

**Article**

## Reading and Readers as Theatrical Strategies In Chiori Miyagawa's *Thousand Years Waiting*

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### Abstract

In Chiori Miyagawa's *Thousand Years Waiting* (2006), the act of reading is theatrically conducted by two protagonists: a woman living in present-day New York City and the author of *The Sarashina Diary*, who lived in a world separated from today by 1000 years. The audience sees them exchanging their thoughts and recounting their experiences to each other not through words but through reading two works of classic Japanese literature: *The Sarashina Diary* and *The Tale of Genji*. Furthermore, as the two women engage in their reading, they begin to take the form of the characters of those narratives on stage, thus transcending the boundaries of time and space. They also recount how those narratives, as works of literature, have shaped and influenced their lives and relationships with their families.

Miyagawa, as an American playwright born in Nagano, Japan, identifies herself an "outsider" both in the United States and Japan. Miyagawa's background enables her protagonists to transcend every boundary in existence by blending works of classic Japanese literature such as *The Tale of Genji* and *The Sarashina Diary* into modern American theatre. Miyagawa simultaneously employs the act of reading itself as her primary theatrical device and strategy. With these points in mind, this paper aims to explore how the act of reading and the memory created by the act contribute to the crossing of the boundaries of time and space in *Thousand Years Waiting*. I would also like to articulate how Miyagawa has transgressed the boundaries of literary genres by blending Japanese literature in novel and diary form into her dramatic work.

Keywords: Japanese-American Theatre, reading and readers, narrative, memory

## 1. Introduction: Chiori Miyagawa's Strategy as a Playwright

*Thousand Years Waiting*, a play by the Japanese-American playwright Chiori Miyagawa, was performed in February and March, 2006, in New York City, directed by the Japanese-American director Sonoko Kawahara. As described in "the Notes on the Play," the play exists over three layers of time and space; a woman in New York City of today reads *The Sarashina Diary*, an 11<sup>th</sup> Century memoir written in the Sarashina region in Japan, in which a woman called Lady Sarashina reads *The Tale of Genji*, the world's first novel by Lady Murasaki written in the early 11<sup>th</sup> Century in Japan (*Thousand Years Waiting* 1). The play also includes several episodes from *The Tale of Genji*, which are conducted as a play within a play. Lady Sarashina, as in the notes, is the narrator of her past events as a middle-aged woman, yet in several scenes, she also appears as a young woman when narrating her earlier experience of reading *The Tale of Genji*. The audience then sees Contemporary Woman (a woman living in present-day New York) and Lady Sarashina exchanging their thoughts not through direct dialogues but through their acts of reading. This ultimately enables them to take the form of several characters from *The Tale of Genji*.

Miyagawa's attempt to transform the works of Japanese classic literature into modern American theatre seems strategic and probable given her background as a Japanese-born American playwright. As Esther Kim Lee points out, Asian American theatre should be "essentially and necessarily transnational and intercultural," and it "fundamentally enhances the multinational, inter-cultural qualities" because "Asia" invokes the original geographical location consisting of multiple nations, and "America" is the destination nation to which Asian Americans or their ancestors immigrated (101). In fact, in the history of American theatre, collaboration between Asian traditional theatre and American theatre has been extensive. For example, as one of the pioneers of Asian American theatrical groups, East West Players performed *Rashomon*, a play based on short stories by Ryunosuke Akutagawa, as their first production in 1965, which "serves as a metaphor for Asian American theater history" (Lee 4). The theatrical group also performed Yukio Mishima's *Lady Aoi* and Junji Kinoshita's *Paper Crane* in the same year.<sup>1</sup> Tisa Chang, the theater director of Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, another representative Asian American Theater company in New York City established in 1977, adopted and directed *Return of Phoenix*, a play based on Peking Opera. This play was performed "with traditional Peking Opera movements and music while providing bilingual (Mandarin and English) narrative and dialogues" at La MaMa Chinatown in 1973 (Lee 84-85).<sup>2</sup> Later, in the 1990s, Rick Shiomi, the playwright and director of Theater Mu in Minneapolis, adopted Korean Mask Dance and Japanese Taiko performance into its theatrical programs.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the production history of East West Players, refer to its "Production and History Archive" <<https://eastwestplayers.org/production-history-archive/>>

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the history of Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, refer to Lee, pp. 82-91.

<sup>3</sup> For the detailed discussion on the relationship between Rick Shiomi's plays and Theater Mu, refer to Keiko Furuki, "'Masking' and 'Unmasking' Korean Adoptees: On Rick Shiomi's *Mask Dance*."

Miyagawa's stance appears considerably dissimilar to those of Asian American playwrights born in the United States, or Asian American theatrical groups such as East West Players, Pan Asian Repertory Theatre and Theater Mu. Miyagawa, who was born and raised in Nagano Prefecture, Japan, and first experienced life in the United States as an exchange student in her high school days, identifies herself an "outsider" in both countries. Yet she articulates that her background has encouraged her protagonists to transcend the boundaries of time and space:

Part of me is intentionally attached to being an outsider. It allows me to metamorphose into characters that temporarily reside in *bardo*, the realm after death and before rebirth, and to think mystically about the next reincarnation. I suspect that my feet are always consciously or unconsciously touching the ancient soil of Japan, and I conjure ghosts of all kinds from my ancestral past (Miyagawa 2009, 203).

As indicated here, Miyagawa's attempt to blend the works of Japanese classic literature into her own works gives the authors in the past and present a chance to discuss their own works. As Lee points out, for Asian American playwrights, blending Asian traditional cultures into their own works can be alarming because America's "cultural nationalism" has encouraged their "enfranchisement and inclusion in America." Therefore, Asian American playwrights have driven themselves "to be represented as Americans onstage" (101). Nevertheless, positioning herself as "an outsider" both in the United States and Japan, Miyagawa has efficaciously adopted "exotic" elements of Japanese literature without much hesitancy or agitation.

Miyagawa has extensively adopted various works of classic literature including those of Japan, the United States and Europe in her other works. For example, Miyagawa's *Awakening* (2000) was construed as an adaptation of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*. In this adaptation work, the main character Kate, presented as the author Kate Chopin, watches over Edna (the main character of the original novella and Miyagawa's play) who travels between Grand Isle and New Orleans in the 1899 and "everywhere" in modern era.<sup>4</sup> Kate in Miyagawa's version confesses that how disheartened she has been, surrounded by the censures and condemnations against the publication of *The Awakening*. However, her declaration toward the play's closure: "But I will come back and live again... The book will open, and someone from the next century will dream about this story. The day will come..." (200),

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*EurAmerica* Vol 41. 4 (Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan), pp. 949-976., and also Theater Mu's URL; "Mu Performing Arts."

<<http://www.muperformingarts.org/>>

<sup>4</sup> Miyagawa thus describes the setting of the time and space of *Awakening*: "The play functions on two levels: Kate Chopin contemplating her book *The Awakening*, and the narrative in the book. Both are real. Kate's presence is constant, then as well as now" (*Awakening* 164).

predicts her future reestablishment as a self-sufficient writer.

*Leaving Eden* (2005) is a play based on several short stories of Anton Chekhov yet devised as an innovative dramatic piece with Miyagawa's unique perspective. In the final act of this play, Anton, a character/author named after Chekhov, converses with the female characters and feels relieved to learn that modern women seem much more self-independent than the characters he created in the original short stories. In *Thousand Years Waiting*, thenceforth, Miyagawa aims to make her protagonists cross the boundary of time and space by merging the texts of *The Tale of Genji* and *The Sarashina Diary* into modern American theatre. As represented in these works, Miyagawa's theatre provides the authors of the past and the present with a place for literary discussion.

With these points in mind, this paper intends to explore how the act of reading functions in *Thousand Years Waiting* as a theatrical strategy. It also aims to articulate how Miyagawa transgresses the boundaries of literary genre by blending Japanese literature into her dramatic work.

## 2. Transcending the Boundaries of Time and Space in *Thousand Years Waiting*

*Thousand Years Waiting*, as discussed above, attempts to transcend the boundary of time and space. It also transcends that of race and gender, which would seem quite revolutionary in Asian American theatre, in which problems of race and gender have often been its focal point. In *Thousand Years Waiting*, the three characters, unpretentiously named A, B, and C, perform every role in the play. In the play's main episode, these three actors play the roles of Contemporary Woman, Lady Sarashina, and Lady Sarashina's sister respectively. They also perform the parts in a play within a play, which consists of several episodes from *The Tale of Genji* and *The Sarashina Diary*, as indicated in the stage directions:

A: A woman of today. She lives in New York City. She becomes the Nanny in Lady Sarashina's world and Lady Rokujo and Lady Lavender in *The Tale of Genji*.

B: Lady Sarashina from Kyoto, year 1000 CE (Christian Era). She plays Lady Wisteria, Yugao, and Lady Akashi in *The Tale of Genji*.

C: Lady Sarashina's older sister. She becomes the stepmother, the companion lady, and Prince Genji in *The Tale of Genji*. (*Thousand Years Waiting* 1)

Here, one can detect common traits among the roles that each character, A, B, and C, plays. The roles played by A—Contemporary Woman, Nanny, Lady Rokujo and Lady Lavender—have gone through their lovers' betrayals. As for the parts performed by B—Lady Wisteria, Yugao and Lady Akashi—all of three can be identified as the realization of Lady Sarashina's longing, that is, a meeting with a

long-awaited prince and the fulfillment of love. Lady Sarashina's sister and stepmother, whom C plays, are forced to separate from their family, and Hikaru Genji (whose name translates literally as "Shining Lord"), also played by C, has occupied Lady Sarashina's mind as the embodiment of unrequited love. Miyagawa, rather intentionally, does not clarify the gender and ethnicity of the actors who play A, B, and C. In fact, in the 2006 performance in New York City, a Caucasian woman played the character C, which includes the role of Prince Genji. This unconventional casting shows Miyagawa's plan to transcend the boundaries of gender, race, and ethnicity.

Additionally, Miyagawa violates the theatrical conventions in the play's inclusion of *Otome* (meaning "maiden" in Japanese) *Bunraku* (a classical Japanese puppet play), encouraged by Sonoko Kawahara, in its 2006 performance.<sup>5</sup> In traditional *Bunraku*, three male performers control the movements of one puppet while in *Otome Bunraku* each female actor is in charge of one puppet. Markedly, in the episode from *The Sarashina Diary* in this play, the traveling performers, whom Lady Sarashina and her sister encounter during their trip to Kyoto, appear as puppets on the stage, presenting the supernatural collaboration between human actors and puppets:

*The traveling performers enter. Music. The "singing" is expressed in movement. Toward the end of the performance, the other three women join the performance.*

*Blackout in the middle of the movement.*

*When the lights come up, the performers are gone. (Thousand Years Waiting 7-8)*

In this scene, having experienced the death of her beloved nanny, Lady Sarashina feels a tremendous sense of despondency. The transitory encounter with the travelers following the nanny's death predicts the other partings with Sarashina's beloved ones, including her sister and husband, in her latter life. The puppets' delicate movements, their joint performance with the actors on the stage and their sudden vanishing underline Sarashina's secluded life to come, and highlight the play's enigmatic journey between time and space. Furthermore, *Otome Bunraku* violates the tradition of *Bunraku*, which has been a form of theatre conducted solely by male actors. In that sense, even though she employs the form of traditional Japanese theatre, Miyagawa transforms the tradition by fusing it with other revolutionary theatrical devices and adding her own sensibility.

In *Thousand Years Waiting*, stories and books play equally vital roles as the puppets and characters from the works of classical Japanese literature. Contemporary Woman and Lady Sarashina separately yet simultaneously read the texts of *The Sarashina Diary* and *The Tale of Genji*, and the play's main action explicitly focuses on their acts of reading:

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<sup>5</sup> Miyagawa notes that even though she originally wrote the scene for "dancers," Kawahara "chose to collaborate with an *Otome Bunraku* artist from Japan," and Miyagawa welcomed Kawahara's interpretation ("Notes on the Play," *Thousand Years Waiting* 2).

*A (Contemporary Woman) and B (Sarashina) sit side by side and read the same book silently. For A, the book is the diary. For B, it's The Tale of Genji. (Thousand Years Waiting 12)*

The two characters then recount the joy of discovering their favorite books when introduced for the first time by their mothers in their childhood:

*A (Contemporary Woman). Time passes in discoveries of new things. I find your diary again in a dusty used bookstore downtown.*

*B (Lady Sarashina). In Kyoto, I find books. I read them all day long. I enter the stories and do not come out except to have tea. I'm fourteen. I read *The Tale of Genji*.*

*(Thousand Years Waiting 9)*

In this “conversation,” as she enters the world of *The Sarashina Diary*, Contemporary Woman sympathizes with Lady Sarashina who devotedly reads *The Tale of Genji*. By hence paralleling and blending the two stories, Miyagawa attempts to diminish the boundary of “thousand years” that exists between these two women.

Contemporary Woman defines *The Sarashina Diary* as a work written “from memory,” (*Thousand Years Waiting* 3), which makes it the accumulation and reconstruction of Lady Sarashina’s past experiences. Megumi Sakabe argues that “narrating” often distorts and complicates one’s consciousness, so it inevitably turns into a “complex and deliberate” effort. This aspect makes narration a far more high-level speech act than speaking, which is often simpler and sometimes oblivious to the speaker’s aim (40). As in Sakabe’s observation, the memory recounted in *The Sarashina Diary* can be “distorted” by the author’s creative efforts. Lady Sarashina attempts to re-experience and revive her past through writing, and the play thenceforth underlines the significance of the language through which people incessantly reconstruct their past. In reference to the relationship between time, language and narrative, Paul Ricoeur’s theory of narrative illuminates the significance of reading and writing in *Thousand Years Waiting*:

On the one hand, the skeptical argument leans toward non-being, while on the other hand a guarded confidence in the everyday use of language forces us to say that, in some way, which we do not yet know how to account for, time exists. The skeptical argument is well-known: time has no being since the future is not yet, the past is no longer, and the present does not remain. And yet we do speak of time as having being. We say that things to come *will be*, that things past *were*, and that things present *are passing away*. Even passing away is not nothing. It is remarkable that

it is language usage that provisionally provides the resistance to the thesis of nonbeing. We speak of time and we speak meaningfully about it, and this shores up an assertion about the being of time. (Recoueur No. 218)

Significantly, Lady Sarashina describes her act of reading *The Tale of Genji* at the age of fourteen in the present tense, as she says, “I’m fourteen. I read *The Tale of Genji*” (12). That is, as in Recoueur’s theory, Lady Sarashina reproduces and relives her past in the narrative and thus renders another significance of the existence of time. Furthermore, this play, by introducing Lady Sarashina’s attempt to encapsulate passing time in her narrative, emphasizes the role of literary works which can speak “about time” in a most cultivated manner.

### 3. Readers and Narratives as the Themes of *Thousand Years Waiting*

*Thousand Years Waiting* likewise brings the role of readers to light as well as the act of reading itself. The audience listens to the narration of the characters’ stories while they watch their actions of reading. Gerald Prince’s argument on the relation between narratives and their readers then draws attention to the relation between theatre and the act of reading:

**reader.** The decoder or interpreter (of a written narrative). This real or concrete reader is not to be confused with the IMPLIED READER of a narrative or its NARRATEE and, unlike them, is not immanent to or deducible from the narrative. (Prince 2003, 81)

Contemporary Woman in *Thousand Years Waiting*, as in Prince’s definition above, justly “decodes” or “interprets” *The Sarashina Diary* and *The Tale of Genji* because she, as a reader, detaches herself from the story’s content, while the author, Lady Murasaki, can be defined as the “implied reader” and listener of *The Tale of Genji*. On the other hand, Lady Sarashina emerges as the “real or concrete reader” of *The Tale of Genji*, and Contemporary Woman becomes the “real or concrete” reader of *The Sarashina Diary*. Prince further clarifies their roles as readers.

Indeed, if it is obvious that reading depends on the text being read, it is also obvious that it depends on the reader reading that text. In the first place, and even though the questions I ask while reading are—to a certain extent, at least—constrained by the text since they must be somewhat relevant to it, we must remember that the set of possible questions is very large, especially beyond the level of individual sentences and their denotational meaning, and that I am the one who, in the final analysis, decides which questions to ask and which not to ask.

(Prince 1982, 129)

As examined by Prince, the significance of “the text being read” can be influenced by its readers’ backgrounds. Contemporary Woman discovers in the text of *The Sarashina Diary* possible solutions to her never-ending struggles with separation and reunion. She also locates *The Sarashina Diary* as a place in which she can converse with Lady Sarashina, the reader of *The Tale of Genji*, and thus “the text being read” functions as a means of communication between the two readers. As in Prince’s argument, the text’s content can be influenced by a certain time period and circumstance, however, the women’s acts of reading uncover the fact that the questions and answers which literary texts contain bear no boundaries within time and space.

In exactly the same way as Contemporary Woman and Lady Sarashina, the author of *The Tale of Genji*, Lady Murasaki, is the listener and reader of Genji’s episodes, which locate story-telling as their main topic:

Shining Genji; the name was imposing, but not so its bearer’s many deplorable lapses; and considering how quiet he kept his wanton ways, lest in reaching the ears of posterity they earn him unwelcome fame, whoever broadcast his secrets to all the world was a terrible gossip.

*(Tale of Genji* No. 991)

I had passed over Genji’s trials and tribulations in silence, out of respect for his determined efforts to conceal them, and I have written of them now only because certain lords and ladies criticized my story for resembling fiction, wishing to know why even those who knew Genji best should have thought him perfect, just because he was an Emperor’s son. No doubt I must now beg everyone’s indulgence for my effrontery in painting so wicked a portrait of him. *(Tale of Genji* No. 2278)

The narrator/author explains the situation in which she has heard Genji’s episodes from someone else, and she seems hesitant in revealing his imperfections. Gerald Prince points out that story can be defined as the content of a “narrative” as opposition to “discourse,” the part of expression in a “narrative.” That is, story is “narrated” by a “narrating” writer to its readers (2003, 184). *The Tale of Genji* consists of the stories picked up by the narrator/author. Equally, *Thousand Years Waiting* consists of *The Sarashina Diary*, which recounts the story of *The Tale of Genji*, and Contemporary Woman’s “discourse” on *The Sarashina Diary*. In short, *Thousand Years Waiting* has adopted the form of a story’s “content” and narration into a play, even transcending the boundaries among literary genres.

We also need to focus on Lady Murasaki in terms of her locus as a reader. Junko Yamamoto clarifies this stance of Lady Murasaki as the creator/reader of narratives (stories):



Stories were blissful for women who spent most of their time at home. Many of my friends were “country” women, that is, wives and daughters staying home all day long, and thus they liked to read stories. Some of them genuinely devoted themselves to stories and participated in discussion on them. Even though we continuously encountered new stories, written texts were indeed precious, and not many people could own them. Therefore, if we heard of a new story, we needed to look for someone who owned the book and then we borrowed it to copy its content. I was not sociable at all in other occasions, but when it came to stories, I did not even hesitate to ask strangers for books.

I thus fully devoted myself to the world of narratives. I did not only read but also created them myself and asked the readers for their criticism and opinions and then, I continued to rewrite them.

My narratives were completely different from the preceding ones. That was because I wrote them not only to entertain the readers but also to enlighten my soul. I became the most delightful reader for my stories, and I wrote them to nurture and impress myself.<sup>6</sup> (76-77)

As Yamamoto points out, just like Lady Sarashina in the play, Lady Murasaki created her narratives driven principally by her passion as a reader. *Thousand Years Waiting* also employs this aspect of an author as a reader and presents the dialogue among three devoted readers: Lady Sarashina, Lady Murasaki and Contemporary Woman. This play thus stages how one work of literature can influence another beyond the passage of time. As Contemporary Woman states, “The blood of dreaming and storytelling runs thorough us. As Prince Genji’s heart faded, all his lovers were still telling the story of forever and ever” (24), this play emphasizes the significance of dreaming and story-telling for people in every time and place.

As Keiko Sekine points out, *The Tale of Genji* was written when Fujiwara Takasue no Musume, (meaning the daughter of Fujiwara Takasue), the author of *The Sarashina Diary*, was fourteen years old, and the diary was written ten years after that. Accordingly, *The Sarashina Diary* is the oldest existing resource on *The Tale of Genji*. Moreover, *The Sarashina Diary* records that the author actually “read” *The Tale of Genji* as a “written” text in the era in which stories were supposed to be recounted orally (111). That is, *The Sarashina Diary* has served as a representation of Japanese literary history in the sense that it has connected the readers of *The Tale of Genji* from various places and periods. In addition, considering Lady Murasaki also underlines the significance of *written* text to be passed to the next generation as in Yamamoto’s observation, *Thousand Years Waiting* functions as another representation of literary history, connecting the readers of *The Tale of Genji* and *The Sarashina Diary* to modern

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<sup>6</sup> The original text of Yamamoto is written in Japanese. The part of the text cited here is the author’s translation.

American Theatre.

It is also noteworthy that, in *Thousand Years Waiting*, literary texts function as the replacements of the characters' dialogues with their family members. The play displays the characters' longing for family reunion in their devoted feelings for the favorite books:

B (*Lady Sarashina*). My stepmother gives me books. As fast as she reads them, I follow. But when I am fifteen, my stepmother informs me that she is leaving.

(*Thousand Years Waiting* 10)

A (*Contemporary Woman*). There was a phone call but I was too far. She read many books. Shakespeare and Tolstoy, *The Tale of Genji*. As a child I read the books she read. I knew her by the books she read. My parents didn't talk to each other very often. Very few words existed between them. But so many words in the books she gave me. So many.

(*Thousand Years Waiting* 11)

Both *Contemporary Woman* and *Lady Sarashina* have acquired the pleasure of reading from their mothers (a stepmother, in *Lady Sarashina's* case). Furthermore, the actor who plays the role of *Lady Sarashina* transforms herself into *Fujitsubo*, *Genji's* stepmother, in a play within a play. Then, *Lady Sarashina's* story of her stepmother directly follows the episode of *Fujitsubo*. Therefore, the mother figure spiritually connects *Genji*, *Lady Sarashina*, and *Contemporary Woman* as well as the characters' acts of reading.

In the subsequent scene, *Lady Sarashina* and *Contemporary Woman* define the significance of narratives (literary works) as the successors of "memory":

B (*Lady Sarashina*). Memories come back to me. Of people who are gone. I write them down. Write down regrets of my life and lived in tales and fantasies, waiting for my prince.

A (*Contemporary Woman*). It is said that all her diary entries were made toward the end of her life. She wrote it from memory. My memories are as old as hers. Her memories are someone's future memories. I go back to her diary. Back to *The Tale of Genji*. Back to all the memories that make us human. (*Thousand Years Waiting* 31-32)

As seen in the dialogue above, *Contemporary Woman's* "memory" can be as "old" as *Lady Sarashina's*, and any person in any era and place, even in the future, can share the memory of parting, writing, and reading. Memory actually bridges the works of literature in the past, present and future and *The Thousand Years Waiting* has achieved this goal through the visual presentation of memory through the

collaboration between ancient and modern literary works.

## 5. Conclusion: Waiting, Reading and Being Read

As its title lays bare, *Thousand Years Waiting* places the act of “waiting” as its focus. The text of *The Sarashina Diary* has been waiting for a chance to “be read” at a used bookstore in Manhattan. Lady Sarashina has likewise been seeking romance and adventure solely in reading and writing. The women in *The Tale of Genji* introduced in this play also have focused their lives in waiting. Richard Bowring analyzes such women of the Heian period of Japan:

In the frustration of waiting, women begin to read, and moreover, write themselves. As man is always the reader and woman the read, she exists to generate male interest and can have no power of her own until read. Indoors, forever waiting, she can become a force only when seen and opened, for without the male reader the female text is barren. (54)

According to Bowring’s argument, the Japanese women in the Heian Period wait for their men’s visits and chances for their letters to be read while they read and listen to their favorite stories. For the women whose lives are marked worthy only by being read by men, reading is the only way for them to acknowledge their self-worth. Since they are able to find the purpose of their lives and the worth of their beings solely in the stories’ language, stories signify much more than mere entertainments to them. Yet significantly, in *Thousand Years Waiting*, the women initiate actions to stop their waiting. The words of Lady Sarashina’s stepmother and Lady Rokujo (one of Genji’s lovers) in this play express such determination:

B (*Lady Sarashina*). Why are you leaving? Don’t you love my father anymore?

C (*Stepmother*). He has other wives. I’m tired of waiting and waiting. If you don’t leave, all you do is make more painful memories. It is better to stop the history, so at some time in the future you are able to visit it in your mind without grief. (*Thousand Years Waiting* 10)

C (*Prince Genji*). I was foolish. I should never have left you alone for so long. Please reconsider. You have my eternal devotion.

A (*Lady Rokujo*). It is better to stop the history so at sometime in the future you are able to visit it in your mind without grief. It is nearly dawn. You must go now. *End of The Tale of Genji episode.*

(*Thousand Years Waiting* 21)

Lady Rokujo and the stepmother consequently stop their history of waiting by leaving their men. For writers like Lady Sarashina and Lady Murasaki, stopping their history means locking the flow of time into the words of their literary texts. However, these stories can be reborn and relived by continuously and constantly being read. In this way, Miyagawa dramatizes the significance of literary texts and their language on stage.

Miyagawa blends three different literary genres; a novel, a diary, and a play into one by presenting the relationship between authors and readers on stage. Furthermore, she also attempts to transcend the boundary between reading stories and watching the stage, and in that sense, it is possible to say that she has in her own way expanded the possibilities of modern American theatre.

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