

been on exploring a vast territory, much of which had been untouched prior to their effort.

Niedzielski and Preston have undertaken two difficult tasks: 1) that of bringing to light a great variety of folk linguistic comments in a U.S. setting; and 2) revealing the deeply rooted concerns and beliefs lurking behind them. The authors deal with people's comments in a way that requires familiarity with linguistics. Consequently, most of the book will be difficult for readers with little or no knowledge of linguistics. Those with a working knowledge of linguistics will find the book interesting and be drawn in by the carefully collected and transcribed data and the meticulous analysis. The book has little to offer the theoretically oriented linguist; the people the book will most likely appeal to are applied linguists, the teachers of linguistics, and linguistically oriented educators interested in serving the educational needs of their community. It will be equally appealing to ethnologists and folklorists because the authors approach folk linguistic beliefs as one of the most important aspects of ethnography and as a key to understanding a culture. It is unfortunate that they have left out of their scope the exploration of whether members of other speech communities share folk linguistic beliefs with those of English-speaking communities. For example, attitudes to AAVE, a strictly American English variety, might be similarly negative in communities where English is taught as a second language. Likewise, bi/multilingualism might not be thought highly of, but individuals learning a second tongue may be tolerated, even respected. If such similarities are indeed found to exist in the people's folk linguistic belief systems, it will be worthwhile to study the reasons for the existence of those belief systems to shed light on the nature of cultures that come into contact with English. All in all, the authors are to be applauded for being unafraid to tackle an issue that has long been left out of scholarly research in linguistics. The book is recommended to anyone interested in language and linguistics and in how ordinary people regard these topics.

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JAPAN

ENCHI FUMIKO. *A Tale of False Fortunes*. Translation by Roger K. Thomas. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000. Cloth US\$38.00; ISBN 0-8248-2135-1. Paper US\$19.95; ISBN 0-8248-2187-4.

Roger K. Thomas's translation of *Namamiiko monogatari* (なまみこ物語, 1965) is a timely gift to English readers. His translation arrives in the wake of Doris BARGEN's (1997) provocative study of representations of spirit possession in Murasaki Shikibu's *Genji monogatari* (源氏物語 ca. 1010), which has focused the renewed attention of Japanologists on issues relating to the gendered dynamics of oppression and resistance in Heian times (794–1185). Where Bargaen argues that spirit possession offered Murasaki's female characters a liminal space in which to express their ordinarily unspeakable desires, Enchi's narrative, set in Murasaki's lifetime, depicts possession as a phenomenon that could also be orchestrated for political gain. Thomas's translation follows, as well, upon the publication of Nina CORNYEITZ's *Dangerous Women, Deadly Words* (1999), which analyzes representations of female empowerment in the texts of Enchi, Izumi Kyōka, and Nakagami Kenji. Finally, it arrives amidst the recent completion of a half dozen English-language dissertations that highlight the work of Enchi Fumiko (円地文子 1905–1986).¹ Thomas's introduction and translation thus contribute significantly to a new era in Enchi studies outside of Japan.

Namamiŕo is complex in its layered narrative structure and is teeming with characters who manipulate each other for personal and political reasons. Thomas is nevertheless able to balance fidelity to Enchi's phrasing and diction with an economical fluidity of expression.² His scholarly introduction of 150 pages succinctly describes the textual features of *Namamiŕo*, situates the events of the novel within Japanese history, and explains the significance and contours of spirit possession in the Heian context. Thomas also provides a genealogical chart of the relevant emperors, empresses, and members of the dominant branches of the Fujiwara clan, thus aiding readers who may be unfamiliar with the historical figures in the novel, or who may need a reminder as to the entangled nature of the bonds that divide and connect them.

The novel itself, which Thomas states is "Enchi's most ambitious work of historical fiction and . . . arguably her best" (*False Fortunes* 1), is comprised of a prologue and six chapters. The narrator of the prologue establishes her identity as that of the daughter of the scholar Ueda Kazutoshi (who is in fact Enchi Fumiko's father; the text deliberately conflates the fictional narrator with the historical author and thus situates itself in the realm of the *shishōsetsu*, or I-novel). The narrator claims to be quoting and paraphrasing from memory an ancient manuscript that she read in her father's library as a child. The manuscript, which has since disappeared without a trace, purports to be the "story behind the story" of the ascendance at court of Fujiwara Michinaga 藤原道長 (966–1028).

Over the remaining six chapters of the novel, the narrator presents an account of how the historical Michinaga may well have staged incidents of spirit possession at court in order to dislodge his daughter's rival, Empress Teishi 定子 (976–1001), from her position as the favorite consort of Emperor Ichijō 一条 (980–1011). The narrator interweaves her modern Japanese prose with quotes from the elusive *Namamiŕo monogatari*, the so-called "historical tale" *Eiga monogatari* 栄華物語 (late eleventh century), and Sei Shōnagon's memoir, *Makura no sōshi* 枕の草子 (early eleventh century), to reveal Michinaga to be a ruthless and deceitful strategist, contrary to his idealized portrait in *Eiga*.³ Through the collision of these multiple voices, styles, and perspectives, which is underscored by the narrator's periodic comments regarding the motivations of the characters and the credibility of her textual sources, Enchi calls into question the boundaries between truth and fiction, history and literature, center and margin.

The main events in the novel span the decade 990–1001, during which time Michinaga consolidated his power over the throne by neutralizing rivals such as Teishi and her brothers. Chapters one and two introduce the principal characters of the novel, establishing Ichijō's unwavering love for Teishi, as well as the waning of Teishi's clan with the death of her father, Michitaka 道隆 (953–995). Chapters three through six record Michinaga's manipulation of events to hasten the downfall of Teishi and her allies. In contrast with *Eiga monogatari*'s portrayal of Michinaga as a generous leader blessed with good fortune, *Namamiŕo* portrays Michinaga as having instigated plots to murder Teishi and to have her falsely accused of slandering important personages. The chapters also recount the flowering of Ichijō and Teishi's love through the adversity of scandal and forced separation, although Teishi finally dies, worn out after the birth of their third child.

Although the novel is heavily populated with historical figures, the key to *Namamiŕo* lies in Enchi's deployment of two socially marginal characters, the fictional sisters Ayame and Kureha. The sisters have inherited shamanistic powers from their mother, Toyome, who served in Michinaga's household. Although Toyome's dying wish was that her daughters not endure the difficult life of a medium, Michinaga has Kureha infiltrate Teishi's staff as an unwitting mole. Eventually, both sisters are persuaded or tricked into faking spirit possessions (Ayame in chapter three and Kureha in chapter six). Both times, however, Teishi is able to

redeem herself: the first time simply by continuing to be her pure-hearted self; the second time by sending forth her spirit to confront the false medium. Unusual for an Enchi heroine, Teishi is never consumed with suppressed rage or jealousy. Yet, when she is truly threatened, she is able, like other memorable characters in Enchi's oeuvre, to engage her primal mind-body connection in order to speak her mind.

Currently, only a handful of Enchi's novels and short stories is available to English readers. However, Enchi has been favored with top-notch translators.⁴ John Bester's *The Waiting Years* (*Onnazaka*, 1957, trans. 1971), Juliet Winter Carpenter's *Masks* (*Onnamen*, 1958, trans. 1983), and now Thomas's *A Tale of False Fortunes* are superb translations that allow for stimulating classroom discussion on the eroticization and commodification of women; on the relationships between such categories as desire and power, experience and perception, good and evil, and tradition and modernity; and on conventions of intertextuality in Japanese literature.

NOTES

1. Enchi debuted as a playwright in 1926 and published the first of her novels and essay collections in 1939. Her greatest works are generally considered to have been written in the fifties and sixties. At present, although her work has been discussed in a number of thoughtful scholarly articles in English, the only in-depth study of her oeuvre is CORNYETZ 1999.

2. Thomas received the Japan-US Friendship Commission Translation Award for best classical literary translation in 2000. The infelicities are few and minor; I note one error that ought to be corrected in subsequent printings. *Oborozukiyo* is not "the emperor's [Suzaku's] favorite daughter" (*False Fortunes*, 58) but "the emperor's favorite lady 帝の愛姫" (*Namamiiko* 67, Shinchō Bunko, 1988).

3. *Eiga monogatari* is translated as "A Tale of Flowering Fortunes" by McCULLOUGH and McCULLOUGH 1980. Authorship is generally attributed to Akazome Emon, a lady-in-waiting in the household of Michinaga's principal wife. Chapters 4–7 in *Eiga monogatari* describe the same years at court as does *Namamiiko*.

4. Sadly, Enchi's thought-provoking work is largely neglected in Japan as well. Certainly, some of her writing is included in anthologies of modern writers or of women writers. Yet her Collected Works (*Enchi Fumiko zenshū*) has been out of print for years, and only a few of her novels are available in affordable, pocket-sized *bunko-bon* editions.

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