

This book has traced a vast history, beginning in early-nineteenth-century Edo and pushing ahead, and around the globe, to settle in the postwar era. We have seen how *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* emerged as the first genuinely popular replacement (adaptation, translation expansively defined) of a tale composed for a narrow aristocratic audience at the Heian court—how *Inaka Genji* in fact created the notion of such a replacement for a popular audience. We have seen how, in the wake of Suematsu Kenchō's *Genji Monogatari* and, most significantly, of Masamune Hakuchō's discovery of Arthur Waley's *The Tale of Genji* and the publication of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's first modern-Japanese translation, *Inaka Genji* itself was replaced as a replacement of *Genji monogatari* in the popular literary field. And we have seen how—through these repeated replacements over a century and a few decades, through the circulation of discourse about these replacements, and through the circulation of discourse about the circulation of discourse about these replacements—*Genji* came to rest in a position of unparalleled prominence in the firmament of the Japanese literary canon, suspended within the finely balanced centrifugal and centripetal pulls of world and national literature.

My presentation of this history of replacement has been detailed and particular, and while I have endeavored to write in a manner accessible to readers unversed in early modern and modern Japanese literary history, I have tried not to be *too* accessible: by and large, the accommodations I made were cosmetic. I used English more than Japanese titles and provided fewer dates than is common in English-language books on Japanese literature, but I did not simplify my arguments, lard them with references to scholars and theorists who work on materials more familiar in the English-language context, or shy away from dense, involved analyses. In a lecture delivered in 1813, the German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher famously proposed that translators have two choices: “Either the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him.”<sup>1</sup> To some extent,



## Conclusion

*Turning to Translation,  
Returning to Translation*



“So that’s what lies in wait!  
But anyone with a memory  
as blurred as ours  
is not  
likely to make it back so far?”

Theodore Weiss,  
“The Future of the Past”

the same two paths present themselves to the scholar, particularly to the specialist in a subject foreign to the primary context in which her work will circulate. In writing this book, I tried to adopt something akin to Schleiermacher's second approach, asking readers to wade into the material, to give themselves up to a stream of information somewhat less tamed than much criticism in English. To an extent, I wrote this study, in English, as though I were also writing it in Japanese, always hoping to produce a book that would satisfy an audience of deeply knowledgeable but not always "theoretically inclined" Japanese scholars of Japanese literature for whom I have enormous respect and to whom I am profoundly indebted. But, of course, I was actually writing in English, hoping that my work would interest scholars in other fields.

In the introduction, I touched on the important dual role that the English language plays in this study; I described it as being, in part, a history, in English, of the possibility of writing a history like it in English. Translation, too, has played a dual role in this book, again both as a major element in the transnational, translanguagual history I have outlined and as an element of the process by which that history came into being. Perhaps the best way to frame the issue is to say that I wrote this book from the perspective not simply of a scholar, but of a scholar-translator, where the scholar-translator is conceived of not simply as a scholar who also translates, but as a scholar whose scholarship, and whose knowledge, is shaped by translation. And because this book is a dual history of the replacement of *Genji monogatari* and the creation, by means of translation, of the possibility of English-language Japanese literary studies as a disciplinary node, I have come, over the course of this project, to see increasingly clearly that scholars in this field are *inescapably* descendants of the early postwar scholars of Japanese literature, whose research often took the form of the translation-plus-introduction. This position has not been easy to occupy, and since the late 1970s, when the translation-plus-introduction came to be regarded as something to be outgrown, many who have written about Japanese literature in English have tried to act as though it was not theirs: they were critics, or critical theorists, not scholar-translators. But for all its discomfort, the position of the scholar-translator has its own particular strengths, if only we can learn better to recognize and to draw on them.

In the pages that follow, rather than weave a conventional conclusion—a look back and a summing up—I would like to reflect on the nature and the position of English-language Japanese literary studies and its relation to translation, drawing on the preceding chapters not so much as a history of the replacement of *Genji monogatari*, but as a his-

tory of the emergence of the possibility of that disciplinary node. This conclusion deals, then, less with the arguments I have made than with my methodology, and less with the ground I have covered than with the issue of how we might proceed from here. At the same time, I hope to give a sense of how this study, as an investigation of *Genji*'s early modern and modern canonization, relates to larger scholarly tides.

## Turning to Translation

Beginning in the late 1970s, scholars of literature in the United States became interested in the intricacies of canon formation—the compound of processes by which culturally authoritative figures and institutions promote certain texts as “classics” and thus attempt to ensure the continued dominance of their own value systems. In the late 1980s, a highly visible, deeply politicized discussion of the content of “the canon”—which for various reasons was often equated with the reading lists for literature classes—broke out in university English departments and then moved into other, less culturally authoritative departments and programs whose faculties taught and researched canons too marginal, in the North American context, to be described so simply, without any qualifying adjective. Books, chapters, and articles began to appear that considered various “other” canons: the African canon, the canon of *nō* plays, the Spanish canon, the Latin American canon, the Asian American canon, the jazz canon . . .

This mind-boggling expansion seems, in turn, to have helped transform the terms of the central debate. The argument about how or whether “the canon” ought to be opened up to underrepresented groups within the “Western tradition”—and, in particular, what authors to include on the syllabi of courses in English and American literature—has given way to a new discussion of what to do with all those other literatures out there: how to deal with the concept of a global canon, with the reality of the plurality of languages, and with the grand discovery that some are making, apparently for the first time, that even national literatures are multilingual. The movement that Shelley Fisher Fishkin described in her presidential address to the American Studies Association in 2004 as “The Transnational Turn in American Studies,” at least as it relates to the gradually multilingualizing study of literature in the United States, looks, from my outsider’s perspective, like a welcome backwash from the waves of critical discourse that are constantly surging from the ocean of the English department into the tidal pools of national and regional literary studies.<sup>2</sup>

It is a matter not of theory, but of waking up to the existence of others. “The globalization of English,” Paul Jay has written, “is not a theoretical formulation or a political agenda developed by radicals in the humanities to displace the canon. It is a simple fact of contemporary history.”<sup>3</sup> Jay is writing not about the English language, but about English literary studies, which he correctly observes “has been at the center of a curricular world organized along the lines of a political map, the borders of which have neatly duplicated those between modern nation-states.”<sup>4</sup> What began, then, as a “mirror, mirror on the wall”-style political brouhaha over the United States’ representation of its beauties to itself has been transformed by a dawning awareness of “literature’s relation to the historical processes of globalization.”<sup>5</sup> So, at last, *they* have noticed that “the canon” is just one among many, that the one contains many, and that the many interact as one.

Not surprisingly, the drift in interest in canon formation from the institutional center to the periphery and then, in an altered form, back again toward the center was accompanied by distinct shifts in the emphasis of the work being done. The fierce debate over pedagogy, aesthetic value, representation, and curricular reform was supplanted, in the less visible, less influential contexts of particular national literary studies, by politically minded historical investigations into the modern delineation of national/cultural identities, the transnational establishment of the institution of literature, the spread of the aesthetic concept of culture, and so on. What had begun as a debate about *what to do* evolved, in these other contexts—fields in which there was less point in debating the canons we taught, at least in terms of identity politics and representation, because they were foreign to most of our students and we were foreign to the institutions that first generated them—into a mode of looking at the past and present of literatures, especially at literatures’ relationship to the *international* rise of the modern nation-state, the process by which national canons got where they are now.<sup>6</sup> Research of this sort necessarily entailed a transnational, translanguagual perspective, since the creation of the global idea of the nation-state and its cultural props could be tracked backward only through the confluence of concepts that had emerged in mutually distant places and were elaborated in different languages. And this global viewpoint has led to what might be described, borrowing a nice turn of phrase from Emily Apter, as “the ‘comp-lit-ization’ of national literatures throughout the humanities.”<sup>7</sup> The comp-lit-ization of national literary studies as I understand it—as a border-crossing response to the realization that “literature” (in whatever language) emerged from the fraught, unequal, two-way intricacies of

trade, that the birth of “literature” (in whatever language) was heralded by the creak of mooring ropes steadying newly arrived ships in old ports—is, I suspect, a large part of what inspired “the transnational turn” in American studies; the turn toward “cosmopolitanism” in English departments; and even, paradoxically, the recent belated turn toward “world literature” in the field of comparative literature.

Contrary to the pronouncements of—to cite just one example—Jonathan Culler in *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, the American Comparative Literature Association’s 2004 Report on the State of the Discipline, I would suggest that, in trying to move beyond its fascinatingly long-lived provincialism, comparative literature has at last begun to participate in a discussion that has been part of the intellectual world of scholars working in national literatures and area studies right from the beginning. Culler proclaims that “comparative literature has triumphed” over national literary studies, from which it was formerly distinguished, “because it did not take it for granted, as did the departments of English, French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, that a national literature in its historical evolution was the natural and appropriate unit of literary study,” and because it “became the site of literary theory, while national literature departments frequently resisted, or at least remained indifferent to, the sorts of theory that did not emanate from their own cultural spheres.”<sup>8</sup>

“Literary theory” emanated, of course, from the same European cultural spheres that most scholars in comparative literature consider “their own.” And while I cannot speak for “departments of English, French, Spanish, Italian,” it is quite clear that Chinese literary studies, certainly studies of modern Chinese literature, never had the option of disregarding the West or the rest of the East the way comparative literature specialists generally disregarded China and the rest of the East, precisely because in the view of scholars of Chinese literature, “literature” and “literary studies” were all too obviously transnational concepts, products of what Lydia Liu has called “translingual practice.”<sup>9</sup> And one might note that Culler’s very inclusion of Chinese in his list of departments is a further indication of his Eurocentrism, since, as far as I know, no university in the United States or Europe has ever had an independent “Department of Chinese Literature.”

A transnational perspective is as inevitable in my own field, Japanese literature, as it is in the field of Chinese literary studies—as this book, particularly its second part, has demonstrated and as a glance at, for instance, the index of Donald Keene’s *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era* makes abundantly clear: the first entry is *À la recherche du temps perdu* (*In Search of Lost Time*); the second, *À l’ombre des*

*jeunes filles en fleurs* (*Within a Budding Grove*); the third, *ABC Library* (*Iroha bunko*) by Tamenaga Shunsui.<sup>10</sup> Throughout East Asia, at least, “literature” (Mandarin Ch. 文学 *wenxue*, K. 문학 *munhak*, J. 文学 *bungaku*) as it was re-created during modern times has always been world literature; the possibility that national literatures may one day arc into the great flow of world literature, joining what Pascale Casanova has described as “the world republic of letters,” was their whole *raison d’être*; canons were necessarily global and globally intertwined. Heated discussion of “the canon” has simply helped coax some into a greater receptivity to this perspective. The current explosion of interest in world literature emerged, to return to an earlier metaphor, from the fraught, unequal, two-way intricacies of interdepartmental trade, not the “triumph” of comparative literature.

No doubt, I am oversimplifying. The current interest in globalizing the canon is not only an outgrowth of the canon debates. But sometimes those of us who stand at the edge of the great synthesizer we might refer to as “the English department”—or, now that it is beginning to overcome its Eurocentrism, “the comparative literature department”—have to take stock, oversimplily, of our situation. The field of Japanese literary studies in the United States has a certain reputation for isolation (or, rather, this is part of our self-image, since our sort of isolation implies a lack of reputation), and it is certainly true that most of us working in this node have little, if any, expectation that our work will be widely read by scholars in other fields, except maybe, rarely, as a source of data. Michael Dutton opened his provocative genealogy of area studies, “Lead Us Not into Translation,” with the question, “Why is it impossible to imagine, much less to write, a work like Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* within Asian area studies?” adding, “It is not just about writing such a text but about having it read as something more than a description; having it read for its theoretical significance more generally.”<sup>11</sup>

To a certain extent, this relates to the movement I have been tracing, out to the margins and then back into the center, of interest in canonization: the theoretical argument about *what to do* with “the canon” turned, as the wave streamed into the little pools, into a mode of applied historical investigation; then, as research detailed the interconnectedness of concepts of literature and national literary canons, and of the processes by which both are formed and reformed, a renewed theoretical discussion of *what to do* with world literature broke out in the English and comparative literature departments. They start the debate; we apply their theories; they go on with their theorizing. It is a familiar complaint, a familiar criticism. An all-too-familiar echo of the slogan “Catch up, surpass.”

We may also say, however, that the applied historical investigations into canon formation that took place in the rather isolated, marginal contexts of national literary studies, but were necessarily transnationally and translangually oriented, have indeed had “theoretical significance more generally,” even setting aside the issue of how given scholarly works are read—that there is, or could be, less to the distinction between debates about *what to do* and applied investigations than there may, at first glance, appear to be.<sup>12</sup> *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature*, the pathbreaking collection of essays that inaugurated studies of canon formation in the marginal field of Japanese literary studies, may or may not have been read by scholars outside of Asian area studies—it was reviewed by Michele Marra in *Comparative Literature Studies* and advertised in both *PMLA* and *Critical Inquiry*, so it may well have caught the eye of a few non-specialists—but either way, it clearly was inspired by and participated in the wash and backwash of discussion of canons that has been taking place in the United States since the late 1970s. And the very meticulousness and detail that characterize its nine essays allowed it to negotiate a theoretical position of its own, combining reception theory with a more radical constructionist stance that attends to the ways in which discourse reinvents its own object, raising issues relevant to discussions taking place in other fields.

In his much quoted essay “Conjectures on World Literature,” Franco Moretti advocates what he calls “distant reading: where distance, let me repeat it, *is a condition of knowledge*: it allows you to focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes—or genres and systems.”<sup>13</sup> This term, “distant reading,” could to a certain extent be used to describe the methodology of a book like *Inventing the Classics*, with its attention to literary histories and its dedication to a particular type of “secondhand” synthesis of earlier analyses. Moretti, too, draws a distinction between studies of national and world literature, expressing his hopes for the latter. “There is,” he writes, “no justification for the study of world literature but this: to be a thorn in the side, a permanent intellectual challenge to national literatures—especially the local literature.”<sup>14</sup> But as *Inventing the Classics* and, for that matter, this book’s treatments of *Genji monogatari* have illustrated, studies of canon formation that have developed within the context of national literary studies are already “a thorn in the side” of national literatures, and this applied theoretical work continues in its own subtle way to present an intellectual challenge to studies of the local literatures of the United States. From our position on the margins, we—whoever we are—continue to

shape the center, even as the center shapes us. The discussion turns and returns.

An interesting parallel can be drawn, I think, between the apparent division of labor in literary studies in the United States into “theoretical work” (the English department, the comparative literature department) and “applied work” (national literature departments and programs, including Japanese literary studies), on the one hand—the division that Dutton laments, but that Culler points to so triumphantly—and, on the other, the apparent division of labor in the context of the global field of Japanese literary studies into “theoretical work” (scholarship in the United States and Europe, “Japanese literary studies,” Japanese scholarship that engages with foreign scholarship [*Nihonbungaku kenkyū*]) and “applied work” (“traditional” Japanese-language scholarship [*kokubungaku*], scholarship in the United States and Europe that employs the methods of “traditional” Japanese-language scholarship). Alternatively, we might turn our attention to another related, seemingly clear-cut binary: “theoretical work” (the work critics do) versus “applied work” (the work that is worked on, the subject of “theoretical work”—that is, Japanese literature itself, scholarly editions of which are invariably prepared by scholars in Japan). To some extent, these oppositions do give us an accurate picture of the situation, though the hierarchy they imply—the emphasis placed on “addressing theoretical issues,” the notion that Japanese literary studies or East Asian area studies needs scholars able to *Discipline and Punish* like Michel Foucault—is actively rejected by Japanese literary scholars of a traditionalist stripe, above all those who work on premodern literature and who tend to value wide-ranging, detailed, and accurate knowledge of primary sources; the discovery of new archival materials; and the basic ability to read and annotate difficult primary texts more than the ability to offer fresh, inventive, and overtly theoretical perspectives.

While these oppositions may exist on some level, however, such constructed dichotomies also miss the mark. There are three reasons for this. First, so-called traditional Japanese-language scholarship (*kokubungaku*) always draws on foreign scholarship—the philological methods associated with this type of research, epitomized by Ikeda Kikan’s *The Tale of Genji Collated*, which I touched on in the introduction, derived largely from Germany, after all, and the invention of “literature” as a global concept is what gave rise to *kokubungaku* in the first place and what reinvented particular works as “national literary classics,” as this book has shown with respect to *Genji monogatari*.<sup>15</sup> Second, even the most theoretically oriented scholarship on Japanese literature, at least as it relates to



premodern texts, draws on heterogeneous lineages of Japanese scholarship that predate by centuries the invention of “literature” as we know it. And finally, we must remember that “applied work” itself often, if not always, has “theoretical significance more generally.” This is particularly true in the case of national literature and area studies departments and programs in the United States that focus on literatures outside Europe, in which research inevitably draws on various methodologies and practices predominant in North America—on, in Culler’s words, “sorts of theory that did not emanate from their own cultural spheres.”

My discussion of the movement of interest in canonization from the English department to national/regional literature departments and then back into the English and comparative literature departments is a case in point. It was a fairly simple matter for Japanese literary studies to steer clear of the bogged-down dispute over “representation” in the canon so trenchantly critiqued by John Guillory in *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* because, as I observed earlier, Japanese literature is taught in the United States as a foreign literature, not as a mirror of “us readers” and “our” society.<sup>16</sup> It was not a simple matter, however, to know in which direction to steer. The approaches adopted and the issues raised in *Inventing the Classics*—the focus on the relationship of the modern Japanese canon to European formulations of literature during the nineteenth century, on competing genres, on the gendering of Japanese literature, on the relationship among various different languages used in Japan, and on the notion that “there have only been competing canons”<sup>17</sup>—were deeply influenced by the particular historical characteristics of the canons, genres, languages, and transnational relationships that the essays in the collection discuss.

This sounds commonsensical, and it is. But it is worth pausing a moment to consider the implications. There is, as I mentioned a moment ago, a tendency among academics in the United States to place theory and applied work in a hierarchical relationship: the clear, cool waters of abstract theory stream over the pebbles and sands of mundane facts, rolling them into new positions and configurations. If one must have a hierarchy—though it seems better, again, to think in terms of trade, of turns and returns—one ought to place theory on the bottom. Theoretical work channels applied work. The best sort of applied work, in my view, is not an application of theory; it is the application of nitty-gritty facts to theory; it is an attack on theory; it is itself an embodiment of theory. Examples abound. Look at D. F. McKenzie, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Jacques Derrida.

My point, in brief, is that for all the criticisms that have been catapulted back and forth between those who consider themselves “theoretically

inclined” and those who insist, with a touch of the craftsman’s pride, that their work is more solid than that, the two camps and their approaches are, in fact, mutually implicated. It is true that some scholars exhibit a marked resistance to theory, but it seems to me that, if anything, over the past decades the theory buffs all but overwhelmed this tendency with their vociferous insistence that “everything is theory,” and that it is, perhaps, this assertion that most has to be challenged, even now. At the risk of sounding a bit opaque, it seems to me that we would do well to cultivate the resistance to the resistance to the resistance to theory. We do not need any more triumphs; we have to keep trading, even trading places. Or, rather, we need to bolster our sense of ourselves as members of a discipline that will not allow us, ultimately, to identify so easily with one place or another, or with one place and then another: scholar-translators stand, inevitably, in many places at once and belong fully to none of them.

Scholars based in predominantly English-speaking contexts working on literatures composed in languages other than English, particularly literatures foreign to the cultural spheres of the United States and Europe, have to confront on a daily basis the foreignness of English, of the cultural spheres of the United States and Europe, to the languages and literatures we read and think about. When we write, we must translate. It is not an option for scholars of Japanese literature, for instance, to preserve the quotations we want to discuss untranslated, as comparative literature specialists working on European literatures sometimes do; often we do not even have the option of reproducing the original text in any but its romanized form. We cannot assume that non-specialist readers will even recognize the names of figures who loom as large in our own fields as, for instance, Europeans such as Goethe and Auerbach do in the field of comparative literature—both easily recognizable by their family names alone. And so we must expend precious space *translating* these names, and the titles of works, into cursory explanations. Conversely, when we publish or give lectures in the languages whose literatures we study, we must translate any terms that “did not emanate from [these] cultural spheres.”

In the Japanese-language edition of *Inventing the Classics* (*Sōzō sareta koten*), which was published before the English version, the word “canon” is translated three ways: 古典 (*koten/kanon*), カノン (*kanon*), and 正典 (*seiten*). The first of these translations lays the reading カノン (*kanon*)—a phonetic transcription of the word “canon”—over the word 古典 (*koten*), which is used in the title and throughout the rest of the book as a match for the “Classics” of the English title, *Inventing the Classics*. Imagine

“canon” being translated intralingually as “classics (read /kanon).” There is a peculiar contradiction here. To be sure, the English word “canon” contains a similar contradiction: its religious origins bespeak, after all, human recognition of divine, eternal value. But the three-decade history of canonization studies in the United States has overwritten the etymology of the term “canon,” giving it a new, specifically literary meaning that allows us to see value as something given rather than recognized. When *Sōzō sareta koten* was released in Japanese, the translator of the introduction had to begin by literally overwriting the Japanese word for “classics” with the Japanese transliteration of “canon”: what had to be invented, first of all, was the concept of canonization itself.

The publication of *Sōzō sareta koten* in Japanese was, in this sense, doubly important—but that is simply another way of saying that it was doubly challenging. In the introduction, a creative approach was taken to the thorny problem of the word “canon” by translating it in three ways, one of which calls up the now-submerged etymology of the word in English, contradicting the theoretical orientation of the book. This is great. It gives us a chance to stop and reflect on the theory and practice of canonization studies. Like most research into canonization, *Inventing the Classics/Sōzō sareta koten* is centered, for the most part—as its two titles indicate—on particular canonical texts. It combines a radical constructionist stance with a historical bent that aligns it with reception theory. This is a very productive approach; but at the same time, as I argued at length in the introduction, one cannot help noticing how it stresses canonical *texts* themselves, putting them at the center, treating them as historical givens—entities that are no less “received” because their reception has a history.

There is a telling slippage between the English and Japanese titles of this collection. In the English version, the act of researching the ongoing process of *Inventing the Classics* seems to acquire a theoretical thrust that ghosts the title with a *Re-*: scholarship is itself “reinventing the classics,” giving us an opportunity to reconsider *what to do*. The Japanese title, with its perfective *Sōzō sareta* (invented, created, and so on), may be back-translated into English as *The Invented Classics*. Here, scholarship is a matter of historical, archival research into the process by which the classics were invented or, perhaps, into the texts that actually were reinvented as classics, as opposed to those that have been allowed to languish. The tension between these two titles highlights, I think, a subtle, suggestive contradiction that runs through the book itself, in both languages, between method and theory. Noticing this contradiction helps us both to see the strengths of the collection’s particular combination of

approaches and to figure out how we might ride the wave it created to the next stage by reinventing not the classics, not even the “classics (read ‘kanōn),” but the whole concept of canonization as a process that has little, if any, need for classical *texts* themselves. This, of course, is one of the moves this study has attempted to make.

What we are seeing here, in something as simple as the comparison of the titles of two editions of the same book in two different languages, is an opportunity, a strength that is conferred, by the inevitable implication of multilingualism in their work, on scholars engaged in national literary studies outside the spheres in which those studies are regarded as native. The activities of reading and researching in more than one language, and above all the experience of using translations to teach students about literatures they regard, perhaps too easily, as foreign—of constantly having to translate, to compare translations to originals, to talk and think about translations, and sometimes even to produce them—can become, if we allow ourselves to be affected, a thorn in the side of our theorizing.

For scholars like me, based in the United States but engaged in the study of a national literature foreign to the cultural sphere of the United States, translation is omnipresent. The experience of drifting constantly back and forth between two languages, occasionally among a greater number, of feeling languages coursing through our bodies, commingling, forming a solution whose density shifts from one moment to the next—right now, writing this, I am almost all English—never allows us to forget, or never should, the peculiar, both-but-neither position that we occupy at the edge of the English department, washed by its waves of theory, and, in my case, at the edge of Japanese literary studies in Japan, washed by its waves of applied, archival work. Our scholarship, lying in a tidal pool somehow fed by two vast oceans, can act on the immensely valuable applied work of even the most traditionalist scholars of Japanese literature writing in Japanese—or for that matter in other languages—helping to turn the tide of their discussions so that they can return the favor and send new waves through ours; at the same time, it can also act on the valuable theoretical work conducted in English and comparative literature departments in the United States and elsewhere, helping to turn the tide of these discussions so that our own can, in turn, keep moving.

Scholars who are also translators—or translators who are also scholars—and who are eager to be given credit for the contributions they make to their field by translating have long argued that translation is a critical activity. It is, of course, but in most cases it is not the most potent form of critical activity. In some sense, translation is, like the photograph in Roland Barthes’s analysis, a “continuous message.”<sup>18</sup> Like the photogra-

pher's art (and recall how many decades it took for photography to be canonized as art), translation is seldom, if ever, automatic and results in the creation of an utterly idiosyncratic image of its subject that is, however, so perfectly idiosyncratic as to be capable of standing on its own. Critical interpretations are useful, I would contend, precisely because they are partial, incomplete, transparent; translations cover over every word of the text they interpret and—despite the prevailing English-language discourse about translation, which assumes that the ideal translation is transparent and demands that the translator be invisible, as Lawrence Venuti has demonstrated—are opaque.<sup>19</sup> A second critical work comparing the translation with its inspiration is needed to make the translation's critical thrust clear, to enable the original to shine through, to make the translation appear incomplete enough (riddled with enough “loss”) that it becomes critically useful.

Scholarly translators of literature would do much better, I suggest, to insist that their work continues to redefine the very contours of the fields in which we work by reinventing the canons we teach and thus gradually redrawing the boundaries within which secondary scholarship (as opposed to the primary scholarship of translation?) is written. We must point out, as I have been trying to do, that their inevitable ties to translation and translanguaging are one of the strengths of national literary studies, especially those that deal with literatures, languages, and cultures to which English and the cultural spheres of the United States and Europe are foreign. And we must stress and demonstrate, vociferously and frequently, that translation is an act not only of critical but, more important, of *theoretical* exploration that touches on issues fundamental to contemporary literary studies. Translation is, in fact, more than theoretical—it is a particularly intense form of research, a stream of the best sort of applied work, detailed practice gushing over the pebbles and sands of settled theories, sweeping them into new alignments and configurations. Readers of this book will have noticed that it presents an unusually extensive array of primary materials in translation, beginning with the *Yomiuri shinbun* editorial “On Writing in English” (1888); in part, I hope this will stand as a reminder of the role that translation inevitably plays in a study such as this one.

I suggested earlier that there are moments when we in Japanese literary studies, in East Asian literary studies, in Asian area studies, in area studies, and in national literary studies that deal with languages that are not English must take stock of our situation with respect to other departments. I believe this is such a time. My reasons for thinking this have precisely to do with the dual nature of translation as simultaneously

theoretical and applied work; with the inevitability of our connection to translation as an academic activity; with the very welcome surge of interest in translation that we have been seeing recently in various fields, including Japanese literary studies; with the ongoing debates in the disciplines of English and comparative literature about the global canon, globalizing literary studies, globalizing English, the comp-lit-ization of national literary studies, the transnational turn in American studies, and so on; and with the emergence, over the course of the past three decades or so, of translation studies as a discipline in its own right.

As I see it, all these factors combine to make this the perfect time for scholars in national literary studies—or at the very least Japanese literary studies, which is the one area I know a little bit about—to stop trying to pretend that they do not have so very much to do with translation, that translation is not the defining feature (one of the defining features, perhaps, though it is hard to think of any others) of the field. The spate of conferences and symposiums and panels on translation in East Asia that have taken place over the past few years, and the number of articles, chapters, dissertations, and books now being written and published that deal in one way or another with translation in East Asia, leaves no doubt that our field is already edging slowly in that direction. This is undoubtedly a very good thing. It is one way for us to reach out beyond our isolation. And yet I have a nagging sense that the direction in which we are headed is, somehow, subtly wrong.

Heartening as it is to see this sudden outpouring of interest in translation, I cannot help suspecting that the trend is unrelated to a certain internal necessity that we should perhaps be feeling, collectively, but are not. Are we, in our rush to rethink translation, simply letting ourselves be swept along like a bit of driftwood on the latest theoretical tide to emerge from the English and comparative literature departments? Our own discipline is and has always been inevitably bound up in translation, we live and work in the conjunction of languages, and the experience and act of translating have played a role in the accomplishments of every scholar and in all the scholarship in Japanese literary studies in the English-language academy to date. Translation offers us a chance to break free from the notion that our field is always trying to “catch up, surpass,” or even that it has finally caught up: from the perspective of translation studies and the global canon, we have been in the future for a long time. Which is only to say that progress is not a march but a seething—an intermingling of different tides. There was never any catching up to do, and there is no such thing as coming of age.

## Returning to Translation

The intertwined histories of translation, translations, and discourse about translation as they pertain to the disciplinary node of Japanese literary studies must, I think, be investigated. Several factors contribute to this necessity. First, there is the circumstance, already alluded to, that Japanese literary studies—most obviously, but not exclusively, in contexts outside Japan—is inevitably bound up with translation.<sup>20</sup> Not only must we translate every passage we quote from Japanese in our writings, but we have to translate important terms specific to one or another of the large academic departments around which we orbit, just as “canon” had to be translated as 古典 (*koten/kanon*), カノン (*kanon*), and 正典 (*seiten*) for the Japanese edition of *Inventing the Classics*, and just as I had to translate the names of early modern genres such as the 合巻 in this book by using both the transliteration *gōkan* and the inadequate, even inaccurate “literal” rendering “combined booklets.” More important still, as professors of Japanese literature in an English-reading context, we have to assign translations as texts in most or all of the classes we teach. To a large extent, our syllabi are determined by the availability of translations, and our syllabi shape the future of the field. Murakami Haruki and anime emerged as new subfields within Japanese literary and cultural studies because they became wildly popular in translation, not the other way around. The study of translation, translations, and the history of translation and discourse about translation is necessary, then, if we are to develop a richer understanding and a self-awareness, as a field, of one of the conditions for all our teaching and research.

My second reason for advocating research into the histories of translation, translations, and discourse about translation in our field is, quite simply, that I think if we did look back at these histories, we would find that scholar-translators were saying extremely provocative, interesting things in the 1950s and 1960s—and even, though less often, earlier. The panel “Problems of Translation from Japanese” comes to mind: it was held on March 20, 1964, at the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, and its speakers included Ivan Morris, Donald Keene, Howard Hibbet, Edwin McClellan, and Edward Seidensticker.<sup>21</sup> Or there is the searing exchange that took place between Joyce I. Ackroyd and Donald Keene from 1964 to 1965 in the pages first of *Orient/West* and then of the *Journal-Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of Japanese*.<sup>22</sup> Or James Araki’s “Japanese Literature: The Practice of Transfer,” which introduced both Walter Benjamin’s “The Task of the Translator” and the influential translation theorist Eugene A. Nida’s notion of

equivalence to Japanese literary studies.<sup>23</sup> Or Donald Philippi's thrilling description, emphasizing the perspective of the translator at the moment he or she is translating, of the process of translating Japanese to English: "Translation Between Typologically Diverse Languages."<sup>24</sup> Or Edward Fowler's well-known "Rendering Words, Traversing Cultures: On the Art and Politics of Translating Modern Japanese Fiction."<sup>25</sup>

The list goes on and on, and we could learn a lot from many of the essays it includes. Indeed, much of what was written about Japanese-English translation, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, is undoubtedly more provocative now than when it was written. In part, this is because scholar-translators in the field appear to have been more conscious then of the role that translation played in their teaching and scholarship, and thus thought and talked more often about it and more deeply; in part, it is because their different assumptions and vocabulary can help relativize and thus denaturalize our own. The concept of "difference in translation," which has been circulating in the field for three decades, becomes unnervingly fresh again the moment it is juxtaposed with the notion of "exoticism in translation," which was a major concern in the 1950s and 1960s.

My third reason for advocating this research is that unless we gain some understanding of the special issues that arise in Japanese-English translation and how they have changed over time, how translation styles and strategies have evolved, and how scholar-translators in the node of Japanese literary studies have discussed their work since at least the 1950s, our knowledge about translation will inevitably be defined to a large extent in relationship to the concerns and perspectives that have emerged in translation studies. Benjamin writes in "The Task of the Translator" that a "real translation" "may be achieved, above all, by a literal rendering of the syntax."<sup>26</sup> This statement can be debated. But if we enter into the debate too soon, without adequately preparing, we run the risk of closing off avenues of thought simply by accepting the terms of the debate. For Benjamin, "syntax" no doubt denoted the arrangement of words into sentences; the arrangement, however, was surely defined along a horizontal, unquestionably European axis. What relevance, one wonders, might the verticality of most Japanese writing have to Benjamin's notion of a "literal"—a metaphor that dies in Japanese—"rendering of the syntax"? Or, rather, how much relevance does "syntax" (and the focus on syntax that has characterized discussions of foreignizing translation strategies) have to Japanese-English translation? Should the term be redefined to make it more relevant to the particular case with which we are concerned? Should it be jettisoned altogether? Questions of this



sort are likely to arise, I think, only if we take the trouble to re-create translation studies from within Japanese literary studies. However interested individual members of our scholarly community may be in translation, we are bound to continue repeating old debates, speaking in an ill-fitting, hand-me-down language, unless we cultivate our communal awareness of issues related not to translation as a universal practice—to translation as it is heterogeneously defined in mainstream translation studies—but to translation as it is shaped by its intersection with what we also know, in Japanese, as 翻訳 (*hon'yaku*).<sup>27</sup>

The past decade or so has seen many panels and symposiums dealing wholly or in part with translation in Japan or broader swaths of East Asia, and the publication of numerous books, dissertations, essays, and articles that draw in one way or another on translation theory or translation studies—most notably, in connection to Japanese, *Translation in Modern Japan*, edited by Indra Levy, which stands as a model for its engagement, through the presentation of key translations, with Japanese-language writings about translation.<sup>28</sup> Positive though this trend is and much as I believe that it should be encouraged, I cannot help feeling that it has emerged for precisely the wrong reasons. Only a full-scale analysis of the sort that I am suggesting we need more of could illuminate the problem fully, but I can at least give a sense of how I see the situation by offering thumbnail sketches of the history of translation studies as a discipline, on the one hand, and of the history of discourse about translation from Japanese, on the other.

The field of translation studies got its name in 1972, when James S. Holmes coined it in a paper called “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies,” but the early groundwork for its emergence as a discipline was done during the 1960s. The year 1964 saw the publication of Eugene A. Nida’s *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to the Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* and the creation of the first translation workshop in the United States at the Writer’s Workshop at the University of Iowa, which also began to offer academic credit for literary translations in the same year.<sup>29</sup> In 1965 J. C. Catford published *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, and the National Translation Center was established at the University of Texas at Austin with a grant from the Ford Foundation. In 1968, two translations of Benjamin’s “The Task of the Translator” were published: James Hynd and E. M. Valk’s in the second issue of *Delos*, the newly founded journal of the National Translation Center—alongside an essay about translating *Genji monogatari* by Edward Seidensticker, as it happened—and Harry Zohn’s in *Illuminations*.<sup>30</sup>

Taken together, this series of events and publications in the 1960s can be viewed as the birth of translation studies (though still nameless) as we know it. The young discipline continued to grow in the 1970s as scholars formulated new theoretical models for thinking about the relationship between “source texts” and “target texts” and the roles that translations play in literary evolution and canon formation. In the 1980s, there was a decisive shift from a focus on source texts to a focus on target texts, languages, and cultures; from normative to functionalist theory (*Skopos* theory); and to descriptive translation studies—a movement that André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett describe in *Translation, History, and Culture* as “The ‘Cultural Turn’ in Translation Studies.”<sup>31</sup> By the late 1990s, research on translation had become common in so many fields that it was possible for these scholars to flip their first formulation around, suggesting that “the translation turn in cultural studies is now well underway.”<sup>32</sup>

Turning now to Japanese literary studies, we notice first of all that 1964 was the year in which the Association for Asian Studies panel convened and the debate between Joyce I. Ackroyd and Donald Keene began. Keene’s “A Reply to Joyce Ackroyd” was printed in the *Journal-Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* with this explanation from the editors: “Feeling that the subject of translation is of particular interest to our readers and that Professor Keene’s reply should reach the profession, we offer it here.”<sup>33</sup> In her reply to Keene’s reply, Ackroyd stated explicitly, “My intention was to protest against a theory of translation,” and proceeded to argue against the position “that the translator has the right to alter words, meaning, progression of ideas, even the social customs delineated in the story, in order to produce a ‘natural’ impression.”<sup>34</sup> In effect, then, the editors of the *Journal-Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* were declaring the importance of translation theory to Japanese literary studies at a time when translation studies did not even exist.

In fact, the panelists anticipated many of the theoretical approaches that translation studies eventually hit on: a version of what is now known as functionalist translation theory, for instance, recurs again and again in the panel. Ivan Morris opened his introductory remarks by arguing that “a literal translation from Japanese or any other language is not only difficult but impossible and indeed a contradiction in terms. The only question is *how* free we should be,” and then answered his own question: “This depends on the purpose of the translation.”<sup>35</sup> Donald Keene referred to “the basic question: for whose sake is the translation being made?”<sup>36</sup> Edward Seidensticker, too, suggested that there was a “fundamental distinction between a translation aimed at those who

have access to the original and one aimed at those who do not.”<sup>37</sup> From the perspective of translation studies, these panelists’ intense communal awareness of translation and its relationship to culture, language, the economics of publishing, and what we might now call the representation of otherness or difference—an awareness rooted in practice—was far ahead of its time.

During the 1970s, however, as the developing field of Japanese literary studies tried to modernize itself by “catching up” with the industrialized English department, translation gradually began to be thrown over by critical theory. In 1980 the editors of the *Journal of Japanese Studies* printed five papers presented at the symposium “Translation and Japanese Studies,” hoping, as Roy Andrew Miller wrote in the introduction, “that they would be able to make at least a preliminary effort toward tracking down the importance of translation in Japanese studies. The key word here is ‘preliminary.’” Miller suggested that “perhaps we in Japanese studies are now in the process of evolving a *raison d’être* for translation in which it will eventually be assigned a role somewhat parallel to the lofty position it occupied in the views of the German romantics. Perhaps also we are drawing nearer and nearer to the conclusion that translation itself is *the* discipline of Japanese studies *par excellence*.”<sup>38</sup> The participants in this symposium—among whom were Edward Seidensticker, Marleigh Grayer Ryan, Jeffrey P. Mass, Chalmers Johnson, and Dan F. Henderson—wrote again from their perspective as practicing translator-scholars.

Unfortunately, this series of ambitious, thought-provoking essays turned out not to be preliminary, not to herald anything like a new awakening to the importance of translation to Japanese studies. On the contrary, translation appears to have been on the way out for Asian studies as a whole: a prediction made by the editor of the *Journal of Asian Studies* in the “Editor’s Note” to the February 1979 issue—that “the study of translation” would soon find more space in the journal—proved to be inaccurate.<sup>39</sup> Interestingly, the editor offered this prediction in the same issue in which Masao Miyoshi’s review of Edward Seidensticker’s *The Tale of Genji* set the “difference” ball rolling, criticizing Seidensticker’s prose for being “as thoroughly English as, say, *Pride and Prejudice*” and, rather peculiarly, suggesting that the problem would be solved if only someone could “render *Genji* into the style of Virginia Woolf.”<sup>40</sup>

In the 1980s and early 1990s, a series of review articles and essays—notably, two forceful reviews by Roy Andrew Miller and H. Richard Okada of Helen Craig McCullough’s *Brocade by Night: Kokin Wakashū and the Court Style in Japanese Poetry* (1985) and Edward Fowler’s review

article “On Naturalizing and Making Strange: Japanese Literature in Translation” and “Rendering Words, Transversing Cultures”—engaged with translation from Japanese in a critical manner that could have been productive but may perhaps have had more of a dampening effect than was intended.<sup>41</sup> By 1987, Japanese literary studies had “caught up” with the theoretical English department to the extent that Norma Field could speak of “the ostentatious growth of academic disdain for translation as intellectual activity.”<sup>42</sup> At last, the scholar had been liberated from the translator, as if Dr. Jekyll had somehow shaken off Mr. Hyde; critical theory was in the course of being “naturalized,” giving us new tools to think about everything but the very conditions of the existence of our field, which we could now blissfully ignore by pretending to be just another English department. Graduate students could no longer be awarded a doctorate for producing an annotated translation with a critical introduction—the sort of work that Michel Foucault, for instance, submitted as his secondary doctoral thesis.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, Alfred Birnbaum, a freelance translator with no academic affiliation, was beginning to create his vivacious English translations of Murakami Haruki, preparing the way for what was arguably the most significant shift in English-language Japanese literary studies since Fowler’s “reigning triumvirate”—Kawabata Yasunari, Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, and Mishima Yukio—were enthroned as the representative literary figures of modern Japan.<sup>44</sup>

By now it should be fairly clear what troubles me about the recent revival of interest in translation in the node of Japanese literary studies. The problem is that we are, once again, simply letting ourselves be buffeted by waves of theory from the center. Now that cultural studies has made “the translation turn”—now that even the English department has sat up and taken notice of translation—we follow suit. We are still trying to catch up. We are trying to catch up, moreover, by running toward the very spot we were fleeing just a decade ago. This is not the right way to go about making Japanese literary studies a node for translation studies, even if those who are doing it are doing the right thing. We should be looking back at the intertwined histories of translation, translations, and discourse about translation *as they pertain to Japanese literary studies*, trying to re-create translation studies anew from within. We should be building on the theoretical perspectives that translator-scholars *working with Japanese literature* hammered together in the decades before Japanese literary studies started trying to pretend that translation is not all that important. We should be questioning and improving on theories and methodologies that have emerged from translation studies by learning to think better about translation as it intersects with *hon’yaku* from our

own perspectives as scholar-translators working with Japanese literature in English as well as in Japanese. We should not, in short, be making “the translation turn”; we should be *returning* to translation, trying to remember what we once knew so that we will know it still better tomorrow.

