

Arthur Waley, Bloomsbury Aesthetics and
The Tale of Genji.

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Arthur Waley's version of the *Genji Monogatari*, originally published in six volumes between 1925 and 1933⁽¹⁾, is unique among the many translations from Japanese literature which have appeared in European languages. Published to rapturous reviews⁽²⁾, it converted what had hitherto been seen by Europeans as an obscure and rambling work of chiefly antiquarian and exotic interest, into a 'world classic', a work which all educated English-speakers were expected to have some acquaintance with⁽³⁾. Written in a distinctive style, which has been described as ranking with 'the most beautiful English prose of our time'⁽⁴⁾, it rapidly joined that select band of translations into English which are regarded more as original works of English literature than as translations as such⁽⁵⁾. Thus, despite the appearance of Seidensticker's weighty rival translation, Waley's version remains in print and remains read⁽⁶⁾.

Waley's translation also has the rare distinction of having affected perceptions of the original work, not merely among foreign scholars and critics, but also in its homeland. Various Japanese scholars and literary figures were quick to pay attention to the new English translation and, while some were critical of its errors, others claimed to prefer it to the original⁽⁷⁾. Given the contemporary Japanese curiosity about, and respect for, European literary trends, the appearance of a highly successful English

translation inevitably stimulated Japanese interest in the original, which had been condemned by some as little better than a fairy-tale⁽⁸⁾.

Despite the extraordinary influence of Waley's versions of oriental literature, which has not always been benign⁽⁹⁾, and the radical originality of his literary judgements, his achievement has been relatively little discussed or researched¹⁰. One reason for this has undoubtedly been a shortage of scholars with the appropriate interests and qualifications to undertake the discussion of a writer with Waley's peculiar and impressive talents, a problem endemic to the study of comparative literature. Connected to this is the fact that Waley's position as both a scholar and literary figure has tended to ensure that he has fallen between two stools, being neither an academic whose writings should be judged on purely academic grounds, nor a wholly creative writer⁽¹¹⁾. (This, of course, reflects the traditional neglect of the translator in literary studies⁽¹²⁾.)

In this paper I wish to emphasise that the success of Waley's version of the *Genji Monogatari* derived not merely from his personal talents, but from precisely that ambiguity in his position which has led to scholarly neglect of his achievement. Waley was, on the one hand, the heir to the Victorian tradition of scholarly, amateur British Japanology, which did so much to establish the modern Western study of Japan. At the same time, however, he was an active member of various of London's literary circles, and consequently alive to the new trends and fashions which appeared in those circles between the wars. His knowledge of Victorian studies of Japanese language and literature, together with his formidable linguistic talents, gave him a direct knowledge of Japanese literature denied to other literary figures interested in Japan⁽¹³⁾. At the same time, his geographical remoteness from Japan, and his unconcern with the modern Japanese language, meant that he was extraordinarily uninfluenced by Japanese schol-

arship and taste⁴⁴. Yet his awareness of European literary trends led him to share in the feeling that Japanese and Chinese literature was of more than merely exotic and scholarly interest, and had something of genuinely literary interest to offer to Europe; thus the originality and excitement of his translations. The oft-cited paradox of Waley's refusal to visit the Far East comes to seem, not a mere personal eccentricity, but rather a trait bound up with the very nature of his achievement, which was to regard oriental literature as literature in precisely the same way that European literature was literature⁴⁵.

The leading role of British scholars in opening up the field of Japanese studies is sometimes forgotten today⁴⁶; here I do not have space to do more than mention a few of the leading figures. One of these was the diplomat Ernest Satow (1843–1929), who, after graduating from London University in 1861, was sent to Japan as a student interpreter, where he remained until 1883. (He also spent the years 1895–1900 posted in Tokyo.) A genuine pioneer in the study of the Japanese language⁴⁷, Satow wrote many books on Japanese language and culture, especially Shinto, including *An English-Japanese Dictionary of the Spoken Language*, co-authored with Masakata Ishibashi (1878). Another prominent figure was W. G. Aston (1841–1911), who was also sent to Japan as a student interpreter, after graduating from Queen's University of Ireland with an M. A. in 1863. Aston remained in Japan, apart from a brief interlude in Korea, until 1889. He was the author of many influential studies, compiling two grammars, one of the spoken language (1869) and one of the written (1872). He translated the *Nihongi* (1869) and wrote the first Western history of Japanese literature (1899). As we shall see, Waley seems to have known Aston's work particularly well.

A third prominent figure was, of course, B. H. Chamberlain (1850–1935).

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From a rather different social and intellectual background, Chamberlain came to Japan as a teacher, as well as for the sake of his health, in 1873. Such was his mastery of Japanese that by 1886 he had achieved the signal honour of being appointed Professor of Japanese at Tokyo Imperial University. He finally retired from Japan because of his ill health in 1911. Among his many books were *The Classical Poetry of the Japanese* (1880), one of the earliest translations of No drama, *A Handbook of Colloquial Japanese* (1888), *A Practical Guide to the Study of Japanese Writing* (1905), and a translation of the *Kojiki* (1906). These three scholars were perhaps the most prominent among those Victorian scholars who devoted themselves to Japanese studies, but one could mention many others, including F. Brinkley, F. V. Dickins, A. B. Mitford, G. Murdoch and so on. Thus, when Waley set about teaching himself Japanese, in 1914 or so, there was a considerable body of scholarly writing on Japanese language and literature in English available to him. Indeed, Waley, like his near-contemporary, the historian G. B. Sansom (1883–1965), can be seen to form a link between this largely amateur Victorian tradition of scholarship and the post-War generation of academic Japanologists⁶³.

These nineteenth-century scholars, however, were Victorians in a deeper sense than the merely chronological. For what is chiefly notable about their work is the fact that their scholarly commitment to Japanese studies is not balanced by any very profound enthusiasm for Japanese culture as such. Indeed, there is something almost heroic about the work they put into introducing a culture which they seem to have often found somewhat unsatisfying in itself. B. H. Chamberlain, for example, remarked of Japanese literature in his *Things Japanese* (1890):

‘what Japanese literature most lacks is genius. It lacks thought, logical grasp,

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depth, breadth, and many-sidedness. It is too timorous, too narrow to compass great things'¹³.

W. G. Aston, generally a much more sympathetic critic of Japanese literature than Chamberlain, also characterised it in condescending terms:

'It is the literature of a brave, courteous, light-hearted, pleasure-loving people, sentimental rather than passionate, witty and humorous, of nimble apprehension, but not profound; ingenious and inventive, but hardly capable of high intellectual achievement; of receptive minds endowed with a voracious appetite for knowledge; with a turn for neatness and elegance of expression, but seldom or never rising to sublimity'²⁰.

One is irresistibly reminded of a schoolmaster's report.

Undoubtedly this strain in Victorian scholarship partly represents a natural desire to dissent from the less informed waves of enthusiasm for things Japanese which swept Europe; it also, perhaps, reflects the role of such figures in Japan as representatives of European 'enlightenment'. At bottom, however, it shows the tendency of these scholars to measure Japanese culture according to nineteenth-century European yardsticks, and naturally to find it lacking. This in turn led these scholars to concentrate upon historical and philological studies, seeing Japanese culture as primarily of historical or anthropological interest, and choosing to translate such works as the *Nihongi* or *Kojiki* rather than the *Genji Monogatari* or other works of more purely literary interest.

It is in this sense that Waley's attitude towards Japanese literature represents a sharp break with this Victorian scholarly tradition; for Waley, Japanese literature was valuable as literature, and in his translations he continually strove to recreate it as such²¹. Waley was able to see Japanese literature in this way because of his own literary ambitions and because of his participation in those literary currents of his own time which represented

a sharp break with Victorian literary tastes and styles. Waley is normally described as a minor member of the Bloomsbury Group; in Anthony Powell's words: 'Though not one of Bloomsbury's highest inner praesidium, he ranked as an authentic Bloomsbury of the next grade, in Waley's case perhaps appropriately to be described as a Mandarin of the Second Button'²². Although Waley's membership of the Bloomsbury Group has been denied, chiefly on the grounds that he is hardly mentioned by the Woolfs, it is clear that he was friendly with other key Bloomsbury figures, especially Roger Fry, but also Lytton Strachey and E. M. Forster²³. At the same time, however, Waley's literary friendships certainly cannot be confined to the Bloomsbury milieu; he was very close to the Sitwells, especially Edith Sitwell, who described him as one of only two people who knew what her early poetry means²⁴, and he also knew T. S. Eliot well, meeting him once a week for many years, as well as Gerald Brenan, Bertrand Russell and others²⁵.

Waley's friendship with Ezra Pound and his circle was perhaps especially significant for his interests in oriental literature. Indeed, although it has been the fashion among critics of Pound to set Waley up as a representative of a rival approach to oriental literature, and to compare him unfavourably with Pound, Waley both praised Pound's versions, which he saw before they were published, and helped Pound in his work of editing Fenollosa's papers²⁶. In fact, in Waley's relationship with Pound's work, we can see something of the tensions implicit in his attempt to combine the roles of scholar and poet. Although Waley's interest in Japanese poetry and the No clearly reflect the enthusiasms of Pound and the Imagists, Waley in his books also seems to be aiming to correct and educate the false impressions gained by those whose knowledge of the originals was only second-hand²⁷. Something of the same tendency is evident in Waley's books on Chinese art, which simultaneously reflect and correct the enthusiasms of

contemporaries such as Fry and Bell.

In his *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting* (1923), Waley outlined the qualifications which he considered necessary for the study of the subject: 'The ideal writer would know both Chinese and Japanese, which under existing conditions requires a special talent for languages'²⁹. In fact, this 'special talent' Waley had in abundance, having proved himself a brilliant classicist at both Rugby and Cambridge. Waley himself wanted to become a Don, but was forced to abandon Cambridge early because of an eye-complaint; nevertheless, when he applied for a position at the British Museum, he stated that 'he could already read easily Italian, Dutch, Portuguese, French, German and Spanish, and speak the last three fluently. He had some Hebrew and Sanskrit, as well as Greek and Latin'²⁹, all this at the age of 24! In June 1913 Waley started working in the newly formed sub-department of oriental prints and drawings, where he was given the task of preparing an index of the Chinese and Japanese painters whose works were owned by the museum. It was for this purpose that Waley began to study Chinese and Japanese; exactly how Waley managed to teach himself these languages remains unclear. It is sometimes thought that Waley taught himself Chinese first, as he printed privately his first set of translations of Chinese poems in 1916. However, there is one piece of evidence that he was studying Japanese at the same time, or perhaps even before, he studied Chinese, and this is the fact that he occasionally translated ideograms in Chinese poems according to their Japanese meaning³¹. For example, the poem entitled 'Fighting South of the Castle', first printed in 1917, interprets the ideogram 'ch'eng' ('A city; the walls of a city'³¹), according to its traditional Japanese meaning of 'a castle'. In his *Chinese Poems* (1946), Waley corrects the title to 'Fighting South of the Ramparts'³². This fact may mean that Waley availed himself of a Japanese dictionary when work-

ing on the poems, or it may mean that Waley asked for help from a Japanese in London, such as the dancer Michio Ito, who had arrived in London in 1914, and who frequented the same circles as Waley, and helped Pound with the Fenollosa manuscripts at about the same time as Waley³³.

Whatever the truth about this is, Waley's Japanese studies had by 1919 advanced to the point that he could publish his *Japanese Poetry: the Uta*. In this volume, Waley steps forward primarily as the scholar, although interest in Japanese poetry was fashionable enough at the time³⁴. Indeed Waley's remarks in his Introduction seem almost designed as a rebuke to those who composed 'Japanese poems' while remaining ignorant of the language: 'for Japanese poetry can only be rightly enjoyed in the original. And since the classical language has an easy grammar and limited vocabulary, a few months should suffice for the mastering of it'³⁵. This is followed by a brilliantly concise summary of the grammar of classical Japanese; an examination of this shows it to be dependent on Aston's *A Grammar of the Japanese Written Language* (1877), mentioned in Waley's bibliography, and yet also to exhibit knowledge of Japanese explanations of the classical language³⁶. What takes Aston a whole book to explain is summed up by Waley in six brief pages; it is clear that Waley's extraordinary gift for languages takes the form of an ability to grasp grammatical essentials in a lucid and well-organised way. At the same time, this gift, which perhaps reflects Waley's classical training, also helps us to see just why he should have made so many errors when reading the *Genji Monogatari*, where again and again he opts for the grammatically plausible rather than the correct interpretation. Waley is said to have remarked once that he had never come across a case of single ambiguity in classical Japanese in his life³⁷; seeing him go wrong with Murasaki's text, one can sometimes wish he had been more open to the possibility of ambiguity.

Despite the general tone of austerity in this book, Waley's literary tastes do emerge in various remarks, such as those on the *Hyakunin Isshu*, or his comment that a German scholar's 'elegiac couplets have neither the elegance of verse nor the fidelity of prose'³³. In the book he mentions his intention to write about the haiku and the No; while the former project unfortunately never came to fruition, the latter was published as *The No Plays of Japan* in 1921. This book is a work of considerable scholarship which provided accurate and up-to-date information on the No for the first time in English; again, the subject was fashionable, and it is difficult not to feel that many of Waley's remarks are pointed at the Fenollosa-Pound versions of the No which had appeared in 1916³⁴. At the same time, the translations are clearly intended to be more than dry, scholarly paraphrases of the original. Waley has said that he was very influenced by the diction of Gerard Manley Hopkins in his versions, and they do indeed have an elaborate, stately and somewhat unnatural tone, somewhat different from that of *The Tale of Genji*⁴⁰. Waley's aim to be at once accurate, and yet to create something which would stand as literature in its own right, emerges in his comments on his own translation:

'In short, what I have been able to give bears the same relation to the original as the photograph of an oil-painting bears to the painting. One whole element, and this a vital one, is lost. But a clear photograph, which though it omits much, at least adds nothing foreign, is generally preferable to a hand-copy..... I give the reader black-and-whites. He must colour them by the exercise of his own imagination. But I have carried the metaphor too far. For a photograph can never be a work of art. And if I have failed to make these translations in some sense works of art – if they are merely philology, not literature – then I have indeed fallen short of what I had hoped or intended.'⁴¹

It is hard to avoid feeling that Waley is a little confused here, claiming

the accuracy of a photograph, and yet also the vitality of art. In fact, Waley's translations of the No, while generally accorded the status of literature, are indeed, as he himself confessed later, very free – they are hand-copies, with the virtues of such. Just the same oscillation between the claims of accuracy and of literary recreation is evident in Waley's attitude to the *Genji Monogatari*.

It is difficult to know when Waley first became interested in the *Genji Monogatari*; according to his own account, his attention was first attracted to the book when he was indexing a series of prints illustrating it, and felt curiously attracted by a passage inscribed on one of the prints⁴². Although he must have known about the work from Aston's *History of Japanese Literature* (1899), Waley's first reference to it in print seems to have been an article which he published in the *New Statesman* in December, 1921:

'Take ... the *Genji Monogatari*, a romance amazing both in matter and extent. The text is so corrupt that a literal and complete translation is obviously impossible. Baron Suyematzu, who published in the 'eighties a version of the first seventeen chapters, attempted no more than a summary of the story, and appears to have used one of the numerous abridgements of the work rather than the romance itself. Yet an attempt to translate all that is translatable would be well worth making.. ...But since the only sound edition of *Genji* is at present out of print, the task cannot be begun.'⁴³

Waley's comments here are interesting for a number of reasons. One of these is the fact that he is clearly completely out of touch with the contemporary state of scholarship in Japan, where by 1921 countless scholarly editions of the *Genji Monogatari* had appeared in print, together with a number of translations into modern Japanese⁴⁴. Equally interesting, however, is the fact that Waley's remarks, while showing his interest in the book, contain no trace of his later view of it as one of the world's masterpieces.

Another interesting point is that his remarks appear to be indebted to those of Aston in his *History*, who criticises Suematsu's translation and also emphasises the inadequacy of current editions and the obscurity of the text⁴⁵. Aston describes the *Kogetsusho* as the 'standard' edition, and it seems likely that it is this edition which Waley describes as being out of print; this is confirmed by the fact that Yashiro Yukio has recalled Waley carrying around a copy of the *Kogetsusho* and reading it whenever he had the time in 1921⁴⁶. The various accounts of Waley's text and method of translation left by those who knew him, however, do not wholly agree with one another. N. Field, presumably following Yashiro, has stated that Waley based his translation on the *Kogetsusho*, while Donald Keene has gone so far as to describe Waley as relying 'mainly on the 18th-century commentaries of Motoori, generally available only in smudgy woodblock editions'⁴⁷. Waley himself stated that he used the 'Hakubunkwan' edition for the first four volumes of his translation; this is evidently that edited by Motoori Toyokai and others, first published in 1912⁴⁸. (For the last two volumes Waley used the edition by Kaneko Motoomi, the first volume of which was published in 1926⁴⁹.) Yet Sir Stanley Unwin, Waley's publisher, recalls Waley telling him that the *Genji Monogatari* amounted to six volumes in the edition which he was using⁵⁰; neither of the editions which Waley mentions in his translation was available in six volumes, and so this seems to have been yet another one. This raises the interesting possibility that Waley actually read Yosano Akiko's modern Japanese translation, which was first published in six volumes in 1914⁵¹. When Waley's translation first appeared, many Japanese speculated that it was merely a translation of Yosano's version, although this has been strongly denied by Yashiro, who argues that Waley's knowledge of modern Japanese at this time was so poor that such a version would have been of little use to him⁵². This notion, however, is

somewhat contradicted by Waley's use of modern Japanese explanations of the No in his translations of the No plays⁵³. Accounts of Waley's method of translation, and the ease with which he was able to read the original also vary widely⁵⁴.

When Waley proposed the publication of a translation of the novel to Sir Stanley Unwin, the latter asked him if the book was really an outstanding one. Waley replied that it was 'one of the two or three greatest novels ever written'⁵⁵. Today, accustomed as we are to the idea of the *Genji Monogatari* being one of the great classics of world literature, this opinion may seem debatable, but it is not particularly astounding. At the time, however, this judgement would have seemed extraordinary to anyone acquainted with the works of Victorian scholars on Japanese literature. For, if the Victorian scholars were somewhat lukewarm about the virtues of Japanese literature in general, they were especially so when it came to the *Genji Monogatari*. B.H. Chamberlain, for example, wrote that:

'On the other hand, much of that which the Japanese prize most highly in their literature seems intolerably flat and insipid to European taste. The romances – most of them – are every bit as dull as the histories, though in another way: – the histories are too curt, the romances too long-winded. If the authoress of the *Genji Monogatari*, though lauded to the skies by her compatriots, has been branded by Georges Bousquet as *cette ennuyeuse Scudery japonaise*, she surely richly deserves it'

and he goes on to quote Ernest Satow as remarking that the plot 'is devoid of interest, and it is only of value in marking a stage in the development of the language'⁵⁶. Aston, while dissenting from this negative judgment, and praising the book for its realism, condemns its immorality, remarking that:

'Japanese critics claim for the *Genji* that it surpasses anything of the kind in Chinese literature, and even deserves to be ranked with the masterpieces of

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European fiction. None, however, but an extreme Japanophile (the species is not altogether unknown) will go so far as to place Murasaki no Shikibu on a level with Fielding, Thackeray, Victor Hugo, Dumas, and Cervantes.⁵⁷

Waley, who, as we shall see, tended to regard the book as superior to any novel in European literature, would certainly have struck such critics as a Japanophile of the most extreme kind.

One obvious cause for Waley's very different assessment of the novel is indicated by Aston's confident listing of the greatest novelists of Europe – it seems very unlikely that a critic of Waley's generation would have chosen precisely these novelists as exponents of the art of the novel at its greatest. Between Aston and Waley there has clearly been a profound shift in critical taste, stimulated by such writers as Henry James, Joseph Conrad, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf⁵⁸, which had completely altered the conception of the novel, and of the role played in a novel by plot⁵⁹. Above all, as has been widely recognised, there had been the first four sections of Proust's masterpiece, and comparison between Proust and Murasaki has been a staple of Western commentary on the *Genji Monogatari* ever since Waley's translation was first published⁶⁰. In this sense, the importance of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* as a model for the understanding and assimilation of the *Genji Monogatari* cannot be overstated; yet, what has been less noticed is that for Waley himself the example of Proust may have been less important than that of the English translation of Proust undertaken by Scott Moncrieff. Waley had been at school with Scott Moncrieff⁶¹, and must have been very conscious of the immense critical success of his translation, the first volume of which appeared in 1922, shortly after Waley first became interested in the *Genji Monogatari*, and shortly before Proust's own death. In the following year, Scott Moncrieff edited a volume of essays in tribute to Proust which included contributions by friends of Waley such as

Clive Bell, Francis Birrell and Logan Pearsall Smith⁶². It has been remarked of this book that the essays differ so much in their view of Proust that it is difficult to believe that all the contributors had been reading the same author⁶³; the essay by Pearsall Smith, however, seems to have something in common with Waley's own view of the *Genji Monogatari*. Scott Moncrieff continued to issue volumes of translation of Proust until he died in 1930, by which time they totalled eleven. It may, one feels, have been this example of a multi-volume, highly successful translation in lush, mannered prose, which spurred Waley on to attempt his complete translation of the *Genji Monogatari*, rather than the French original itself, although Waley was clearly fond of this⁶⁴.

Nevertheless, so much has been said about Murasaki and Proust that it is important to remind ourselves that Waley quite clearly distinguished her art from that of the French writer. His most important discussion comes in the introduction to *The Sacred Tree* (1926), the second volume of his translation. He begins by remarking that few reviewers 'have dealt with the points that seem to me fundamental', and goes on to consider the analogy with Proust explicitly:

'One reviewer did indeed analyse the nature of Murasaki's achievement to the extent of classifying her as "psychological" and in this respect he even went so far as to classify her with Marcel Proust. Now it is clear that, if we contrast *Genji* with such fiction as does not exploit the ramifications of the human mind at all (the *Arabian Nights* or *Mother Goose*), it appears to be "psychological". But if we go on to compare it with Stendhal, with Tolstoy, with Proust, the *Tale of Genji* appears by contrast to possess little more psychological complication than a Grimm's fairy tale.'⁶⁵

Waley's interpretation of Proust's achievement as being essentially one of subtle delineation of psychology is very much of its time⁶⁶. Waley accepts,

of course, that the novel has a superficial appearance of modernity, but he regards this as largely accidental:

'Yet it does for a very definite reason belong more to the category which includes Proust, than to the category which includes Grimm. Murasaki, like the novelist of to-day, is not principally interested in the events of the story, but rather in the effect which these events may have upon the minds of her characters She is "modern" again owing to the accident that medieval Buddhism possessed certain psychological conceptions which happen to be current in Europe to-day..... They give to Murasaki's work a certain rather fallacious air of modernity. But it is not psychological elements such as these that Murasaki is principally exploiting. She is, I think, obtaining her effects by means which are so unfamiliar to European readers (though they have, in varying degrees, often been exploited in the West) that while they work as they were intended to do and produce aesthetic pleasure, the reader is quite unconscious how this pleasure arose.'⁶⁷

Thus, while Waley is sometimes seen as having interpreted the *Genji Monogatari* as primarily a psychological novel of the kind then fashionable in Europe, it is clear that Waley thought of himself as doing no such thing. Once again, Waley comes forward as a scholar, determined to rebut hasty and superficial analogies drawn between ancient Japanese and modern European culture.

Yet, when we come to Waley's conception of Murasaki's artistic 'means' to her effects, I think that we find his own understanding of the novel very firmly rooted in contemporary European thought about art. In Waley's view, Murasaki's virtues are essentially formal ones:

'Foremost, I think, is the way in which she handles the whole course of narrative as a series of contrasted effects The effect of these subtly-chosen successions is more like that of music (of the movements, say, in a Mozart symphony) than anything that we are familiar with in European fiction.....

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That to one critic the *Tale of Genji* should have appeared to be memoirs – a realistic record of accidental happenings rather than a novel – is to me utterly incomprehensible. But the first painted makimonos that were brought to Europe created the same impression. They were regarded merely as a succession of topographical records, joined together more or less fortuitously; and Murasaki's art obviously has a close analogy with that of the makimono.⁶⁸

The radical originality of this judgment of the novel – although it accords with some more recent writing about the *Genji Monogatari*⁶⁹ – is indicated by a comparison with Victorian views. For the Victorians, the prime fault of the book was its poor construction, its incoherent plot, while its chief virtue was its realism, its value as a picture of the times. Waley completely reverses this valuation; the book's realism, historical or psychological, is at best an accidental effect, arising from its formal perfection:

'The modern novelist tends to fling his characters on to the canvas without tact or precaution of any kind. That credence, attention even, may be a hard thing to win does not occur to him, for he is corrupted by a race of readers who come to a novel seeking the pleasures of instruction rather than those of art..... This sense of reality with which she invests her narrative is not the result of realism in any ordinary sense. It is not the outcome of those clever pieces of small observation by which the modern novelist strives to attain the same effect..... Her construction is in fact classical; elegance, symmetry, restraint – these are the qualities which she can set in the scales against the interesting irregularities of European fiction. That such qualities should not be easily recognized in the West is but natural; for here the novel has always been Gothic through and through.⁷⁰

For Waley, Murasaki is not merely as great as any European novelist, but rather herself provides an object lesson in the meaning of true art.

Where, then, did Waley derive this radically new perception of the *Genji Monogatari*? The answer to this, I believe, lies in the field of art

criticism, rather than literature or literary theory as such. In particular, I believe that any contemporary reader of Waley, abreast of developments in the world of fine art, would have immediately recognised the influence of what is sometimes called 'Bloomsbury aesthetics', that is the aesthetic theories developed by Roger Fry and Clive Bell, on Waley's remarks⁷¹. Waley's dislike of representation, of historical or psychological realism in the ordinary sense, his reference to an 'aesthetic pleasure', the causes of which are hidden from the reader, the comparisons to Mozart or the makimono, the attack on the corrupt taste of modern readers, ignorant of the pleasures of art, the praise of formal perfection and the distaste for the Gothic – all of these are distinctive traits of the variety of aesthetic formalism developed by Fry and Bell in response to the Post-Impressionists, and to Cezanne in particular⁷².

That Waley should have been influenced by trends in the Fine Arts is not at all surprising because, from 1913, his professional occupation, at least, was the study of Chinese and Japanese painting. Thus his concern with art coincided with the introduction and widespread public discussion of the Post-Impressionists. Moreover, Roger Fry, who coined the very term 'Post-Impressionism', and was responsible for organising the two Post-Impressionist exhibitions held in London (in 1910 and 1912), was a close friend of Waley's⁷³. It was Fry who developed the point of view which came to be identified with the Bloomsbury Group, both as critics and as artists, especially in his 'An Essay in Aesthetics' (1909)⁷⁴. For Fry, the artistic excellence of the Post-Impressionists, especially his personal hero, Cezanne, showed that aesthetic value could not be measured by an artist's skill at creating realistic representations, nor by reference to the moral worthiness of his aims, but only in terms of formal considerations:

'The perception of purposeful order and variety in an object gives us the feeling which we express by saying that it is beautiful.....'⁷⁵

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This view was primarily aimed at Victorian conceptions of art – or what were felt to be such – and in particular what was seen as a corrupt stress on the anecdotal, the historical and the didactic in art. But it was also aimed at those who justified Impressionism in terms of its ‘realism’, its ability to achieve a photographic accuracy by recording effects of light; thus it was presented as a Post-Impressionist theory, and indeed the word itself came to be something of a slogan, being applied to the novels of D. H. Lawrence and the dancing of Nijinsky⁷⁶. This formalism, however, was also used to explain and accommodate exotic and primitive art, such as Chinese painting or Byzantine ‘primitives’. Indeed, Fry’s comments on unity in ‘certain Chinese paintings’ may have particularly influenced Waley’s view of the *Genji Monogatari*:

‘Such a successive unity is of course familiar to us in literature and music, and it plays its part in the graphic arts. It depends upon the forms being presented to us in such a sequence that each successive element is felt to have a fundamental and harmonious relation with that which precedes it.’⁷⁷

If it was Fry who first developed this account, it was Clive Bell who gave it currency, especially in his widely read *Art* (1914). Bell, who had married Virginia Woolf’s younger sister Vanessa in 1907, first met Fry in 1910 and they rapidly became close friends, despite profound differences in temperament⁷⁸. In *Art*, Bell carries Fry’s formalism to extreme lengths, reinterpreting the whole of the history of art as a series of ‘slopes’ or declines from various pristine primitives to the ‘same sea-level of nasty naturalism’⁷⁹. Bell, influenced by the philosopher G. E. Moore, identifies aesthetic excellence with a unique aesthetic emotion; the cause of this emotion, he states, is ‘significant form’⁸⁰. Bell’s argument has naturally been accused of circularity (significant form causes an aesthetic emotion; we recognise sig-

nificant form by the fact that we have the aesthetic emotion), but I feel that this is a misunderstanding. Bell's purpose is not to characterise 'significant form', but rather to show that it cannot be explained in any other terms (such as fidelity to nature), just as Moore aimed to show that the good could not be reduced to happiness or anything else. The effect of Bell's argument, however, is to root the value of art very firmly in the subjective response of the spectator – to explain art in terms of 'states of mind'. This gives this view of art a profoundly ahistorical character – paintings from any culture or any period can be seen as equally worthwhile, as long as they provoke the requisite aesthetic emotion. It was on these grounds that Bell and Fry rejected Futurism and some versions of Cubism, which they saw as neglecting the pursuit of the essentially suprahistorical 'significant form', in favour of mere historical and social considerations⁸¹. On the same grounds, they welcomed art from any culture or period, so long as it exhibited formal excellence⁸².

Although, for Bell, representation in art is strictly speaking irrelevant to the question of a painting's formal beauty, he is in fact deeply hostile to any form of representation in painting, seeing it as a constant temptation to the artist to ignore the imperative of formal perfection, and to indulge instead in the specious pleasures of 'story-telling'. Thus conventional art history is reversed, with what had formerly been seen as progress towards greater realism in painting now being interpreted as falls from primitive purity (Bell's language being oddly Protestant)⁸³. Bell's actual taste is severely purist, not to say puritan, as emerges in his discussion of Gothic architecture:

'With Gothic architecture the descent began. Gothic architecture is juggling in stone and glass. It is the convoluted road that ends in a bridecake or a cucumber frame. A Gothic cathedral is a tour de force; it is also a melodra-

Arthur Waley, Bloomsbury Aesthetics and *The Tale of Genji*.

ma. Enter, and you will be impressed by the incredible skill of the constructor; perhaps you will be impressed by a sense of dim mystery and might; you will not be moved by pure form. You may groan "A-ah" and collapse: you will not be strung to austere ecstasy. Walk round it, and take your pleasure in subtleties of the builder's craft, quaint corners, gargoyles, and flying buttresses, but do not expect the thrill that answers the sheer rightness of form.'⁸⁴

Here, surely, we find the origin of Waley's punning remarks on the essentially Gothic nature of the novel in the West.

When Waley first began to study the *Genji Monogatari*, in 1921 or so, he was also busy writing books on Chinese and Japanese art⁸⁵. It is one of the paradoxes of Waley's writings on art that, despite his own aestheticism, and his pronounced artistic tastes, he gives very little space to appreciation, confining himself to providing historical and anecdotal material for the interpretation of paintings⁸⁶. In his *Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting* (1923), he remarks that 'it is essential that' an ideal writer on Chinese art 'should be a person in whose life art plays an important part; otherwise, however great his scholarship, it will be impossible for him to sift to any intelligent purpose the vast mass of documentary material at his disposal', and Waley implies that he lacks this qualification⁸⁷. In a later passage, however, he indicates another possible reason for his lack of personal enthusiasm for oriental art:

'In every secular Chinese painting there is an element of narrative, lyricism, or romance; and in every painting there is at least some striving for formal beauty. Never at any moment has the plastic side of art been entirely subordinated to sentiment, as it has been in Europe by popular artists since 1850. Never has so great a formal beauty been achieved in Chinese painting as is seen in the works of such artists as Della Francesca, Chardin or Cezanne.'⁸⁸

Waley's tastes here are impeccably Bloomsbury, and can be paralleled by passages in Bell⁸⁹; like Bell and Fry, Waley deplors the subordination of art to sentiment in Victorian painting. Yet, unlike Bell and Fry, Waley argues that Chinese art does not attain that formal purity which he looks for—paradoxically he is too formalist to appreciate Chinese painting. It is said that Waley once criticised the theory of 'significant form' by showing Fry some Zen paintings and defying him to explain them in formal terms alone⁹⁰. This has been seen as a criticism of 'significant form', but it may have been a criticism of the Zen paintings themselves.

It is this formalism, derived by Waley from Fry and Bell, which allowed him to completely reverse Victorian judgments of the *Genji Monogatari*. How then did this view affect Waley's translation? Unfortunately, detailed discussion of this question will have to be put off to another paper, but I think a few general comments may be made. One is that Waley's sense of the importance of an 'aesthetic emotion' caused him to view literary translation as primarily recreation of the original so as to provide an equivalent emotion in the target language; thus, for example, his tendency to look for equivalents rather than introducing foreign terms into the text⁹¹. His conception of the novel as a series of contrasted effects also induced him to sharpen contrasts, and indeed sometimes to invent them⁹². These tendencies enabled Waley to produce a translation which lives on the page, which avoids that fatal flatness characteristic of so many translations from the Japanese. Waley's characters are vivid and recognisable, and their feelings and fates concern us. Paradoxically Waley seems to have done what he thought Murasaki was doing, producing an illusion of realism by paying careful attention to formal organisation.

At the same time, it is hard to avoid feeling that Waley's conception of the original as a model of formal perfection gave him highly unrealistic

expectations. As Seidensticker has said of the original:

‘There is a widespread view that the *Genji*, like *Remembrance of Things Past*, with which it is so frequently compared, is a tightly organized piece of fiction, carefully worked out in advance, and carrying its end already in its beginning. This is a false view.....The *Genji* is very loosely organized. It builds up by a process akin to agglutination.’⁹³

In fact, I think it is possible to see Waley becoming disillusioned with the original during the course of his translation, and this may explain the cuts and alterations which he made to the middle sections of the work⁹⁴, as well as the four year gap between the fourth and fifth volumes of his translation, although both boredom and illness played a part here⁹⁵. In 1928, the year of the fourth volume, Waley also published his *The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon*, which consisted of selections from the *Makura no Soshi* together with a linking commentary. Although Waley later described this as his favourite book, and it is indeed beautifully written, one detects a growing emphasis on the alienness of Heian civilisation:

‘It is, then, not only their complete absorption in the passing moment, but more generally the entire absence of intellectual background that makes the ancient Japanese so different from us, and gives even to the purely aesthetic sides of their culture a curious quality of patchiness. At any moment these men and women, to all appearances so infinitely urbane and sophisticated, may surprise us, even where matters of taste rather than intellect are concerned, by lapsing into a *niaiserie* far surpassing the silliness of our own middle ages. It is this insecurity which gives to the Heian period that oddly evasive and, as it were, two-dimensional quality, its figures and appurtenances seeming to us all to be cut out of thin, transparent paper.’⁹⁶

Is Waley expressing his own irritation with Murasaki’s novel? Certainly, in his introduction to *The Bridge of Dreams*, the last volume of his translation, Waley expressed his dissatisfaction with the construction of the mid-

Arthur Waley, *Bloomsbury Aesthetics and The Tale of Genji*.

dle part of the novel in strong terms, declaring his preference for the first and last books⁹⁷. More fundamentally, however, the tone of his remarks seems to have altered, and he seems to confess that the book is rather more alien than even he himself recognised:

‘Her book indeed is like one of those caves, common in a certain part of Spain, in which as one climbs from chamber to chamber the natural formation of the rock seems in succession to assume a semblance to every known form of sculpture – here a figure from Chartres, there a Buddha from Yun-kang, a Persian conqueror, a Byzantine ivory. That such should be the impression that Murasaki’s book makes on us remains surprising only if we cling to the false conception of human development as a ladder, to a particular rung of which every civilization must at any moment have attained. On the contrary, a civilization is a mosaic, and it is natural that when we see the stones arranged in a new way, we should feel at first that they do not belong together..... What seems to us an unaccountable patchiness in Murasaki’s art simply reflects the pattern of contemporary life and feeling, made up of elements of which some do not occur in Europe till the twentieth century, some dropped out centuries ago, while others have not yet figured in our European pattern at all.’⁹⁸

From a Mozart symphony to a Spanish cave seems a sad falling-off indeed: while Waley’s new sense of the book’s alienness and difficulty may be more appropriate, one cannot help feeling sad that by the end of his translation the original has come to seem more rather than less remote. It is as if the golden period when Japanese literature seemed genuinely to have something to teach European literature is being brought to a close with these remarks – from now on the book will be left in the hands of the academics.

Notes.

(Japanese names are given in Japanese order i. e. surname first.)

(1) Full bibliographical details are available in Francis A. Johns, *A Bibliography*

of Arthur Waley, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1968.

- (2) See the examples cited by Ruth Perlmutter, *Arthur Waley and his Place in the Modern Movement between the Two Wars*, Ph. D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1971, (University Microfilms, 71-26, 070), p. 240.
- (3) When the distinguished Japanese art historian, and friend of Waley, Yashiro Yukio, visited Harvard University in the 1930s, he 'learnt that Waley's English-language translation of the *Tale of Genji* was listed as one of those world classics which every educated person must, at least once in their lifetime, read' (Yashiro Yukio, 'Arthur Waley', *Japan Quarterly*, Vol. XIV, 1967, p. 368).
- (4) by Raymond Mortimer; see Ivan Morris (ed.), *Madly Singing in the Mountains: an appreciation and anthology of Arthur Waley*, London, 1970, p. 73. (Hereafter: *MSIM*.)
- (5) Perhaps the nearest comparable translation is Edward Fitzgerald's very free *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (1859).
- (6) E. G. Seidensticker (trans.), *The Tale of Genji*, New York, 1977. Waley's version is available in various editions; one interesting indication that it is still being read comes in Iris Murdoch's latest novel, where a young girl 'had been seen reading or (it was Rose's impression) affecting to read *The Tale of Genji*, which Rose had recommended to her some time ago' (Iris Murdoch, *The Book and the Brotherhood*, London, 1987, p. 249).
- (7) A scholar named Takagi Ichinosuke reviewed the first volume of Waley's translation in *Kokugo to Kokubungaku* (October, 1926), where he complained that, while a quick reading gave the impression of fidelity to the original, closer examination revealed too many errors. The writer Masamune Hakucho bought Waley's translation in London and read it on the ship home. He declared that Waley's version was more interesting than the original, and written in a better style. See Takasugi Ichiro, 'Genji Monogatari no Eiyaku', in Furuta Hiromu, Takasugi Ichiro, Takeda Ko, Matsunaga Iwao, *Genji Monogatari no Eiyaku Kenkyu*, Tokyo, 1980, pp. 212 ff. Tanizaki Jun'ichiro's discussion of a passage from Waley in his *Bunsho Dokuhon* (1934) (Tokyo, 1975, pp. 53 ff.) is also well-known.
- (8) See Tsunoda Bun'ei and Nakamura Shinichiro, *Omoshiroku Genji o Yomu: Genji Monogatari Kogi*, Tokyo, 1980, esp. pp. 160-1. It must be remarked, however, that this book provides a wildly inaccurate picture of the Bloomsbury Group, it being claimed that members of the Group took it in turns to translate and publish Proust (p. 158); cf. Norma Field, *The Splendour of Longing in*

'*The Tale of Genji*', Princeton, New Jersey, 1987, p. 8.

- (9) See Marion Ury, 'The Imaginary Kingdom and the Translator's Art: Notes on Re-reading Waley's *Genji*', *Journal of Japanese Studies* II, 1976, 2, pp. 267-94, esp. pp. 290, 294.
- (10) The basic book for any student of Waley is that edited by Ivan Morris and mentioned in note 4. The accounts of Waley given there, however, besides being essentially tributes to the man, are not always reliable, and sometimes contradict one another. Moreover, as E. G. Seidensticker has remarked, the book fails to answer many of the questions which occur to the student of Waley: see E. G. Seidensticker, 'Review: *Madly Singing in the Mountains*', *This Country Japan*, Tokyo, 1979. The most thorough study of *The Tale of Genji* as a translation is that by Furuta Hiromu et. al., mentioned in note 7, in which Waley's text is subjected to severe scrutiny. Naturally enough, however, the authors write from a very Japanese standpoint, and thus are somewhat unreliable when it comes to questions of Waley's style. Perhaps the best study to date is that by Ury mentioned in note 9; Ury, a specialist in Heian literature, makes many interesting and scholarly points. Again, however, her sense of English literary history seems somewhat vague, while her general point, that Waley translated the novel into a kind of fantasy or fairy story, seems to me untenable (contrast Furuta et. al., *op. cit.*, pp. 213-4). The doctoral thesis by Ruth Perlmutter, mentioned in note 2, is damaged by the author's apparent ignorance of the originals for Waley's translations, as well as her failure to give any kind of precision to the notion of a 'modern movement' or of Waley's affinities with it; the thesis rapidly degenerates into summarising. Seidensticker's necessarily somewhat loaded views on Waley's translation are available in (too) many places, including: E. G. Seidensticker and Anzai Tetsuo, *Nihonbun no Hon'yaku*, Tokyo, 1983, pp. 210-228.
- (11) Thus Waley is hardly mentioned by Earl Miner in his standard treatment of the influence of Japanese literature upon English literature: *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1958.
- (12) See Susan Bassnett-McGuire, *Translation Studies*, London, 1980, pp. 54, 75.
- (13) such as Ezra Pound and his circle; see Miner, *op. cit.*, esp. Chapter V and VI.
- (14) A point made by Donald Keene in his contribution to *MSIM* (p. 59)
- (15) See Waley's 'Notes on Translation' (1958), reprinted in *MSIM*, pp. 152-64, esp. p. 152. (Hereafter: *Notes*)
- (16) See Sanehide Kodama, *American Poetry and Japanese Culture*, Connecticut,

1984, p. 208: 'The French, the British, and other Europeans have tended to ignore Japan, and to be haunted still, to a certain extent, by Orientalism in the old sense, with exoticism and with "the high-handed executive attitude of the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century European colonialism"'. The force of these remarks is somewhat undercut by the fact that R. H. Blyth, who plays a very important part in Kodama's chosen subject of the influence of Japanese poetry upon America, was himself an Englishman (see pp. 154, 158-60, 170).

- (17) See Ernest Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan* (1921), Tokyo, 1983, pp. 55 ff. for the difficulties facing a student of Japanese in the 1880 s.
- (18) Waley's position as godfather to the post-War generation of academic Orientalists is well indicated by the fact that two influential anthologies, one of Japanese and one of Chinese literature, were both dedicated to him; see: D. Keene (ed.), *Anthology of Japanese Literature*, New York, 1955, and Cyril Birch (ed.), *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, New York, 1965. Waley's scholarship has been praised by the eminent Sinologist, David Hawkes, (*MSIM*, p. 45), but Donald Keene is perhaps nearer the point when he remarks upon the extraordinary influence of Waley's choice of tone for his translations upon later scholars (*MSIM*, p. 57). This tone is (implicitly) criticised, along with a great many other things, in R. A. Miller, *Nihongo: in defence of Japanese*, (London, 1986), especially p. 219.
- (19) B. H. Chamberlain, *Things Japanese* (5th ed., 1905), Tokyo, 1971, p. 295. (Reprinted under the title: *Japanese Things*)
- (20) W. G. Aston, *A History of Japanese Literature* (1899), Tokyo, 1972, p. 4. (Hereafter: *History*)
- (21) See Waley, *Notes*, *MSIM*, esp. p. 52: 'If one is translating literature one has to convey feeling as well as grammatical sense.....if the translator does not feel while he reads.....he may think he is being "faithful", but in fact he is totally misrepresenting the original'. This stress on feeling seems to me redolent of the emphasis upon 'aesthetic experience' in Bloomsbury aesthetic thought.
- (22) Anthony Powell, *To Keep the Ball Rolling*, abridged and revised edition, Middlesex, 1983, pp. 203-4. Powell's remarks on Waley are characteristically original and penetrating. In the same vein see Hawkes, *MSIM*, p. 45. E. M. Forster's assessment of Waley's place in the Bloomsbury Group, however, seems significantly different from that of many later writers, to judge by a fragment of an interview found among Forster's papers: 'The only definite group I can think of is "Bloomsbury", which consists of a number of people

of intellectual integrity, high critical ability, independent incomes, and emancipated outlook. Their enemies call them "high brow" and "superior", and accuse them of sterility. But they have already produced Lytton Strachey, J. M. Keynes, Virginia Woolf (that most talented and poetic novelist), Roger Fry (our chief art-critic), Arthur Waley (the great Japanese scholar and translator) – not to mention writers of the younger generation.....' (Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank (eds.), *Selected Letters of E.M. Forster*, Vol. 2: 1921–70, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1985, p. 106). The date of this fragment is unknown, but the fact that Forster considers Waley primarily as a scholar of Japanese suggests that it is early. It is interesting to note that Forster does not seem to consider himself a member of the Group.

- 23 Ury denies Waley's membership of Bloomsbury on the grounds that he is not mentioned in Leonard Woolf's memoirs (*op. cit.*, p. 273, note 18). There is some reason to think that Waley may not have got on well with Virginia Woolf, despite her mentioning him in her preface to *Orlando*. P. Quennell records Woolf as making a 'slightly caustic reference' to Waley in her private notebooks (*MSIM*, p. 89), while M. Sullivan recalls Waley criticising Woolf's biography of Roger Fry (*MSIM*, p. 113). It is a mistake, however, to identify the Bloomsbury Group completely with the Woolfs. Waley himself described Roger Fry as 'one of my greatest friends' ('Arthur Waley in Conversation' (1963), *MSIM*, p. 144; cf. his 'introduction' to *A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems* (1962 ed.), *MSIM*, p. 134). This is confirmed by Gerald Brennan in his *Personal Record*, New York, 1975, pp. 95 ff., and by much other evidence. As regards Lytton Strachey, Waley records that he had 'a corporate admiration for the whole Strachey family', but that he became disillusioned with Lytton after he saw some 'ribald parodies' of his translations of Chinese poems (*MSIM*, p. 135). Strachey himself preferred Giles' versions (see Michael Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey: A Biography* (1967, 1968), rev. ed., Middlesex, 1979, p. 354). Nevertheless, Waley seems to have been a regular visitor to Ham Spray, the country home shared by Strachey with Dora Carrington (*ibid.*, p. 972). Waley also described E.M. Forster as 'my friend' in 1960 (*MSIM*, p. 136); one very close friend whom they had in common was R. C. Trevelyan, brother of the historian, and a poet who wrote an *Epistola Ad A. W.* in 1932 (*Rimeless Numbers*, London, 1932). Waley dedicated the fourth volume of his translation, *Blue Trousers* (1928), to Trevelyan. His character and friendship with Forster is described in P. N. Furbank, *E. M. Forster: A Life*, (1977, 1978), Oxford,

1979, esp. pp. 112-3.

- ②4 See F. A. Johns, *op. cit.*, p. 157. For Waley's friendship with the Sitwells see John Pearson, *Facades: Edith, Osbert and Sachaverall Sitwell*, London, 1978, pp. 176, 347, 364, and *MSIM*, pp. 96-107. Osbert Sitwell said of Waley that he had 'perhaps the greatest range of friendship of any person I know' (*ibid.*, p. 107), something which seems to contradict the usual emphasis upon Waley's haughtiness.
- ②5 For Eliot see Waley's remarks in *MSIM*, pp. 140-2. For Brenan, Russell etc., see Brenan, *op. cit.*, pp. 95 ff.
- ②6 Waley described his relationship with Pound in 'Arthur Waley in Conversation', *MSIM*, pp. 139-42. In particular, he remarked that 'I think Pound often improved the things he translated. I wouldn't wish Pound's translations any other way' (*ibid.*, p. 148). Pound himself, in his *'Noh' or Accomplishment, a study of the classical stage of Japan* (1917), (New York, 1959), stated in an introductory note: 'I wish to express my very deep thanks to Mr. Arthur Waley, who has corrected a number of mistakes in the orthography of proper names from such Japanese texts as were available, and who has assisted me out of various impasses where my own ignorance would have left me.' (This note was omitted by Hugh Kenner in his edition of Pound's *Translations* (London, 1953)). Waley remarked of the Pound/Fenollosa versions that: 'The versions of E. F. seem to have been fragmentary and inaccurate; but wherever Mr. Pound had adequate material to work on he has used it admirably' (*The No Plays of Japan* (1921), New York, n. d. Hereafter: *The No Plays*). Hugh Kenner seems to have started the fashion of comparing Pound and Waley to the latter's disadvantage; see H. Kenner, 'The Invention of China', *The Pound Era*, London, 1972.
- ②7 See *The No Plays*, p. 5.
- ②8 A Waley, *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting* (1923), London, 1958, p. 8. (Hereafter: *Introduction*.)
- ②9 B. Gray, 'Arthur Waley at the British Museum', *MSIM*, p. 39.
- ③0 See D. Keene, *MSIM*, p. 56.
- ③1 The definition of ideogram no. 380 given in *Mathew's Chinese-English Dictionary* (1931), revised American edition, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1943, p. 49. The poem in question is an anonymous early military song. The full text plus Japanese translation and commentary may be found in Matsuda Shigeo, *Chugoku Meishisen*, vol. 1, Tokyo, 1983, pp. 150 ff. Waley's translation was

first published in 'Pre-T'ang Poetry', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1. 1917, pp. 34-55.

- ③2 See A. Waley, *Chinese Poems*, London, 1946, p. 52.
- ③3 See Helen Caldwell, *Michio Ito: The Dancer and His Dances*, Berkeley, 1977, pp. 37 ff.
- ③4 See Miner, *op. cit.*, pp. 156 ff.
- ③5 A. Waley, *Japanese Poetry: The Uta* (1919), London, 1976, p. 12. (Hereafter: *Japanese Poetry*.)
- ③6 Waley includes the 2nd Edition (1877) of Aston's work in his bibliography, and comments that it is out of print. (Oddly, Waley does not seem to be aware of the 3rd Edition, published in London and Yokohama, 1904.) Aston, true to his period, is very concerned with philology in the older sense, that is, with the history of the language, and with etymology in particular. Waley discards all of this, which takes up much space in Aston's book. Waley quotes from Aston at one point (p. 83), and employs much of the nomenclature devised by the older scholar. He also follows Aston in describing the *renyokei* as the 'root' and placing it first in his paradigms of verbs (Aston, confusingly, describes the *renyokei* as both 'root' and 'adverbial form'; Waley collapses these two categories into one). In the rest of the paradigm, however, Waley follows the Japanese order: 'Fut. & Neg.' (i.e. *mizenkei*), conclusive (i. e. *shushikei*), attributive (i. e. *rentaikei*), concessive (i. e. *izenkei*), and imperative (i. e. *meireikei*), the last being omitted by Aston (pp. 14 ff.). Waley's knowledge of Japanese grammar as shown by this work is an interesting topic for further research.
- ③7 See Carmen Blacker, *MSIM*, p. 21.
- ③8 *Japanese Poetry*, pp. 11, 19.
- ③9 cf. Miner, *op. cit.*, p. 137: 'Waley's translations are executed with both scholarship and delicacy and are, so to speak, the authoritative English texts'.
- ④0 See Waley, *MSIM*, pp. 137, 144. See also J. M. Cohen's discussion, *ibid.*, pp. 29-33.
- ④1 Waley himself later confessed that his translations of the No were very free (*ibid.*, p. 142), and criticised one of his own translations: 'I felt at once that my translation was hopelessly overlaid and wordy and that it tried in a quite unwarrantable way to improve upon the original' (*ibid.*, p. 155).
- ④2 See *MSIM*, p. 133. Waley once remarked that 'anyone with a good classical education could learn Chinese by himself without difficulty' (*ibid.*, p. 68).

- 43 A. Waley, 'An Introspective Romance', *The New Statesman*, Dec. 10, 1921.
- 44 For a useful, although apparently not complete, list of editions and modern versions at the time, see Takekasa Masao, *Genji Monogatari Shoshi*, Tokyo, 1934.
- 45 See Aston, *History*, p. 96. Suematsu's translation was first published in 1882; a reprint was published in 1874. Ury, *op. cit.*, p. 270, suggests that Waley may have been influenced by Suematsu in the early part of his translation.
- 46 See Yashiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 366-7.
- 47 N. Field, *op. cit.*, p. 5; Keene, *MSIM*, p. 56.
- 48 A. Waley, *The Sacred Tree*, London, 1926, pp. 35-6 (hereafter: *The Sacred Tree*). See Takekasa, *op. cit.*, p. 340 for bibliographical details.
- 49 A. Waley, *The Bridge of Dreams*, London, 1933, p. 24. (Hereafter: *The Bridge of Dreams*.)
- 50 Sir Stanley Unwin, *The Truth about a Publisher*, London, 1960, p. 193.
- 51 Yosano Akiko, *Shin'yaku Genji Monogatari*, 6 Volumes, Tokyo, 1914.
- 52 Yashiro, *op. cit.*, p. 367.
- 53 *The No Plays*, p. 305.
- 54 See e.g. Yashiro, *op. cit.*, p. 367: 'The truth is that he even read ancient Japanese literature with great effort, painstakingly and patiently translating word for word, relying on dictionaries and commentaries'; contrast Keene, *MSIM*, p. 58: 'He described to me once how he had translated *The Tale of Genji*. He would read a passage over until he understood its meaning; then, without looking back at the passage, he wrote out an English assimilation. He would later consult the original again. If the content of the translation was the same, he would let it pass, even if some words had been added or deleted'. If Yashiro's account can be trusted, then we surely need to take some of Waley's remarks about the need to capture 'the emphasis, the tone, the eloquence' of the original with a pinch of salt (*MSIM*, p. 158).
- 55 Unwin, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
- 56 Chamberlain, *op. cit.*, pp. 294-5.
- 57 Aston, *History*, pp. 96-7.
- 58 It is interesting to note in this connection that Waley, alone among the Bloomsbury Group, appreciated Joyce; see Brenan, *op. cit.*, p. 157. Virginia Woolf's opinion of *The Tale of Genji* is available in a Japanese translation: V. Woolt, 'Genji Monogatari o yonde', *Bungei Dokuhon: Genji Monogatari*, Tokyo, 1981, pp. 214-6. (I have not been able to trace the original.)

- 69 Useful general accounts are: John Fletcher and Malcolm Bradbury, 'The Inverted Novel' in *Modernism*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, Middlesex, 1976, pp. 394-415; or Michael Bell, 'Introduction: Modern Movements in Literature', in *The Context of English Literature: 1900-1930*, ed. Michael Bell, London, 1980, pp. 1-93, esp. pp. 8-12.
- 60 See e.g. Donald Keene, *Japanese Literature: an introduction for Western readers*, New York, 1955, pp. 75-6; A.M. Janeira, *Japanese and Western Literature: a Comparative Study*, Tokyo, 1970, pp. 64-71; David Hawkes, *MSIM*, p. 49.
- 61 *MSIM*, pp. 138-9.
- 62 C. K. Scott Moncrieff, *Marcel Proust: An English Tribute*, London, 1923. Bell, Birrell and Pearsall Smith were all on the list of friends to whom Waley sent copies of his first pamphlet of translations from the Chinese; see F. A. Johns, *op. cit.*, p. 8. Waley mentions Pearsall Smith's kindness to him in *MSIM*, p. 134. For Birrell, see also Brenan, *op. cit.*, p. 95.
- 63 See Roger Shattuck, *Proust*, London, 1974, p. 11.
- 64 Waley's wife described him as re-reading Proust during his last illness; see *MSIM*, p. 116.
- 65 *The Sacred Tree*, p. 30.
- 66 See e.g. Francis Birrell's essay in Scott Moncrieff, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-20, where he emphasises that Proust is one of the 'first completely modern men, who study the working of their minds with the imaginative enthusiasm, but also with the cold objectivity, of a scientist dissecting a tadpole' (p. 15).
- 67 *The Sacred Tree*, pp. 30-1.
- 68 *Ibid.*, pp. 31-2. It is interesting to compare Waley's remarks on the formal perfection of the No: 'It is above all in the "architecture", in the relation of parts to the whole that these poets are supreme. The early writers created a "form" or general pattern which the weakest writing cannot wholly rob of beauty' (*The No Plays*, p. 52).
- 69 See Field, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-17.
- 70 *The Sacred Tree*, pp. 32-3.
- 71 I find that, quite independently, David Dowling has published *Bloomsbury Aesthetics and the Novels of Forster and Woolf* (London, 1985), in which he traces the influence of these aesthetic theories on the novels of the two Bloomsbury writers. For a stimulating general discussion of aesthetic theory and literature in the period see Alan Robinson, *Poetry, Painting and Ideas, 1885-1914*, London, 1985.

- 72) See J. B. Bullen's 'Introduction' in Clive Bell, *Art* (1914), ed. J. B. Bullen, Oxford, 1987, for an excellent discussion of Fry and Bell.
- 73) See above, note 23.
- 74) Roger Fry, 'An Essay in Aesthetics' (1909), in *Vision and Design* (1920), Harmondsworth, 1937.
- 75) *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- 76) Bullen, *op. cit.*, pp. xxiv-xxv.
- 77) Fry, *op. cit.*, p. 36; cf. Roger Fry, 'Chinese Art', *Chinese Art*, ed. Tatlock, London, 1925.
- 78) See Leon Edel, *Bloomsbury: A House of Lions* (1979), Harmondsworth, 1981, *passim*.
- 79) Bell, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
- 80) *Ibid.*, pp. 7 ff. For Moore's influence see *ibid.*, p. 107; cf. Paul Levy, *Moore: G. E. Moore and the Cambridge Apostles* (1979), Oxford, 1981, esp. pp. 169 ff.
- 81) Bullen, *op. cit.*, pp. xxvi-xxx.
- 82) e.g. *ibid.*, p. 36: 'It is the mark of great art that its appeal is universal and eternal'.
- 83) e.g. *ibid.*, pp. 16, 19, 128.
- 84) *Ibid.*, pp. 144-5.
- 85) i.e. *An Index of Chinese Artists* (London, 1922); *Zen Buddhism and its Relation to Art* (London, 1922); *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting* (London, 1923). Waley also contributed articles to the *Burlington Magazine* which Fry was editing at the time.
- 86) See Sullivan, *MSIM*, p. 108, and Gray, *MSIM*, p. 41.
- 87) *Introduction*, p. 8.
- 88) *Ibid.*, pp. 65-6.
- 89) See Bell. *op. cit.*, p. 8: 'What quality is common to Sta. Sophia and the windows at Chartres, Mexican sculpture, a Persian bowl, Chinese carpets, Giotto's frescoes at Padua, and the masterpieces of Poussin, Piero della Francesca and Cezanne?' Waley's brother, Hubert, recalls Waley 'praising Piero della Francesca' (*MSIM*, p. 127).
- 90) Sullivan, *MSIM*, pp. 108-9.
- 91) As in his use of Roman Catholic terminology to translate Buddhist references in *Genji Monogatari*, for which he was criticised (*Sacred Tree*, 'Preface'). See above, note 15.
- 92) This is especially clear in the case of Yugiri, who is developed by Waley into

Genji's opposite, although in the original no such contrast seems intended. See Ury, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

- ③ See E. G. Sedensticker, 'Chiefly on Translating the Genji', *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 6, 1980, 1, p. 93.
- ④ Discussed by Ury, *op. cit.*, pp. 288–92.
- ⑤ For Waley's illness, see Laurence Binyon's 'Preface' to A. Waley, *A Catalogue of Paintings Recovered from Tun-Huang by Sir Aurel Stein, KCIE*, London, 1931. For his weariness, see his remarks in 'The Real Tripitaka' in *The Real Tripitaka and Other Pieces*, London, 1952, p. 127.
- ⑥ A. Waley, *The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon* (1928), London, 1979, pp. 9–10.
- ⑦ *The Bridge of Dreams*, London, 1933, p. 11.
- ⑧ *Ibid.*, pp. 23–4.