Japanese Language and Literature
Journal of the American Association of Teachers of Japanese
jll.pitt.edu | Vol. 55 | Number 1 | April 2021 | https://doi.org/10.5195/jll.2021.68
ISSN 1536-7827 (print) 2326-4586 (online)

The Story/History of Japan: Producing Knowledge by Integrating the Study of Japanese Literature and Japanese History

Peter James Kvidera

Several years ago, literary scholar Haruo Shirane identified a concerning trend in Japanese literary studies.[1] Citing both a general shift in the humanities toward modern studies and a specific shift in student interest toward contemporary Japan, he lamented what he saw as a diminishing focus on Japan's past. Even if these changes helped undermine Orientalist tendencies (which he noted as a happy result), Shirane found that, as theoretical and comparative inquiry came to dominate Japanese studies, students and scholars began to ignore the evolutionary development of Japanese literature and, accordingly, overlook important connections between pre-modern/early modern and modern/contemporary literary enterprises. He claimed that an adequate understanding of modern and contemporary Japanese culture required a return to comprehensive, historical study of Japanese literature. The issue at hand was how to revitalize intellectual curiosity to the whole of Japanese literary studies. To address this problem, Shirane argued that literary studies (of any historical era) "must interact with and be closely linked to other disciplines including history, religion, art history, and linguistics."[2] Only by crossing disciplinary boundaries could instructors achieve the level and intensity of intellectual discourse that attracts students and future scholars; only by crossing disciplinary boundaries could instructors adequately analyze key issues touching all periods and genres of Japanese literature, including power, subjectivity, and the commodification of culture. He contended that these issues are in fact universal and help students engage more readily in texts they may otherwise find inaccessible. To open up literature through these issues, however, we need not only develop theoretical connections and comparative frameworks between disciplines; we must

"combine or work in at least two fields within Japanese studies, such as literature and history, literature and visual arts, literature and religion, or literature and linguistics." In the end, he argued, "literary study independent of history simply will not exist in the future."[3]

While Shirane's call to action for strategic, interdisciplinary work is now nearly two decades old, I find continued relevance in his recommendation, particularly for the circumstances in which I teach Japanese literature. His argument for integration of Japanese literary study and analysis of Japanese politics, economics, religion, and society has, in fact, reinforced important scholarly endeavors before him, and it has shaped how Japanese literature has been presented in the years that followed publication of his 2003 article. For example, Ivan Morris, in the introduction to his classic—and enduring—anthology *Modern Japanese Short Stories* (first published in 1962 and most recently republished in 2019), directly addressed the use of history in studying Japanese literature.[4] He warned that a focus on historical contextualization could limit interpretation so that stories are understood simply to represent certain time periods or schools of writing and not stand as individual works of art. However, he acknowledged that with writing as remote from most Western readers as that of Japan, the historical approach was necessary, otherwise, what is not familiar becomes the exotic—certainly one of Shirane's concerns.[5] Morris's introduction to this volume self-consciously explains how important features of modern Japanese fiction, such as the autobiographical/confessional *shi-shōsetsu* tradition (the "I-novel") and the nihilism that often accompanies it, emerge directly in response to the political and social conditions of the Meiji Restoration and beyond. Though focusing on the modern era, Morris anticipated what Shirane would later argue: contextualizing literature within an historical period—seeing it as a response to the realities and challenges of an era—is essential to interpretation. Shirane, however, asked for more than just contextualizing. He also advocated for examining Japanese literature through disciplinary lenses, using disciplinary methodologies to arrive at the larger thematic and conceptual features of the literary text. So, it was not merely placing literature within an historical era or alongside a political movement, but demonstrating how literary and historical modes of analysis, together, offer a more complex and complete picture of Japanese culture and society.

If we look at recent collections of Japanese literature, we find that Shirane himself and other scholars follow the argument he established in

presenting Japanese literature to readers. For example, in his edited volume, *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600* (2012), Shirane arranges each section according to period (Ancient, Heian, Kamakura, and Muromachi) and includes a brief historical overview of the major political, social, and economic developments of the period.[6] Because some literary forms span historical eras, he begins by instructing his readers to read both for genre and period, and thus establishes an imperative for interdisciplinary work. The general introduction that follows lays out genre and period through categories that demonstrate the topical and thematic intersections of disciplines, including "Power and Courtship," "Loss and Integration," "Sociality," "Attachment and Detachment," and "Performance and Narration." Within these thematic categories, he argues that political, religious, linguistic, social, and economic realities provide not just context, but must be read with and through the literary. He suggests, for example, that the urgency of state building and the efforts to maintain political power and authority interweave the references and imagery of the *Kojiki* (An account of ancient matters, 711–712) and the *Man'yōshū* (A collection of ten thousand leaves, compiled mid-eighth century). He suggests, as well, that the co-existence of different religious ideologies (Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shintō) infuses the dramatic conflict that often arises in Japanese literary texts, such as Kamo no Chōmei's *Hōjōki* (An account of a ten-foot-square hut, thirteenth century).[7] As Shirane demonstrates throughout his introduction, knowing context as well as discipline-based readings of the context enriches our interpretation of the literature. Moreover, if we examine other prominent anthologies of Japanese literature published in recent years, we see the same interdisciplinary emphasis when introducing different genres of Japanese literature, whether it be recognizing the impact of historical shifts (such as how urbanization and mass education imprint literature and literary reception), the development and continued influence of oral storytelling, the relevance of time and space on such texts as *setsuwa* (anecdotes or "spoken story") and the *otogizōshi* (Muromachi tale), or the psychological trauma of postwar literature as shaped by the serious historical and sociological issues of the period.[8] From these volumes, we might say that this anthologizing of Japanese literary texts evinces a clear response to Shirane's directive to reimagine how we teach all periods of Japanese literature, from ancient to contemporary texts.

In the same vein, Shirane's original challenge has had a major impact on my own pedagogical practices. As an instructor who teaches a general

survey of Japanese literature at the undergraduate level, I may not fully share Shirane's concern that the popularity of contemporary culture endangers classical Japanese literary studies. However, I appreciate his recommendation to turn a more sophisticated and multi-varied lens on the subject, which is an important strategy not only for Japanese studies but for liberal education as a whole. I have for years taught introductory Japanese literature in a traditional manner, as a stand-alone course at my home institution, John Carroll University. This course has typically served three purposes: as a requirement for the East Asian Studies (EAS) major/minor, as an elective for the English major/minor, and as a "literature" course for the university's general education program. The multiple purposes bring varied audiences. A good number of my EAS students are well-versed in Japanese history and culture, but because our EAS program, though robust, has been relatively small, many other students enroll without the same knowledge of Japan. Therefore, to include as much historical and cultural context in my course as possible has been not just a bonus but a necessity.[9] While important for the circumstances in which I teach, the advantage of historical context in the study of Japanese literature has also been well documented by critics other than Shirane. In their discussion on teaching literature in translation, Carol Maier and Francoise Massardier-Kenney argue that the context of the original work is crucial because making students aware of the cultural background in which a literary work is produced creates positive intercultural communication. Without this context, students may read and interpret a work of literature only through the lens of their own cultural norms and, as a result, "impose their own image on the world."[10]

In practice, I have found that the contextual material I could add (that is, had *time* to add) was hardly ever enough given the other content I must teach and the limited time in a semester, nor as effective in illuminating the texts as I would have liked. However, a recent revision to John Carroll's general educational program—what we call our Core curriculum—helped me address this perennial difficulty and allowed me to take up Shirane's challenge more directly. The new program has offered the opportunity to pair my introductory Japanese literature course with an introductory Japanese history course, an arrangement that has provided multiple benefits to my course and my teaching. This disciplinary integration has indeed made Japanese literature more accessible to the broad range of students who enroll. Teaching literature alongside Japanese history enriches the student learning experience by infusing literary texts

with new relevancy and poignancy: characters, images, and tropes come alive as they imaginatively represent real-life stories about the creation and development of Japanese society. At the same time, history itself comes alive as students discover a vibrant chronicle of Japan's historical record in the literature they read. Yet, beyond providing the useful historical (political, cultural, economic, social, religious) context, this pairing of courses uncovers ways in which literary and historical texts, together, raise key humanistic questions, often about those universal themes of power, subjectivity, and culture. Moreover, this pairing of courses prompts students to reflect on the production of historical knowledge itself: When we consider a certain age, how do we know what we know? How do literary representations contribute to this knowledge? What is the power of Japanese literature to shape and even create a historical consciousness of Japan?

Before addressing these questions, let me first explain how the paired literature and history courses operate within the context of John Carroll's revised Core curriculum. After several years of discussion, the John Carroll faculty voted to change its nearly twenty-year old general education program from a distributive to an integrative curriculum. In other words, we moved from a set of disciplinary requirements—essentially a check list for students—to a curricular structure that emphasizes interdisciplinarity. The impetus for this change came, in part, from within the university when we realized that a newly approved set of student learning goals did not fully map onto the existing Core curriculum. Motivation also came from outside the university, from a set of best practices promoted by many governing bodies of higher education, including the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). In 2005 the AAC&U launched its LEAP challenge—Liberal Education and America's Promise—as a response to demands that college students be better informed citizens of the world and better prepared for the decision making required of them outside the University. LEAP strives for all students, no matter their chosen field, to acquire the broad knowledge, higher order capacities, and real-world experience necessary for success in a globally engaged democracy. To attain these goals, LEAP encourages universities to offer high-impact pedagogies in their general education programs, including learning experiences that promote interdisciplinarity and value multiple perspectives for examining complex intellectual issues. According to a number of surveys the AAC&U conducted, potential employers are looking for students who are globally

minded and are nimble enough to address significant issues with broad knowledge, from a number of diverse positions rather than a single, isolated idea. Few real-world problems, they say, can be addressed with such a narrow approach.[11]

In response to these recommendations, my university introduced what we call "Linked Courses" as part of the Core. Linked courses bring together two disciplines by joining courses from different academic departments, courses that share either a main subject of study or a similar set of questions and issues. The same students enroll in both courses, and the two courses usually meet back to back to facilitate further collaboration. The combination of courses, with their varying methodologies, provides a more comprehensive investigation of the subject matter by addressing problems from multiple angles.[12] For example, in a set of linked courses on climate change, a biology course and economics course would, respectively, examine the science and the economic forces behind climate change, as well as consider how climate change will continue to affect the physical environment and fiscal policy. With these corresponding but diverse approaches to the issue, students can navigate the broader implications of climate change and be in a better position to tackle the associative challenge in a more comprehensive and nuanced way.

This effort to help students think more broadly and globally about significant issues was also one of the reasons why my colleague in John Carroll's Department of History, Roger Purdy, and I decided to link our two courses. Several theoretical goals guided our decision, but practicality also was a determining factor—as it must for most curricular and programmatic decisions at colleges and universities these days. Quite simply, we wanted to contribute to the new curriculum to ensure that the university could deliver its Core with a variety of offerings. Additionally, our courses (already existing independently) had served important roles in the previous general education program, which required all students to take a literature course and a history course. Even with these disciplinary categories eliminated, our courses remained key electives for EAS majors/minors, as well as for English and History major/minors; yet with the reality of John Carroll's small EAS program, we feared low enrollments and the possibility of cancelation without Core designation. Re-imagining and re-packaging the courses for the new curriculum served as a means of survival, certainly. However, this new iteration also raised the profile of our courses because of the signature role disciplinary

integration plays in the new curriculum. We anticipated correctly that as a linked pair, our courses would attract students who might not otherwise have thought of enrolling in Japanese studies. Such a result has benefitted the EAS program overall.[13]

Beyond the practical, linking the two courses made pedagogical sense and provides mutual advantages for the teaching of literature and the teaching of history. In previous versions of our courses, we had already used materials from the other discipline to establish context. But by linking the courses we have brought this integration of history and literature to the forefront, with greater focus on the disciplinary features of both. The link moves us beyond a notion of "supplemental" material by highlighting how the disciplines interact, inform, and shape each other: history is not subordinate to literature or literature subordinate to history; rather the two disciplines are co-equal partners. The interplay of disciplines, in fact, not only presents students a more complex view of Japanese culture and tradition, but it also equips them to become more confident in their interpretation and analysis.[14] Providing such a learning experience for students is crucial because, in my experience, I have found that Japanese literature can be bewildering or even intimidating to students for at least two reasons: the historical and cultural references are often unfamiliar to them and the literary techniques do not always conform to literary traditions they know. For example, poetry in the *Man'yōshū* may initially seem overly simple and somewhat impenetrable, but it takes on new levels of meaning when students learn about early efforts to form Japan into a coherent state by establishing an imperial line and founding a capital. They learn that symbolism saturates the landscape, particularly references to the real (and mythical) "Yamato." Or in another example, students can better comprehend the significance in seasonal imagery found broadly in Japanese literature when they understand Japan's religious history and, in particular, the reverence to nature that characterizes Shintō. Also, it is easier for students to appreciate pathos in the demise of the Taira as expressed in the fourteenth century war epic *Heike monogatari* (The tale of the Heike) if they have learned details about the warfare that predicated the end of the Heian Period (794–1185). Finally, students can make more sense of the characters' single-minded actions in Mishima Yukio's "Yūkoku" ("Patriotism," 1961) if they have learned about the role of nationalism and emperor-worship leading up to the Pacific War and revived in later decades. These examples suggest that students have better tools to read and understand thematic and aesthetic nuances of literary

texts when supported by a solid historical foundation. As Ryuko Kubota has noted, the key to understanding elements of Japanese culture—practices, products, and perspectives—is recognizing the importance of their historical contexts.[15]

Just as historical context assists my teaching of literature, Purdy explains how literary context assists his teaching of history. According to him, one advantage of using literature with history—even seeing the literature as an accompanying "historical text"—is (again) accessibility and interest: students often find the narrative or literary imagery more engaging than dry political or economic texts. Yet Purdy understands literature to do more than simply enliven history. He agrees with historian Steven Ericson, who finds that literature has the potential to deepen a student's understanding of the past by revealing everyday attitudes and modes of thinking, as well as the emotions of an age. In other words, literature can humanize and personalize abstract concepts of history, making them more intelligible.[16] Consider again *Heike monogatari*. When used to help explain the historical record, this narrative registers the consequences of political upheaval at the human level, whether it be Kumagai's anguish when required to kill the youthful Atsumori, or the former Empress Kenreimon's despair at the tolling of the bell at Jakkō-in. In addition to humanizing dry historical detail, Purdy finds that the use of literature alongside history reinforces a central skill of historical study: analyzing texts. As he notes, students of history must read and interpret a variety of texts: formal speeches, government edicts, diaries and personal letters. To address these texts, he asks the same types of questions one would ask of the literary text. Literature therefore assists productive historical inquiry: Who wrote the text and for whom? What is the author's perspective and that of the reader? How is the society in the text represented? When was the work written and how might that time differ from today? What do other documents or sources say? What words, symbols, or images used by the author provide insight into the times in which the literary text was written, particularly in regard to social status and relations between genders? These questions demonstrate how the study of history and literature both require active interpretation by the student; and with that interpretation, the student, in effect, participates in the creation of knowledge.

In many ways, by linking our courses, Purdy and I make explicit the practice that has long defined Japanese historiography and, in fact, historiography in general. Hayden White has discussed extensively the

role of narration in history, suggesting that the distinction between narrative history and non-narrative history is not as obvious as one might think initially.[17] While history as a narrative discourse has been condemned for its association with mythic and religious thought (as well as literary fiction), White is not sure that such an association discredits its authority.[18] He argues that history as narrative offers the same type of coherence we find in stories because it employs the same narrative tools: "structure, tonalities, auras, meanings."[19] In other words, this coherence comes from a narrative structure or "emplotment." Fredric Jameson claims that reality is already part of a narrative, part of a representational text. He writes as follows:

> The literary or aesthetic act therefore entertains some active relationship with the Real; yet in order to do so, it cannot simply allow "reality" to persevere inertly in its own being, outside the text and at a distance. It must rather draw the Real into its own texture.[20]

White concurs, observing that scientific explanation is often textualized as narrative. He cites the physical sciences, for example, noting that they utilize classification, characterization, and causation (all narrative principles) to explain natural events and processes. Although narrativization of real events might raise questions of historical authority because it then enters the realm of representation, White cautions against purging narration simply to be purely scientific. Rather, he suggests that the narrative structure is not necessarily imposed upon reality but is, in fact, already present in reality.[21] We can therefore justify using narrative (even literary narrative) to tell the historical story because the fictional and the real share key narrative elements. Moreover, we should acknowledge that the historical text is to some degree representational, not without bias, and thus requires interpretation and critical scrutiny.[22] This reminder—that the historical text requires interpretation as part of its critical analysis—is an important lesson that students gain especially when we pair literary and historical studies.[23]

When we consider the tradition of Japanese historiography, which has commonly used the literary to tell its story, interpretation is key. The earliest chronicles of Japanese history, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* (The chronicles of Japan, 720), in fact relied heavily on the mythical, legendary, and fantastic, to narrate Japan's origins in order to accomplish their political purposes: consolidate power for the concept of a nation unified and controlled by the descendants of the sun goddess Amaterasu.

Moreover, both histories conspicuously incorporate the literary into the telling: the *Kojiki* includes 112 poems and the *Nihon shoki* includes 128 poems, both demonstrating the importance of poetry as a form of communication, often a method to address conflict and, according to historian John Bentley, a "worthy vehicle to telegraph history."[24] In fact, Bentley calls the *Kojiki*, in particular, a "literary project" that puts emphasis on the power of the word, especially through love poetry between the sovereign and members of the court. Thus begins a long tradition through the *Genji monogatari* (The tale of Genji, eleventh century) and beyond, in which the literary serves as a means to address the practical concerns of the court and aristocracy. Later histories, including the *Eiga monogatari* (A tale of flowering fortunes, 1028–1107) also included poetry and narratives from everyday life and surrounding the court. In many cases of Japanese historiography, we have, as Bentley notes, tales that tell history.[25] Often we find the mirror—signifier of reflection, image, representation—used as a metaphor for history. According to Bentley, Japanese historiography was not just a simple account of the past, but "had morphed into a medium like a mirror where the past also illuminated the present and future."[26]

The real and the representational remained intertwined as Japanese historiography progressed. Masayuki Sato observes that between the years 1400 and 1800 historians commonly addressed the turbulence of the period through the aesthetic. Noting frequent references to *wabi* and *sabi* (austere refinement and quiet simplicity), Sato explains:

> The orientations toward a spiritual world that transcended historical time was achieved not through the metaphysical writing of history, but rather was expressed in the spiritual culture of the tea ceremony, the practice of Zen, and the Buddhist desire for enlightenment. In other words, this aesthetic world served as an important counterbalance to the realities of a world ravaged by war.[27]

Stories of conflict in the Tokugawa period, Sato argues, were often placed in the literary realm—*kōdan* (storytelling), *bunraku*, and *kabuki*—and used narrative form to educate the Japanese people about history. In fact, Sato focuses on such arts as Noh theatre and *emaki* (picture scrolls) as key vehicles for teaching history. Zeami's *Atsumori* (ca. 1400), which returns to the *Heike* story, is one such example.[28] Noh, Sato argues, is quite simply a performance of history. Not surprising then, the structure of a Noh play bridges the present and past between the first and second acts,

utilizing an actual bridge (*hashigakari*) built into the traditional Noh stage. Undoubtedly, the literary is indispensable to the historical in Japanese tradition.[29]

In many ways, therefore, linking Japanese literature and history courses is consistent with previous practice—but the structure provided by John Carroll's Core curriculum actually puts into practice what Shirane had been arguing for. With this traditional intersection of disciplines in mind, Purdy and I carefully plan our courses so that literary and historical periods line up and have the chance to resonate: to inform and to be (re)formed as objects of knowledge through this integration. Overall, our courses are well coordinated in terms of historical period and chronological layout of literary texts, often with significant overlap. In fact, at several points throughout the semester, we assign the same texts on the same day.[30] While we, in some ways, reduce the student workload (as they prepare the same material for two classes), we believe that a more intense focus on the material, covered in both classes, will allow for greater depth of analysis and fuller comprehension. We also do this to show that while literature and history are academic fields closely aligned, they also possess their own methodologies and ask different questions of the material. These varying disciplinary perspectives help us meet the LEAP challenge by indicating to students that a single text (as any single issue) can and should be evaluated from multiple positions. An example from the most recent semester is when we both assigned for the same day "Kūkai and His Master," an excerpt from *Shōrai mokuroku* (A memorial presenting a list of newly imported sutras), written early in the Heian Period, in which Kōbō Daishi (774–835) describes his Buddhist training in China. Although we focus on the same text, we approach it differently. Purdy uses it, in part, to explain the Chinese influence on Japanese religion, culture, and politics. With that historical analysis as a foundation, I take a different angle, focusing on the emotional features of Kūkai's story, particularly how he expressed reverence for the master. In fact, that reverence, which students can better understand with knowledge of Chinese religious and social influence on the Japanese, provides an important lesson for Japanese literature and aesthetics. Kūkai quotes his master's instructions as follows:

> Now my existence on earth approaches its term, and I cannot long remain. I urge you, therefore, to take the two mandalas and the hundred volumes of the teachings, together with the ritual implements and these gifts which

> were left to me by my master. Return to your country and propagate the teachings there."[31]

He refers to the master, as well as the master's master, as models, whose teaching he is to transmit to Japan for subsequent generations there to replicate. This document helps establish a key aesthetic principle, more fully developed as the Heian Period progressed and became common thereafter: using (repeating, perfecting) practices, forms, images, and allusions of the masters who have come before. I explain to students that this model is a form of *honka-dori*, or allusive variance, in which the originality of an artist is not based upon development of an entirely new concept or image, but the creative use of literary form, image, and allusion that have already been established and passed down to later artists.[32] One example I discuss with students is the *Shinkokinshū* (New collection of ancient and modern poems, completed in 1205) where we find frequent use of such images as cherry blossoms, crimson leaves, and the moon. These images are not new but borrowed from earlier literary works, including the *Kokinshū* (Collection of ancient and modern poems, completed 905). This Japanese concept of artistic innovation hardly seems to be innovative at all to those steeped in Western traditions, and so it is often difficult for our students to grasp. Yet, the combination of historical and literary analysis provides a clearer rationale for this aesthetic value and practice.

"Kūkai and His Master" represents one way our linked courses operate together to expand the conversation on Japanese history and culture. To reinforce this integration, Purdy and I scheduled a series of joint class meetings, which replaced our individual classes on these days. These joint classes, for which we used the full two hours allotted us, gave the students the opportunity to see the literature professor and the history professor teach side-by-side. Students could more directly compare the different methodologies we use in our respective disciplines to address the same topic and text, as well as note the varying types of questions we ask of the material. (Purdy: "What does the Murakami story reveal about contemporary urban life?" Kvidera: "Yes good point, but can we also dig in a little deeper on the symbolic quality of Murakami's vanishing elephant?")[33] But at the same time, students could better witness how the two disciplines work together. We held six such meetings during the term, and we used these sessions in various ways, often simply to provide more time for extended discussion of the literary texts and their historical contexts. The length of these sessions also allowed us to incorporate more

interactive participation from the students, such as small group discussions followed by mini-presentations on the groups' findings. For example, in a joint session early in the semester on the history and culture of the Nara era (710–794), we broke the class into three groups to have students read different sections of the *Man'yōshū* and address general questions about the poems.[34] These questions required close reading with a focus on the specific images and symbols, and in particular, how these images and symbols reflect cultural attitudes (Japanese views of love and death; nature as a vehicle to convey emotional response), as well as shifting political positions (the adoption of Chinese culture during this period). Another use of an extended session was to give students time to re-read key passages in the assigned texts, such as the *michiyuki* sections of Chikamatsu's *Sonezaki shinjū* (The love suicides at Sonezaki, 1703) and *Shinjū ten no Amijima* (The love suicides at Amijima, 1720), and to consider in detail the Tokugawa era (1600–1868) merchant society, as well as that society's impact on professional and personal relationships.[35] Finally, these joint sessions allowed time to screen an entire film. During one such session we viewed *Enjō* (1958), the film version of Mishima's *Kinkaku-ji* (The temple of the golden pavilion, 1956), and then discussed concepts of beauty as they existed in the volatile post-war years of modern Japan.[36]

I will linger on the second of these joint class meetings to explain more fully our intended outcomes and the results of the collaboration. We devoted this session to the literature, art, culture, and politics of the Heian Period, with particular attention to three prominent texts of the era: *Genji monogatari*, *Murasaki Shikibu nikki* (The diary of Murasaki Shikibu, 978?–1015?), and *Makura no sōshi* (The Pillow Book, ca. 1002) by Sei Shōnagon.[37] To demonstrate the interplay of literature and history, we concentrated on three key concepts, central to the age's social and political context, as well as its literary production: *miyabi* (courtliness, refinement), *mono no aware* (pathos, sensitivity, poignancy), and *okashii* (strange, unusual, humorous). These concepts provide a way to explain elements of Heian court life, especially the rules that determine who holds power, how power is lost, and the consequences of power on an individual's subjectivity within this social, political, and cultural milieu. Purdy and I first defined these concepts, explaining their significance as literary tropes and their relevance to the historical period. After examining several examples in the literary texts as a class, we put students in small groups and set them to work with a handout of key passages we had selected earlier. We asked students to read the passages aloud and then, as a group,

determine which of the three concepts governs that passage. Further, we asked them to draw on what they had already learned about Heian Japan and consider why the author would employ the concept in this historical context. To prompt this analysis we provided several questions for the groups to answer: For whom did the author write and why? What appears to be the author's perspective and how does that correspond to the intended reader? What imagery does the author use to provoke a response from the reader and why is a human (emotional) response important in this context? How does the description provide a picture of the society, as well as the attitudes and concerns therein? And finally, how might these attitudes and concerns correspond to our own time and circumstances? After giving students several minutes to identify the concepts and discuss their meaning in the passage, we asked a spokesperson from each group to present their observations to the class as a whole. These mini-presentations led to a broader discussion of aesthetics and politics. With a better grasp on these concepts, students spoke with greater fluency on key issues that span literary and historical analysis. They could articulate how courtly refinement defined success in this age (*miyabi*—seen especially in *Genji* and Murasaki Shikibu's diary), how ridicule can place one in the margins when conventions are flouted (*okashii*—seen especially in *The Pillow Book*), and how pathos characterizes a shining era already on the decline (*mono no aware*—seen especially in *Genji*). For example, one group of students observed that while the *Genji* story glorified courtly life, its focus often seemed to be on the outcasts, glorious themselves but not necessarily in a position of power, including characters like Genji and, later in the narrative, Kashiwagi. Another group noticed that much of the narrative focus is not on the daily political workings of the court but on action behind the scenes (literally behind the screens) and often of an intimate and (sometimes) scandalous nature. In these cases, we acknowledged the astute observations and asked the groups, and the class as a whole, to consider more deeply how Heian literature informs and is informed by the history of the age. Several students began to argue that such literary representations indicate a shift to new centers of power; not only were the writers of these key texts of the period women rather than the men of education and privilege, but the subjects of their focus, while still of the aristocracy, resided outside the recognized seats of authority. While clearly not as sophisticated, these student observations began to approach an argument Shirane makes about the *Genji* narrative. He writes that the *monogatari* genre often presents sympathetic representations of political

losers, or at least expressions of alternative voices. Regarding *Genji*, he claims that although it glorifies court culture and the position of the emperor (looking a century backward when the sovereign, rather than the regency system, had power), a story that depicts an illegitimate son on the throne "seriously undermines the myth of direct and unbroken descent from the gods that became so important in late, twentieth-century pre-World War II discourse."[38] The students therefore began to adopt an understanding of this age filtered through the actions and attitudes of the aristocracy. In short, they witnessed how literary representation informs historical awareness.

Here, the real and the representational work together to provide a more complete portrait of a people and an era—or at least part of that story we tell. These joint class sessions make transparent what Purdy and I profess throughout the semester: the combination of fact and its representation determines what we know and how we know it. Moreover, what we come to know about Japanese culture translates to broader human issues relevant to us today. To make this argument during this class session, we then turned to later textual representations of the *Genji* narrative. We pointed out what many literary critics, such as Donald Keene and Marvin Marcus, have observed: *The Tale of Genji* has inspired medieval Noh drama, kabuki and bunraku plays, modern-day films, anime, and many types of pop-culture variations.[39] A number of students (several of whom were interested in Japanese history and literature because of their fondness for Japanese popular culture), wondered out loud if we might not have contemporary Japanese manga without this visual re-telling of the tale. In our joint class session, we examined two such renderings: the twelfth-century *Genji* scrolls and a twenty-first century manga series that re-tells the *Genji* story. The scrolls offered later audiences of the tale, as they do for us twenty-first century readers, the ability to visualize the key concepts we discussed, especially *miyabi* and *mono no aware*. By taking the lid off the court, as it were (the *fukinuki yatai* technique), the scrolls give us a bird's eye view to interpret the various episodes. We peer down into the chambers, into this world of refinement and, often, of pathos, to recognize the intricacies and foibles of human relationships that dictated success or failure in Japan's social and political spheres. The visual art of manga does much of the same. We examined a manga version of "The Oak Tree" chapter, particularly the depictions of anxiety and grief felt by the secret lovers, Kashiwagi and the Third Princess, and the betrayed Genji himself. We discussed how this later text, like the Genji scrolls, reflect the artistic

value and continued interest in the original tale. Several of our students recognized its similar effort to make the story accessible (some claimed that they then "got it"), and they added that the challenges of the lovers (which they saw as not foreign to their own experience) helped them to understand the social and political uncertainty of the Heian period itself. By way of the manga, they came to a clearer understanding of how the narrative can be a significant piece of the historical record. In the end, we felt that our students' reactions to the texts supported the claim of historians Schirokauer, Lurie, and Gay, who argue that *Genji monogatari* "left its mark on the writing of history."[40]

Along with this effect of producing historical knowledge, Purdy and I found that our discussion of these texts, and especially our focus on the endurance of the *Genji* story, revealed to students a universality embedded in Japanese literature and Japanese history. In other words, for students to learn something about Japanese culture, through this intellectual framework, was to learn something about themselves. The original version of *Genji monogatari* introduces a multitude of human emotions: grief, anxiety, jealousy, sadness, joy. Later versions of the tale only reinforced these emotions, suggesting that human relationships do not change much over time and across cultures. The manga version of *Genji* seemed to have the strongest impact on our students in this regard. One reason for their response may have been the contemporary language in the translated text. They also were impressed by the fact that their counterparts in Japan (young adults) still find meaning in the classical text and readily read these modern renderings of the tale. As a result, we found our students willing to look more candidly at the narrative's universal themes. For example, when meeting with me to discuss her writing assignment on Heian literature, one student mentioned how surprised she was to read about characters in pre-modern Japan struggling with the same emotional and ethical questions so familiar to her and her college peers. As Edward Seidensticker has noted, *Genji* has continued to be read throughout the centuries, and all generations have attached some significance to it. It lends itself as much to modern concerns as it had to ancient concerns and, he adds, it will continue to do this in the years ahead.[41] We might recall Shirane's claim that only through history can we grasp the significance of power, subjectivity, and the commodification of culture as key (and enduring) issues in literature. Notably, our students observed in *Genji* how the social and political rules determined the characters' opportunities and limitations, as well as the identities they were allowed to claim. They also

recognized that these themes are not confined to Heian Japan; rather many recognized and reviewed the impact their own relationships have on their social positions and self-perception. Our subsequent argument to the students, therefore, was that by reading Heian Japan through multiple disciplinary lenses, by looking at the literary and historical together, they could find not only the significance of the themes in their lives, but also comprehend how these themes transcend time, space, and culture.

Our skills in helping students fully understand and appreciate this interdisciplinary approach to Japanese studies are, of course, still to be developed and honed. Purdy and I can certainly identify ways to improve our courses and take better advantage of the link between Japanese history and literature. However, we believe that we have made positive progress toward our goals, as demonstrated by students' comments on their experiences in the courses. In course evaluations, when asked what they would remember most from the courses, one student wrote, simply, "the connections between history and literature." Others gave further elaboration, such as "I'll remember the historical transitions that Japan has made," and "I will remember the culture of Japan and how literature was a reflection of historical events. I will also remember how the Japanese people think and how their societal norms vary greatly from ours in certain aspects of life." When speaking specifically about the literature course, one student focused on the importance of historical and cultural knowledge, noting, "I will probably remember aesthetics of Japanese literature the most as well as most of the influences and motifs for certain time period writings." For their evaluations, I also asked students to consider what in the courses made them better readers and thinkers about the subject. One student responded, "When learning about central themes and historical context of Japanese culture, I was able to identify these aspects within the literature while reading"; and similarly, another student explained, "Providing historical context within my writing helped me. It enabled me to provide readers of my work with an idea of the story/topic setting." Finally, when asked to add any general comments about the courses, one student wrote, "The history and literature link really enhanced my understanding of the culture of Japan as a whole."

While Purdy and I have sanction from our university to link our classes in the ways I have described, I recognize, of course, that such opportunities do not exist at all institutions. Nevertheless, I would encourage professors elsewhere to consider ways they can replicate elements of this interdisciplinary methodology. Of course, many instructors of Japanese

literature already introduce useful contextual elements to students, and certainly those are efforts to continue and enhance. To extend this interdisciplinary approach beyond just supplemental materials within the individual course, I would suggest other ways to create a learning environment for students that introduces more disciplinary-specific methodologies. Relying on colleagues and peers, either at our home institutions or those at other institutions would be a good place to begin. One could invite specialists in cognate fields to guest lecture at key points during the semester. Circumstances at my university led to a focus on the relationship between history and literature; but we should recall, as Shirane has noted, work in other disciplines can also greatly benefit students of Japanese studies: political science or economics focused on Japan and Asia, Asian religions, Asian philosophy, art history with an emphasis on Japanese art, Japanese language and linguistics, and even comparative literatures. Introducing students to the expertise of guest lecturers in any of these academic areas could greatly expand their perceptions of Japanese society and culture. Another possibility could be working with professors teaching other Japanese studies courses in the same semester to plan coordinated activities between classes: joint trips to a local art museum to view a collection of Japanese art (if available), screenings of relevant films or documentaries, or even excursions to a Japanese restaurant would provide additional disciplinary perspectives on the subject matter. Finally, it is worth looking at other resources that may be available online or even from an academic organization focused on Japanese and Asian studies in the United States, such as ASIANetwork or the Japan Studies Association.

No matter the interdisciplinary approach we take to the study of Japan, as instructors we need to keep in mind that we are shaping our students' perspectives. In my case, by linking Japanese literature with Japanese history, I teach stories but also help to create stories. And when considering the story of Japan, it is important to remember that historians and authors have to make choices. We must acknowledge, for instance, that in the context of *Genji* the imperial court and the aristocracy composed only one segment of the complex social, political, and economic fabric that made up Heian Japan. The period also was defined by poverty, famine, and calamity (caused both by nature and humankind). Yet, as historians have reflected, it was when classical Japanese literature blossomed; and the literary texts that emerged put a persistent mark on the age.[42] Literature of a specific time does not just record a slice of history

but constructs part of what that history is. Accordingly, through this interaction of literature and history we can come to a better understanding of how history (and knowledge) is created and told. If students can come to an understanding of how the two disciplines interact productively in this way, then the linked courses have begun to fulfill the goals of the Core curriculum—particularly teaching students the value of using multiple disciplinary registers to think through critical issues. Ultimately, by linking our courses—by highlighting the integration of literature and history—my colleague and I not only raised the profile of Japanese studies at our university, but we set our students on the intellectual path to ponder what they know and how they know it.

APPENDIX

Reading, Discussion, and Assignment Schedules

EN 288, Japanese Literature in Translation	**HS 381, Japanese History**
Week One 8.27 Introduction to course 8.29 Kawabata Yasunari, Nobel Prize address; Ōe Kenzaburo, Nobel Prize address 8.31 Continued discussion of Nobel Prize addresses and Japanese aesthetics	Week One 8.27 Introduction and orientation 8.29 Japanese geography 8.31 Yamato and Shintō (Schirokauer, ch. 1)
Week Two 9.3 Labor Day 9.5 Poetry from the *Man'yōshū* 9.7 *Man'yōshū,* continued; Marcus, ch. 1 **[joint session with HS 381]**	Week Two 9.3 Labor Day 9.5 The China connection: Prince Shōtoku and the Nara era 9.7 Literature and Culture in Nara era (Marcus, ch. 1; *Man'yōshū* **[joint session with EN 288]**
Week Three 9.10 "Kūkai and His Master" 9.12 Poetry from the *Kokinshū*; Marcus, ch. 2 9.14 "Yūgao" from *The Tale of Genji*; *The Diary of Murasaki Shikibu*; *The Pillow Book* of Sei Shōnagon **[joint session with HS 381]**	Week Three 9.10 Aristocratic Japan: The Heian era (Schirokauer, ch. 3; "Kūkai and His Master") 9.12 Aristocratic Japan, continued (Marcus, ch. 2) 9.14 Heian culture: The rule of taste ("Yūgao" from *Genji*, *Diary of*

	Murasaki Shikibu, and *Pillow Book*) **[joint session with EN 288]**
Week Four 9.17 Continued discussion of *Genji*, *Diary of Murasaki Shikibu*, and *Pillow Book* 9.19 Additional selections from *Genji* 9.21 *Genji*, continued	Week Four 9.17 Heian Culture: The rule of taste 9.19 Heian Culture: The rule of taste 9.21 The beautiful people of Heian Japan (additional selections from *Genji*)
Week Five 9.24 *The Tale of Ise* 9.26 Exam #1 9.28 *The Tale of the Heike* **[joint session with HS 381]**	Week Five 9.24 Exam #1 9.26 Rise of the samurai and the Genpei War (Schirokauer, pp. 71–72; Marcus ch. 3) 9.28 Warrior values of *The Tale of the Heike* (read *The Tale of the Heike*) **[joint session with EN 288]**
Week Six 10.1 Kamo no Chōmei, "An Account of My Hut" 10.3 Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, "In a Grove" and "Rashōmon"; Marcus, pgs. 73–75 10.5 Akutagawa, continued	Week Six 10.1 Warrior Government: Kamakura bakufu (Schirokauer, ch. 4) 10.3 The Kamakura revival 10.5 Kamakura revival ("An Account of My Hut")
Week Seven 10.8 Film: *Rashomon* 10.10 *Rashomon* continued 10.12 Fall Break	Week Seven 10.8 Kamakura revival 10.10 The Ashikaga bakufu and the beginning of the Warring States era (Schirokauer, ch. 5) 10.12 Fall Break
Week Eight 10.15 *Essays in Idleness* 10.17 Film: *The Tradition of Performing Arts in Japan*; "Zeami on the Art of the Noh"; Atsumori 10.19 *Sotoba Komachi*	Week Eight 10.15 The Zen arts (*Essay in Idleness;* Zeami's "Birds of Sorrow," *Atsumori*, and "Death of Atsumori" 10.17 Warring States era and unification (Schirokauer, ch. 6) 10.19 The Great Tokugawa peace: The Tokugawa system and samurai culture (Schirokauer, ch. 7)

Week Nine 10.22 Enchi Fumiko, *Onna-men* (Masks), "Ryō no onna,"; Marcus, ch. 4 10.24 Enchi continued, "Masugami" 10.26 Enchi continued, "Fukai"	Week Nine 10.22 The Tokugawa system and samurai culture (Marcus, ch. 4) 10.24 Merchant class in the Tokugawa era (Saikaku: *The Almanac-Maker, Umbrella Oracle,* and *Eternal Storehouse*; Bashō: *Narrow road of Oku*; and Ikku: *Hizakurige*) 10.26 Merchant class in the Tokugawa era
Week Ten 10.29 Chikamatsu on the art of the puppet stage; Chikamatsu, *The love suicides at Sonezaki*; Discussion of Japanese performing arts: noh, bunraku, and kabuki **[joint session with HS 381]** 10.31 Haiku by Bashō and his school; Bashō, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* 11.2 Bashō, continued	Week Ten 10.29 Love and life of the chōnin class (*The love suicides at Sonezaki*; *The love suicides at Amijima*) **[joint session with EN 288]** 10.31 Exam #2 11.2 The fall of the Tokugawa bakufu (Schirokauer, ch. 8)
Week Eleven 11.5 Exam #2 11.7 Kawabata Yasunari, *Yukiguni* (Snow country), part one; Marcus, ch. 6 11.9 Kawabata continued, part two	Week Eleven 11.5 Meiji Japan: Achieving "Rich Nation! Strong Military!" (Schirokauer, ch. 9; Kanagaki, "The Beefeater"; Hattori, "The Western peep show" 11.7 Meiji Japan (Schirokauer, pp. 197–207; Marcus, pp. 63–71 11.9 The "Meiji" revolution
Week Twelve 11.12 Kawabata continued 11.14 Kawabata continued 11.16 Abe Kōbō, *Suna no onna* (The woman in the dunes), chapters 1–10	Week Twelve 11.12 Taishō Japan (Schirokauer, pp. 207–219; Tanizaki, "Aguri" 11.14 Japan's 15-Year War (Schirokauer, ch. 11; Marcus, pp. 71–76) 11.16 Terror from the sky (Ōe, "The Catch")
Week Thirteen 11.19 Abe continued, chapters 11–20 11.20 Abe continued, chapters 21–24; excerpts from film version of novel 11.21 Thanksgiving break	Week Thirteen 11.19 Modernization in Meiji Japan (Sōseki, *Kokoro*) 11.20 The Allied occupation of Japan (Schirokauer, pp. 235–243;

11.23 Thanksgiving break	Marcus, pp. 80-84; Nosaka "American Hijiki" 11.21 Thanksgiving break 11.22 Thanksgiving break
Week Fourteen 11.26 Abe continued, chapters 25–31 11.28 Peer-review workshop on Essay #3 11.30 Selections from Mishima Yukio's *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*; film: *Enjō* **[joint session with HS 381]**	Week Fourteen 11.26 Japan's economic miracle (Schirokauer, pp. 243–261; Marcus, pp. 84–92; Mishima, "Patriotism" 11.28 Japan's economic miracle 11.30 Beauty and destruction in modern Japan (film *Enjō*) **[joint session with EN 288]**
Week Fifteen 12.3 Mishima Yukio, "Yūkoku" ("Patriotism"); Murakami Haruki, "The Elephant Vanishes" and "The Zoo Attack" **[joint session with HS 381]** 12.5 Continued discussion of Mishima and Murakami; review for final exam Final Exam Week • Take-home portion of exam (final essay written for both EN 288 and HS 381) due Tuesday, December 11 by 5:00 p.m.	Week Fifteen 12.3 Japan: "The fragile fuperpower" (Schirokauer, pp. 262–270); Murakami, "The Elephant Vanishes" and "The Zoo Attack"; view film version of "Patriotism" **[joint session with EN 288]** 12.5 Contemporary Japan (Schirokauer, "Afterword"; Marcus, "Postscript" Final Exam Week • Take-home portion of exam (final essay written for both EN 288 and HS 381) due Tuesday, December 11 by 5:00 p.m.

NOTES

[1] Haruo Shirane, "Redefining Classical Japanese Literature and Language: Crisis and Opportunity," *Japanese Language and Literature* 37.2 (October 2003): 155–165.

[2] Ibid., 159–160.

[3] Ibid., 160–161.

[4] Ivan Morris, ed., *Modern Japanese Short Stories: Twenty-Five Stories by Japan's Leading Writers* (Rutland, Vermont: Tuttle Publishing, 2019).

[5] Morris quotes Angus Wilson, who argues, "To read the literature of a civilization or age entirely or almost entirely unfamiliar emphasizes one's unconscious dependence on historical background. To begin with, the unfamiliar is likely immediately to present a number of specious qualities—the 'quaint,' the 'charming,' the 'horrific'—which are merely attempts to come to terms with a strange world on a surface level. Greater familiarity always destroys the immediate impressions," Ibid., 11–12.

[6] Haruo Shirane, ed., *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 1.

[7] According to Shirane, on display in this text is the conflict between Buddhist aspirations of selfishness and early native (Shintō) emphasis on the sensual, the aesthetic, and the emotional. See Ibid., 7.

[8] Such anthologies include Haruo Shirane, ed., *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600-1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Theodore W. Goossen, ed., *The Oxford Book of Japanese Short Stories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); J. Thomas Rimer and Van C. Gessel, eds., *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Japanese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Haruo Shirane, ed., *The Demon of Agi Bridge and Other Japanese Tales* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); and Keller Kimbrough and Haruo Shirane, eds., *Monsters, Animals, and Other Worlds: A Collection of Short Medieval Japanese Tales* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

[9] For a discussion of the challenges when teaching such a mixture of students in a Japanese literature course and for suggestions to make the literature more accessible for all, see Chieko Irie Mulhern, "On Teaching Japanese Literature," *Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 16.1 (April 1981): 64–71.

[10] Carol Maier and Francoise Massardier-Kenney, "Introduction" in *Literature in Translation: Teaching Issues and Reading Practices*, eds. Carol Maier and Francoise Massardier-Kenney (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2010), 1–2. See also Maier's essay in this volume, "Choosing and Introducing a Translation," 13. Maier refers to Laurence Venuti's rules for translation and highlights as crucial (1) recognizing and investigating the cultural milieu of the original work and (2) remembering that all literary works belong to a complex web of traditions (with the further recommendation to read multiple translations to understand this tradition fully).

[11] For more explanation of the LEAP challenge and its goals, visit the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) website: https://www.aacu.org/leap. For detail on employers' survey results see https://www.aacu.org/leap/public-opinion-research. Although the LEAP challenge was

launched in 2005, recent employers' surveys demonstrate that the goals are still relevant. A 2018 survey, titled "Fulfilling the American Dream: Liberal Education and the Future of Work," notes that employers still demand the skills John Carroll University's Core curriculum addresses: communication, critical thinking, ethical judgment, working effectively in teams, and applying knowledge and skills in real world settings. See https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2018Employer ResearchReport.pdf.

[12] In a course evaluation, one student wrote, "I like how the classes are back to back because one's mind is already thinking about [the subject]."

[13] While the linked courses have been popular among existing EAS majors and minors, we have also recruited additional majors and minors from among students who initially enrolled just to fulfill Core requirements. In the two times we have taught the link, four students declared an EAS major and four others declared an EAS minor after taking our courses. I must add here that because of unexpected financial pressures on the university in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, John Carroll University has decided to phase out its East Asian Studies major and minor. Although we will no longer be able to add to the ranks of EAS majors and minors, we believe our linked courses (which will continue because of their integral role in the History and English departments) will become even more important to the JCU curriculum (Core and otherwise) since the emphasis on Asian studies overall will be lessened.

[14] Several comments by students in their course evaluations indicate as much: one student wrote, "I think this class helped me look into literature with a different lens." Another noted, "This class made me look deeper into themes and motifs within literature as related to cultural aspects." And another added, "I was taught how to more closely read for attitudes and biases on the parts of the author."

[15] Ryuko Kubota, "Critical Teaching of Japanese Culture," *Japanese Language and Literature* 37.1 (April 2003): 78, 81.

[16] Steven J. Ericson, "Literature in the Japanese History Classroom," *Education About Asia* 6.1 (Spring 2001): 48.

[17] Hayden White, "The Structure of Historical Narrative" in *The Fiction of Narrative: Essays on History, Literature, and Theory, 1952–2007*, ed. Robert Doran (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 112.

[18] Hayden White, "Storytelling: Historical and Ideological," in *The Fiction of Narrative: Essays on History, Literature, and Theory, 1952–2007*, ed. Robert Doran (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 274.

[19] Ibid., 280.

[20] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Social Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), 81.

[21] White considers the possibility that "the kind of plots that utilize the 'climax' in different ways, occur in 'reality' or at least in 'historical reality,' as well as in 'fiction' and 'myth.'" See White, "Storytelling: Historical and Ideological," 281.

[22] Jameson, 82. Jameson notes this textual nature of history, arguing that "history is inaccessible to us except in textual form, or in other words, that it can be approached only by way of prior (re)textualization."

[23] Ericson, 51.

[24] John R. Bentley, "The Birth and Flowering of Japanese Historiography: From Chronicles to Tales to Historical Interpretation," in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, Volume 2: 400–1400, eds. Sarah Foot and Chase F. Robinson (Oxford, U. K.: Oxford University Press, 2012), 63

[25] Ibid., 70.

[26] Ibid., 77. We attribute the metaphor of the mirror to Chinese historian Sima Qian, who said people in the present could use past events as a mirror to judge between the two. See also Bentley, 71.

[27] Masayuki Sato, "A Social History of Japanese Historical Writing," in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, Volume 3: 1400–1800, ed. Daniel Wolff (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 82.

[28] Ibid., 84–85. Sato adds, "Zeami's basic structure of 'history-telling by the dead,' which sought to establish a direct link to the past by allowing the dead to speak, is a reflection of the Japanese historical way of thinking."

[29] Robert S. Lehman, *Impossible Modernism: T. S. Eliot, Walter Benjamin and the Critical of Historical Reason* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2016), xiv. Lehman also considers how the literary and the historical intersect, here through the lens of modernism. He notes that from Aristotle to Nietzsche to modernist writers, history has been seen "not as a collection of empirical facts, but as something formed, something written"—and therefore something represented. We have traditionally turned to literary devices such as lyric, satire, allegory, and myth to chronicle historical time and historical change.

[30] Please see the Appendix, where I include the daily reading, discussion, and assignment schedules for both classes. As this chart demonstrates, we closely align the subject matter and topics of the two classes, though at various points

in the semester we also diverge a bit and cover materials that are not a focus in the other class.

[31] Kōbō Daishi, "Kūkai and His Master," in *Anthology of Japanese Literature: From the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, ed. Donald Keene (New York: Grove Press, 1955), 65.

[32] For further explanation of this term and the concept, see Donald Keene, *Seeds in the Heart: Japanese Literature from Earliest Times to the Late Sixteenth Century*, *A History of Japanese Literature,* Volume 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 121–122; see also Haruo Shirane, "The Imaginative Universe of Japanese Literature," in *Masterworks of Asian Literature in Comparative Perspective: A Guide for Teaching*. ed. Barbara Stoler Miller (New York: Routledge, 2015). Shirane explains, "The object of traditional art and literature is not (as so often in the West) the representation of nature, society, or some other ideal world, but rather the 're-presenting' of the classics."

[33] We joined classes together for a discussion of Mishima Yukio's and Murakami Haruki's short stories. Here I refer to our discussion of Murakami's "The Elephant Vanishes" (first published in English in 1991).

[34] These questions included the following: (1) What appears to be the occasion for the poem? (2) Who is speaking in the poem and what does the speaker observe? (3) How does the poem reflect a social or political situation? (4) What are the key images in the poem, and what do you think they represent for the speaker, the setting, or the occasion of the poem?

[35] Examples of questions we posed to the class are as follows: (1) In both plays a love-sick merchant foolishly squanders both his money and reputation on a high-class call girl in the pleasure quarters. In the end both merchants and their prostitute-lovers see suicide as their only option. Why would Tokugawa Era audiences, especially the merchant class, find the plight of these characters sympathetic? Do they die a "good death?" (2) What were the social pressures faced by the plays' characters? Despite the socially sanctioned pleasure quarters, how much liberty did members of Tokugawa urban class have? How is Jihei's and Tokubei's decisions to commit suicide as much a correct social response as an act of love? (3) Examine the language of the *michiyuki* in the plays and take note of the use of imagery. How does this language express these important themes? How does it elevate the status of the main characters?

[36] Before screening the film, I had assigned several chapters of Mishima's novel, to be read alongside a discussion of Japan's rise from the Pacific War (from the Schirokauer, Lurie, and Gay text). We then gave several questions to students to consider while watching the film including the following: (1) What are the different characteristics that the central character attaches to the temple? What

are the different characteristics that he attaches to the concept of beauty? (2) What argument do you think Mishima (in his novel) and Ichikawa (director of the film) make about the nature of beauty, here through the lens of the central character? (3) Through this focus on beauty, and the apparent difficulty in accepting a representation of Japan's beautiful past (or certainly having a complicated relationship to it), what do we learn about the challenges some believed Japan faced in addressing the past and emerging as an economic superpower following the war?

[37] Lest one wonder how we could fit so much material into one class, I should add here that for this class period we used only the selections of these texts found in Donald Keene's *Anthology of Japanese Literature*, which includes the "Yūgao" chapter from *Genji* and excerpts from Murasaki Shikibu's *Diary* and *The Pillow Book*. And both Purdy and I continue beyond this one session discussing this period and these texts in our individual courses, each adding several chapters of *Genji*, though neither of us tackling the whole narrative—these courses are introductory after all.

[38] Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600*, 3–4.

[39] Both critics discuss the *Genji* influence in some detail. See Marvin Marcus, *Japanese Literature from Murasaki to Murakami* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Association for Asian Studies, Inc., 2015), 28; see also Keene, *Seeds in the Heart*, 507-9.

[40] Conrad Schirokauer, David Lurie, Suzanne Gay, *A Brief History of Japanese Civilization*, Fourth Edition (Boston: Wadworth, Cengage Learning, 2018), 62. Note: Purdy selected this textbook for his course, so the students were familiar with its perspectives on Japanese history.

[41] Edward G. Seidensticker, "*The Tale of Genji*: An Historical Overview" in *Masterworks of Asian Literature in Comparative Perspective: A Guide for Teaching*, 390–403.

[42] See Schirokauer, Lurie, and Gay, 46–69. These historians suggest this power of literature on the historical record and focus their attention on the religious influence, literary and visual arts in their chapter on the Heian Period.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bentley, John R. "The Birth and Flowering of Japanese Historiography: From Chronicles to Tales to Historical Interpretation." In *The Oxford History of*

Historical Writing, Volume 2: 400–1400. Eds. Sarah Foot and Chase F. Robinson. Oxford, U. K.: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Ericson, Steven J. "Literature in the Japanese History Classroom." *Education About Asia*, 6.1 (Spring 2001): 48–51.

Goossen, Theodore W., ed. *The Oxford Book of Japanese Short Stories*. Oxford, U. K., University Press, 2010.

Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Social Symbolic Act*. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981.

Keene, Donald. *Seeds in the Heart: Japanese Literature from Earliest Times to the Late Sixteenth Century*, *A History of Japanese Literature*, Volume 1. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Kimbrough, Keller and Haruo Shirane, eds. *Monsters, Animals, and Other Worlds: A Collection of Short Medieval Japanese Tales*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.

Kōbô Daishi. "Kūkai and His Master." In *Anthology of Japanese Literature: From the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. Ed. Donald Keene. New York: Grove Press, 1955.

Kubota, Ryuko. "Critical Teaching of Japanese Culture." *Japanese Language and Literature*, 37.1 (April 2003): 67–87.

Lehman, Robert S. *Impossible Modernism: T. S. Eliot, Walter Benjamin and the Critical of Historical Reason*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2016.

Maier, Carol and Francoise Massardier-Kenney. "Choosing and Introducing a Translation." In *Literature in Translation: Teaching Issues and Reading Practices*. Eds. Carol Maier and Francoise Massardier-Kenney. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2010.

———. "Introduction." In *Literature in Translation: Teaching Issues and Reading Practices*. Eds. Carol Maier and Francoise Massardier-Kenney. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2010.

Marcus, Marvin. *Japanese Literature From Murasaki to Murakami*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Association for Asian Studies, Inc., 2015.

Morris, Ivan, ed. *Modern Japanese Short Stories: Twenty-Five Stories by Japan's Leading Writers*. Rutland, Vermont: Tuttle Publishing, 2019.

Mulhern, Chieko Irie. "On Teaching Japanese Literature," *Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese*, 16.1 (April 1981): 64–71.

Rimer, J. Thomas and Van C. Gessel, eds. *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Japanese Literature* (abridged). New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

Sato, Masayuki. "A Social History of Japanese Historical Writing." In *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, Volume 3: 1400–1800. Ed. Daniel Wolff. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Schirokauer, Conrad, David Lurie, and Suzanne Gay, *A Brief History of Japanese Civilization*, Fourth Edition. Boston: Wadworth, Cengage Learning, 2018.

Seidensticker, Edward G. "*The Tale of Genji*: An Historical Overview." In *Masterworks of Asian Literature in Comparative Perspective: A Guide for Teaching*. Ed. Barbara Stoler Miller. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Shirane, Haruo, ed. *The Demon at Agi Bridge and Other Japanese Tales*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

———, ed. *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600–1900* (abridged edition). New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

———. "The Imaginative Universe of Japanese Literature." In *Masterworks of Asian Literature in Comparative Perspective: A Guide for Teaching*. Ed. Barbara Stoler Miller. New York: Routledge, 2015.

———. "Redefining Classical Japanese Literature and Language: Crisis and Opportunity." *Japanese Language and Literature*, 37.2 (October 2003): 155–165.

———, ed. *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600* (abridged edition). New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

White, Hayden. "Storytelling: Historical and Ideological." In *The Fiction of Narrative: Essays on History, Literature, and Theory, 1952–2007*. Ed. Robert Doran. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.

———. "The Structure of Historical Narrative." In *The Fiction of Narrative: Essays on History, Literature, and Theory, 1952–2007*. Ed. Robert Doran. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.