p. 55.

98. Shirane, p. 23. Michele Marra also believes that "Japanese literature is far less "harmonious" and much more engaged in political discourse than both nativist and aesthetic scholars may be ready to admit." Marra, p. 4.

99. *Masks*, p. 127. Cf. Chapters 9 and 10 in Donald Philippi's translation of the *Kojiki.*

100. *Masks*, p. 126.

101. *Onnamen*, p. 909.

102. This waka was first anthologised in the *Shûishû* (poem 1342), but was taken here from Izumi Shikibu's poem collection, p. 27, poem 151. In this edition Fumio Shimizu reproduces and glosses the line from the Lotus Sutra as follows:

    法華経化城喩品「従冥入於冥、永不聞佛名。」（冥（くら）きより冥（くら）きに入（い）りて、永（なが）らく佛名（ぶつみょう）を聞（き）かず）.

103. Kamens, p. 107. Also see Kamens, pp. 36-41, for discussion of Daisaiin Senshi's poetic use of the Lotus Sutra, discussion of *Shakkyôka* and comparison of Daisaiin Senshi's *waka* with Izumi Shikibu's.

104. *The Tale of Genji*, p. 666.

105. *Masks*, p. 57. Mieko embodies the dark side of female nature; in contrast an analogy is drawn between Tomo and Lady Vaidehi (see *The Waiting Years*, pp. 141-144), the first person to whom Buddha imparted the teachings of the Pure Land. Lady Vaidehi, through no fault of her own, suffers terrible tribulations, but instead of seeking revenge, chooses always to react with virtue.

106. *Masks*, p. 34.

107. *Onnamen*, pp. 880-881 and p. 911; *Masks*, p. 69 and p. 135.

108. *Masks*, p. 76.

109. Ibid, p. 77.

110. Ibid, p. 94.
111. *Masks*, p. 112, Juliet Winters Carpenter's translation of poem 69 in *The Tales of Ise* (which also appears as poem 645 of the *Kokinshû*).
112. The Buddhist interpretation and translation of poem 646 of the *Kokinshû* are taken from Burton Watson, in Sato and Watson.
113. *Masks*, p. 129.
114. See 'Watashi to koten', p. 51.
115. See *Masks*, p. 127 and p. 131.
116. 「女性の生活が，がらりと変わったのは敗戦後である．アメリカの進駐軍政治の中で，感謝していいのは何といっても男女共学の実施と女性の人権が男子と同様に認められるようになったことだと私は思っている... 現代の若い女性は自分を主張することについて，実に雄弁であり，達筆である... しかし，その半面に，戦後の若い女性は何かを失ってはいないだろうか... それは陰影のないことである．深々と内に湛えていて，決して外に溢れ出させない女独自の秘密がないことであった... 現代の若い女性に能の「女面」のような内潜性を求めるのはもとより無理であるけれども，主張し，議論し解決することの余り，簡潔明瞭に過ぎないことを私は望みたい．感情や理知の全部が言葉に変わり得るということは，何よりも女にとって味気ないことなのだということを知っていて貰いたいのである.」'Onna no himitsu', p. 86.
117. For an interesting discussion of the changes in Japanese women's circumstances post-1945, see Buckley.

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