ENCHI FUMIKO:
A STUDY IN THE SELF-EXPRESSION OF WOMEN

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Abstract

This thesis examines four major works of Enchi Fumiko in terms of themes, style, and plot development. In these works, Enchi created three "types" of female characters: the vengeful woman, the lovable woman, and the elderly woman facing death and aging. She attempted to show how it was possible for these women, all repressed by a society, to release themselves from suppression to express their hidden, real selves. In exploring these issues, Enchi drew heavily on her knowledge of the Japanese classics, especially The Tale of Genji and late Edo fiction (including Kabuki), creating a literary world in which the classical and the modern, the past and the present were conflated. Unable to express their true selves within the constraints of a repressive social order, her characters seek self-expression and Eros through the intervention of mediumistic, spiritual, and supernatural forces. In Enchi's works, when the characters released spirits united with their Eros, they realized their essential femininity. An analysis of four of Enchi's major works clarifies these themes and Enchi's literary world.

Chapter One examines The Waiting Years, the work which established Enchi's reputation as a powerful novelist. Though marred by a lack of realism in the supportive characters, The Waiting Years succeeds in portraying a "vengeful woman" who expresses her essential femininity through revenge. A well-controlled, repressive style, influenced by that of The Tale of Genji and late Edo fiction, reinforces the theme of revenge and repression.

In contrast to this vengeful woman, Tale of the Mediums, which is analysed in Chapter Two, deals with the "lovable woman." This type of woman uses her spirit force to express her suppressed love. This chapter attempts to explain how Enchi employs complicated stylistic devices and a
plot in which historical facts and fiction, present and past, and illusion and reality are conflated, in order to describe an ideal love. Tale of the Mediums, which can be called Enchi's work of Heian literature, creates a highly sophisticated and even a slightly artificial literary world.

Chapter Three focuses on the novel, Wandering Souls, which is part of the larger trilogy also called Wandering Souls. In this work, the heroine is neither a vengeful nor a loving woman. Although she is involved with men, love, and sex, she is forced to face the realities of aging, death, fear and loneliness. These harsh realities force her to release her hidden self from the forces of social suppression and from the barrier of her public self. Her self-expression takes place through the fusion of reality and illusion, in a world associated with that portrayed in The Tale of Genji.

The Mist in Karuizawa, Enchi's most mature work, is the subject of Chapter Four. All of Enchi's major concerns are brought into focus in this work. Using an imaginary classical work as the center of the novel, Enchi develops two additional narrative lines to create a sophisticated, layered plot. The heroine is an elderly woman facing aging, death, fear and loneliness, and her self-liberation takes place in an illusional world created through reference to the Japanese classics. In this work an ancient high priestess symbolizes the essential quality of femininity, the unity of spirit force and Eros, and through a supernatural relationship with this priestess, the novel's protagonist also realizes her essential femininity and life force.

This thesis, through the four works that are examined, can be considered an attempt to shed light on the question how Enchi's women characters express their hidden, real selves; it also attempts to assess Enchi's place as a modern Japanese writer.
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Introduction

To live, I have to write. The pain of writing, like that of a heavily-laden horse climbing sorrowfully up a slope without making a sound, seems to prove that I am alive. (238) (translation mine)

This view of writing was expressed by the heroine of The Mist in Karuizawa (Saimu 彩霧，1975-76), but it also describes the way in which the author, Enchi Fumiko (円地文子, 1905-86), regarded writing. For Enchi, who dedicated her life to writing, life and art were intimately linked, but as the above quotation indicates, her career was by no means smooth or easy.

Enchi's full talent developed in her later life. It was only in 1957, at age fifty-two, that she finally established her position as a writer. That year, she won the Noma literary prize—one of the most prestigious in Japan—for her novel, The Waiting Years (Onnazaka 女坂, 1949-57). From that time on until her death in 1986, she produced a series of high-quality short stories and novels, for which she won several additional awards. Critics generally regard Enchi as one of the most important modern Japanese writers. In particular, her modern Japanese translation of The Tale of Genji (Genji monogatari 源氏物語, eleventh century) by Murasaki Shikibu (970's-early 1000's) contributed greatly to the Japanese literary world.

Despite her fame in Japan, Enchi Fumiko remains largely unknown to Western readers. Only three of her numerous works have been translated into English, and as yet almost no interpretation or analysis of her writings exists in Western languages. Thus, a biographical sketch may be helpful to acquaint Western readers with the general events of Enchi's life and work.
It is possible to identify five main conditions of her life which most significantly affected her writing career: her father's influence; her educational background, especially the influence of the Japanese classics; her brief leaning as a dramatist toward communism; her unhappy experience in marriage and love; and her delicate health. Together these five elements exerted a tremendous impact on Enchi the writer, and while discussing her biography, I will refer to each.

Enchi Fumiko was born in 1905. Her father, Ueda Kazutoshi, earned the epithet "Patriarch of Modern Language Studies" in Japan. He studied linguistics in Germany and returned to Tōkyō Imperial University to establish the discipline of Japanese linguistics based on modern Western critical theories and methodologies. Fumiko was deeply loved and morally supported by her great father and in fact seems to have developed something of an "Electra complex," which she probably retained for most of her life.

Enchi encountered the Japanese classics at an unusually early age, in her preschool days. She was frequently taken to the Kabuki theatre by her parents and enjoyed hearing her paternal grandmother tell various stories from eighteenth-century Edo fiction. With this basic knowledge of the Japanese classics, she started to read The Tale of Genji when she was only ten. Extremely difficult for Japanese readers of any age, this work would be a daunting challenge for a ten-year-old. But through these early experiences, Enchi absorbed the Japanese classics and cultivated a precocious sensitivity and intelligence.

During her high school days, she was captivated by the romanticism of Edgar Allan Poe, Oscar Wilde, Nagai Kafū (1879-1959) and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (1886-1965). In 1922, a fateful exposure to theater art through a lecture delivered by dramatist Osanai Kaoru (1881-1928) plunged her into Ibsen, Strindberg, Hauptmann, and contemporary Japanese
playwrights. When she was seventeen, Fumiko became disillusioned with the prescribed education at her women's high school, and after four years she quit the school, one year short of graduation. Her father was steeped in Westernized liberal thought, so he permitted her withdrawal and engaged a British missionary and several prominent college professors to tutor her in English, French, and the Japanized Chinese called Kambun. She continued the lessons until her marriage at age twenty-five. In this way, Enchi was able to become a modern author who synthesized the self-acknowledged influences of past and present as well as Eastern and Western literature.

In 1925, when she was twenty years old, she made her literary debut with a play, **Hometown** (*Furusato* ふるさと, 1926), which won first prize in a contest sponsored by the drama magazine, **Kabuki** (歌舞伎). Following the publication of several more works, her play, **A Busy Night in Late Spring** (*Banshun soya* 晩春騒夜, 1928), was staged in 1928 at the prestigious Tsukiji Little Theater. After she became a novelist, Enchi's early training as a dramatist continued to condition her writing, influencing such elements as the dialogue and the settings of her novels.

Before her marriage, Enchi was attracted to communism, which fascinated many Japanese intellectuals at the time. In fact, **A Busy Night in Late Spring**, which dealt with a contrast between a conservative artist and an idealistic socialist, was published in a proletarian literary magazine, **Women's Art** (*Nyonin geijutsu* 女人芸術). However, because her father was wise enough not to object strongly to her inclination toward the communist movement, she did not become deeply involved. Her father perceived that she was not essentially a social activist, and this insight proved correct. Through her life, although she touched on certain social problems in her works, Enchi's main interest was always directed toward the inner workings of human beings. After her marriage, she gradually
drifted away from the communist movement.

Fumiko married newspaperman Enchi Yoshimatsu in 1930. Their married life was never happy, although they had one daughter and were never divorced. Some of Enchi's best and most realistic works describe the stifling atmosphere of a home in which a career-oriented couple lead separate lives under the same roof without any real intimacy. We can see this especially in the trilogy, What Robs the Vermilion (Ake wo ubaumono 朱を奪うもの, 1955–56), The Wounded Wing (Kizu aru tsubasa 傷ある翼, 1960) and The Rainbow and Ashura (Niji to shura 虹と修羅, 1965–67), which contain many autobiographical elements. This trilogy won the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize in 1969. It is probably true to say that Enchi never loved any man as a living human being. Her "Electra complex" was strong, and the fictitious worlds of such works as The Tale of Genji and of Kabuki theatre were deeply instilled in her; as a result, she sought lovers that were not "real man," but great or heroic just like her father or her fictional heroes. Before her marriage, she was briefly infatuated with the dramatist, Osanai, but nothing came of it. Before and after her marriage, she had an affair with a communist writer, but her passion was insufficient to make her leave her husband. It seems that after this affair ended, Enchi never again found a man she could love.

Considering that love is usually of central importance to most writers, in their careers as well as in their personal lives, Enchi's case is quite unusual. Her unhappy marriage and dispassionate love, caused by and at the same time generating a longing for romantic love, played a vital role in her growth as a novelist. As with their creator, most of Enchi's heroines are too timid to pursue love actively and instead long secretly for a time when they can express their passions fully.

After her marriage and the birth of her daughter, Enchi wrote only a few plays. Her fame as a dramatist gradually declined, and she herself
became increasingly interested in becoming a novelist. Since Enchi saw drama as deeply connected to Marxism, drifting away from communism meant drifting away from drama. She began to find dramatic conventions too constricting to express the new vision of life she gained through her unsuccessful marriage. At the same time, the popularity of theatre started to decline in Japan after Osanai's death. She started to write novels as a member of the literary magazine, The Daily Calendar (Nichireki日曆), in 1935. But, because of their heavy, intellectual style, her early novels were not well received.

The years between about 1937 and 1953 brought Enchi misfortune in her health, financial situation and career. In 1937, her father died. In 1938, she suffered from mastitis and had to have a breast surgically removed. During the war, she lost her house and most of her fortune, including a substantial library. In 1946, at age forty-one, she suffered from uterine cancer and hovered on the brink of death for four months, after a hysterectomy, an operation which deepened her sense of her impaired femininity. From then on, this anxiety over her femininity was reflected in her works, quite often as a half-mocking self-image revealed through her heroines, one of whom said, for example, "I am no longer a woman. Just a weird monster, neither male nor female" (368). But eventually Enchi realized that women were still women even though they might have lost certain physical female attributes. In fact, she discovered a woman's passion might become even stronger in such a situation, though that passion would no longer emerge in a healthy way, but rather with a certain pathological energy. This physical misfortune forced her to think deeply about the issues of women's lives and led her to explore new themes as a writer. In her subsequent works, descriptions of sex became increasingly audacious.

For about five or six years after the operation, she experienced
writer's block and wrote only light stories for girls to bring in some money. She continued to write novels, but these were continually rejected by publishing companies. Compared with her easy and successful debut as a dramatist, Enchi the novelist remained in a slump for a long time. But she did not give up. In 1954, at age forty-nine, she was awarded the Women's Writers Prize for a short story, "Poor Days" ("Himojii tsukihi" ひもじい月日). After that, with her work on The Waiting Years, her talent bloomed. This is probably because even if she had experienced "poor days" as a writer, she maintained pride and confidence in her writing ability, as well as in the literary intelligence she had acquired and cultivated over such a long period of time. It was, I would argue, the above-mentioned five elements—her father's influence, her love for the Japanese classics, her brief leaning as a dramatist toward communism, her unhappy experience in marriage and love, and her delicate health—which interacted to produce the novelist Enchi Fumiko.

During her life, Enchi produced over thirty-five novels, more than one hundred and fifty short stories, and a ten-volume translation of The Tale of Genji. In her earliest works, such as "Poor Days" and The Waiting Years, Enchi dealt with suppressed or oppressed women, who stoically endured their painful lives. In her next group of novels, she generally created mysterious women, who realized their hidden, real selves by employing their mediumistic abilities. Such works include "Enchantress" ("Yō" 妖, 1956), "Love in Two Lives: The Remnant" ("Nisei no en: shū" 二世の縁拾遺, 1957), Masks (Onn amen 女面, 1958), The Orange Blossoms (Hanachirusato 花散里, 1957-60), Tale of the Mediums (Namamiko monogatari なまみこ物語, 1959-65), and A Variation of Komachi (Komachi hensō 小町変相, 1965). Most of the works from this period reflect her knowledge of and inclination toward the Japanese classics, especially The Tale of Genji and Edo fiction or Kabuki.
Enchi's third group of novels includes such works as the trilogy, *Wandering Souls* (Yūkon 遊魂, 1969-70), *The Mist in Karuizawa* (Saimu 彩霧, 1976), and *Chrysanthemum Child* (Kikujidō 菊慈童, 1982-83). In these, Enchi dealt with characters facing aging, death, loneliness and fear, mainly elderly women struggling to express their femininity by using their supernatural powers. Illusion, dream and an atmosphere of enchantment often run through these works. The influence of the Japanese classics is still evident, but it is more subtly assimilated than in her previous works.

In the following essay I will focus on four of Enchi's major works: *The Waiting Years*, *Tale of the Mediums*, the trilogy *Wandering Souls* and *The Mist in Karuizawa*. These I think not only demonstrate Enchi's central concerns as a writer, but insofar as they span the entire period of her career, they reveal the development of her style and writing ability. They are, in addition, among her best known and well written works.

What then are Enchi's concerns in these works? According to the well-known art historian, John Berger, because of their sociological and historical experiences, women have come to understand themselves as women in terms of two constituent yet always distinct elements: they see themselves at one and the same time as "the surveyor" and "the surveyed," or in other words, as subject and object simultaneously (415-16). It seems that Enchi has the same dichotomized view of women, though she does not explicitly use the terms surveyor and surveyed. She is concerned with a number of conceptual poles as they relate to women's selves: natural-social, inner-outer, subjective-objective, private-public, and real self-disguised self. Enchi believes that women possess a true self, which is natural, inner, subjective, private and real. That self is innate and independent of the opinions of others, so men have no access to it. However, the other self—that which is social, outer, objective,
public and disguised—is acquired and dependent upon how it appears to others and ultimately to men. Probably because Enchi was herself a repressed woman, her primary concern was with the first of these, with the woman's real self, which is usually hidden, or suppressed by society. In her works she tries to cast light upon this suppressed female self in various ways. She is especially interested in what happens when, for any number of reasons, the inner self becomes released from suppression and takes on the character of a kind of pathological "spirit force" which acts without restraint, sometimes taking spiritual possession of others. In other words, Enchi's main theme is how the real self of a repressed woman comes to attain liberation. At the time of release, the hidden, real self, so long suppressed, acquires a twisted, drastic power, so much so that society is likely to perceive it as dangerous. Therefore, the repressed woman's self which Enchi deals with is regarded by many critics as a form of evil karma or obsession always latent within woman—a view colored by Buddhist teaching.

Enchi's reputation as an author with an expert ability to depict this evil feminine karma or latent obsession is solidly established. However, she has often claimed that rather than some potential evil lurking only within women, it is a hidden part of the inner world of all human beings that she is attempting to write about. It is true that Enchi deals with the private obsessions of both men and women, and she does not evaluate those obsessions as good or evil. However, she believes that these obsessions are particularly characteristic of women because women have been particularly suppressed by society. By focusing on the suppressed self of the female, Enchi explores certain fundamental issues, such as the very meaning of what it is to be female, male and human.

How then does Enchi understand this hidden force which for her constitutes essential femininity? In one word, I would argue that she
sees this power as a kind of "spirit force"—a force of frustration, unresponsive to the intellect, to morals or common sense, and a force over which the woman has no control. When the private self has been thoroughly suppressed and its desire for self-expression reaches its peak, this spirit force is awakened and stimulated to take concrete action in the external world. Quite often this action takes on a sexual character. At this stage, the woman's spirit force and her Eros are united; by expressing her inner self, she recovers her whole self and becomes integrated. This state is associated with that of spirit possession as experienced by a spiritual medium.

Thus, the figure of the medium fascinates Enchi. As long as we live in this world, she believes, we try to control our own inner selves, but sometimes we lose control and in this sense each person possesses a potential spirit force. The phenomenon of spirit possession in Japan has been peculiar to woman since ancient times. According to Nakayama Tarō, this is because women usually had a more sensitive and hysterical disposition than men, and so had more mediumistic potential. It was felt that a medium who served a god should be a woman, since she was supposed to marry him. Further, from medieval times on, for the practical reason that job opportunities for women were extremely limited, serving a god as a medium was one of the rare jobs for women (72-73). Therefore, in Japan, the job of medium has been reserved for women. It is here, especially in the unity of Eros and spirit force found in the medium, that Enchi sees the essential quality of femininity. And in the end, Enchi considers the medium who represents this femininity as a source of life, which men cannot defeat.

What led her to formulate this idea? The clue to this seems to lie in Enchi's "An Account of the Shrine in the Fields" (Nonomyaki 野々宮記) in which she presents her unconventional interpretation of the Rokujiō lady
in The Tale of Genji through the eyes of the heroine of Masks (Onnamen
女面，1958). The Rokujō lady is the beautiful, intelligent, and
sophisticated widow of a former crown prince. She becomes Genji's
paramour as a result of his strenuous courting. She is very elegant and
dignified on the surface and also has high self-esteem and a strong inner
self. Because of her jealousy, her spirit takes leave of her body to
attack and finally kill Genji's wife, Aoi. Even after the Rokujō lady's
death, her spirit plays an important role in the events leading up to the
decision of Genji's later wife, the Third Princess, to become a nun.
Therefore, the Rokujō lady is generally considered to be a jealous,
vindictive woman. Commentators see in her a classic illustration of the
evil karma characteristic of all womankind. However, Genji is tolerant
and forgiving of her behavior, and indeed seems to have particular regard
for women of strong character such as the Rokujō lady. Enchi defines the
Rokujō lady as a female archetype, one who is the object of man's eternal
fear, in contrast to the archetype of the woman who is the object of man's
eternal love, represented by Fujitsubo, Genji's mother-in-law, and
Murasaki, Genji's most beloved consort. Fujitsubo and Murasaki are "women
who dissolve their whole beings in the anguish of forgiving men, and
thereby create an image of eternal love and beauty in the hearts of the
men they love" (52). Enchi believes that the Rokujō lady "possess[es] a
spirit of such lively intensity that she [is] incapable of surrendering it
fully to any man" (50). Inhibited by an aristocratic upbringing, she
"turns unconsciously to spirit possession as the only available outlet for
her strong will" (51). Because Enchi herself is a repressed woman, she is
more interested in the suppressed female self and its revelation in the
Rokujō lady. The state of such a female self, when it is released from
repression to become a spiritual presence, is the state of unity between
spirit and Eros. And this condition is associated with that of a
spiritual medium in the state of possession. I think that Enchi finds this type of strong female inner self inaccessible to men, and thus she uses the Rokujō type and spirit mediums often. Therefore, an understanding of the Rokujō lady and the spirit mediums or shamanesses provides a key to unlock the secrets of Enchi's works.

My thesis will attempt, by means of textual interpretation, to examine how Enchi's protagonists express their real selves and attain release or liberation from suppression. For this purpose, I will analyze each work in terms of four major elements: characters, style, structure, and the influence of the Japanese classics. I will also discuss the influence of the Western languages and literatures on Enchi's writing.

The influence of the Japanese classics is strongly related to Enchi's main theme of feminine release, and so is particularly important in understanding her works. In particular, Edo fiction, including Kabuki and The Tale of Genji, affected her at a fundamental level. In the Edo period (1603-1868), especially in the later years, there arose a culture of grotesque decadance, dense sensuality and masochism in the confined world of the Japanese feudalistic society. Strong emotions, suddenly released from repression and often accompanied by bloody images, were often expressed in Edo fiction and Kabuki. We can find similar tendencies in Enchi's works, especially in her earlier writings. This stylistic tendency I will refer to as the Edo-fiction grotesque or masochism.

What of the influence of The Tale of Genji? Judging from the fact that Enchi translated it into modern Japanese, we can easily imagine how much this work fascinated her. She borrows some characteristics of the female characters and of the protagonist, Genji, and some similar plots, techniques and style in her own works. Most significant is the Rokujō lady, who gives Enchi an insight into the essential quality of femininity, the unity of spirit and Eros.
As has been mentioned, Enchi establishes two archetypes of women: the woman to be loved by men, and the woman to be feared by men. In The Waiting Years, the heroine is a fearsome woman, and in Tale of the Mediums, the heroine is lovable. This black and white dichotomy is, of course, based on a male point of view, even though Enchi's purpose is to write about an independent female self. In Wandering Souls and in The Mist in Karuizawa, however, the heroines are neither vengeful nor lovable women, and I would argue that in these works Enchi moves toward a more balanced depiction of women as human beings. In her later works, the liberation of Enchi's heroines is connected with the Rokujo lady's form of self-expression, her soul's wandering off, and the Heian court world. Enchi seems to conceive a fantasy world, or even a source of salvation in the literary world of The Tale of Genji. She seems to have a desire to escape from her inclination toward Edo culture even though emotionally rooted in it. Therefore, in her later works, the Edo-fiction style tapers off, while her inclination toward Genji continues. In her last two works, women's inner selves are expressed by the fusion of unconsciousness and consciousness, and the fusion of illusion and reality. Through the heroines of those works, readers are led to the other world, which is related to the Heian court era.

In contrast to the great influence of the Japanese classics, Western languages and literatures did not greatly affect Enchi, although some critics point out the Western influences in her works. Indeed, Enchi often uses foreign loan words, cites foreign authors' words and poems, mentions names of the protagonists of Western novels, touches on Western arts, and so on. Especially in her later works, such as Wandering Souls and The Mist in Karuizawa, in which a fusion between illusion and reality takes place, she employs Western references as one element to express the conflation of East and West. However, these allusions are basically
decorative. The influence of the West remains superficial in her works.

As for Enchi's characterization, since she is fascinated with the fictitious worlds of Edo fiction, or Kabuki and The Tale of Genji, her characters are based on prototypical characters drawn from other fictional works. As a result, except for a few heroines who seem to be partially identified with the author, they do not possess a strong sense of reality as human beings. In other words, Enchi creates her literary fiction on top of other fictions, and this is why her literary world is more or less artificial. This artificial quality is also related to the fact that there are not many scenes from nature in her works. Even though she describes natural scenes, quite often nature functions merely as a backdrop. This may have something to do with the urban environment she was brought up in. However, in her later works, there are more natural scenes, and Enchi's way of dealing with them becomes a bit more "natural."

Since she has a great deal of knowledge about Japanese classics, Enchi's vocabulary is rich. In general, her style is well-controlled and rather firm, for she often uses Chinese loan words and phrases which give to her writing a quality of restraint and an academic air. To balance this, she also occasionally uses colloquial vocabulary. Once in a while she injects daring and sensual expressions in the midst of a well-mannered style, which function to shock the reader. Kamei Hideo calls this tendency "discordant aesthetics" or hachô no bi (破顛の美) (154). However, in her later works, her use of discordant aesthetics decreases, as does the predominance of Edo-fiction style. Her narrative structures usually tend to be complicated, because she tries to construct her literary world in a sophisticated way. For example, in some works such as "Love in Two Lives: The Remnant," she employs the Japanese classics and presents them in modern translation to create her literary world.

Now, let us explore this world of fused modern and classical
literatures, a world full of mysteriousness and sensuality, in which the real self of the female is liberated.
Chapter One

Enchi's first major novel was *The Waiting Years* (*Onnazaka* 女坂), written between 1949 and 1957. The story opens with a scene in which the protagonist, Shirakawa Tomo, at the age of thirty, has arrived in Tōkyō to procure a concubine for her husband, Yukitomo. From this beginning it is not difficult to imagine that the heroine's life will be neither happy nor easy. The novel covers a period of approximately thirty-five years, from the early Meiji period (around 1885) when the civil rights movement was at its peak through the mid-Taishō period (around 1920). In those days the patriarchal family system had not yet been abolished, and although the practice was officially illegal, tradition permitted the keeping of concubines.

Yukitomo is a successful officer of the government. At home he is an absolute monarch and yet attractive to women. Tomo is a typical Meiji woman, who endures the despotism of the male-dominated order and devotes herself to husband and family. Even the humiliating job of finding a concubine for her husband she sees as part of her duty as a good wife. Needless to say, Tomo becomes jealous of the beautiful fifteen-year-old girl, Suga, whom she procures. But at the same time she feels guilty about Suga, for it is Tomo who buys her as a sexual slave for a man of over forty years. With Suga established as her husband's concubine, Tomo is forced to live out her days like a widow under his roof. At first, Yukitomo is pleased with Suga, but he is not fully satisfied with only one concubine. When the family moves to Tōkyō where Yukitomo has been appointed Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police Force, their sixteen-year-old maid, Yumi, becomes his second concubine. After he makes a fortune and realizes that he will no longer be powerful in the new age of the civil rights movement, he retires into private life at his mansion in
the Shinagawa district of Tōkyō, where he initiates an illicit relationship with his eldest son's wife, Miya. The son himself, Michimasa, is rather half-witted—another sorrow and burden for his mother, who begins to seek salvation in the Shin sect of Buddhism. In the meantime, Tomo marries Yumi off to her nephew, and Yukitomo's love, Miya, dies at a young age. Things do not end here, however, for a family maid bears Tomo's grandson's child before the heroine finally falls ill one winter day. When she realizes that death is approaching soon, Tomo leaves Yukitomo a will and a dramatic message, both of which express her anguish and the resentment she has felt against him for over forty years.

From the preceding summary, it is clear that Tomo's life is one of pain and endurance. But what type of woman is Tomo? Does she possess a spirit force, and if so, how does she express it? In order to analyze Tomo's character in detail, it is possible to divide her life into three stages, based on the psychological changes she experiences. The first stage includes her married life before Suga's arrival. The second stage covers the period from Suga's appearance to Miya's marriage. The third stage extends from the illicit relationship between Miya and Yukitomo until Tomo's death.

Born into a low-ranking samurai family in central Kyūshū, a stronghold of Confucian morality and male dominance, Tomo is strongly influenced by her environment and acquires little formal education. At the age of fourteen she marries Yukitomo and goes off to live in Northeastern Honshū, an area whose deep snow gives it a confined atmosphere which further influences and restricts Tomo's character. Naturally she lives by the strict Confucian conduct which gives "first importance in everything to husband and family . . ." (14–15)³. This makes her look old before her time. Her gaze is heavy, and her speech and manner have a certain formality:
the eyes, narrow beneath the full, drooping eyelids, had
an almost frustrated look, as though the lids were being used to
screen off a whole variety of emotions that might have found
expression there. (10)

Her face is like a Noh mask under which all her emotions are hidden.
Although she does not yet realize it, Tomo's life within the patriarchal
family system keeps her real self suppressed. She clothes herself in the
public self and in her duties, but knows that, like most women of the
south, she has an intense passion within herself. She loves Yukitomo with
a fierce sensuality. "Tormented by the one-sided love that [gives] and
[gives] with no reward," she longs "to have her husband understand through
and through the innermost desires and emotions of her heart" (28).

Tomo's hidden force and passion are particularly well illustrated in
one scene from the novel. One summer night, while Yukitomo and Tomo are
sleeping, a snake crawls into their bedroom. Both awaken with a start to
find the snake curled on Yukitomo's chest. But it is Tomo who grabs the
snake away and flings it into the garden. In doing so, she expresses a
deep conflict between her hidden desires and her sense of duty, a conflict
which is normally shut away from sight, and unacknowledged even by Tomo's
conscious self. The snake can be interpreted as a symbol of Tomo's hidden
desires: sexuality, passion, defiance and "anti-order," and in her
subconscious mind Tomo is frightened by a power of such violence, with the
potential to destroy her ordered, public existence. In order to protect
her husband, she has to throw the snake—her hidden desires—away.

The snake possesses other symbolic meanings as well. As in the
legend of the "Snake Wife," the snake constitutes a traditional symbol of
the ideal wife in Japan. In this story a man saves a snake from a group
of children who are bullying it. To repay the man's kindness, the snake
changes itself into a woman, comes to the man's house, and offers herself
to him as a devoted wife, willing to love their child at the price of
self-sacrifice. To display such dedication requires a strong will as well as a profound sense of attachment, based upon the conviction that one should never forget even one single kindness from others. The characteristics of the snake in this legend are not unlike those of Tomo. Both dedicate themselves to their husbands and to family life, and both sacrifice their own desires to do so.

Along with this symbolic meaning, the snake is also widely seen as a symbol of wisdom and as the source of an almost evil life force—an interpretation which, as Jung pointed out, is common to many cultures in the world (Kimura 103). Furthermore, in Japan the tenacious personality of the snake has long been understood as a good omen. When a harmless snake inhabited a house, the Japanese traditionally believed that it was a guardian god of the family, come to guard the house. This image of the snake is also identified with the figure of Tomo, who eventually becomes like "a family ghost" to sustain her family nearly single-handedly. The snake is also an animal with strong ties to the earth, for usually it does not show itself in the sunlight, and in this way it is suggestive of Tomo's introverted character. And because of its association with the earth, the snake refers to the womb and the tomb, or in other words to life and death, reminding us of the idea of karma and transmigration. It thus seems associated with Tomo's later inclination toward Buddhism. From this, it is clear that Tomo's personality is very snake-like. In fact, in one scene, she feels as if she were a great snake "rearing its hooded head" (48) to stare at her husband and Suga. Most importantly, from the time of the snake incident, Yukitomo finds "it difficult to see [Tomo] as an object of desire" (19).

Yukitomo not only understands Tomo's dedication to duty, but uses this knowledge to control her, thereby making her life increasingly tragic. Although her life to this point may be marred by her husband's
"self-indulgence where women [are] concerned" (14), her inner world is still stable. In other words, she is not aware of any conflict between her inner desires and social duties, because her dedication to her husband and the family name is reinforced by her acceptance of Confucian ideals. In general, such moral codes determine people's behavior to a great extent, so that their morals are quite often in opposition to their more passionate emotions and desires. However, in Tomo's case, until Suga arrives, her moral code is still compatible with her desires, because, at least on the conscious level, what she wants to do is also what she has to do. She can be said to be happy in the sense that she is not aware of any self-deception. She is able to devote "all the love and wisdom of which she [is] capable" (15) to her husband and the whole household.

However, when Suga appears, Tomo's integrated world begins to fall apart. During this second stage, she begins to suffer from a split self. The reason for this fracture is rooted in the fact that it is Tomo who chooses Suga. Yukitomo's false democracy in requesting that Tomo help find him a concubine as part of her marital duty is more ruthless than any command, for once his wife agrees to act, she must take some responsibility for her decision. She becomes an accessory to her husband's moral crime. She still loves him; as she says, the love is "still stronger than [the] creed [to serve her husband]" (28), and she has no choice but to obey him. Confucian morality serves to reinforce her actions, as does her debased self-esteem as a wife. The centrality of Confucian morality in her personality is obvious in her very name, which is written with the character tomo (倫) meaning similar group; friend; order; morality. It is also interesting to note that the sound tomo is part of the name Yukitomo. Thus we see that Tomo is an accomplice to and part of Yukitomo, helping him preserve feudalistic morality. However, it is this business that causes her to start distrusting and hating her
husband, and to begin saving money secretly. Tomo comes "to see his nature at a step removed" (51). She is "gradually acquiring the ability to view him dispassionately, as another human being" (52). This new tendency runs counter to Confucian morality, giving her a sense that she herself has descended to the level of a shameful woman. She cannot help doubting the validity of this traditional morality. Tomo's awareness of her real self is growing.

Just as Tomo's feelings toward Yukitomo are divided in two, so are her feelings toward Suga. The heroine feels herself to be both the victim and the perpetrator of her husband's moral crime. Tomo's jealousy for her rival, Suga, and her feeling of distrust for her husband are related, for both cause her to question her received moral code and to be more independent and self-reliant in her thinking. At the same time, Tomo also suffers from pangs of conscience over complicity in a moral crime. Tomo feels both guilt and compassion toward Suga. The patriarchal principle produces the moral crime, and causes the heroine to experience feelings of guilt, which in turn deepen her doubts about Confucian ethics.

Even though Tomo has such contradictory feelings, she is "constitutionally incapable of letting her actions follow the natural dictates of her instincts" (52). She does not try to change the situation in a practical, realistic way, by leaving her husband, for example. She is forced to turn her frustration against herself, becoming a self-destructive person who realizes herself only through painful endurance and repression of her emotional and physical desires. Tomo, who does not have a sexual life, turns into a living "family ghost" with no physical substance. This repression forces her to live an artificial life as family manager. She becomes a proxy executor of the male principle which keeps the patriarchal family system alive. From around this time, male and female roles in the Shirakawa household become reversed. Etô Jun says
that Tomo, a woman who originally belongs to Eros, actually comes to sustain the fiction of "the family" ("Kaisetsu" in Onnazaka 215-216). Another critic, Ogasawara Yoshiko points out that her tragedy is exacerbated by her involuntarily acquired ability to criticize the male principle that she performs (42). Her inner world has been split into so many parts that all she can do is endure the reality of her circumstances. Even her appearance is changing:

To her household Tomo presented a more energetic front than ever. . . . Far from fading into the background because of Shirakawa's infatuation for Suga, she seemed to counter Suga's growing beauty with such a sense of authority in her back and shoulders as she sat motionless in her room. . . . Something forbidding emanated from her as she sat there without speaking, something that spurned all lies and deception and inspired more fear than did Shirakawa himself. (52-53)

Thus we are not surprised when the arrival of Yukitomo's second concubine, Yumi, has little effect on Tomo. Indeed, her presence only clarifies Tomo's position as manager of the house. To be a wife in the samurai class of feudalistic Japan was to be a slave to one's husband's sexual desires as well as to one's household duties, while the value and status of women in the lower classes, such as among farmers, manufacturing laborers and merchants, was in some ways much greater because of the recognition they received for their labor. The Shirakawas are descended from the samurai class. In The Waiting Years Suga and Yumi become Yukitomo's sexual slaves, whereas Tomo becomes the household slave. Too badly hurt for any hope of reconciliation with her husband, Tomo sees no possibility that they might recover a real wife and husband relationship. She begins to lose her tender feelings for him.

The third stage of Tomo's life begins with the marriage of her half-witted son, Michimasa, to the seductive Miya. Bound to her husband by her moral code, she would not have allowed herself to be attracted to another man, but ironically, it is the sexually starved Tomo who is first
attracted to Miya's feminine qualities, to her "enveloping softness, free from all sharp angles" (93). Contrary to Tomo's expectations, the womanizer, Yukitomo, and Miya, a prostitute figure, begin to have an affair. A brown stain on Miya's bridal outfit from the pawnshop foreshadows this dirty spot in her marriage, besides raising doubts about her virginity. The fact that her red bridal outfit is three or four inches shorter in the sleeve than the white silk under-kimono is also symbolic of future discord in her marriage. When Tomo discovers this immoral relationship, she becomes a woman moved by "a seething indignation" and "a fierce wrath that stands up to Yukitomo, the ungovernable male" (105). Her repressed self is about to explode. Even then, however, she is afraid to hurt the family reputation and thus cause harm to her favorite grandson, Takao, so she has no choice but to sustain the Shirakawa family with a "constant, tense determination not to be outdone" (121). Tomo's circumstances worsen progressively. Within her suppressed environment she does what she can to protect the concubines from her husband, for they are also victims of the patriarchal family system. She displays a growing empathy toward Suga, whose beauty is beginning to fade, and arranges a marriage for Yumi, who has never had much favor from Yukitomo.

Although Tomo's love for her husband has begun to wane, she cannot bring herself to hate and despise him completely. This is because of her formulated morality that "a man's morals [are] judged solely by his public behavior while a woman [is] expected to be faithful" (166). Yukitomo at least carries out his social responsibilities and realizes that "his own position depend[s] on others and on society at large" (146). In comparison with Miya, whom Tomo sees as only "a female of the species with no more shame than a cat or a dog" (166), and Michimasa, who is excessively self-centered and lives out his useless life in a kind of
premature retirement without performing any worthwhile social role, Yukitomo looks less disgusting.

Having examined the basic character of Miya, let us now look at Michimasa:

Michimasa was close-fisted, gluttonous and snappish with the servants. . . . [W]henever he opened his mouth to speak he invariably inspired a sense of disgust as though he gave off some foul odor. His mere presence was enough to cast an ugly pall over those about him. (87)

Enchi's descriptions of Michimasa are implacably harsh. The fact that he is Tomo's own son brings much grief to the protagonist, for she cannot break this tie, no matter what happens. Although Tomo can fight the immoral Yukitomo with morality and a "deep-seated, icy will" (75), her will power and the belief that parents should love their children do not overcome her disdain for Michimasa. She finds in her mind "the unwillingness to suffer fools gladly" (86), so she cannot give Michimasa unconditional love. Tomo truly stumbles over her morals at this point. Michimasa is a symbol of Tomo's ultimate grief. This type of "ugly" man appears often in Enchi's works, such as in the short story "Poor Days" ("Himojii tsukihi" ひもじい月日, 1953), the trilogy What Robs the Vermillion (Ake wo ubaumono 朱を奪うもの, 1955-68) and so on. In addition to this burden, Tomo feels even sadder when she notices that her grandson, Takao, keeps away from her because she has put a stop to his fleeting affair with his stepsister, Ruriko.

Toward the end, Tomo turns to religion to attain salvation. Faith, in general, is a recourse for people who suffer from many things in this world and so seek release or salvation. It is a natural and straightforward way to express one's desire for salvation. Tomo, however, does not seem suited to religion, for she feels a strong energy for worldly life and a powerful internal will through having had to endure a harsh situation. Nevertheless there are several reasons why religion
attracts her. Firstly, the Shin faith provides her with strength to endure an unhappy reality by teaching salvation through reliance on the Buddha or tarikihongan (他力本願). Secondly, the reality surrounding Tomo becomes a living hell, and finally, her son Michimasa deprives her of all hope.

Despite all this, the Shin faith does not provide Tomo with any realistic solution. In fact, the only real solution to her problems may lie in her outliving her husband. This would mean release from the binding patriarchal family system, and a chance to recapture her self. But fate is not so kind to her. Before falling fatally ill, she staggers up a slope, reflecting upon her whole life:

Her world was a precarious place, a place where one groped one's way through the gloom; where everything one's hand touched was colorless, hard, and cold; where the darkness seemed to stretch endlessly ahead. Yet at the end of it all a brighter world surely lay waiting. . . . She must not despair, she must walk on; unless she climbed and went on climbing she would never reach the top of the hill. . . . She looked up, and saw the gently sloping road stretching up far away from her. She thought she had covered three-quarters of the way, but it was still scarcely a half. (190)

The original Japanese title of The Waiting Years is Onnazaka (女坂), which means the "slope" of womankind. This "slope" may be interpreted in two ways; in chronological terms, Tomo is at the end of her life and hence her "slope" is declining. Psychologically, the long, gentle slope in the above scene represents an incline. It symbolizes Tomo's entire life, the long years she has spent "waiting" for a brighter world. But her hopes come to nothing. Instead, it is only approaching death that will set Tomo free. In her will, she utters not a single word of complaint or reproach, but apologizes for not having trusted her husband fully, because she has saved money secretly for her daughter and son in case they have to leave the Shirakawa household. Her words, "So you forgive me? I am so grateful" (201), are more forceful than any outright accusation could ever
be. She also leaves Yukitomo a deadly ironic message: "I want no funeral. Tell him... to take my body out to the sea at Shinagawa and heave (ざんぶり捨てる) it in the water" (Onnazaka 122). The novel ends with a description of the effect Tomo's word have on her husband: "His body had suffered the full force of the emotions that his wife struggled to repress for forty years past. The shock was enough to split his arrogant ego in two" (203). Tomo's cold words, "heave it in the water" represent a dramatic culmination of all the tensions in this novel. With these words, the story comes full circle, for the feelings she has kept pent up throughout the novel are fully expressed in this scene. Here, all is revealed, and we feel the full force of Enchi's carefully constructed plot and dramatization.

In considering the meaning of Tomo's message, a number of interpretations arise. Firstly, it expresses the feeling of seething indignation that she has kept repressed for forty years. It is an expression of her revenge. Okuno Takeo suggests that that revenge is based on a form of spirit possession and hence cannot be expressed concretely through actions in the real world (115). Tomo feels that after her death, her spirit may want to look back at the Shirakawa household from the sea at Shinagawa with a fierce anger; their mansion, which is symbolic of Tomo's unhappiness, stands beside the Shinagawa sea. Her self-esteem is restored by her strong refusal to be taken care of by anyone or anything even after her death. Although she has believed in the Shin faith for a time, she rejects the salvation of the Buddha as she lies dying.

Secondly, this message may also express her deep regret at having silently endured so many years of hurt and repression. It gives voice as well to her sense of relief at being on the verge of release from all the burdens and cares of her unhappy life. This is why she employs the word
"heave" "with a kind of pleasure" (202). She no longer has to live an artificial life and gains pleasure from the knowledge that without her the Shirakawa household, and its patriarchal family system, will collapse.

Finally, her message may be a twisted expression of her love for Yukitomo which has sunk to the bottom of her heart. During the course of the novel Tomo changes from a woman who patiently trusts her husband and believes in his love into a woman who looks down on him and is able to criticize him objectively. However, her anger and hatred can also be seen as expressions of her attachment and her deep feelings of commitment toward Yukitomo. Indeed, throughout the novel, we have seen that Tomo's feelings of love and hatred are delicately interwined, one shading easily into the other. Her love for Yukitomo is a strong emotion that always revives no matter how hard she tries to kill it. Because the object of her revenge is also the object of her love, her revenge can never be complete.

In her final message, Tomo's real self is released from its suppression. Toyoko relays her message to Yukitomo "as though Tomo's spirit had taken possession of her" (203). Tomo, a living "family ghost," literally becomes a "spirit" presence. As a spirit in possession of Toyoko, Tomo shows an abundant life force, and perhaps even some eroticism. "Her eyes were alive and shining with excitement. Their gaze brimmed with feelings of such intensity that they were scarcely recognizable as the placid, leaden-hued eyes . . ." (202). Released from all ties in this world, Tomo becomes a spiritual embodiment of essential femininity.

At this point let us return to the earlier question of what type of woman Tomo is. As noted, she is clearly an "oppressed woman" who endures a terrible situation with an iron-will. In other words, her real self is thoroughly repressed by her social self. Even in the end when she finally
releases her real self from its suppression, her essentially repressed condition can be seen from the fact that she relays her message indirectly through others and that it contains no straightforward accusation. However, her strong self makes men afraid of her—she is the type of woman who is the object of man's eternal fear, the Rokujo type. Tomo has a spirit force, but it is rather weak when compared with those of Enchi's later heroines, because her method of self-expression is too indirect and passive to bring about the changes she desires. Because of the weakness of her spirit force, her eroticism is not powerful even in the end, so that she only has a mild power of attraction to men. Nevertheless, in the character of Tomo, Enchi firmly establishes a prototype of the repressed woman who attains a powerful force of "spirit."

If Tomo is a model of the woman to be feared by men, then what type of women are the others in the Shirakawa household? Although the heavy weight of Tomo's presence makes them appear somewhat weak, an important role is played by each other female character. Together they create the confined and closed world of the Shirakawas.

As for Yukitomo's first concubine, Suga, through the course of the novel, she changes from an innocent and beautiful girl reminiscent of a famed courtesan of old to a gloomy and depressed middle-aged woman always troubled by hemorrhoids. Her extraordinary beauty and fragility are attractive to men. However, if her hemorrhoids can be seen to symbolize Suga's character and her situation in the Shirakawa household, her life there cannot be called happy. Generally speaking, hemorrhoids do not produce the drastic pain of an acute disease, but rather entail endemic, persistent pain, which undermines slowly and steadily (Yamazaki 178). Treatment for hemorrhoids is usually temporary and incomplete as we see in Suga's case. Without surgery, the sufferer continues to experience constant dull pain, and is likely to feel chronic discomfort. Certainly,
Suga's existence within the repressive regime of the Shirakawa household was governed by such chronic malaise, for in that environment she was passive and subdued, forced to repress her true spirit. Recovering from her hemorrhoidal condition, i.e. her condition of chronic suffering, would signify her ability to escape the Shirakawa environment and live a free life. But there is no cure for Suga. The one man who could save her from this situation is Konno, toward whom she is favorably disposed. However, just as the Chinese herbal infusion he gives her as medication does not have a strong effect on her condition, so he offers only temporary salvation for her. Moreover, because of her passive character she cannot take any concrete action to be released from her fate. She, like Tomo, is a fundamentally repressed woman. Thus, Suga continues to suffer from hemorrhoids, remaining as gloomy and depressed as ever.

What role does Suga play in the Shirakawa household? As Mishima Yukio points out, her presence serves to multiply Tomo's tragedy ("Kaisetsu" 230). As we have seen earlier, this is because it was Tomo's duty to choose her as a concubine for her husband. In practical terms, Tomo sees in Suga's subdued and timid spirit "an ideal type for the second woman" (27). Since her position is socially unacceptable, the concubine exists in the mistress' "shadow," for according to Confucian ethics she is not only the husband's, but also the wife's servant, and in Suga, Tomo finds a woman suitable to be her own "shadow." From the beginning Tomo might have predicted that her relationship with Suga would become one of interdependence, for in such arrangements the wife is dependent upon the concubine for the stability of her social position and vice versa. Tomo and Suga are two sides of a coin, and they are also shadows of each other (Endō 17). They both play supporting roles, the wife acting as the household manager, but actually a passive-aggressive slave shouldering the burden of public appearances, and the concubine serving the patriarchal
master as a sexual slave, a completely passive woman carrying the private burden of filling the void which exists between husband and wife, a void which must be filled in order for the family to keep up the appearance of normality. Both cooperate to support the Shirakawa household, both endure silently the same fate from their different positions. This shared condition and the similar experience of repression bind the two women even more closely, creating a deeper relationship. In short, it may be said that Tomo's private self is embodied in Suga, a woman to be loved by Yukitomo.

In one scene, in which Tomo is looking after Suga after a hemorrhoidal attack, their relationship and the feelings they have toward one another are evident (153-154). Tomo, feeling "ashamed and soiled" to see blood coming from Suga's body, cannot help hating her. But at the same time, Tomo is overtaken by "an indescribable sense of pity" for the other woman. On the other hand, Suga has complex feelings about her position: as a concubine she is sexually superior to her mistress, while inferior to her socially. However, it is important to take note of the fact that after Miya's appearance, Suga's position becomes less stable, causing her to rely more and more on Tomo, who "seem[s] to have lost [her] customary watchfulness and to be filled with motherly affection" (153). Their shared fate and increasing interdependence are shown in the following descriptions: "Tomo put[s] her arms around Suga's shoulders as she [stands] swaying on her feet. Clinging together, the two women [stagger] along the corridor . . ." (153).

Tomo sees that Suga's ultimate destiny is "to grow gradually older while leading the concubine's life that she loathe[s], sharing with a woman [Tomo] whose presence [makes] her uneasy the care of one man, Yukitomo" (129). This is not only Tomo's observation, but also her desire. Therefore, Tomo opposes Yukitomo's suggestion that Suga marry
Konno, and she puts an end to Suga's love for Konno. Tomo will not allow Suga to leave the Shirakawa household and be happy, for she is indispensable to the Shirakawas and to Tomo.

If this is true of Suga, then what can be said of Yukitomo's second concubine, Yumi? She has a "boyish face, [a] swarthy complexion and [a] tall clean-limbed look" (70). "[T]he body [is] strong and flexible like young bamboo... The amber, somewhat coarse-textured skin too [has] a touch of masculinity..." (71). Her personality is also easy-going, of an almost masculine nature. Yumi provides a stark contrast to Suga. She finds less favor in Yukitomo's eyes, for she is the type of woman who, although attractive to men, cannot retain their affections forever. Thus her presence has little effect upon either Suga's position or Tomo's. In fact she only strengthens Tomo's position as manager. Her simple and clear-cut personality and healthy beauty are not easily pushed into the shadows. For these very reasons she is too incongruous to fit into the Shirakawa household well enough to be its permanent slave and thus is the only woman entering its confines to be released and allowed to start a new life with a husband and a baby. Unlike Suga, whose beauty fades, and Miya and Tomo who die, Yumi is set free from the bonds of the patriarchal family.

We now turn to the fourth woman in Yukitomo's life, his daughter-in-law and lover, Miya. As her name suggests (Miya (美夜) means a beautiful night or a beautiful woman at night), she is a sexually immoral type of woman—a prostitute of sorts. Her "ingratiating femininity" and "enveloping softness, free of all sharp angles" (93) are attractive to everyone, even to Tomo and Suga. Miya is the type of woman who is not only immediately attractive to men, but who can retain their affections. Although looked down upon by Tomo and Suga for her complete lack of morals, Miya can be said to be a woman faithful to her own passionate
desires. Of all the Shirakawa women, she is the freest from male-imposed Confucian morality. Her fertility also shows that she is a "natural" female. Unlike Tomo and Suga, she rejects the strictures of an artificial social world and suffers no identity conflict. Even in such a warped situation her natural self is at least compatible with her social self.

However, is she completely free from the artificial world of the "family," and from the often painful female desire to attract man? No, she is not, for she dies young during her eighth pregnancy, feeling guilty about the secret that one of her children is Yukitomo's. Even Miya lies so that she might retain his favor. She contributes to the Shirakawa household by leaving numerous offspring. The fact that she dies "youthful and attractive" (172) without getting old suggests that she is a symbol of procreation. But her naturalness is in the end buried by a premature death, destroyed by the stifling artificiality of the Shirakawa household.

Thus Enchi casts these three women, who are all Fujitsubo types, (i.e. women to be loved by men) in supportive roles. However, they also carry characteristics of Genji's other women. For example, in the morning after Suga's first sexual union with Yukitomo, she refuses to get up from her bed, and her hair and forehead are drenched in perspiration. These descriptions are exactly the same as those of Murasaki—Genji's beloved consort—after her unexpected nuptial night with Genji. Yumi shares certain likenesses with Tamakazura, who despite Genji's courting, marries another man and becomes Genji's adopted daughter. And Miya is like Oborozukiyo with whom Genji's affair causes his temporary seclusion from court life.

Finally, we can find another interesting parallel between The Waiting Years and The Tale of Genji. Each of the four main women living in Genji's mansion possesses her own seasonal image, although one of them is not his paramour and the Rokujo lady lives elsewhere. Enchi employs this
idea, in order to clarify and decorate the image of each woman in The Waiting Years. Winter is a symbol for Tomo—her slow and heavy movements are "melancholy and monotonous yet powerful as the waves on a wintry sea in their silent suggestions of the body and the voice . . . " (75). Her emotion seems to be frozen in "the deep snow that buri[es] the northeastern districts . . . " (75). It is on a snowy winter day toward the end that she climbs the slope before falling ill. And it is also on a "night of still, penetrating cold . . . " (201) at the end of February that she dies. Of all the scenes described in the novel, only these two scenes are set in winter. Tomo dies just before spring which is a symbol of life and hope. Her entire life has been one long winter.

If Tomo is a woman of the winter, Suga is a woman of the autumn. When she comes to the Shirakawas in late summer, she is quite bright in her youth. But once Yukitomo actually starts to have a physical relationship with her that autumn, she becomes more and more melancholic and gloomy. Suga's figure is overlaid with images of autuminal decline. It is also symbolic that her room faces the back garden where pale pink sazanka, an autumn flower, is in bloom. After Tomo's death she will probably replace Tomo. It seems that her future will be winter.

Yumi is a woman of the summer. Her boyish looks and dark skin, and her lively and non-shadowy character call up images of a sunny summer day. Her marriage, which symbolizes her new life, is held during the Japanese rainy season—summer. The rain symbolically washes away her past.

Miya, whose entourage makes its way below an umbrella of "full-blooming cherry tress" (82) "in the evening haze of high spring" (81) on her wedding day, is a woman of the spring. Her appearance, her fertility and her free, natural and unrestrained way of living, all remind us of spring when the joy of life is full in bloom. That she dies young in the summer is also symbolic, for Miya accomplishes her female duty of giving
birth in the spring. Thus each of the four women is associated with one of four seasons.

Another similarity shared by the four women living in Genji's mansion and those in the Shirakawa household is their lack of major conflicts. Enchi often deals with harmonious relationships between women all committed to the same man, for example, in The Orange Blossoms (Hanachirusato 花散里, 1957-60). As suggested by the fact that this is also the title of a chapter in The Tale of Genji, The Orange Blossoms can be interpreted as a variation of Genji. In Genji, the Rokujo lady arrives from the outside, and breaks this harmony, but in The Waiting Years Tomo helps sustain it, though she is a Rokujo type. Thus there exist shadows of Genji's women behind the women of the Shirakawa household.

If the four women basically correspond to Genji's women, then Yukitomo is the Genji type of man. In the role of what is apparently that of absolute ruler over his household, Yukitomo seems to decide the destinies of his women. Whether or not this is actually true will be clear through analyzing his character. Yukitomo is typical of men of the Meiji era when feudalistic values still governed society. In public he is a successful officer and at home he is a patriarchal dictator. The new morality which advocated monogamy would judge him morally guilty. However, Confucian morality, which permitted polygamy, would consider him conscientious for adopting his concubines to give them legal status and for going so far as to marry one of them off (Mulhern 29). However, whether he is judged good or bad, he is attractive to women. Yukitomo is "a middle-aged gentleman of a neat and unassuming appearance . . ." (31). He has a chaste and aloof air about him "as though he were quite indifferent to the other sex" (67). This makes him look cool and dignified. Although he finds "particular stimulus in an illicit affair" (113), the fact that he is a womanizer who knows how to handle women
implies that he has some power of attraction to women. And also the fact
that there is little overt conflict between his women, all of whom, at
least for a time, gain pleasure from being loved by him, illustrates both
his power and his charm.

Enchi clearly tries to establish Yukitomo as a Genji type who
combines the above-mentioned power and charm. However, it is doubtful
whether many readers find him truly attractive. Except for the few scenes
detailed below, we are not well informed of what goes on in his mind. In
other words, Yukitomo has little reality as a human being. For this
reason his sudden display of humanity at the novel's close may leave
readers somewhat puzzled. Moreover, since he is meant to fascinate women,
it is a pity that Enchi did not imbue his character with a greater sense
of realism.

Despite all this, Yukitomo still strikes us as the most attractive
and powerful man in this novel, though this may be due to the general
unattractiveness of the other male characters. There is one scene in
which Yukitomo looks unusually human. One day Yukitomo happens to meet a
civil rights activist whose group he had clamped down on fiercely several
years before and whom he presumed long dead. This man's comment, "Your
reign will soon be over," (76) only aggravates Yukitomo's fear and worry
about the coming age which beats down his arrogance. That night, he calls
Tomo to his room:

[H]e was sick at heart and would gladly have put aside the
stiffness in which he normally encased himself and talked to
her easily and familiarly, as they had when they were young. .
. . He wanted to place his daunted spirit in Tomo's protective
arms. The emotion he felt now was one that he could not
possibly divulge to Suga or Yumi, whom he petted as one would
care for goldfish or a caged bird. (75-78)

Here, Yukitomo suffers from the loneliness that sweeps over him "like a
chill, dark wind" (79), making him appear human. When he is hurt either
emotionally or physically, Yukitomo, who knows Tomo's strength, goes to
her. He makes ardent love to Tomo for the last time after he kills a
political activist in the line of duty and comes home wounded. He looks
for the shadow of his mother in Tomo, whom in fact "he was merely imposing
a maternal image on . . . ." (78). Only at such times does he look
vulnerable and human. This fact indicates that without Tomo, the presence
of Yukitomo amounts to almost nothing. Indeed, his name suggests this.
The first character yuki (行) means to go. The second tomo (友) means
friend or company. The latter also has the same sound as his wife's name,
Tomo. Thus we can see that his name implies a close connection with, even
a dependence upon, Tomo. In other words, without his wife, he cannot "go"
or exist. In the end, even though Yukitomo appears to have great power in
determining the fate of the women in his household, it is in fact Tomo who
performs the more important role. Tomo chooses Suga. Tomo selects a
husband for Yumi. She is attracted to Miya first. Above all, Tomo partly
determines her own destiny. Therefore, the reason for Yukitomo's shock
upon hearing Tomo's message is that besides realizing her true feelings,
he has been awakened to the fact that things will never be the same after
her death. He has heard echoes of warnings of the imminent collapse of
his household and the patriarchal family system that has supported it.
Yukitomo is Enchi's favorite type of man, and she continued to develop
this type of character in her later works.

Enchi's style seems to indicate that it is Tomo rather than her
husband who controls the other household members. Although the story is
apparently told by a third person narrator whom we naturally expect to
describe everything objectively, it is often told from Tomo's point of
view. In general, the world that Tomo cannot penetrate, for example, the
inner world of the other characters, is not well-illustrated. Kamei Hideo
sees this as a peculiarity of the author, who seldom grants her supporting
characters, particularly males, either autonomy or enough self-awareness
to confront their anima, while allowing the heroine's consciousness to dominate and even absorb that of the other characters (133). Thus Tomo's presence is dominant in the style.

The fact of Tomo's repressed and introverted character is also evident in the novel's style. Firstly, there exist numerous unsignaled interior monologues which show that her personality is not open. Secondly, these interior monologues are injected among descriptive narratives explaining her behavior (Mulhern 15). These show the ambiguity of the narrator and Tomo, so Tomo's subjectivity is squeezed into objective descriptions. Toward the end of the novel as Tomo staggers up the slope, an interior monologue is sandwiched between descriptive narratives. According to John Bester's translation, "Her world was a precarious place. . . . She must not despair, she must walk on . . ." (190). However, rather than using third person pronouns throughout the novel, Enchi often uses the word jibun, which means oneself, in reference to Tomo. Depending upon the context, this word can mean "I" or "she." Those sentences in the above example are no doubt unsignaled interior monologues: "My world is a precarious place. . . . I must not despair, I must walk on . . . ." (Onnazaka 115). Therefore, we can see Tomo's introverted character more easily in the original text.

As we have seen, the third person narrative is critical of Tomo, but not of the other characters. For example, although Yukitomo should be criticized by the new morality, he is never criticized by the narrative. Tomo is critical with herself from the beginning to the end. This repressive style creates a tension and a life force, and is one of the attractions of this work.

The repressive quality in Enchi's style is also found in her selection of words. Hasegawa Izumi says that Enchi's writing style is unusually firm for a woman writer, and once in a while we can see some
incongruity in the flow of the words, but this disharmony gives a force to her writing (180). Her overall style in this work is well-controlled, formal, sophisticated, and repressive, for she often uses Chinese loan words and phrases which have a certain heaviness about them. They suggest a formality, a squareness and modesty, or more concretely speaking Tomo's strong-mindedness and formulated morality. Such words and expressions tend to give Enchi's style a bookish, academic quality. However, in order to compensate for this, Enchi also uses easy, colloquial words and expressions. Since she commonly employs audacious and even vulgar expressions, Okuno Takeo says that private and indelicate activities are suddenly revealed for a moment, and then covered over again in a well-mannered style (103-104). Kamei Hideo calls this "discordant aesthetics" or hacho no bi (破調の美) (154). Let us look at a few random examples:

At this, the mother[Suga's] last shreds of self-control had vanished and she had prostrated herself before Tomo. Hearing the clumsy, halting words with which she sobbed out her thanks, Tomo had had to fight back the bitter tears that came welling up. (64)

It [Suga's innocent smile] was a smile without substance, as if she were being drawn uncomprehendingly down into some unknown darkness.

Again a creeping horror down Kin's back made her look at Suga intently. (65)

When we encounter such expressions one after another, we unconsciously feel a certain mystery, danger and fear—words that describe the heroine well, though the force of this does not come out in English translation.

Such attributes of Tomo are associated with one of Enchi's common
stylistic characteristics: the Edo-fiction grotesque or sensuality. Describing Enchi's peculiar inclination toward Edo (1603-1868) fiction—mainly Kabuki—in her works, Chieko Mulhern says: "Along with the incident-rich dramatic plot and the theatrical contrasts. . . , Enchi displays another trademark of Edo fiction, a gothic fascination with the grotesque in all their graphic detail" (20). This can also be called a masochistic aesthetic. Tomo is impressed with the play, *The Ghost of Yotsuya* (東海道四谷怪談, 1825) by Tsuruya Nanboku (1755-1829), an Edo horror story in which a woman whose looks have been ruined by poison avenges herself on her betrayer husband and his lover. Tomo, who compares herself to the heroine, watches the play with a choking sense of pain, spellbound by its grotesque scenes. She is attracted by the grotesque sensuality of suppressed passion and emotions in this play, which she herself also subconsciously possesses. Several scenes containing bloody images also appear in the novel, which are further expressions of Enchi's taste for Edo fiction. We have already looked at the scenes in which Yukitomo is wounded and Suga's bleeding hemorrhoids leave a red trail behind her. Less vivid, but equally striking is a scene in which the madly jealous Tomo feels "as though her very flesh and blood were being devoured by maggots" (35). This style, which brings out Tomo's masochistic life force in a confined frame, sustains Enchi's theme of an "oppressed" woman who is to be feared.

On the other hand, another dominant aesthetic characteristic of Enchi's writing, which I will call "declining beauty" is found in Tomo, in the novel as a whole, and also not surprisingly in *The Tale of Genji*. When Miya, who once had a soft plump body, is on her deathbed, she looks youthful and attractive again because her face is emaciated from tuberculosis. Tomo too looks somewhat lively on her deathbed with her eyes alive and shining with excitement. And Kayo, who loses the peachy
fullness in her cheeks after she gives birth, has the weariness about her eyes which "[gives] her girlish body a new womanly appeal and pathos" (183). These descriptions remind us of the evanescent Murasaki in *Genji*, whose death is approaching, and of the fragile appearance of the pregnant Akashi Lady. Thus Enchi's appreciation for the beauty of the grotesque and of decline appears in her style.

In order to better understand Enchi's thematic concerns, it may be helpful to consider her reasons for writing a novel like *The Waiting Years*. Most significant is the historical context of the work. This novel was originally published in seven parts over an eight year period from 1949 to 1957. The author has said that during the war she started to think about the plot of a story based upon her grandmother's real experience, but in actuality she did not begin to write until after the war. The new Japanese constitution which guaranteed citizens' universal freedom and equality had already been promulgated, and the patriarchal family system based upon Confucian ethics was disbanded after the war. Women were set free from the ties of the "family." The lively and free atmosphere of the new age may have been one of the conditions for the birth of this work, for in such an atmosphere Enchi was able to distance herself from and thus write analytically about the confrontation between women and the patriarchal family system which had subjugated them in the previous era. It was not until the new age that Enchi began to write about women of the previous age beginning to become aware of themselves and growing as human beings.

On the other hand, the fact that she already had an idea for this story during the war, when nobody knew what kind of society might develop next, indicates that she wanted to write about the essence of "women" in general as opposed to women of a particular age. Indeed, Tomo is governed by a formulated historical morality, but also has free will, in other
words, a real self which any human being of any age might possess. Her own strong will makes her accept and endure her ruthless fate. Strictly speaking, her will has nothing to do with any age. The Waiting Years does not deal only with the tragedy of a woman who has been passively suppressed by the feudalistic system. This is why the work can be said to deal with universal themes which transcend time or historical context.

What Enchi seems to be suggesting is that excessively repressive regimes are dangerous because they produce a frustrated, irrational urge for release. Moreover, Enchi seems to harbor a certain deep-seated distrust for "freedom" and "equality" as uncertain and vain ideals. I am of this opinion because Enchi sets the novel between the early Meiji period (around 1885) which was the last vigorous year of the civil rights movement and the mid-Taishō (around 1920). Though immature, the civil rights movement demanded universal rights of freedom and equality in its fight against the government. However, it unfortunately lacked any proper perspective on the social status of women. In fact, Tomo's life becomes even worse after Yukitomo's retirement, which symbolizes the end of feudalistic ideas and institutions. As history has proven, the establishment of the parliamentary system demanded by civil rights activists does not lead necessarily to an expansion of other civil rights.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that Enchi did have expectations of the postwar era because in writing this novel, she attempts to clear up all the resentments, grudges and sorrow experienced by women of the past in order to welcome in the new age. Isoda Kōichi calls The Waiting Years a requiem for the dead Utopian "family" (188). Having finished this requiem in The Waiting Years, Enchi goes on in her later works to focus on women with strong selves who are neither loved by men nor conditioned by any particular age.

Finally, let us examine the author's personal situation at the time
of writing in order to further elucidate her reasons for creating such a novel. As detailed in the Introduction, the war years and those following the war brought Enchi misfortune in her health, financial situation and career. She suffered from uterine cancer as well as from financial burdens. She experienced writer's block and had no choice but to write only light stories for girls. However, she did not give up, but like Tomo, pressed on with her literary ambitions. In fact, it is not difficult to see the author speaking through Tomo as she struggles up the slope: "I must not despair, I must walk on . . ." (Onnazaka 115). Enchi herself has said that the spirits of the Meiji women incited her to take up her pen and tell their story (Uso makoto shichijyonen 112-113). However, there is little doubt that it was Enchi's vitality and love of writing which not only sustained her to write The Waiting Years, but also gave this work its powerful life force.

With this novel Enchi firmly established herself as a writer. She also created a model of a female type who, feared by men, expresses her hidden, real self, in the form of a spirit force. We will observe how this type of woman develops in analyzing Enchi's later works.
Before analyzing Tale of the Mediums (Namamiko monogatari なまみこ物語, 1959-1965) in this chapter, it is important to look briefly at Masks (Ounnamen 女面, 1958), an essential key in any examination of Enchi's female characters. The model of the woman to be feared by men, first presented in Tomo of The Waiting Years, is further developed in the character of Toganō Mieko, the protagonist of Masks. Although Tomo possessed a spirit force, which for Enchi is an essential quality of femininity, that force was weak, with the result that her eroticism, deeply tied to this spirit force, was barely developed. However, in Mieko we see the complete unity of spirit force and Eros, in other words, the fully realized female. Mieko's basic character is described in the article, "An Account of the Shrine in the Fields" ("Nonomiyaki" 野々宮記) which, as mentioned in the Introduction, is Enchi's view of the Rokujō lady as conveyed through Mieko. This heroine is indisputably identified as a contemporary reincarnation of the Rokujō lady, inheriting her predecessor's spiritual force from "a stream of blood flowing on and on, unbroken, from generation to generation" (57). As such, Mieko, a woman feared by men, is also a spiritual woman who realizes her hidden, real desires by using her spirit force. In order to express her real self, she manipulates the people around her as if she is taking spiritual possession of them. She does not command them in an explicit way. Compared with Tomo, who only subconsciously possesses Rokujō characteristics, Mieko embodies the Rokujō lady in a much more pronounced way.

Since Tomo's spirit force was rather weak, her way of expressing her repressed self was relatively indirect and still underdeveloped. Her revenge was on the whole ineffectual and incomplete in the sense that from
it she did not gain anything tangible which could make her happy. Above all, she was a moralist. In contrast, Mieko's method of self-expression brings about the results she desires. The revenge Mieko takes against her husband is not incomplete and abstract, but more satisfactory, concrete and threatening. She does not feel guilty about her immoral conduct. In comparison with Tomo, Mieko possesses a more enigmatic spirit nature, and her mysteriousness and the impression she gives of "even greater obscurity and elusiveness" (91) are what make her attractive and erotic. The enigmatic cloak in which she wraps herself hides her emotions so well that it is as if she were wearing a Noh mask, as the title suggests. Behind this "erotic" cloak lurks her evil intrigue, which she carries out according to plan.

Mieko's revenge takes an interesting form. "A woman's love is quick to turn into a passion for revenge—an obsession that becomes an endless river of blood flowing on from generation to generation" (127). In order to avenge herself on her dead husband who betrayed and tormented her by having a mistress when they were young, Mieko supplants his lineage with children who are not theirs, but rather the children of Mieko and her lover. Their children are the twins, the retarded daughter, Harume, and Yasuko's dead husband, Akio. Mieko tries to transmit her bloodline to further generations. She has her daughter-in-law, Yasuko, seduce the infatuated Ibuki who, in his euphoria, does not notice that Yasuko switches places with Harume a few times while they are in bed. Harume eventually becomes pregnant and gives birth to a baby. Although Harume loses her life in childbirth, Mieko gains a grandchild who is the living symbol of her love and revenge. Thus her plot is carried out.

Commenting on Mieko's revenge, Ogasawara Yoshiko argues that any triumph of the maternal over the paternal line is relevant only in the context of the patriarchal family system (60). Since this system had
already been abolished by the time Masks was written, Ogasawara seems to deny the validity of Mieko's victory, claiming that it has come too late. Nevertheless, Mieko is not a figure of any particular age, for her character is described as that of a spiritual woman who does not possess the psychology of a realistic person living in the modern world. It seems that the author's intention is to create a woman unbounded by time, by dissolving the distinctions between the modern and ancient worlds. Moreover, the women characters, with Mieko at the center, are too dominant to argue any kind of male predominance in this work. In addition, there is the author's discussion about the revenge of women in The Wounded Wing (Kizu aru tsubasa 傷ある翼, 1960), which indicates that Mieko's revenge does have some universality:

It is only the mother who can be certain that the child she bears is her own; the father, who has no way of positively identifying his offspring, can only take his wife's word. In this sense, the most ruthless revenge a woman can take against her husband is to make love to another man. . . . Her revenge fully takes on its evil implications when her husband holds the other man's child, believing it to be his own. (223) (translation mine)

Therefore, it cannot be denied that Mieko has gained a kind of victory, even if it is dark, gloomy and classically passive-aggressive.

Thus the theme of revenge dealt with in The Waiting Years and other stories such as the short story, "Enchantress" ("Y6 妖, 1956), is fully developed in this work. Enchi creates in Masks a mysterious and fearful woman, who possesses clearer characteristics of the spirit type, of whom Tomo was an embryo. Most significant is that Enchi clarifies the meaning of the Rokujō lady in this work. Moreover, in Masks Enchi firmly establishes her own literary world based on a knowledge of and inclination toward the Japanese classics. It is obvious that both the characters and the plot of Masks are influenced by The Tale of Genji and Edo fiction. For example, Yasuko's switching places with Harume reminds us of a similar
situation involving Utsusemi and her sister in Genji. Mieko is a reincarnation of the Rokujo lady, but she is also associated with Genji's affair with Fujitsubo, for both women bear their lover's children, a secret known only to their faithful old servants (Yoshida, Gendai bungaku to koten 291). In addition, the Edo taste for the grotesque is evident throughout the story. For example, "Harume as she was now, with a child's mind and woman's body, was as unsettling a sight as a face without a nose or a hand without fingers" (74) so that she becomes like a wild animal during her monthly period and "[o]nce Yasuko [has] been the victim, receiving a bite on her little finger so savage that it [has] drawn blood" (72). Another example is Yasuko's dream of her husband who died accidentally in the deep snow on a mountain. In this dream, while looking for his body by thrusting a rod down into the snow, she "stab[s] Akio with the rod: [she] stab[s] his dead face straight in the eyes" (63). Enchi had already written a short story "Love in Two Lives: The Remnant" ("Nisei no en: shui" 二世の縁 抱遺, 1957), in which she presented her modern translation of "Love in Two Lives" ("Nisei no en" 二世の縁) in Tales of Spring Rain (Harusame monogatari 春雨物語, 1808?) by Ueda Akinari (1734-1809), and used this Edo fiction outright as a base to create her literary world. Enchi wrote also The Orange Blossoms (Hanachirusato 花散里, 1957), which is considered an apparent variation of Genji. Therefore, Masks is along the same lines as these works. Although the presence of the classics in this work is not as explicit, we can see clearly the traits of both Genji and Edo fiction in this work and Enchi's method of drawing upon these classics.

From the above-mentioned discussion, although some commentators criticize Masks on such points as its unnaturally complicated plot, the hackneyed dialogue of its male characters and the characters' lack of realistic psychological depth, there is no doubt that this work is a very
important step in Enchi's literary career.

At this point one question arises: where does Enchi, who treats the revenge theme fully in *Masks*, go next? In order to answer this question, the last scene of *Masks* may be suggestive:

The crying of the baby [Harume and Ibuki's] filled her ears. In that moment the masks dropped from her [Mieko's] grasp as if struck by an invisible hand. In a trance she reached out and covered the face on the mask with her hand, while her right arm, as if suddenly paralyzed, hung frozen, immobile, in space. (141)

Mieko's attempt to cover the mask with one hand suggests that she is trying to cover up the evil she has done, for the mask knows everything in her mind. Her right arm hanging in space seems to symbolize her state of lethargy. And these actions are brought about by the crying of the baby, a symbol of life. All this points to Mieko's empty feeling, and it can be identified with the author's. Perhaps in the end Enchi felt that she had reached a dead-end in her treatment of the theme of female revenge.

That this assumption may be correct is suggested by the fact that in her next work, *Tale of the Mediums*, Enchi drastically alters her course. This work is a historical fiction about a noble lady's tragic life in a court of Heian Japan (794-1191). It is unique among Enchi's works, for it deals with an ideal love, and its protagonist is a "perfect" woman as the object of man's eternal love. We do not see in the heroine's character any of the jealousy, resentment or revenge typical of a woman obsessed with an evil karma or obsession, which previously had been Enchi's main concern. By exploring the unexpressed self of a woman feared by men, Enchi discovered that a spirit force united with Eros was an essentially feminine quality. What the author considers as an essential element of femininity in a woman who is loved by men will be clear from an analysis of *Tale of the Mediums*. For the purpose of this analysis, it may be helpful first to present a synopsis of the story and its historical
Tale of the Mediums opens with the marriage of Teishi (975-1000), the daughter of Fujiwara Michitaka (953-995), to Emperor Ichijō (980-1011). At that time, Teishi is a beautiful, bright sixteen-year-old, five years older than the emperor. Following his death, the Regent Kaneie (929-990) is succeeded by his eldest son, Michitaka, under whose rule the family reaches its peak of prosperity. The power structure in tenth-and eleventh-century Japan was such that, while retaining the formal dignity of the emperor's position, the Regents created a system under which power was held exclusively by the Fujiwara family. In fact, "the establishment of Fujiwara power was brought about through intermarriage with the Imperial family until it was almost impossible to distinguish between the two . . . ." (Katō, A History of Japanese Literature—The First Thousand Years 141). The firm tie between the two families created stability in the Fujiwara monopoly.

However, even among the Fujiwara clan, power struggles were natural. Michitaka's youngest brother, Michinaga (966-1027), a great and ambitious politician, secretly aims for power. Michinaga believes that he has to seize power before Empress Teishi gives birth to a Crown Prince and Michitaka's family line secures the position of Regent. Since the Regent secured power through a maternal relation to the emperor, a marriage making possible the birth of a Crown Prince was a very important political issue within the Fujiwara clan. Michinaga perceives that the biggest obstacle to his ambition will be the strong tie between the emperor and the empress. He plots to destroy their relationship and have his daughter, Shōshi (988-1074), marry Emperor Ichijō. Although Shōshi is still too young to marry, Michinaga tries to cultivate and refine her on the model of Teishi to attract the emperor. In order to spy on Teishi, Michinaga sends the unsuspecting Kureha to serve as her attendant.
After Michitaka's premature young death, Michinaga easily obtains power with the cooperation of the emperor's mother. Employing various strategies one after another, he succeeds in ruining Teishi's brothers' chances to regain power. Nevertheless, after Teishi's family starts to decline, her intelligence and graceful beauty shine all the more brilliantly in the dark uneasiness surrounding her, so that Emperor Ichijō, as a mature man, comes to love her even more deeply. Although Teishi gives birth to a princess and the first prince, who could have been a Crown Prince if Michitaka's family had been in power, it is already too late for her family to restore its past prosperity. Around the time Teishi gave birth to the prince, Shōshi, the twelve-year-old, enters the court as the emperor's second empress. However, because the emperor continues to favor Teishi above all the other court ladies, Michinaga is again forced to resort to manipulating two sisters, Ayame and Kureha, as false spiritual mediums, to tear Ichijō and Teishi apart for good. Kureha, who admires her mistress, Teishi, at first becomes furious to realize that she is being used for political ends. However, later she attempts to betray Teishi because of an intense jealousy when her own lover, Yukikuni, who is an officer of the metropolitan police, falls hopelessly in love with Teishi. Despite all his cautious plots, Michinaga is never able to ruin the emperor and empress' relationship, which finally comes to an end only at the time of Teishi's death after the delivery of her third child. She dies young but peacefully, wrapped in the love of Ichijō.

From the above summary, it is clear that the aristocratic beauty, Teishi, leads an evanescent and unfortunate life, and yet one which is full of love. In order to understand her more fully, it is helpful to look at three elements of her character: her beauty, her intelligence, and her method of expressing her real self.
Teishi is flawlessly elegant and beautiful, as well as bright and wise, from the beginning to the end. For example:

As for waka poetry, calligraphy, koto or biwa, she is so talented at whatever she does that even men who excel in these arts cannot outshine her. Needless to say, neither is she a show off, but rather looks indescribably elegant and graceful as if the first cherry blossoms of the year give off the scent of plum blossoms.

... [H]er face, hands, neck and feet, every part of her is slender, smooth and gentle. Her appearance is inexplicably beautiful. The supple movements of her body, like the branches of a willow, capture painfully the heart of the young emperor.

While she suffers from the tragic decline of her family, she remains a modest and dignified empress, supported by the love of Ichijō. Or rather, misfortune causes her to polish her generosity and femininity even further. This flawless figure reminds us of Fujitsubo or Murasaki in Genji. Indeed Enchi's descriptions of Teishi are often like the descriptions of Fujitsubo or Murasaki. For example, both Teishi and Fujitsubo, who is Genji's mother-in-law and eternal love, are so "beloved and pretty or lovely" or natsukashū, rōtageni (なつかし、らうたげに) that as for the former, "it is reasonable that Emperor Ichijō makes light of any of the other ladies" (135), and as for the latter, "there [is] no one else quite like her" (Murasaki Shikibu vol. 1 212-213, trans. Seidensticker 98). The depictions of the emperor's boundless affection for Fujitsubo is also similar to the Emperor Ichijō's love for Teishi. Murasaki, Genji's beloved consort, is also a flawless beauty, and an archetype to be loved by men. Besides this, Ichijō's worry and grief over Teishi's sickness and death is exactly overlaid with Genji's worry and sorrow over Murasaki's sickness and death. Fujitsubo or Murasaki, archetypes of women eternally loved by men, is applied to Teishi in a direct way. By using such a technique to create Teishi, Enchi probably expected readers to associate Teishi with Fujitsubo or Murasaki. In this
sense, Teishi's figure lacks reality as a living person.

Unlike Fujitsubo and Murasaki, however, Teishi is not from a first ranking family so that she has an opportunity to acquire an unusual education in the fairly free atmosphere of her family; she learns Japanized Chinese called Kambun, which was considered essential only for men in those days. With this exceptional education, she becomes a mistress of the modern and bright salon where her talented brothers, Korechika and Takaie, and a lady-in-waiting, Sei Shônagon (965?-?), who described the glory of the empress in The Pillow Book of Sei Shônagon (Makura no sôshi 枕草子, 1002?), gather to exchange witty and sophisticated conversation. This free atmosphere is very attractive to the young Emperor Ichijô, though his mother and her side of the family criticize this as a "too modern" "lack of sublime dignity" (132).

Since Teishi possesses such aesthetic charm, though she is but a non-political empress who trusts only in the love of the emperor, the Michinaga faction, including the emperor's mother, is afraid that she may manipulate the emperor in order to restore her family to power. Toward the end, Michinaga's plot, in which Kureha is to impersonate the living ghost of Teishi and utter evil words of reproach to Shôshi and Ichijô, comes to failure. Teishi's true living spirit, instead of Kureha's false one, takes over in Kureha to clear up the apprehension and any doubt in Emperor Ichijô's mind. At this point, Teishi, who has seemed to accept passively her tragic destiny, expresses her hidden, real self:

"I beg you to listen to what I am saying. I love you, my lord, but not having seen Fujitsubo's [Shôshi's] face until today, I was not able to visit you. None of the spirits that has visited you claiming to be mine are real. This is the first time that I have wandered in this place and I shall never return. My lord, I am thinking lovingly of you from morning till night, but I have never even dreamed of cursing the young Empress Fujitsubo. No matter how much she prospers, I live submerged in a private bliss unknown to others. I feel secure in believing that you understand this. Please, do not fret about me...." (204-205)
Teishi's true character and values are clarified here. It is not hatred and a sense of competition against Michinaga and Shôshi, but her earnest love for the emperor that gives her spirit the ability to leave her body. Love, instead of an evil attachment, releases her real self from social suppression.

Indeed, Teishi is a woman full of love. She is a woman to be eternally loved by men, a woman who has a "source of charm that draws out the soul of every single man at first glance" (173). However, she possesses the same strong self as do those women who are to be feared by men. Her real self is intense enough to lead to a victory "the female principle" (Etô, "Kaisetsu" in Enchi Fumiko shû 414), which is composed of the "Eros and love" Teishi represents, over "the male principle," which symbolizes the "power" Michinaga has gained. Yukikuni's whisper confirms this: "She [Teishi] alone [is] strong enough not to be woven into the fabric of the Regent Michinaga's politics" (211). Thus she certainly conveys her intention to the man she loves through spirit communication. She is also a spiritual woman, but not the same as Tomo in The Waiting Years and Mieko in Masks. In Teishi, Enchi creates a new type of spiritual woman. She does not suffer from a conflict between her natural and her social selves. Her self is not torn in half. She realizes her self with satisfaction. The woman Enchi creates here is a complex and aesthetic combination of spirit force and Eros which is one characteristic of the spiritual medium. Thus Enchi discovers such a fusion in a woman to be loved by men as well as a woman to be feared by men. In other words, the fusion of spirit force and Eros can be said to be the essential component of femininity in Enchi's thought.

Having examined the character of Teishi, a woman loved by men, and one who possesses her strong self through her spirit force, one might wonder whether this novel describes the type of woman to be feared by men.
Kureha appears to be her mistress' opposite, although her vindictive character is not as powerful as that of many of Enchi's heroines. At the same time, she has the potential to be the type of woman loved by men, as her relationship with Yukikuni indicates. Kureha is not completely feared by men. But she certainly has a vindictive and obsessive personality. First of all, she almost falls in love with her mistress, Teishi, for she conceives "a strong admiration almost like a homosexual love for the extraordinary beauty of her mistress, who is provided with clean elegance and eroticism" (133). Because of her attachment to Teishi, Kureha finds it difficult at first to forgive her sister, Ayame, for using her to drive Teishi into difficulty. However, this strong attachment easily turns into a vindictive jealousy, when Kureha senses that her lover, Yukikuni, is strongly attracted to Teishi. Kureha suffers from complex feelings of admiration, jealousy and resentment toward Teishi, as well as love and hatred for Yukikuni. Like Tomo in The Waiting Years, she is compared to a snake. However, the author describes this snake as "small and white" (180), which gives us an image of weakness and innocence rather than powerful tenacity. As this suggests, her evil attachment is not intense enough to allow her to express her suppressed emotion through spirit activity. Instead, she must resort to physical measures, but, as discussed, her attempt to betray her mistress ends in failure. Despite the failure of her intended betrayal, the author has Kureha commit suicide in the end, as if her actions deserve severe punishment.

Thus Kureha's presence is subordinate to Teishi's. It seems that the world of this novel is pervaded by Teishi's eros and love which cause her presence to be so dominant as to prevent the co-presence of a woman even half feared by men. Although the author states in the introduction that the heroine is a medium, indicating Kureha, she does not make this woman the main protagonist. Considering that in her previous works Enchi gave
the main role to women who possessed an evil obsession and expressed it through their spirit forces, we can observe that the author's way of dealing with vindictive women like Kureha has changed in this novel. It is not the medium, Kureha, but rather Teishi who employs a spirit force to express her inmost self and the love she feels. In this novel, the real self of a woman loved by men is more powerful in its expression than that of the woman feared by men. The author diminishes the value of the Kureha type of woman, probably because Enchi finds less significance in this type after having worked out the theme of revenge in her previous works. However, Kureha's role is also important, because she interferes with Teishi's destiny, and makes her presence all the more outstanding. In addition, it is important that Kureha appears as a spiritual medium. Her mother used to be a medium serving in the noted temple, Kasuga Myōjin, so that Kureha as well as her sister, Ayame, have inherited the spirit force from their mother. *Tale of the Mediums* is the first work in which Enchi deals explicitly with a medium. In her previous works Enchi uses the medium only as a metaphor. As Mishima Yukio notes, after *Masks*, Enchi's theme becomes increasingly clear in *Tale of the Mediums*, and that theme is the union of sensuality and mysteriousness presented through the medium of Japanese classics (396); consequently, Enchi's interest in spirituality, which she believes represents an essential element of femininity, becomes more obvious in this work.

In the above analysis, the function of the female principle in Enchi's work was clarified. However, in order to understand this principle better, one must also examine the male principle in the novel. Michinaga is the symbol of this principle. As discussed, he is a great Machiavellian, but he is described as "a man of character and dignity who also possesses a tenderness which attracts women and children" (210). He also possesses a well-cultured intelligence and a sensitive understanding
of human emotions. These traits are illustrated in a scene in which Michinaga happens to overhear a duet in which the emperor plays the flute and the empress the koto:

Were Michinaga an uncivilized man with no understanding of music, he most likely would have felt no emotion upon hearing them perform. Unfortunately for the royal couple, however, the harmony of their performance clearly bespoke the supreme happiness of their love to the musically accomplished Michinaga, who is skillful at flute and koto. (190-191)

As a result, the more Michinaga realizes the depth of the emperor and empress's love, the more seriously he feels that he has to take further steps to break their tie.

Another scene illustrates his human characteristics equally well. Although in those days the emperor was not allowed to come in contact with the dead because it was thought that he must avoid being contaminated by death, Michinaga secretly takes Emperor Ichijō to see Teishi right after she dies, "holding on his lap the almost unconscious emperor" (208). Michinaga's quick decisions and decisive acts are conspicuous and shining, even in the scene where the emperor, who is expected to play a central role, deeply grieves over Teishi's death. Even though Michinaga's acts might be the expressions of the confidence he feels as a man in power, he looks merciful as well as powerful. He knows the ruthlessness of politics, and he is faithful to its principle. He is not a self-deceptive man, but rather steadily realizes his self in this world. Therefore, though he cannot defeat Teishi, Michinaga, who establishes autocratic power as he plans, may be said to be the winner from the point of view of the male principle.

Such characteristics Michinaga possesses remind us of Genji. It is in fact said that Genji is partly modeled on Michinaga, so that it is not surprising that Enchi creates Michinaga as a Genji type of man. She already created another Genji type, Yukitomo, in The Waiting Years.
Michinaga is a more fully developed figure than the latter. Enchi makes Michinaga's humanity and sensitivity deeper and more attractive than Yukitomo's. Neither of them, however, is criticized by the narrative, no matter what they have done. Michinaga, as well as Yukitomo, is the author's favorite man. Indeed Michinaga in particular is the ideal type of man for Enchi.

This kind of enthusiastic admiration for Michinaga is also given by such writers as Sei Shônagon, Murasaki Shikibu and Akazome Emon (eleventh century), who is said to have written a eulogy on Michinaga in A Tale of Flowering Fortunes (Eiga monogatari, 1030?). Historical fact also makes him shine brilliantly. During the Heian period, Japan was isolated from the Asian mainland so that "the aristocratic ruling class fused elements of foreign and native culture and created an internally coherent, independent, individualistic cultural system" which is called "Heian Court Culture" (Katô, A History of Japanese Literature—The First Thousand Years 139). One of the peaks of Japanese civilization, this culture, which gave birth to The Tale of Genji, saw its own zenith during the glorious days of Michinaga's rule. This man's satisfaction with things is well illustrated by a waka poem he composed in which he described the world in terms of a full moon as seeming to belong to himself alone. Enchi's Michinaga in Tale of the Mediums is described along the same lines as characters depicted in the past.

Nevertheless, this is in fact contrary to Enchi's original intent. Enchi gives us an interesting explanation that the intent of the "original" Tale of the Mediums—supposed to have been written by someone in the past but in fact a fictional work invented also by Enchi—may be similar to Enchi's actual Tale of the Mediums:

It would be my guess that, motivated by both a knowledge of Heian history and some sympathy for the defeated, the author of the original Tale of the Mediums employed actual parts of A Tale of Flowering Fortunes in order to depict its unwritten side.
... [R]ather than being a eulogy on Michinaga's family, the original work takes a completely different direction and attempts to describe the contrast between the despotism of the victor hidden by his prosperity and the misfortune of the defeated who, in their attempts to resist fate, only hasten their decline. (118)

This initial purpose is obviously not accomplished. Despite the intent to illustrate the victor's despotism, Michinaga's image is far from that of a despot even in the scene in which he plays a main role, such as that of the emperor's visit to Teishi's deathbed. Conversely, Michinaga's power and charm appear even more clearly. With the obvious exception of Teishi, the defeated family of Michitaka are not described well enough for the readers to feel sympathy for them. As for Kureha and Yukikuni, who may also be considered defeated, the author does not express their psychologies well enough for them to emerge as main characters. As a result, the structure of this work functions in such a way that the more attractive Michinaga is, the more powerful the male principle is. In the end this makes the victory of the female principle more glorious.

It is quite ironic that Michinaga, the ideal man, and Teishi, the ideal woman, are not ideal partners. Perhaps Enchi's realism did not allow such a combination. The ideal woman's partner is a puppet emperor under Michinaga's control. From a public viewpoint, the marriage of an emperor has but one purpose: procreation of the Imperial line. Although Emperor Ichijō has to entrust this "public" aspect of his life to Michinaga, he does his best not to allow him to control his "private" emotional world with Teishi. However, even this attitude of Ichijō appears to arise not from an independent will, but rather from a fascination with his wife's attractiveness. Although the emperor's fine character and good appearance are described along with his growth, it is his older-sister-like Teishi who leads him into the world of Eros. The fact that Ichijō, who loves to be wrapped with Teishi's long and abundant...
shining hair, which was an important component of beauty in the Heian times, seems to symbolize that he cannot be apart from her beauty and love. Kamei Hideo suggests that in an ideal love between man and woman, one partner's feelings are the same as the other's, and in this work the man's psychology is overtaken by the woman's emotion (144). Her charm and anxiety take possession of him; in their love, female sexual obsession manipulates male action. Therefore, the apprehension and doubt which the Michinaga faction has conceived might be reasonable in this sense. Emperor Ichijō is deprived of his independence by both Michinaga and Teishi. He possesses only a divine dignity and dependent emotions. As far as the male principle goes, Emperor Ichijō is defeated by Michinaga. In other words, he plays only a secondary role to make the victor of this principle, Michinaga, shine more brilliantly.

Finally, one must consider the other three male losers, Teishi's two brothers and Kureha's lover, Yukikuni. Contrary to the purpose of the original work, Enchi only gives Korechika and Takaie supportive roles, not describing their psychologies well enough to give them strong presences in the novel. Indeed, descriptions of these men are nothing more than interpretations based on historical events. For example:

... [H]aving been brought up in a rising family and thus given special status by society, even the bright youth Takaie developed an arrogance which denied him the consideration to calmly allow misfortune to follow its course in such troubled times and protect themselves from their misfortune. (159)

In these descriptions, it is true that the author shows some sympathy and understanding for these characters, following her intent, but she is also critical of them. "Like drowning men sinking deeper" (159), they cause "the Kazan'in incident" and as a result, are deprived of their bureaucratic ranks and relegated to inferior positions in distant provinces. Korechika and Takaie are not nearly as attractively portrayed as Michinaga, and they are defeated. They are also treated as secondary
characters.

If this is true of Korechika and Takaie, then what can be said of the other loser, Yukikuni? Michinaga also seems to manipulate his relationship with Kureha. Upon realizing how Michinaga has used his love for Teishi for political ends, Yukikuni flees to the Eastern provinces where Michinaga and the Fujiwara clan can have no influence over him. Although Kamei Hideo points out that Yukikuni and Kureha's love described in a modern novelistic style is incongruous with that of the emperor and empress in pseudo-Heian writing such as *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*(145), Yukikuni has an important role. He makes Michinaga's presence more dominant as far as the male principle goes. At the same time, he presents the readers with his view of Teishi and Michinaga. In the last scene, for example, the author has Yukikuni say that even if he gains glory in this world, Michinaga cannot overcome death, and that happiness cannot be judged superficially, for the seemingly unfortunate Teishi is blessed with a perfect love while the seemingly fortunate Shōshi unhappily outlives both her husband, Ichijō, and their children.

Through an analysis of the characters, we see that in the world of this novel the female principle—Teishi's love and eros connected with a supernatural power—is dominant over the male principle. In order to express the theme of ideal love, Enchi employs a complicated style and structure. The introduction of this work is full of mystery. The father of "I," Dr. Ueda Kazutoshi is given a great number of books by Dr. Basil Chamberlain. "I" believes that in his library there existed a book entitled *Tale of the Mediums—The Remnant of A Tale of Flowering Fortunes—*(Namamiko monogatari—Eiga monogatari shui—生神子物語 生華物語拾遺) which is supposed to have been written by someone in the past, but "I" does not know where it has gone now. "I" wants to write her own *Tale of the Mediums* based on this original text which is supposed to exist only in
memory. However, there has never existed such an original novel; rather this is a figment invented by Enchi. But this situation does not sound very unnatural, because Dr. Ueda and Dr. Chamberlain and his library actually existed. "I" also says that "... were the original Tale of the Mediums to show up somewhere and be compared with mine, my version would be found to contain many mistakes" (118). As mentioned, the author's purpose in writing the novel is explained in this introduction. With such an explanation, Enchi clearly tries to convince readers of the existence of the original Tale of the Mediums. This cautious tone of voice continues until the end:

... Ayame was speechless before Yukikuni and closed her eyes, and the next morning she joined her group again and went to wander toward Kōzuke.

The original Tale of the Mediums ends with this sentence. Upon investigation I find an error in the dates quoted in the original, for the fourth year of Manju when it claims Michinaga died was actually during the reign of the Goichijō Emperor. However, because of its fictional nature, it is also possible that the author deliberately reversed history as a means of expressing allegory. (214)

Thus, while readers may be a bit suspicious of the presence of the original work, they are led into a double fictitious world. Enchi constructs one work of fiction on top of another fiction. Tale of the Mediums is composed of several parts: excerpts from the assumed original and its modern literal translation and synopsis, quotations from A Tale of Flowering Fortunes and its summary, quotations from The Pillow Book by Sei Shōnagon and its modern literal translation, a summary of The Great Mirror (Okagami 大鏡, eleventh century), and Enchi's interpretations and comments on historical events and characters. As we can see from the above quotation, this is like a patchwork of various styles.

In order to analyze the meaning of such stylistic techniques, one might first consider the reasons Enchi set her story in the past. Writing
about almost surrealistic and ideal love probably requires a setting outside the present. As a writer who had been concerned with woman's evil side, Enchi may have hesitated in portraying an ideal love in a realistic way, by employing the setting of the contemporary world. Needless to say, Enchi's love for Japanese classics also has something to do with this. However, she still desired to present modern readers with an ideal love. To portray an ideal world, she could not set it in the real world, for the "ideal" is opposed to the "real." In addition, Enchi has said that it is difficult for a well-balanced, perfect woman to be the heroine of a novel, referring to Murasaki, who is associated with Teishi (Genjimonogatari shiken 183). So, she needed a totally different setting to create a perfect woman.

The unusual setting of this work is based upon historical events. In general, by employing certain historical events and characters, writers can easily create distance both temporally and spatially while at the same time imparting a sense of reality to what they describe. Enchi takes advantage of this device in her novel, although the historical setting is used only as a means for the author to convey her theme effectively. This method is the opposite of that of Mori Ōgai (1862-1922) who "tries to be as faithful as possible to historical facts and avoids setting a central theme for this purpose," and is rather close to that of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892-1927) who "simply borrows historical background in order to describe a modern theme . . ." (Yoshida, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke 71). This is why Enchi's characters possess an originality apart from history. For example, the figure of Teishi created by Enchi is not pitiful. This characterization contrasts with the image of Teishi created by many historical documents and classics, which depict her and her brothers as the tragic losers in a political struggle. Enchi's Teishi is also different from that of Sei Shōnagon, who focuses only on the glory of the
empress and on her prosperous and admirable life in The Pillow Book of Sei Shônagon. Enchi manages to provide the empress with a sense of reality, describing her and her family's poor situation. Thus Enchi's Teishi is created as an indispensable figure to convey the author's theme. Enchi also writes other historical fictions such as Women's Sash (Onna obi 女帯, 1961-62) and The Account of Princess Sen (Senhime shunjûki 千姫春秋記, 1964-65). Neither of these is faithful to historical fact, although neither is as stylistically complicated as Tale of the Mediums, so that Enchi's general characteristic method of dealing with historical fiction becomes clear.

Why then did Enchi choose the Heian period? Along with her familiarity with the era, we cannot discount her fascination with The Tale of Genji whose author, Murasaki Shikibu, partially modelled Genji on Michinaga and actually served Teishi's rival, Shoshi Empress, as lady-in-waiting. Further, the period of Japanese history when Murasaki Shikibu wrote this novel might have reminded Enchi of the prosperity of Michinaga's time, for Japan by then had recovered from the damage caused by the war and started to acquire even greater prosperity than before the war. The Heian court described in The Tale of Genji is an elegant and sophisticated world, and it seems to be a fantasy world to Enchi. In order to describe an ideal love, the Heian court must have seemed an ideal situation for her. Moreover, even if we do not consider the matter of the theme, Enchi also might have desired to write a Heian court-like literary work. It is not difficult to imagine that Enchi would have wanted to employ Heian literature as a base at this time, after she had written "Love in Two Lives: The Remnant" based upon an Edo fiction. Of equal importance is also the fact that the spiritual medium's trade reached the height of its prosperity and started to sink to mere prostitution during the Heian period (Nakayama 492). In fact, during the Heian period people
tended to be superstitious and took the threat of revengeful spirits quite seriously. This tendency was particularly strong during the years that the Regency system was gradually being established (Naoe 75-77). Fascinated by such things, Enchi must have been keen to write a novel set in a period during which spiritual mediums played an active and important role in the life of the Court. In Masks, she discusses the practical functions of such mediums in the Heian era:

... [C]ases of human manipulation involving mediumistic acts—cases, in other words, in which spirit possession took place to serve some strategic purpose—must have been quite common. ... [I]t would have been quite possible to bribe one of them to say whatever one liked, making her into a false medium of, if you will, a demagogue. (77)

As this quotation suggests, Enchi concretely develops this plot in Tale of the Mediums, for Ayame and Kureha are manipulated by Michinaga. There is another explanation about the medium in Masks:

Shamanesses do tend to go from being strictly mediums into being prostitutes as well. The state of inspiration itself is intensely physical, heightening a person's sensuality to the furthest degree (unlike intellectual labor, which diminishes sexuality), so that the body of a medium in a trance comes to seem the very incarnation of sex. (77)

A similar explanation exists in Tale of the Mediums (126). Thus, the significance of the medium in Enchi's works is more clearly confirmed in this work than in any previous one.

Finally, let us consider her purpose in basing Tale of the Mediums upon a patchwork-like combination of a non-existent original and several actual works of the past, and her own interpretations and comments, rather than simply creating her own story. This method allows her to interrupt temporal and spatial flow as she desires in order to further stimulate the readers' imagination, so that she can avoid the incessant, overly detailed realism common in certain works of historical fiction (Takenishi, "Namamiko monogatari ron" 167). For example, we come across the following
scene in which Michinaga's mistress, Shōshō, reports to him what she has learned of the emperor and the empress' sex life through Kureha:

"... but Koben [Kureha] must have been too embarrassed to talk about it."

"No, actually not. At first only a vague smile hung about her lips, but before long she suddenly burst out talking in a clear tone." (134)

Although from the viewpoint of the flow of the story, it would be natural for this conversation to continue and the readers to learn along with Michinaga the details and then to observe his reactions, the author decides to end the discussion here and resume it in a different style:

At this point the original Tale of the Mediums suddenly changes tone, avoiding any direct mention of Ichijō and Teishi's sex life. Koben's [Kureha's] report is replaced by a detailed discussion on such topics as the facts that the aristocracy married early in those days and that young men were initiated into sex by older woman.

Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Michinaga gleaned a lot about the royal couple's sexual activity through this explanation. He was particularly thrilled and satisfied with the knowledge that when in bed Teishi's voice, generally subdued and quiet like water hidden by the grasses, became animated and merry like a nightingale quivering with all its might. (135)

Thus the author interrupts the flow of the story with her own comments and interpretations. This stylistic technique of clearcut transfer not only allows readers to participate in the creation of the author's fictional world, but is also more imaginative, romantic and erotic than any direct explanation would be. Particularly in the above scene, the description which focuses on only Teishi's voice stimulates readers' imagination more effectively, so that this scene becomes more erotic and sensual. Moreover, since the narrative is not omniscient, this patchwork-like style is also appropriate in dealing with Michinaga's intrigue, making it more mysterious. Furthermore, the interpretations and analysis of the historical facts, which Enchi seems to have seen from an objective point of view, give this fiction more reality than its supposed linear story.

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Thus Enchi's devices are cautiously established to the extent that they might look a bit too complicated and artificial, leading the readers to the world of Heian Kyōto.

Such a shift and transfer of styles reminds one of the "discordant aesthetics" seen in The Waiting Years, in which easy colloquial words and expressions are integrated with sophisticated formal speech. However, in Tale of the Mediums we find few such words or expressions. Enchi avoids using straightforward expressions to describe Teishi in bed, and similarly, in the following scene, in which Ichijō and Teishi are reunited after one and a half year's separation brought about by her brothers' relegation to lower positions, the language is subdued:

... [A]s he gazed upon Teishi's face shining in the candlelight, the emperor's breast was all at once flooded with thoughts of the past and present, his sensibility and reasons faded away like light snow. Teishi's skin which shone like white silk was so smooth that she seemed to slip through his tight embrace. Wrapping himself around her, he spent all the night disheveled and in tears. (179)

This scene could be more dramatic, but Enchi's careful word selection is still as controlled and elegant as ever. Quite often in her other works Enchi uses explicit language to express the eroticism, whereas in Tale of the Mediums she achieves the same end perhaps in more effectively subtle and shaded language. Her language, combined with her shifting stylistic technique, provides the readers with more room to imagine the erotic. This kind of language is suitable to express Teishi's love and eros. Just as Teishi is elegant, sophisticated, dignified, but not suppressed, so it is with the style.

Given Enchi's well-known reputation for audacious and straightforward expressions in describing sexual scenes, this work is rather exceptional. In order to clarify this, it may be helpful to present some comparative examples. We find the following description in "Love in Two Lives: The Remnant":

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... [U]nder his masculine chest, I writhed and panted like a puppy, and I was soon withered and paralyzed with the pleasure of sensuality as if my body and heart were fading away. These sensations returned to my body, were not mere memories. My womb sounded audibly. (340) (translation mine)

Or in The Mysterious Tale of Deer Island (Shishijima Kidan 鹿島綺譚, 1963) we come across the following description of one woman's surprise as she watched another woman swimming in the sea:

Eiko's breasts were pushed up by the sea water which shrunk their fleshy swell while the sunken navel formed a charming little dimple on her wave-washed abdomen. Among the soft, gentle hairs of a reddish hue that swayed like seaweed below, lips, reminiscent of the meat of a beautiful shellfish, loosened and closed with the strong movement of her thighs. ... (370) (translation mine)

This passage caused a sensation when the work was published. We find no such explicitly sexual descriptions in Tale of the Mediums. Thus, while the author does not employ her characteristic language, she succeeds in expressing a subtle and yet more effective eroticism in Tale of the Mediums.

This eroticism is related to the "declining" beauty which we saw in The Waiting Years. For example:

Because of years of pain and grief, and because of the fatigue of giving birth to the two children, she [Teishi] was emaciated and sometimes looked evanescent to the extent that she was empty inside of layers of kimono and her abundant dark hair. However, a noble clarity which no one could take from her mercifully remained in the incomparable beauty of her white and transparent heart, like the reflection of the moon on the snow during a harsh winter. (185)

There are several similar descriptions of Teishi, who becomes prettier and more delicate as she grows thinner and thinner. The mere fact that Enchi chooses to deal with a fragile heroine like Teishi clearly shows her taste for the concept of "decline." Even Teishi's rival, Shôshi, is described in terms of decline when she is sick and afflicted by an evil spirit. The emperor who visits her, gazes in sorrow upon the "face which has become
thinner and smaller" (203).

Another stylistic tendency often found in Enchi's works, her taste for Edo-fiction grotesque and brutality, is not as dominant in Tale of the Mediums as it is in The Waiting Years and in Masks, for Teishi's straightforward, flawless beauty is conspicuous throughout the novel, and the elegant, refined Heian court is in general incompatible with the grotesque and brutality. However, we can find a few descriptions expressing a kind of grotesque, as in the scene following the big fire in Teishi's place when Kureha appears before Yukikuni, who unconsciously left her crying for help in the conflagration: "He [finds] Koben[Kureha], the left shoulder of her kimono burned brown and the hair disheveled as though she were a ghost, looking quietly down at him like a spider" (174). Another example is found in the description of a possessed woman acting as a medium: "a monk with a vermillion flushed face chanting a sutra in a loud voice as he violently beats with his prayer beads a woman attendant who has gone mad and is violently disarranging her hair" (153). Thus Enchi's aesthetic inclination toward decline is apparently shown, while her taste for Edo fiction grotesque becomes less pronounced in this work. This style, which brings out Teishi's beauty, sustains Enchi's theme of the ideal woman loved by men. Enchi's increasing inclination toward the Genji-like world and her decreasing dependence on Edo-fiction grotesque in her style continues in her later works. The relationship between Genji-type literature and Edo fiction in Enchi's works will be discussed in the analysis of her later works.

In order to understand fully the theme of Tale of the Mediums, it is necessary to look at the position of this novel in Enchi's works. As mentioned earlier, this work is unique for Enchi. The figure of Teishi she creates is an unexpectedly peaceful character for readers who have been familiar with such women as Tomo in The Waiting Years and Mieko in
Masks. In those works Enchi paid attention to the unexpressed inner darkness of women, which may be called her evil karma or obsession. As a means of expressing a woman's repressed self, she is also interested in possessed and spiritual mediums. Upon reading Tale of the Mediums, we find that Enchi's purpose as a writer is not always to write only about the dark side of women, about such emotions as jealousy, revenge, resentment and so on, for needless to say, these are not women's sole attributes. In order to describe the quality of female evil, the author also has to present the bright and good side of women. Such a motif may have existed in Enchi's mind longer, for Enchi herself says later on that "I do not think that women's evil karma or attachment drive a woman forever" (Geppo 13 in vol. 11 of Enchi Fumiko zenshū 4). In addition to this, in Tale of the Mediums Enchi explores a new type of femininity—a woman to be loved by men as opposed to a woman to be feared by men. By writing about this female type, she confirms that the unity of spirit and Eros is the essential feature of femininity in her thought.

However, Enchi apparently was not willing to set the Teishi type of woman up as the heroine in her previous works. Only in Tale of the Mediums is Enchi at last ready to write about this type. It is not difficult to imagine that since Enchi had written only about women to be feared by men, she had already expressed her own hatred or resentment in her works and felt that she had only created a partial, one-sided picture of women. After she had expressed those hateful emotions and her thoughts concerning these and developed more confidence as a writer, she was ready to write about another type of woman and explore the issue of what constituted femininity in a more balanced, rounded way. This confidence may have led her to write Tale of the Mediums, for which she won the Women Writers Prize in 1966.

Additionally, it is important to note that such social issues as
those presented in *The Waiting Years* seem to gradually disappear from the surface of her work while she wrote *Masks* and *Tale of the Mediums*. Though they exist in different settings, both Mieko and Teishi are unbounded by any specific time. They are depicted as examples of essential femininity through Enchi's method of dissolving the modern and old worlds. Enchi's interest gradually goes deeper and deeper into the inner world of women and its revelation, as we will see in the following chapter.
Chapter Three

The protagonists in Enchi's previous works expressed their real selves by using their spirit forces. They were drawn in terms of either revenge or ideal love, as women to be feared by men or women who were loved by men. They possessed what Enchi saw as the essential element of femininity, the unity of the spirit force with Eros. However, in the trilogy, Wandering Souls (Yûkon 遊魂, 1969-70): The Foxes' Glow (Kitsunebi 狐火, 1969); Wandering Souls (Yûkon 遊魂, 1970); The Voice of the Snake (Hebi no koe 蛇の声, 1970), the heroines can be classified according to neither of these two categories. They are neither vengeful women nor loving women, for they are no longer strictly defined in relation to men. While they are involved with men, love and sex, they are women forced to face the realities of aging, death, fear and loneliness. These harsh realities force them to release their hidden selves from the forces of social suppression or from the barrier of their public selves. They search for love and vitality as women and human beings.

In all three books of the trilogy, there is a common character: a female writer of over sixty years old, who "has been strongly attached to writing whether it is good or bad" (261). She leaves home, where she has lived with a daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren for ten years, and finds a separate apartment in order to devote herself to writing. Interestingly this situation parallels Enchi's actual position at the time.

How does Enchi express the true, hidden desires of her female protagonist in this trilogy? Does this protagonist represent Enchi's view of essential femininity? In order to consider these questions, the second work of the trilogy, Wandering Souls is particularly significant, for this work is most explicit in treating the question of what constitutes
"femininity." Enchi chose to name the entire trilogy after this work since she felt that *Wandering Souls* expressed the theme running through all three works (390). However, since the heroine of each story expresses her self in a slightly different manner, it may be helpful first to look at the general narrative of the trilogy, summarizing each story.

The Foxes' Glow opens with the death of three acquaintances of the protagonist, Shio. For Shio, the idea of death is becoming increasingly familiar. She has already reached such an old age that she is not at all affected or excited by a phone call from a stranger, who wants to introduce a man to her. Until now she has always been "waiting to be taken away by a strong wind," and "starving for the danger to be captured by such a swift, strong and unfamiliar thing" (283). But Shio has never been passionate enough to pursue any sort of active course to realize her hidden desires. Even when she was in love with a successful and noted scientist, Hayami, ten years earlier, she as usual did nothing to encourage the relationship. At first she wanted him to marry her daughter, Tomie, but in fact Shio herself was strongly attracted to him, and he to her. In the end, Kengo, a friend of Hayami's, married Tomie, and Hayami went to the United States and married there. After that, Shio developed a strong relationship with Kengo. She trusted and felt close to him, but she also felt that his core was closed off and that he did not let others in easily. These feelings were similar to those that she had had for her father.

However, when Shio receives news of Hayami's return to Japan, it causes disturbances in her inner world. She thinks that "compared with the infinite extent of time and space" (279), a human's life may be only a moment. "Is it necessary to impose a restrained, narrow framework on our lives?" (279) she wonders. "Taking actions as we wish may be proof of the fact that we are alive . . ." (279). One day, Shio's reason becomes
unbalanced. On her wall hangs an ukiyoe [a woodblock print] by Andô Hiroshige (1797-1858), "One Hundred Views of Famous Places in Edo: Gathering of Foxes at the Nettle Tree in Ōji on New Year's Eve" ("Meisho Edo hyakkei: Ōji shōzoku enoki—Ōmisoka no kitsunebi" 名所江戸百景王子装束榎 大晦日の狐火). Suddenly, the white foxes in this print, supplely dancing around the nettle tree like "graceful nude women," "[fall] down on Shio without a sound" (281). Another time, in a three-sided mirror, she sees a vision of herself at seventeen or eighteen, looking at her present self. The older Shio sees her unchanged self in the youthful image. As such, her real self is revealed, with time and space mysteriously conflated.

Around this time, she impulsively buys an expensive sapphire ring when she is out with Kengo one day. As if with Kengo's help, she is trying to confine her desires to the obscure "pale blue" lights of the ring, which represent the evanescent glow before her death. Her visit to a nursery school for orphans, which shows the reality of society, tends to discourage her fantasizing. In the end, she does not see Hayami, and confirms that "a violent thing which is about to blow up is still alive in herself" (295). This "violent thing" does not find an outlet in reality, but it is expressed in an enchanting dream she has one night, in which Shio, Kengo and Hayami are dancing together around the big tree with the erotic white foxes pictured in the painting on her wall.

The last scene of The Foxes' Glow is connected to the first scene of Wandering Souls, in that the second story begins with a morning dream of the heroine, Suō, on the day of the Festival of Aoi. In this dream, Suō hears the voice of a mysterious woman. The woman appears once in a while, talking to Suō from the "other realm." She represents Suō's real self and realizes Suō's hidden desires. Although Suō cannot control this woman's acts, she appears in a day-dream of Suō's son-in-law, Kingo, whom Suō
loves, and seduces him into a state of erotic ecstasy. This woman also appears to Mikuriya, Suô's former lover, and has an affair with him. Although all this occurs in a dream or an illusion, Suô has the sensation that her soul has left her body, and that her partner Kingo, and perhaps Mikuriya too, experiences an affair with Suô as if it were real. As this story opens on the day of the Aoi Festival, it is clear that behind Suô and the "other woman" there exists the shadow of the Rokujo lady, and that behind Kingo and Mikuriya there is the shadow of Genji. This is indeed the universe of "wandering souls."

The characterization of Suô, her daughter, son-in-law and former lover, as well as their situations, relationships and mutual feelings are similar to those in the first work. However, while the heroine trusts her son-in-law in The Foxes' Glow, the heroine in Wandering Souls loves him. Suô is aware of her love for Kingo, although this feeling does not cause any confrontation with her daughter. Perhaps the shift in the heroines' emotions is related to a slight difference in their methods of self-expression. Even in reality, Suô pursues her desires more actively than does Shio, for Suô agrees to meet her former lover, whereas Shio does not. In The Foxes' Glow the hidden self of the heroine is not allowed a substantial form through which to express itself, whereas in Wandering Souls it is provided with such a vehicle through the "other woman." Her presence is neither concrete nor abstract, but she is a substantial entity to Suô. This woman symbolizes the heroine's intrinsic sexuality and femininity. Thus, Suô's real self is realized in the world of illusion.

How does the protagonist in the third work, The Voice of the Snake, express her real self? The work opens with a scene from a story which Shiga is writing. In the story, an entire family—husband, wife and their two children—are committing suicide; recently the husband caused serious injury to an eighteen-year-old girl in a traffic accident, and the family
cannot raise the money to compensate the victim. After the family's suicide, the victim's mother, who has been leading a quiet life with her daughter, fights with the well-off relatives of the dead family in order to get compensation. However, it is impossible for her to collect any money from the rich relatives. The hopeless mother, who cannot afford medical treatment for her daughter, is driven into a desperate state:

The indignation, resentment, hatred and sorrow in one human body are fiercely writhing and turning into a condensed lump and furthermore into an unusual power. During this transformation, the mother suddenly flings off her elderly woman's clothes. (362)

The mother, who is not even allowed to kill herself, lures a young man into an affair, using an unexpectedly supernatural power, in an effort to overcome despair and death. The young man is "trapped in the spell of the half-possessed, aged woman" (363). In the process, the woman regains the sexuality which she lost over ten years ago.

In The Voice of the Snake, the elderly woman in Shiga's story begins to come alive inside Shiga. The uncanny eros of the elderly woman becomes Shiga's. The "other realm" is realized here, transcending time and space. Unlike the woman in her story, Shiga leads a financially stable life and does not have any significant problems on the surface. Her circumstances seem to be more or less similar to those of the heroines' in the first two works. However, Shiga's inner self is often driven to take action, for she faces the reality of aging and death. The fact that she has recently had a car accident and has been affected with angina casts a shadow in her mind. Her inner self is starved by what the author calls "luxurious poverty": "I do not need anything now. I wonder what will become of this unendurable feeling, which now fills my body and mind" (368). Because of her mental hunger, Shiga becomes aware of her love for her son-in-law.

In The Voice of the Snake, Shiga perceives that a cord, which connected the heroines and their daughters in The Foxes' Glow and
Wandering Souls, is severed. This perception deepens her loneliness. However, Shiga's soul does not leave her body to overtake her lover with a supernatual power. Rather, Shiga is caught up in the fictitious world she creates, with "one half of her heart contracted by the pressure of death, and the other half stirring with the excitement of sexuality" (369). In another story, Shiga deals again with the forced double suicide of an eighty-year-old mother and her sixty-year-old daughter. The daughter is too exhausted in life to support herself and take care of her sick, bedridden mother. In the past, the beautiful mother had had a physical relationship with the husband of her fragile, less attractive daughter. This past continues to haunt them still. The peaceful death mask of the mother is contrasted with the demonic mask of the daughter. Shiga's love for her son-in-law and the broken tie with her daughter are reflected in this plot, and this is how Shiga expresses herself. Through writing about their deaths, Shiga becomes identified with her characters. Writing releases her "wandering soul." Quite often she finds herself in the "other realm," transcending reality. In one instance, she enters the world of a woodblock print on her wall, talking and dancing with the girls in the print, and another time she goes back to the days of her early, happy motherhood, when holding her little daughter in her arms, she looked at the gentle moonlight. Suddenly coming back to reality, however, she finds herself sitting at her desk, alone in the darkness.

As the loneliness grows deeper, the mysteriousness and the illusional forces in the work become more powerful. Indeed, The Voice of the Snake is the most mysterious of all three books in the trilogy. However, no matter how deep Shiga's loneliness is, she can do nothing to combat it in reality. She returns to writing, through which she realizes her hidden, real self, for she is a woman who "has been strongly attached to writing whether it is good or bad" (261).
From the preceding summary, the theme of this trilogy is clear. What compels souls to "wander" is the profound loneliness which is experienced by aging women who confront death. This is different from the evil attachment or the earnest love for a man, which awakened the spirit forces of the heroines in Enchi's previous works. In this trilogy, the utter loneliness of death, which nobody can share, provokes an impulse toward Eros, or life, in women. In order to analyze this theme in detail, it is useful to focus on Wandering Souls.

What kind of woman is the heroine, Suô? Her basic character is displayed in the secret taste she has for kimono. She tends "to avoid making things conspicuous no matter what they are" (306). She prefers high quality, plain-looking and quiet kimono, but her underkimono are bright and colorful—with showy designs and vivid reds and yellows flashing amongst light green-colored leaves. From the outside, all that is visible is the occasional glimpse of light blue showing beneath the outer kimono. The bright undergarments are not to be seen by anyone. Suô's taste clearly represents her own condition, for "although her body is heavy and sinks deeply, her mind functions freely and without limits, remaining young and brilliant" (307). Moreover, "she always needs a person to talk to. The older she becomes, the larger her desire becomes to have a partner" (328). As she realizes, however, "her actual body is too old to alleviate her loneliness and dissatisfaction . . ." (328). As is indicated by a fortune she draws at a shrine, which promises her "small luck," nothing is likely to change the course of her life.

As we have seen, Suô is introverted in nature and has been repressed in her life. She is too timid to take determined action, but she longs for romantic love. Once she has put on the familiar cloak of her public self, she cannot take it off, but in her old age she is deeply aware of the discrepancy between her inner and outer selves. Since she perceives
the deep loneliness inherent in aging and death, the "other woman," who has shut herself up in the depths of Suô's psychology, resurfaces in her consciousness. This constitutes the phenomenon of "wandering souls." In Enchi's previous works, when the heroine's desire to express her real self reached its peak, her soul—her spirit force—was awakened and left her body. In contrast to this, however, Suô's soul is perpetually poised to leave her body, for she is immersed in the loneliness of daily life, and her desire for self-expression is constantly at its peak. This "other woman" shows up once in a while, and when Suô's desire for self-expression is strongest, the spirit force enables the "other woman" to join the man Suô loves so that her eros is united with her spirit force. Like Enchi's other female characters, Suô is a spiritual woman, but while she possesses the essential element of femininity, she is neither a woman to be feared by men, nor a woman to be loved by men, since she no longer confronts men in any real sense. However, as the Aoi Festival in Kyôto in the opening scene suggests, she does share some characteristics with the Rokujô lady.

At this point, it may be helpful to clarify how the Aoi Festival relates to the Rokujô lady. In The Tale of Genji there is a well-known episode in which Genji's paramour, the Rokujô lady, and Genji's wife, Aoi, compete to see the Festival. The Rokujô lady's carriages, which look plain at first glance, compete with Aoi's elegant procession of carriages in order to gain a place from which to watch the Festival. However, because of Aoi's authority, the Rokujô lady's carriages are pushed aside, and she is utterly defeated. The Rokujô lady, who, as a lady of prominence, has high self-esteem, is completely hurt and miserable. From that time on, she continues to hold a grudge, though it is deeply buried in her subconscious. In the end, as a living ghost, her spirit takes leave of her body to attack and finally kill Aoi.

Unlike the Rokujô lady, whose "wandering soul" is born from the

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jealousy she feels toward Genji's wife, Suō's inner self is not troubled by jealousy or resentment, so her soul does not leave her body to take possession of another woman. Suō's spirit comes simply from her strong attachment to life and from her relationships with the men she loves. It is not at all harmful. However, in both women, "the soul of one so lost in sad thoughts [goes] wandering off by itself" (trans. Seidensticker, The Tale of Genji 167). It is against this background that we must understand Suō's visit to the Aoi Festival. She enjoys the traditional festival so much that she is "swallowed up in the aesthetic world which the ancient order created one thousand years ago" (303). She imagines the shining figure of Genji on one of the horses in the procession, thus evoking the fictitious world of Heian Kyōto.

This fusing of space and time, reality and dream prepares us for the appearance of Suō's "other woman." From her snow white body, the woman emits "a flowery brilliance reminiscent of twilight" (320). This description parallels Suō's condition, and corresponds to her declining, but still beautiful image.

The "other woman" appears six times in the story, and a consideration of each appearance will help to clarify her significance in the work. She first appears on the cloudy day of the Aoi Festival in Kyōto, as a voice in Suō's morning dream. She talks about the men, Mikuriya and Kingo, in whom Suō seems to be interested, and also talks of Suō's concern with masochistic themes, such as torture, women slaves, and martyrdom. Suō, she says, likes the men she loves to wear some sort of "a crown"—of social performance, success, fame, or heroism. On the next day of the Festival, it is drizzling. While Suō is walking along the Mitarashi River in the Kami-Gamo Shrine, the "other woman" appears again against the background of the "koto's dull, quiet and uncertain sound that were heard on the Festival yesterday" (315). Suō holds a reddish purple umbrella,
whereas the woman holds a pale purple umbrella. Their faces are invisible in the hazy light. They talk about Suô's way of living, which is described as a kind of stoicism. Suô believes intellectually that "we should not be ashamed to fall in love with a man even if he is our son's age" (316), but she lacks the conviction to realize her ideas through action. Because of this, the "other woman" murmurs to Suô, "May I substitute for you?" (316) During his train journey from Kyôto to Tôkyô, in Atami, Kingo has an erotic dream. Suô appears in his dream as the young woman that she once was, resembling her daughter, Tome. In his dream, he has an affair with her, experiencing it as if it were real. This "Suô" is, in fact, the "other woman." As Suô watches the woman's ecstasy in her fantasy, she experiences every sensation vividly, knowing that the event is actually taking place in the "other realm." The fourth appearance of the "other woman" takes place in Karuizawa. Suô goes out with her friends to see a ruin where foxes live. In the thunder and rain, she hears the quiet, dull sounds of a koto. Suô then hears the woman's voice, and it reports to her that a man, for whom Suô has subconsciously been waiting, has come back from somewhere. On the way back from Karuizawa to Tôkyô, Suô is in the car, with Kingo driving. It is raining heavily. Amid the muffled sounds of the koto, the woman again speaks to Suô. The woman confirms that Suô loves Mikuriya as well as Kingo, and wants to see Mikuriya, who has just come back from the United States with quite a name. Finally, in Tôkyô, Suô's soul wanders off to see Mikuriya, while she is at home and in a state of drunkenness. She is aware that the woman experiences sexual ecstasy with Mikuriya. Although the narrative does not explain how she knows, Suô is certain that Mikuriya also has the sensation that he has been allured into a fantasy in the "other realm" by her soul.

From the preceding, it is clear that this "other woman" undoubtedly
symbolizes Suô's real self. She informs Suô of what Suô wants to know subconsciously, articulates Suô's hidden desires, and acts as a substitute for Suô in the "other realm." However, the woman acts as a separate physical entity from Suô, so Suô cannot control her as she likes. Their relationship is illustrated well in the colors of their umbrellas: "reddish purple" as opposed to "pale purple." Suô often prefers a bluish color or purplish color in her kimono and obi, and she is especially attracted to purple. In Japanese, the name Suô (蘇芳) literally refers to the reddish purple color, which was the favorite color of Heian court ladies. The color suô is also associated with what we call "forbidden colors," deep red and deep purple, which only certain high ranking people of the Heian court were allowed to wear (McCullough, Notes in Tales of Ise 228). Fujitsubo and the Rokujô lady were two women who could wear these forbidden colors. Therefore, Suô's taste for purple can be understood as a reference to those ancient times, suggesting her association with the Heian court ladies. Generally speaking, red symbolizes the life force, and purple, which is a black or bluish red, can be interpreted as a symbol of a "ripened" life force (Tsuruta 233). Because of the contrast between black and red, purple can also symbolize disharmony or conflict. In general this color symbolism applies to Suô. She is a woman of "ripe" age, and her inner world is full of life force, but its only means of expression is through a rather pathological outlet, which causes disharmony between her mind and body. On the other hand, the "other woman" is presented in shades of "pale purple", which suggests the shadow of purple, or, in other words, the shadow of Suô. After this woman appears in Kingo's dream wearing a "greyish purple" kimono, they take a bath together. The color of the bathroom is "lavender," which may also symbolize the "other woman," for the bathroom itself represents the space of Suô's fantasy.
This fantasy transcends both time and space. The woman's appearance is accompanied by the rain and by the sound of the koto. Not including the times when she joins the men, she appears on a cloudy morning which looks like rain, on a drizzling day, on a rainy day during a thunder storm, and during a night of heavy rain. Rain mystifies things, making everything muted and obscure. It gives an illusional and mysterious atmosphere to those scenes in which the woman appears, and functions to announce her presence. The weather is not mentioned when she meets the men, probably because Enchi intended to draw readers into the illusional world without alerting them to the fact that it was all, in fact, a dream. Instead, the narrative flows smoothly, and readers find themselves in a dream world without noticing any shift. This technique also applies to the koto, which was first played in the Aoi Festival, and which also signifies the woman's appearance. By drawing this association between the woman and the koto, Enchi creates the impression that she comes from ancient times, and thus is able to achieve a transcendence of time. The festival itself may be a symbol of a transcendent illusion in the midst of reality. One question remains, and that is why the woman and the sound of koto do not appear at the end of the story, while the rain falls, making a dull and uncertain sound. Perhaps Suō, who met Mikuriya both in her dream and in reality, no longer harbours a desperate longing to see him, and is left with only her lonesome reality.

The places where the "other woman" appears also suggest the transcendence of space. Tōkyō seems to symbolize reality and the outer self to Suō, for Tōkyō is a living and working place for her. In contrast, Kyōto, Karuizawa and the roads to and from Tōkyō symbolize the "other realm," for it is in those places that the "other woman" usually appears. The only exception is her last appearance which occurs in Tōkyō. In general, people can escape from everyday reality, fantasize, and become
revitalized on journeys, so that these places are appropriate locations for the other world. In particular, Kyôto is a tourist city, removed from everyday life, where older traditions still live in the modern world. It is the setting of The Tale of Genji. Karuizawa, too, a famous summer resort, is remote from the stresses of daily life. In Karuizawa, there are many foxes, which are traditionally believed to take possession of people and to turn into beautiful women to bewitch men. Foxes are suggestive of mediumistic elements, as in the first work where they appeared to allure the heroine. It is significant that when the "other woman" meets with Mikuriya, it occurs in Tôkyô. In that meeting, Suô's hidden desires are so strongly felt that even in Tôkyô, the world of reality, her soul can wander off. Here reality and illusion are fused. Just before this scene, the drunken Suô expresses her real self to Kingo in an unusually open way. This also suggests that the division between her inner and her outer selves is dissolved even in reality.

Just as the other woman represents Suô's real self, so it is with her daughter, Tome. Tome, who "cannot be reached by civilization or artificiality" (313), naturally injects into her surroundings a "wild and untamed atmosphere" (313). Kingo loves her primitive character. Despite some trouble at the time of their marriage, Tome and Kingo work well as a couple. Without embarrassment, Tome shows up naked in front of Suô and Kingo, or she reveals to her mother that she has a good sexual relationship with her husband. She does not hide her real emotions, she is not a "shadowy" woman. However, even though Suô has a strong trust in and love for Kingo, Tome does not display any twisted jealousy toward Suô and does not disturb the close relationship between her mother and her husband. She is inherently incapable of any devious emotions or plots. Tome is, in this sense, an open and "natural" woman, and as such is quite opposite to Suô, who exemplifies the repressed, "socialized" woman.
Suô realizes that she is still connected to Tome by "an umbilical cord" (314), so she feels no jealousy toward Tome either. Suô reveals her veiled self only to Kingo, feeling as if "the naked man, Kingo, comes to her through Tome" (314). At the same time, Suô "smiles to see that her unfulfilled desires are awakened and flourishing in her through Tome's physical union with Kingo" (314). This is why Suô once expected that whether they married or not, Tome would have a physical relationship with Mikuriya, for Suô's own desires would be fulfilled through Tome. The fact that in Kingo's day-dream the young Suô, who is a symbol of her real self, looks very much like Tome is suggestive of Suô and her daughter's inseparable relationship. Therefore, Tome is a living symbol of Suô's real self, along with the unrealistic "other woman." Tome, whose psychology is not well described, does not have much reality as a human being, but this is because she represents Suô's hidden, real self—which is an abstract substance. That is, Suô, the "other woman" and Tome become one entity.

The situation in which a mother and daughter are attracted to one man is a favorite of Enchi's, and this situation was, as discussed, dealt with again in the third work of the trilogy. It also occurs in "Two-generation Mistresses" (Aishô nidai 愛妾二代, 1952) and The Genealogy of Love (Aijô no keifu 愛情の系譜, 1960-61) to cite just two examples.

If Tome maintains an untamed naturalness, Yoshie is characterized by an unsophisticated openness, which also seems related to the naturalness within her. She appears twice in the story, in Kyôto and in Karuizawa. She seems to be quite an elderly woman because she already has grandchildren, but her kimono, which she wears loosely, are bright pink, or of gaudy design, in contrast to the more restrained kimono which Suô wears. She has a round, fat face and big, round shoulders. She looks "open and loose everywhere in her body" (304). She loves men openly and
straightforwardly. She is not erotic or mysterious, but rather unsophisticated and even funny. In Yoshie's openness there is something of Tome. Yoshie also has certain points in common with the "other woman" in that her figure does not strike us as real; she appears in Kyōto and Karuizawa, which represent the "other world," and "she seems to be bewitched by a fox" (305). However, she has nothing in common with the repressed character, Suō. This is why when Suō talks to Yoshie, she feels as if she were hearing about "food, clothing and shelter of a certain race in which the manners and customs are different" (305). This difference makes Suō's repressed character all the more conspicuous.

In order to elucidate further the characters of these four women that appear in Wandering Souls, it is helpful to recall the four women in The Waiting Years: Tomo, Suga, Yumi and Miya, each of whom symbolizes one season of the year. It is not difficult to see the similarities between Suō and Tomo; the "other woman" and Suga; Tome and Yumi; and Yoshie and Miya, although the four women of Wandering Souls are not attracted to one man. Suō is old and at the end of her life, and in this sense may be associated with the last season, winter. The "other woman," who is a middle-aged woman ten years younger than Suō and emits the "flowery brilliance reminiscent of twilight" (320), is a woman of autumn. The interdependent relationship of the two women reminds us of that between Tomo and Suga, who are like "two sides of a coin." Just as Suga embodied Tomo's private self, so the "other woman" embodies Suō's. As for Tome, her character is unlike that of Yumi, but her "non-shadowy" character corresponds to summer. Yoshie's character makes Suō think of "drinking sake and the enjoyment of viewing the cherry blossom in a spring field" (307). Yoshie's willingness to provide men with favors and services are reminiscent of Miya, and while Miya is more erotic than Yoshie, both have certain prostitute-like characteristics. Thus, Yoshie is a woman of
Despite these similarities between the four women in *Wandering Souls* and those in *The Waiting Years*, there is a significant difference between the two works. For the women in *Wandering Souls* are far more liberated than in the earlier work. First, the women of *Wandering Souls* possess seasonal images, but it does not follow that they also carry obvious traits of Genji's women as in *The Waiting Years*. The women of *Wandering Souls* are liberated from the apparent, direct influence of Genji's female characters. Moreover, Suō possesses a language to express her real self in the conversation of the "other woman." She is not hampered by any moral system such as Confucianism, so that she is less restricted than Tomo. The "other woman" acts as freely as possible, in contrast to Suga. The freedom of Tome, who cannot be reached by civilization, is much more extensive than that of Yumi, who was finally released from being a concubine. Miya, who appeared free from any formulated morality and remained faithful to her desires, died young, while Yoshie survives into old age. Miya was despised by Tomo, as someone like a female of the cat or dog species, but Suō is not critical of Yoshie, for she thinks that her own character "may be more disagreeable than Yoshie's, which is open and unsophisticated" (307). Thus, in comparison with the women of *The Waiting Years*, those of *Wandering Souls* are relatively free from suppression. Enchi's evaluation of the "natural" woman has also changed. In *The Waiting Years* and *Masks*, Miya and Harume, who bore children, represented the "natural" female, but both died young, which suggests that in the universe created by Enchi such naturalness is impossible. However, by the time Enchi wrote *Wandering Souls*, she had begun to value the naturalness of women, for neither Tome nor Yoshie, who symbolize naturalness, are criticized by the narrative or by Suō. Instead, they are accepted as they are. By dealing with the problems of aging and death, which represent the
most natural of human events, Enchi had apparently come to terms with nature.

Along with an analysis of the women in *Wandering Souls*, it is also significant to consider Enchi's portrayal of men in the work. What kind of man does Suô, aware of aging and death, find attractive? Kingo is a physicist, but his scientific contributions, unlike those of his friend, Mikuriya, attract little attention. However, he pursues his work steadily, as an excellent if obscure scientist. Kingo does not push other people aside to show off his talents, and gives frank opinions, even when this may be materially disadvantageous. He goes his own way and therefore does not feel jealous of Mikuriya's success; rather he respects and values his friend highly. His attitude toward life often irritates Suô and Tome, but Suô cannot help but realize that she respects and loves him. Suô unexpectedly reveals her hidden, real self in his presence, and he seems to understand her. Kingo even helps her to meet Mikuriya. When she becomes drunk because of her nervousness about having talked to Mikuriya on the phone, he also takes care of her, "feeling a strange eroticism" within her; she looks to him like an ageless, "naive little girl" (341). Kingo is a fatherly figure to Suô and is not at all a womanizer. The close relationship between Suô and Kingo does not cause any trouble in the family, because he is deeply in love with Tome's primitive personality, which is essentially compatible with his nature. However, since he and Suô seem unusually close, people are puzzled by their intimacy. For example, Kingo often uses the second person "you" to address Suô, which is highly unusual in Japanese culture, in which the son-in-law would be expected to address her with the more formal "mother." Easily dismissing their uncommon show of intimacy, Kingo says that the family is a "crazy tribe."

The preceding descriptions of Kingo show that he is most certainly...
not a Genji type of male. He represents a type which is another of Enchi's favorites. The Kingo type, usually a serious, sincere scientist or a doctor also appears in *The Awakening of the Autumn* (Aki no mezame 秋のめざめ, 1957-58) and in *I am Passionate, Too* (Watashi mo moeteiru 私も燃えている, 1959).

In contrast to Kingo, Mikuriya is a successful, acclaimed physicist. His contributions are known worldwide. He shines with this worldly fame, which for Suō adds to his attractiveness. Although he is over twenty years younger than she, Mikuriya apparently knew how to handle women very well even ten years ago. And the fact that he found a husband for Tome, whom he might have married himself, indicates his patron-like character. The news of his return to Japan creates instability in Suō's inner self, and her soul joins him in the dream world.

However, in contrast to Suō's high expectation of him, their actual meeting is not particularly animated. "Wearing glasses framed in black," which he did not used to wear, "he looks very small and dark like an Arabic boy" (347). To Suō he looks like a different man, and the word "Arabic" suggests how estranged she feels from him. Mikuriya is "too healthy" (345) for her. His reddish black pipe, which is mentioned often, seems to suggest his "overly healthy" state, for "reddish black" may symbolize an overly matured life force. Suō's feeling of alienation from him is associated with parting, end, loss, and even the death of her love. The "black, dark" color is also suggestive of this, for black often symbolizes death, an association which is strengthened by the fact that the first work of the trilogy starts with a scene of "black mourning." Suō feels "indescribably lost" (349) to see his real figure. However, at the same time, she feels satisfied with the Mikuriya she met in her illusional world. His "reddish black" pipe, which appears both in her illusion and in reality, may indicate that the object of Suō's love lives...
in the "other realm," which is expressed by the "redness," whereas it dies, that is, becomes "black" in the real world. Partly a creation of Suō's imagination, Mikuriya lacks reality, and his psychology is not clearly described. He embodies the traits of Genji, and as such is a living symbol of the kind of man Suō is longing for.

Suō's ideal man is Genji, from the beginning of the story to the end. The first scene started with the Festival of Aoi, in which Suō saw Genji amidst the bright lights of the festival. In the last scene as well, she imagines some brilliant lights, which refer to the image of the "shining" prince, Genji, whose epithet, Hikaru, is written with the character for hikaru (光), meaning "to shine." In this work, the heroine articulates that Genji is her ideal man, though in Enchi's previous works we saw only a trace of Genji in the men that attracted the heroines. Mikuriya is a Genji figure even if a more realistic version of that type, and Kingo is more of a fatherly type. Thus Enchi's lovable men are of two types: one is the Genji type, who is successful, admirable and sexy, and the other is a father figure, who is sincere and trustworthy. Both types are disposed to take care of women physically and emotionally.

Although Suō can be seen as a repressed and introverted woman, she has found an outlet—the other realm—through which she can express her real self and hence, unlike many of Enchi's other protagonists, she cannot be understood as a completely repressed woman. This fact is reflected in the style of the work. The story is told by a third person narrator, but it is often told through the protagonists's point of view. We still find Suō's interior monologues here and there (319, 323 etc.), as was the case with Tomo's monologues in The Waiting Years. Unlike Tomo, however, Suō has conversations with the "other woman." In their dialogues, Suō's psychology is unveiled quite openly. This suggests that the heroine of Wandering Souls is less repressed.
Just as the style reflects the fact that Suō's character has become a little more released, the other characters are also somewhat released from the heroine's power of perception, though Suō's perception does dominate and hence control the other characters whenever the story is told through her point of view. It is worth noticing that in Wandering Souls, Enchi allows Kingo to have his own autonomy or self-awareness once in a while, which is quite different from what occurs in The Waiting Years. In his day-dream, Kingo releases his subconscious desires. Kingo cannot help but admit that "being captured by a strange illusion" (342), once in a while he is sexually attracted to Suō. He views her as an ageless, helpless woman, "her emotions looking very youthful like those of an innocent girl" (342). Thus Kingo has sufficient autonomy to see the heroine.

Such a quality of openness and release is found also in numerous dialogues within the work. In the dialogues, Enchi cannot use the same heavy, intellectual vocabulary that characterizes the narrative, so that their style appears simpler. Her language starts to lose its formality. At the same time, one does not find any straightforward, vulgar expressions in the story, either. Therefore, the "discordant beauty" of Enchi's language is not as explicit as before. Moreover, the shifting of styles which takes place in Tale of the Mediums does not occur, so that there is not the same quality of discord in the style. Although Suō's expressions often continue to be rhetorical, as Kingo points out, what dominates in the work is a relatively plain, easy and colloquial vocabulary. Of her style, Enchi herself says that it "wears heavy make-up" (Okuno 139), but in Wandering Souls, it is as if she begins to take off the heavy make-up, and reveals glimpses of her true face.

Corresponding to this stylistic change is a slight increase in Enchi's descriptions of nature. In general, she does not pay much attention to nature. Her literary world is usually drawn in terms of
other fictions or Kabuki and carries an artificial quality. Perhaps this also has something to do with the influence of the urban environment in which Enchi was born and raised. Even when she describes natural scenes, nature often functions merely as a setting, just as in the theatre. However, in *Wandering Souls*, Enchi describes several natural scenes of Kyōto and Karuizawa. Just as Enchi comes increasingly to accept the "natural" woman, so she pays more attention to nature. The fact that she confines her descriptions of natural scenes only to the fantasy worlds of Kyōto and Karuizawa suggests that nature is functioning as the condition for producing the protagonist's fantasies.

Aging and death both imply a decline in life, and thus we can see Enchi's aesthetic of "declining beauty" in Suō and in the "other woman," who is described as a beauty in "twilight." Suō has about her both a "loneliness and floweriness, and seems like an aged woman who plays with dolls" (327). Although her physical appearance and strength are inevitably declining, her inner world is in flower—she "innocently enjoys beautiful *kimono* or is dreamily in love with someone as if she were in her girlhood days . . ." (328). Suō is often described as "very youthful like an innocent girl" (342), and "as if she has returned to a peevish child" (343). Kingo feels a strange eroticism to see Suō drunk, which "makes her look naive like a little girl" (341). As for the "other woman," her body is described as "supple" (318) and "unresistably soft like a mollusk" (345) when she has sexual encounters with Kingo and Mikuriya in the dream world. As discussed, in Suō's "purple"-colored images we can see the beauty of aging, or what might be called the aesthetic of "declining" beauty.

What, then becomes of the Edo-fiction style characteristic of Enchi's work, in *Wandering Souls*? In a dialogue with the "other woman," Suō says that "people can see suffocation and misery in a suppressed place, but
they are ignorant of the joy and ecstasy which otherwise would not be possible" (302). Suō shows an interest in masochistic ideas such as torture, martyrdom, and women slaves. Moreover, in another scene in which she is with Kingo, Suō brings up the topic of adultery; they say that in the West, "a man who sleeps with someone's wife was killed in bed, but the woman who was with him was left alone in the sea of the blood" (310). On the other hand, "in Japan, a man and a woman were piled up together and cut into four pieces" (310). Suō's concern with masochism or the grotesque can be glimpsed here. In the above scenes, however, it appears only as a topic of conversation. Edo-fiction expressions are not seen in the other scenes. Therefore, one could argue that the force of Edo fiction motifs has weakened in Wandering Souls. This is related to the fact that the forces of repression have also weakened, for Edo fiction or Kabuki, born out of a suppressed feudalistic society, deals primarily with repressed human emotions.

Such a diminishment of the repressive qualities in Enchi's style facilitates the fusion of reality and illusion in Wandering Souls. In order to sustain this fusion, other oppositions also become blurred. First of all, Enchi's two categories of women—the woman to be loved by men and the woman to be feared by men—simply disappear. The fact that the aged woman, Suō, often looks like a cute little girl, suggests that age and youth are not truly distinct. The normal and the abnormal also tend to shade into one another, for while Suō, who Kingo refers to as the boss of a "crazy tribe," may represent the abnormal, she is also leading an ordinary, normal life. In some characters, even the distinction between existence and non-existence is ambiguous. The "other woman" is both existent and non-existent. Mikuriya and Yoshie have little sense of reality; they are half real and half unreal. Moreover, the past and the present are conflated. While Suō watches the Aoi Festival in modern
times, she is absorbed in the ancient times of Heian Japan. She sees the fictitious figure of Genji in the context of modern reality. Kingo and Mikuriya, both committed scientists of the modern world, are the objects of love for Suô, who is at the same time preoccupied by Genji, a fictitious figure from the past. The ancient aesthetics of order displayed in the Aoi Festival is compared to the disorder of the students' political demonstration, which seeks to destroy the formulated order. As for the fusion of space, in the end, Tôkyô, the symbol of reality, becomes the place where reality and illusion are fused, where Suô's wandering soul meets her former lover. The reference to things Western such as the stories of adultery, the apostate Julien, Julien Sorel of Stendhal's The Red and Black (who is compared to Genji), and Gide's Gertrude of The Pastoral Symphony, while they be primarily decorative, might also suggest the fusion of East and West.

Such fusions are strengthened by the structure of the trilogy, for the three sequential stories create a layered, three-tiered progression. Common settings and certain differences among the three works help to produce an illusional world. The technique is different from that employed in another of Enchi's trilogies, What Robs the Vermilion (Ake wo ubaumono 1955-68), in which the growth of the same heroine is described in a linear fashion, following the stages of her life. In Wandering Souls, certain motifs recur: the relationships of the heroine with her family are similar in all three, while the motif of foxes and the scene in which the heroines see themselves in a three-sided mirror occur only in the first and the second. In general, foxes are believed to take possession of people, alluring them into an illusional world. However, in the first work, the foxes are only present in an ukiyoe, whereas in the second, they are living, though they do not actually appear in the scenes. The images reflected in the mirrors represent the heroines' real selves,
and they show changing stages in the lives of women. In the first work the heroine discovered her real self in the image of a seventeen or eighteen-year-old girl. The second heroine at first saw her image in the mirror, fragmenting like the colored pieces inside a kaleidoscope, but in the end what she saw was the wrinkled face of an aged woman. Moreover, the names of the characters in the first and second works correspond closely: the heroine, Shio-Suō; her daughter, Tomie-Tome; and her son-in-law, Kengo-Kingo. Probably because the tie between mother and daughter is severed in the third work, this kind of parallelism does not continue in the third book, except in the case of heroine's name: Shiga. The ukiyoe which Shio sees and the prints on Shiga's walls also tie the first and the third work together. Both artworks, which the artists created late in their lives, function to allure the heroines into the "other realm." But the ukiyoe is by the Edo artist, Andō Hiroshige, whereas the prints in the third are by a modern Japanese artist, Fujita Tsuguharu (1886–1968), who established a new fashion, through synthesizing the style of Japanese painting and that of the Western oil painting.

In the first book, while the fusion of reality and fantasy occurs in time, that is in the past and the present, in the third work fusion also occurs in the dimension of space, between East and the West, for the girls in the prints recite a poem of William Blake in English. In the first work, George Sand and Virginia Wolfe are mentioned, in the second work, Western culture is brought up as a topic of conversation, and in the third the distinction between East and West is further dissolved. Therefore, the fusion of reality and illusion is most fully achieved in the third work, and the lines between the real and the fictional—both because of stylistic and thematic blurring—are most difficult to distinguish. In this way, the trilogy leads progressively to the other realm.

This fusion is sustained most effectively by the conflation of modern
and classical motifs. Enchi acknowledges that "the motif of the Rokujō lady is reflected throughout the trilogy" (Uso makoto shichijūyonen 148).

In Wandering Souls, the other realm grows out of the heroine's perception of the profound existential loneliness inherent in human life and not from the jealousy of a Rokujō-type woman, but still the Rokujō's "wandering soul" is retained in the work.

At this point, it may be useful to discuss the relationship between Enchi's works and the Japanese classical works. It is already well known that Enchi's works are influenced by Edo fiction or Kabuki and The Tale of Genji. As for The Waiting Years and Masks, we can see clear traces of both influences in the characters and plots. In Tale of the Mediums, Edo fiction style was diminished, for this was Enchi's attempt to create a work based on Heian court literature. When it comes to Wandering Souls, as discussed, little remains of Enchi's taste for Edo fiction. On the other hand, the influence of Genji is evident through the story. However, compared with Enchi's previous works, Wandering Souls is influenced by Genji in a different way. While some male characters possess Genji's traits, female characters do not receive obvious, direct influence from the women of Genji. However, the motif of the "wandering off" of the Rokujō lady is retained at the centre of the story. "Wandering off" is a symbol of female liberation from social suppression and the public self. In other words, the liberation of the female real self, which is in fact a realization of the woman's fantasy connected with Eros, is strongly related to The Tale of Genji.

This suggests that while still attracted to Edo fiction, by the late 1960's Enchi was moving away from it, seeking a fantasy and dream, or even salvation in the literary world of The Tale of Genji. Enchi felt familiar with Edo culture both emotionally and temporally, for she was born in the Meiji era and raised in Tōkyō—which was called Edo before the Meiji era.

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She heard various stories of Edo fiction and often watched Kabuki plays. However, Edo fiction, which was born out of the feudalistic suppressed society, dealt with brutal themes such as the grotesque, masochism, decadence, dense sensuality and disorder. In this sense it may be called "unhealthy." Perhaps Enchi, whose sensitivity was rooted in this culture, desired at the same time to overcome its influence. Therefore, she became greatly concerned with The Tale of Genji and its author Murasaki Shikibu, who Enchi sensed possessed a sensitivity similar to her own, including an inclination toward the decadence. For Enchi, The Tale of Genji represented the most ideal work, one which as a writer, she continually tried to equal. That this assumption may be true is suggested by the fact that when Enchi wrote Wandering Souls, she was also translating Genji into modern Japanese; her dedication to this work was so intense that she almost lost her eyesight while working on it.

When Enchi began to write Wandering Souls in 1969, human progress, especially in science and industry, seemed to hold out infinite promise; this was a time when economic growth was expanding rapidly in Japan; the previous year the United States succeeded in landing a rocket on the moon. At the time, "people could have sexual affairs as if they were having tea together" (307). Nevertheless, Enchi's heroine in Wandering Souls believes that even in the modern world, in which new orders may be arising, "that strange woman . . . keeps walking and wandering endlessly, entering into the insides of men and searching for their substantial entities the way only a woman can do" (351). This confirms Enchi's thoughts about the timeless quality of femininity, which in essence she sees as the unity of Eros and spirit.

Enchi said once that:

I claim no clear understanding of existentialism or mysticism, but I have come to cultivate a hypothesis that there exists another me and another object of my love in a realm apart from the one which this body of mine inhabits. (390)
Wandering Souls is a literary expression of this idea. Enchi was awarded the Japanese literary prize for this work in 1972.
Chapter Four

In *The Mist in Karuizawa* (Saimu 彩霧, 1975-76), Enchi deals with the same theme as in the trilogy, *Wandering Souls*: how women who face aging, death, fear and loneliness express their inner selves. The protagonist in *The Mist in Karuizawa* also possesses what Enchi sees as the essential element of femininity, that is, the unity of spirit force and Eros. But she is neither a vengeful nor a loving woman, as are the protagonists of *Wandering Souls*. In *The Mist in Karuizawa*, the heroine's concern and familiarity with death deepen, and her true self is not expressed merely through the "wandering off" of her soul. Both her mind and body travel back and forth between reality and illusion. In the end, while possessed by the "other woman," she is led to take action in reality. What allures her into the "other realm" is not jealousy, love or attachment to the past, but a genuine impulse toward Eros. While the heroines in *Wandering Souls* were still longing for a psychological attachment through love, the heroine of *The Mist in Karuizawa* feels little of such longing. Though she subconsciously loves a man with whom she has an affair, she is not aware of her psychological bond. Perhaps because she is so deeply immersed in her existential loneliness, she feels the need for a strong physical union with others. In order to express this theme in *The Mist in Karuizawa*, Enchi uses her favorite method of "inventing a work of classical literature" as a basis to develop the story. Using an imaginary classical work as the center of the novel, Enchi develops two other narrative lines, one the story of a mysterious woman living in Karuizawa and her lovers, and the other the story of the heroine, Tsutsumi Sano, and her lover.

The story begins in Karuizawa, in the cottage of the heroine, a sixty-nine-year-old writer. She has just received the scroll painting called "Picture Story of the High Priestess of the Kamo Shrine" ("Kamo
saiin e-kotoba" 侍茂齋院絵詞), from Kawaraha Yukiko, a mysterious elderly woman living in Karuizawa. The scroll is a eulogy on the high priestess and depicts the official events of the Kamo Shrine, but surprisingly it also shows the sexual encounters of the high priestess and her valet. The scroll, on the cover of which "confidential" is written in blood, has been transmitted from woman to woman within the family of priests at the Kumano Shrine. Born into the priestly family of Kamo, Yukiko received the scroll from her mother. The high priestess in the scroll seems to symbolize a mediumistic power, which Yukiko has inherited. Through a demonic enchantment, numerous men have become infatuated with her. But most of the men associated with Yukiko die unnaturally in the end. When Yukiko, who does not have a child, realizes her approaching death, she wants to give the scroll away to Sano. Her eyesight weak, Sano tries to read the tiny scrawl of the scroll's classical text, and resolves to investigate its background and origin. After Yukiko's death, her servant invites Sano and her secretary, Katsuko, to Yukiko's cottage. Sano gradually begins to feel possessed by Yukiko and eventually by the high priestess as well. Sano displays her newly acquired seductive powers, but at the same time she seems to grow senile. Traveling back and forth between reality and illusion, one day in Karuizawa, Sano at last has a physical relationship with her nephew-in-law, Yasuo. Immediately after this, she burns the scroll. Thus all the men and women who have any relation to Yukiko and the scroll reflect the eros of the high priestess and her valet. In The Mist in Karuizawa, Enchi relates the stories of those men and women in the three main stories.

Before analyzing these narratives, it is necessary to have a general understanding of the actual high priestess system, which continued in Japan from the early Heian period (794-1191) through the early Kamakura period (1192-1333). According to the custom of the period, each time a
new emperor assumed the throne, one of the young virgin princesses of the Imperial family was appointed the high priestess of the Ise Shrine and another became the high priestess of the Kamo Shrine (Nakamura 113). These women would seclude themselves in a palace on the outskirts of Kyōto. The palace was a place of purification, and there the chosen women practiced austerities for a certain period, in order to serve the gods of Ise and Kamo. Ancient people believed they could obtain bliss and protection from the gods by offering them the virginity of noble girls. Therefore, the virginity (i.e. purity) of the high priestesses was viewed as highly significant.

According to the scroll painting in Enchi's story, however, despite such a sacred, purified quality of the high priestess, there also existed at Kamo Shrine secret rituals called the "awakening souls." In order to awaken the high priestess's unconscious soul, her valet performed sexual rituals with her. This was not motivated by their physical desires, but was meant to revitalize and purify the high priestess. This ritual originated long ago when a group of robbers burst into the palace of the high priestess, and attacked her. In order to resurrect the half dead, faint priestess, the god of Kamo took possession of one of the virgin male attendents and led him to perform a certain ritual, which involved having intercourse with her. From that time on, the same ritual took place several times a year, whenever the high priestess required purification, and it continued until she grew aged and grey. However, during the ritual, the high priestess herself would fall into a state of suspended consciousness, so that she did not recognize the presence of the valet. He functioned only as a medium of the god of Kamo. He was not usually allowed to utter a word or even to glance at such a high-ranking, dignified lady. However, since the valet was an ordinary man, he suffered jealousy toward a powerful, attractive aristocrat who also loved the
priestess. The valet maintained his passionate and sad love for the priestess all his life. Feeling uncontrollable longing for her even after he resigned from his vocation, he could not help but write about his ecstatic experiences. His strong attachment to the high priestess was shown in one episode of Tales of Ise (Ise monogatari 伊勢物語, 9007-9507) by Ariwara no Narihira (825-880), which the valet cited in his notes. The valet strongly identified with Narihira in the episode, who was seeing off a carriage of the empress, his former lover, and reflecting on the woman whom he could no longer reach. In the end, the valet felt himself to be an "empty sake pot" (305), and so after hearing of the high priestess's death, he committed suicide. His nephew, moved by the notes his uncle had written, used them as the basis to paint the series of black and white pictures which comprised the "Kamo Shrine" scroll subsequently given to Sano.

Since the figure of the high priestess in the "Picture Story of the Kamo Shrine" is drawn from the descriptions of her admiring valet, she appears as a woman of great charm. She has beauty, natural talent as the mistress of her salon, and a strong mediumistic ability as a fortune teller. Her beauty and charm do not decline in her old age. She is "not infected with the ugliness of aging. . . . Her face looks clear and pretty as if she were a young little girl" (303). When the high priestess is younger, "her breasts are like the buds of the lotus flower beginning to bloom," but later on they "look white and shrunken, like moonflowers before the dawn" (297). Enchi avoids vulgar and direct depictions to describe the priestess's eroticism. But the painting, which readers cannot see, produces an air of eroticism, further enhanced by the use of ancient words. Readers are not clearly informed of the incident of the robbers, who probably attacked and raped the high priestess, because the descriptions of that particular scene are blurred in the text of the
scroll. Rather, the eroticism of the scroll's text is subtle:

... [H]ow could one possibly leave such a sacred, dignified and unworldly lady, dead? While blowing my breath into the princess with all my strength, and pouring the male life into her, I pray that God may save this princess. I hold tight her seemingly dead body, and blows my breath into her lips (omission), and my body also gets entangled with her icy skin, and I feel as if I am going into death.

In the omitted part, their intercourse is described in detail, with the words of medieval days. (289)

This subtle eroticism is expressed in various styles. The text of the scroll is composed of classical words, supposedly written by the valet and the painter. To supplement the information provided in the scroll, Sano explains the system of the high priestess and scroll paintings in general, and adds a summary of some parts of the text and interpretations. Moreover, the narrative told in the "Picture Story" intersects with the other two main stories of Yukiko and Sano. This narrative technique, involving patch-work stylistic shifts, works well to draw readers into the illusional world of the past. It was also employed in Tale of the Mediums, but the setting of this work was complicated to the extent that it seemed a bit too fabricated and artificial. In The Mist in Karuizawa, the insertion of a classical work is accomplished more smoothly.

In order to understand the high priestess better, it is useful to look at the known historical facts as recorded in the "Account of the High Priestess of the Kamo Shrine" ("Kamo saiin-ki," 賀茂齋院記) in Gunsho ruijū (群書類従, 1779-1822) by Hanawa Hokiichi (1746-1821). Judging from the official history, the high priestess of the scroll is probably the Imperial Princess Senshi (964-1035), who occupied the position of high priestess for an unusually long time, over the reigns of five emperors. During the prosperous times of the Heian court, the palace of the high priestess became a highly cultivated, social salon, though her palace was detached from the Kyōto court. While Senshi (964-1035) was high
priestess, she managed to make the salon particularly prosperous, and equal in popularity to the salons of Empress Teishi (975-1000) and Empress Shōshi (988-1074) (Nakamura 114). Senshi was called the Great High Priestess. In the lively atmosphere of her salon, numerous love affairs between court men and ladies-in-waiting bloomed, and even Kaneie (929-990) and the powerful Michinaga (966-1027) are said to have had affairs with Senshi. Thus, despite the fact that the palace was supposed to be a highly disciplined place, in actuality, courtiers were very free in their thinking about sex. Enchi refers to this sexual freedom where she discusses an episode from Tales of Ise in Masks:

... Ariwara no Narihira visits his younger cousin the high priestess of Ise and exchanges a vow of love with her. The fact that of her own accord she goes into Narihira's bedchamber at night, despite her supposed chastity, is interesting because it shows that she took a shamaness's view of sex, as something intrinsically sinless. (77)

Similar explanations can be found in Tale of the Mediums (126). In this context, the descriptions of the "awakening souls" ritual in the scroll look convincing, for they are a part of the sacred and worldly prosperity of the high priestess.

The high priestess is described as an admirable woman. She too possesses the essential element of femininity, the unity of spirit force with Eros. Therefore, whether she has affairs with men in actuality or not, by uniting with a god of Kamo she can express her real self. The high priestess may also be a symbol of freedom, because she is released from love, or in other words from evil attachment. For as far as we know, the high priestess only allows her powerful aristocratic suitor to see her naked body. However, she is not simply the type of woman who is loved by men. In Enchi's view, she is also a symbol of the life source:

What is a high priestess? What is a medium? In the end, it is probably similar to the idea of the "original mother" in Chinese philosophy. It is deeply rooted in the earth and
creates all nature, and it is the source of life which makes all nature live. After all, perhaps men cannot conquer. . . . (366)

The meaning of the high priestess, as the life source which men cannot "defeat," is further clarified, when she is compared with Teishi in Tale of the Mediums, who defeats the male principle with the female principle, with love and Eros. The fact that the valet commits suicide seems to suggest that the high priestess does not simply symbolize life, but that there also exists an element of death within her, an issue to which I will return later. Thus, the high priestess is a symbolic, archetypal woman, who possesses few truly "human" traits. Since the text of the scroll is based upon the valet's one-sided observations, we do not have any access to her psychology as a living woman. This makes her all the more unreal.

Thus in The Mist in Karuizawa, Enchi clarifies the meaning of the high priestess and mediums, and uses those figures to express her notion of essential femininity. Enchi's use of the high priestess is no surprise, considering the great interest she had in mediums throughout her career. The high priestess may be regarded as the supreme medium or in other words as an archetypal, representative medium. Enchi used mediums in Tale of the Mediums, and the heroine in Wandering Souls attended the Aoi Festival—which is also called the Kamo Festival—and walked in the Kamo Shrine, thinking about the purification of the high priestess. These events seem to function as an underplot to the "Picture Story of the High Priestess of the Kamo Shrine" in The Mist in Karuizawa.

In addition, the motif of the high priestess reminds us of an episode concerning the Rokujō lady. When the Rokujō lady's daughter is appointed the high priestess of Ise Shrine, the Rokujō lady goes with her to a detached palace, in order to resolve her long unstable relationship with Genji. The Rokujō lady takes her courtly salon along to the new palace. Thus the shadow of the Rokujō lady exists behind the story of the high priestess.
priestess in *The Mist in Karuizawa*. Furthermore, we can find another episode in *Genji* in which he tries to win the high priestess of Kamo, then Princess Asagao, desiring to make her his official wife. With her stiff resolve not to accept his proposal, Genji's hopes are disappointed. Enchi interprets Genji's sudden courting of Asagao by explaining that after the deaths of Fujitsubo and the Rokujo lady, he could not find any other supreme, dignified ladies besides Asagao (*Genji monogatari shiken*, 32-33). That is, Enchi herself values the status of the priestess highly. It seems natural for Enchi, who has always paid attention to Fujitsubo and the Rokujo lady in her works, to at last employ the high priestess.

The scroll painting, which evokes the entire history of the high priestess, functions to set in motion other plot developments in *The Mist in Karuizawa*. Yukiko, the present possessor of the scroll, is a reincarnation of the high priestess. We can see obvious similarities between the high priestess and Yukiko. Yukiko's ancestor was related to the Imperial family, and she was born into the priestly family of the Kamo Shrine. She is provided with mediumistic ability. Therefore, when she has a physical relationship with a man, she feels herself transformed into "a spider or starfish," and becomes "another entity, while she remains still herself" (242). Her body seems controlled by someone else, so the concept of love, as well as the sense of morality and responsibility, do not mean anything to her. Therefore, even a Genji-type male—Duke Katsurai—is not particularly attractive to her. She has affairs with numerous men. She is physically captivating and simply bewitching to men. She looks "as if every button is undone" (253), though she does not look sloppy. Her beauty is "lethargic" and "idiotic" (241). Her body is supple "as if it does not have muscles and bones" (254) and in this way it parallels the body of the high priestess, for "the valet [did] not know where her bones [were]" (289). Her way of talking is "slow and rather
sticky like sweets" and "her big opened eyes do not give off any strong light" (241). Such beauty is related to her mediumistic quality, which represents the unity of a spirit force with Eros. She constitutes essential femininity. With this femininity, she lures men one after another into an ecstatic illusional world. And once a man enters into this "other realm" with her, he cannot escape except through death.

Let us look at her relationships with men in detail. Along with a husband who has no interest in her life, Yukiko also has a lover, Eckerman, who was a German Nazi officer just before the end of World War II. After the Nazi collapse, however, Yukiko refuses his proposal to return with him to Europe where he will be granted political asylum. In the end, after he tries and fails to kill her, he shoots himself in her bedroom. While having an affair with Eckerman, Yukiko also has another affair with the prime minister, Duke Katsurai. He is the first man to discover Yukiko's mediumistic ability, for he is also of noble birth and has inherited the aristocratic blood of an ancestor who had a close relationship with spiritual mediums. Katsurai feels "as if he were possessed by a god when he is united with her" (246). However, being identified as a war criminal, he commits suicide by taking a drug. Around that time, Kajita Shûko, who is a drama critic, becomes one of her lovers. In the end, he dies unnaturally in the sea. After the war, Yukiko's cottage in Karuizawa becomes a social salon for the GHQ [General Headquarters of the United States], and an American civilian, MacIntosh, becomes her lover. But he is murdered in Holland by a Japanese man called Shinoda, who studies in Italy and also has an affair with Yukiko. Sano's nephew-in-law, Yasuo, who is a diplomat, is seduced by Yukiko in Italy, though they do not have an affair. Finally, there is the servant Kariya, who has been "serving" Yukiko since he was sixteen or seventeen, remaining faithful all throughout her affairs with different men.
Yukiko captivates all the men she meets. She is the reincarnation of the high priestess, but Yukiko's life is freer than the high priestess', for the latter's life is basically restricted by her role as a priestess. Yukiko is a symbol of freedom, for she is released from her outer self, social suppressions, love, attachment, responsibility and so on. In this sense, she may be understood as a "natural" woman, who is detached from society. Although Yukiko talks about her experiences almost objectively, she does not express a psychology, or rather one could say that she seems not to possess such a thing. She is an illusional symbol. Moreover, although all men fall under her enchanting power, they are neither deprived of their own psychologies andautonomies, nor controlled by her perceptions. Most of her lovers are provided with opportunities to reflect upon their experiences with Yukiko and to express their psychologies, though their self-revelations are not sufficient for readers to understand each character well. As her character is described from the multiple points of view of her male lovers, her mysterious figure is gradually clarified. Like the high priestess, she is also a symbol of life force. All the men involved with her, except her husband, experience great pleasure with her. In other words, she brings them life force. However, the fact that most of them die unnaturally, or die mentally suggests that Yukiko's power is ambiguous and double-edged. She can also be a symbol of death. The fact that Yukiko does not have a child makes us doubt her motherly quality, for the high priestess signifies "the original mother" (366). So, the symbolic meaning of Yukiko does not simply conform to the idea of a life source, or the original mother. As discussed, when we consider the suicide of the valet, the life source which the priestess was supposed to possess is also put into question. Moreover, Yukiko herself dies in the end. Her taste for purple, which is shown in her dyed, pale purple hair, her purple gown, and the purple cloth she uses to
wrap the scroll, is suggestive of her "ripened, excessive" life force, which might eventually cause death. For, as we discussed in Chapter Three, purple is a blackish and bluish red, and red usually symbolizes the life force. That is, the source of life can imply death as well. Death and life are united in Yukiko as well as in the high priestess. Yukiko fuses such fundamentally dualistic concepts, so that she may function to dissolve the apparent distinctions between things at various levels.

Let us look at further examples of her ability to fuse apparent dualities. Yukiko possesses the characteristics of both a vengeful woman and a lovable woman. She is able to give any man supreme bliss as well as supreme misfortune. She can be either a goddess or a demon. She takes men to the "other realm." She functions as a medium or a messenger connecting illusion and reality, whereas the high priestess represents only the illusional past world. In other words, Yukiko's presence is also the fusing of reality and illusion. Yukiko does not possess the motivations or psychology of a real person living in the modern world and in that sense has little reality. However, she cannot escape from the reality of death, so she is not a completely illusional figure.

Thus, her existence is half illusional and half real. Yukiko is also a medium linking the past and the present. Her taste for purple can be understood as a reference to the court of Heian Kyōto, for purple is associated with the "forbidden colors." Her figure transcends time and space. There is one scene that symbolically illustrates this. Yukiko sings a popular ancient song called imayō, which was written in the Heian court era, while unsteadily playing the guitar. Since this kind of song is supposed to be accompanied with a biwa or koto, we can see here a type of fusion. In this scene, Yukiko looks "like an old Western doll, wearing a long Western gown" (334). The past and the present, the East and the West, and the human and non-human make an "unusual harmony" (334). We can
see other conflations as well, which support the main intertwining of illusion with reality and past with present. Yukiko, who is already over seventy years old, nevertheless exhibits youth.

... Although she gives an impression of an aged woman in her staggering walk and in her hair dyed pale purple, her face looks young, plump and healthily colored, as if she forgot to age, and her big eyes with double eyelids look clear like an innocent little girl. (240)

Her wrinkled neck is compared to the "head of an old chicken" (241). She retains a childlike beauty in an old appearance, and that beauty corresponds to that of the high priestess. Moreover, Yukiko, who becomes hysterical and unbalanced once in a while because of a weak heart or some other physical ailment, leads an ordinary life. Here, abnormality and normality are dissolved into one. While she looks like a simple-minded beauty, Sano is surprised at her sharp mind. Stupidity and brightness are also merged.

Judging from Yukiko's functions in the work, she can be interpreted as the same kind of woman as the "other woman" in Wandering Souls. However, in comparison with the "other woman," who does not have a completely individual entity as a human being, Yukiko is an independent living entity with a name. Therefore, Yukiko exhibits a certain component of Tome in Wandering Souls, who keeps a primitive naturalness and freedom, and is a living symbol of the heroine's real self along with the unrealistic "other woman." Moreover, Yoshie's dedication to men and her impression that "she looks loose everywhere in her body" correspond to the image of Yukiko, who "looks as if every button is undone" (253). Thus, Yukiko possesses the characteristics of the "other woman", Tome and Yoshie. It is possible to imagine that she may also express Sano's hidden self, a point which I will later discuss.

Yukiko's function as an agent of fusion is also evident in her experiences with her lovers. The relationship of Yukiko and Kariya can be
identified with that of the high priestess and her valet in the scroll painting. Yukiko and Kariya appear as "one entity within two, as if they are a good puppeteer and his puppet" (240). It is only Kariya who can handle Yukiko, who is like an old feeble Western doll. He understands her and accepts his seemingly humiliated situation, just as the valet did. The figure of Kariya, who copies the text of scroll in his own handwriting, is overlaid with the valet's figure, who wrote about his experience, and Kariya, who talks to Sano about Yukiko after her death, also reminds us of the valet who left his secret notes to his nephew. Kariya's life after Yukiko's death is not explained by the narrative, but since he agrees with Shinoda's plan to set fire to Yukiko's cottage in Karuizawa, one can assume that his later life was similarly empty to the valet's. Kariya lives with Yukiko and mentally dies with her. Thus just as Yukiko is a reincarnation of the high priestess, Kariya is a reincarnation of the valet. His figure is also overlaid with that of a past character, Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241). Kariya sings a popular ancient song called "The Vine of Teika" ("Teika kazura" 定家葛). This song is about a man's obsession with a female: Teika's attachment to the Imperial Princess Shikishi (?-1201) turns into the vine, which gets entangled with the grave of the Princess to prevent her soul from departing and reaching the heaven. Thus, the distinction between the past and present is dissolved in Kariya.

However, Enchi provides him with more reality than she does the valet. Kariya's peaceful appearance after Yukiko's death is different from the valet's obvious despair, and is more convincing. Moreover, Kariya seems more realistic when we consider that he is described as similar in appearance to Officer Onoda. At the time when Enchi was writing this work in 1974, Onoda had been just discovered in the jungles of the Lubang Island in the Philippines, his story causing a sensation in
Japan. He had hidden himself in the jungle, observing military rules even after the war had been over for about thirty years. Since Kariya may be said to have been away from reality for around thirty years serving Yukiko, the parallelism extends not only to their looks, but also to their situations and mentalities. Both have been detached from reality and later become "reattached." Since Kariya possesses an air of reality, he functions to support Yukiko, who creates an illusional world in the midst of Kariya's reality.

If Kariya is identified with the valet, the other men, who all die in the end, can also be said to represent the death of the valet. They help to dissolve the distinction between illusion and reality, and past and present. Duke Katsurai, who discovered Yukiko's subconscious mediumistic ability, related her to the high priestess in the scroll. Yukiko's relationship with Katsurai, who is of noble birth and holds considerable power, reminds us of the relationships of Senshi and her aristocratic lovers, such as Michinaga.

Moreover, interestingly, Kajita Shûko relates the fun of Kabuki to the pleasure of an affair with Yukiko. He talks of Kabuki's charm, saying that in Kabuki "to be beautiful and interesting becomes terrifying," and Kabuki "transforms illusion into reality through a spell" (229). The terrifying pleasure of Kabuki is identified with the pleasure he receives from Yukiko. The attraction of Kabuki's spell and its "idiotic beauty" (232) are also attractive characteristics of Yukiko. Both can create the "other realm" in reality. Therefore, Sano, who is also attracted to Kabuki, has the potential to be bewitched by something terrifyingly interesting besides Kabuki, which will be clarified later.

Shinoda, another of Yukiko's lovers, has wandered in foreign, war-torn countries such as Vietnam and Iran after killing Yukiko's lover, MacIntosh, in Holland. Since killing MacIntosh out of jealousy, Shinoda
feels he has lost an important part of himself. In this sense, he is also mentally dead. It is Shinoda who burns down Yukiko's cottage after her death, for her cottage is like "a shrine dedicated to Kawahara Yukiko" (366). Shinoda, who is interested in Zoroastrianism, considers her a goddess or demon, and worships her. This idea is connected to the high priestess' religious quality.

Finally, let us consider one more elderly man, Sugaya, who is Yukiko's cousin, and not her lover. One summer day in his youth, during a thunder shower, he held the naked body of Yukiko, as she stood in the bathroom. Since this scene is identified with a picture in the scroll, Sugaya also helps to fuse the worlds of Yukiko and of the high priestess.

Compared with these Japanese men, the Western men involved with Yukiko do not play important roles in the story. They are employed not as ordinary men, but as "exotic" men, in order to display how irresistibly attractive Yukiko is to any man of any nationality. Therefore, the Western men help Yukiko to dissolve the distinction between East and West.

If Yukiko is a symbol of freedom and the fusing of death and life, and a medium linking illusion and reality as well as past and present, Sano initially symbolizes the repressed woman living in the world of reality. In the development of the story, Yukiko gradually takes possession of Sano, and Sano begins to transcend time and space. She is a sixty-nine-year-old writer. Reflecting on her whole life on the fifteenth of September, which is a day of celebration for the elderly in Japan, she regards herself as "an inconspicuous heroine in an unsuccessful drama" (217). Her physical self, which has been "like a storehouse of various diseases" (220), is becoming older and weaker. She has diabetes, a heart disease and gallstones, and above all her eyesight is terribly weak because of the loss of sight in one eye from a detached retina. And all her teeth are false. For the last few years, she has been unable to
escape from the idea of death. She often sees herself as "the same as a bird or a squirrel" (237), and as "a vacant shadow which is not distinguished from the others" (238). The themes of fusion or compatibility as opposed to contradiction or confrontation often come to fill her mind, though the contradictions in her mind, which encourage her to write, are proof of her vitality. Although she knows how to make herself look young by wearing a wig and sunglasses and trying on Western clothes which she has never worn before, she cannot deny the fact of her aging. In regard to love:

The concept of love was an illusion which had always captured Sano in her life. But she could not grasp its true figure, which actually has no substance—just like an uncertain shadow that an insane person would follow about. . . .

If love needs a partner, Sano has already given it up. (218)

Given the deep loneliness of her life at this point, what Sano probably needs most is love. But, she yearns for a primitive love, one connected only with sex. Despite her aging, she still once in a while perceives "something like an angel leaping in her mind" (220).

Compared with Suō in Wandering Souls, Sano's mental and physical state shows that the aging of the heroine has gone one step further. In the previous work, the protagonist suffered from the discrepancy between her active mind and her lethargic body. However, the protagonist of The Mist in Karuizawa does not sense such a discrepancy. Her unconscious mind still wants love, but her body and conscious mind become totally lethargic. Unlike Suō, who loves her son-in-law, his friend and Genji, Sano does not love any man, not at least at the conscious level.

Nevertheless, the scroll painting "Picture Story of the High Priestess" stimulates her hidden, subconscious desires. When she sees the painting of the secret ritual, she feels that "some part of her body arises audibly" (265). Sano, who first tries to adhere to the discipline that the scroll is "to be transmitted only from one woman to another,"
already has a sense of complicity with Yukiko. In the end, it is with the help of Kariya's notes and her secretary Katsuko that she reads the entire scroll, and breaks with the traditional discipline. During this process, Sano is gradually being led to the illusional mysterious world to transcend reality.

Sano's transformation is first shown in her dreams or illusions. After Sano learns about the fire at Yukiko's cottage, she has a dream which is suggestive of this change, in which she is waiting for her cue to appear on a "stage" at the burning cottage. Sano feels as if she is an actress. However, Katsuko restrains her from going onto the "stage." As discussed, Kabuki and Yukiko's world correspond to each other. The "stage" of this dream can be seen to be a stage of the "terrifyingly interesting" Kabuki. Sano is about to enter that world. Despite Katsuko's warning, she is being lured into the "other world" in which a fire is burning. In general fire symbolizes life force, passion, and danger, none of which Sano possesses in her life. She becomes obsessed with the "fire" which ignites her hidden desires. After that, Sano's illusional erotic dreams occur once in a while. One day, before going to the Omizutori ceremony in Nara, Sano has an erotic dream in a Kyoto hotel:

... While lying on the bed, Sano is untying the knot of her obi age [bustle sash]. Someone's hands work skillfully to untie the obi, and the kimono slips down from her shoulders... Sano wonders if this is Katsuko, but no. It is sure that a man draws close to her and is removing the kimono from her body. She does not know who it is, but this is pleasant. She does not show any resistance, and wiggles and twists herself.... (383)

Next morning, Sano finds herself under the illusion that she had a sexual affair while sleeping. She does not have any sense of having been raped, but she does not feel any sexual pleasure, either. It seems to be an inevitable incident. While watching the Omizutori in the Tōdaiji Temple, in which priests carrying torches run on the stone stairs of the Nigatsudō, Sano hears the uncertain voice of Yukiko: "You can see the
fire..." and "I am within you, all the time from now on" (391). Sano feels this voice as "a mysteriously which is not distinguishable as either illusion or reality" (391). Sano's illusional world is entangled with reality more and more. While she lies down on a bed, she feels that:

[H]er heart is beating unsteadily, her breasts seem to suddenly swell, and she hears a cry from her vagina which calls for something. The sense that her inside seems to wait for or absorb something makes it cry, and makes her body wiggle with erotic movements as if the body is not hers while it is hers. . . . [T]he bodies of men pile up on her, and they are being taken into her inside, as if they are responding to the cry of her vagina. (395)

She experiences a strange intercourse, which produces "a tenacious and sweet sensuality, which she has never before experienced in her life" (395). However, she does not consider these dreams as completely illusional, for her reasonable consciousness always coexists during these illusions. For example, while looking at herself in the mirror, she smiles at herself, saying, "We shall live together with you, shall we? It is fun to have an affair with a man, whatever age we are at" (395). Immediately after this, she returns to reality and sees only an ugly, aged woman's nude body in the mirror.

Therefore, when Sano regains her reason in reality, she is aware that an inexplicable monster lives and expands in her mind and body. Moreover, when she realizes that she is sexually attracted by young Kajita whom she does not feel in love with, she is afraid that she may be developing a kind of senility or insanity. She often feels dizzy, her eyesight becomes weaker and weaker, and she forgets things very easily. A doctor warns her that she is in a serious state of diabetes, likely to result in a coma. Sano in fact does not figure out that her condition is due to her physical senility or to Yukiko's possession. Her ability of self-analysis, which is imperative to writers, becomes weaker. Sano feels the life force when she fights the strange monster in order to retain her introverted,
dispassionate character.

Along with such a transformation taking place within Sano, her appearance is also changing. Sano's face becomes tender and childlike, as if "there is a child in an elderly woman" (387), and also once in a while she displays "strangely erotic eyes" (373) or "hot and watery erotic eyes" (385). Katsuko finds that Sano has "a supple body as if there are no muscles" (353), and "her back shines white and smooth" (387). Such characteristics are associated with Yukiko and the high priestess. In actuality she comes to resemble Yukiko, which surprises Shinoda. This transformation attracts young Kajita. While watching the Omizutori, he supports Sano's shoulders from behind. He helps her to zip up her clothes in the back. However, Katsuko notices that Sano's physical condition is becoming worse.

Sano's fusing of reality and illusion reaches a climax in a trip to Karuizawa. Sano finally takes concrete action to realize her hidden self in reality, though Karuizawa may be a symbol of the illusional "other world." On the highway to Karuizawa, there is a thick mist, which may be understood as a drape to mark the passage onto the mysterious stage. The next morning, Sano and Yasuo go on a drive and walk in the fields of Karuizawa on a beautiful day. The mountain spring is overpowering, with its leaping force of nature. Such an exploding natural force probably prompts Sano to feel free. The scene in which Sano takes hold of Yasuo's belt from behind, "descending the slope" of the field with him, suggests that they are going back to their young days, when they found each other attractive and kissed each other lightly in a thunderstorm in Karuizawa. "Descending the slope" may also mean going back to her life, for Sano regards writing, which is in fact life itself to her, as "going up a hill with pain." The scene in which Sano is carried by Yasuo and crosses over a small river, may symbolize crossing the barrier of social suppression.
and her outer self, for after this they kiss each other passionately, as if compensating for their unsatisfactory kiss over twenty years ago. That night, it thunders and rains heavily. The electric power is out. Only the flame of the candle is lit for a few hours. Early the next morning, Sano sets fire to the scroll painting, with disarranged grey hair but wide, bewitching eyes, which Yasuo thinks look like Yukiko's. Although the narrative does not explain clearly what occurred between Sano and Yasuo that night, their kisses and the "flame" of the candle in the storm suggest that they had a sexual encounter. Sano, who is possessed by Yukiko, at last takes action here in Karuizawa, which can be compared to a Kabuki theatre. The spring, the cottage, storm, electric failure and flame, all function as a setting for a drama. Perhaps, Sano performs her dream role as an actress. However, this is not her real figure, so she has to sever this illusion from herself by burning the scroll, and then she comes back to reality.

Thus, Sano becomes "Yukiko-ized" to the extent that she acquires the ability to seduce even the most realistic man, Yasuo. He is neither a Genji type, nor a type like Kingo of Wandering Souls, but he is an ordinary man, working hard in the world as a practical diplomat. The realities of aging and death cause Sano's hidden, real self to be released from suppression, with the power of Yukiko and the high priestess. Sano acquires freedom. She becomes a reincarnation of Yukiko and the high priestess. She is, needless to say, neither a vengeful, nor lovable woman. She expresses her essential femininity by uniting her spirit force and her eros. She also fuses illusion and reality, as well as the past and present.

In order to strengthen the conflation of past and present, Enchi employs Japanese classics which deal with female obsessions for men. In Tales of Ise, Narihira sleeps a few times with an elderly woman out of
compassion, for she longs desperately to meet a man to ease her loneliness. In a Noh play, Komachi on the Stupa (Sotoba komachi 卒都婆小町), Ono no Komachi (ninth century), who is known as an excellent poet of waka and a woman of matchless beauty in the Heian era, goes mad when she becomes an old beggar, thinking about her prosperous past. Moreover, Enchi mentions one episode from Stories New and Old (Kokon chomonshū 古今著聞集, 1254) by Tachibana no Narisue (twelfth century), in which an elderly virgin nun chants prayers on her deathbed, but she says in delirium, "The penis comes, the penis comes." Thus, by drawing on parallel examples from the past, Enchi emphasizes Sano's subconscious desire for a man caused by the loneliness of her aging.

As for the fusion of space, Tōkyō, which symbolizes reality, becomes a place of illusion as Sano begins to make her strange transformation. In this work, Karuizawa is the symbol of the illusional world. Yukiko lives in Karuizawa and all her lovers visit her cottage there. It is in Karuizawa that Sano has a physical relationship with Yasuo. As discussed in the chapter on Wandering Souls, Karuizawa is a noted resort area, and it is remote from everyday reality. In The Mist in Karuizawa, this characteristic of Karuizawa is more fully developed than in Wandering Souls. Sano feels that Karuizawa is a town like "a friend," whereas Tōkyō is like a strongly tied "family" (216). Tōkyō is a place of reality in which she cannot harbor fantasies, while in Karuizawa she can dream. However, even in Tōkyō Sano starts to travel back and forth between reality and illusion, after she becomes possessed by Yukiko. In addition to Karuizawa, Kyōto is also a symbol of the "other world." The scroll describes the Heian people in Kyōto, and the place where Sano has her strange erotic dream is also Kyōto. In Nara, which is another old capital of Japan, Sano hears the voice of Yukiko. In both Kyōto and Nara Japanese traditions remain alive in modern times. They are away from everyday
reality as well. Therefore, they are suitable places for Sano to have a fantasy. Furthermore, foreign countries seem to function as the other world, too. As we have seen, when Yukiko goes to Italy, she tries to seduce Yasuo, and there she has an affair with Shinoda and meets MacIntosh. The fact that Sano recovers from her obsessive concern with death after traveling to Europe, indicates that foreign countries engender fantasy, and thus give life force. Thus, while at first only Karuizawa, Kyôto, Nara and foreign countries represent the "other world," Tôkyô eventually is added to the list, thereby uniting the worlds of reality and illusion, as well as past and present. The reference to things Western such as foreign characters and the names of foreign authors might also suggest the fusion of East and West.

In considering the meaning of Sano, it is possible to see a parallelism between her and the heroine Suô in Wandering Souls. This is because, as mentioned, the force that leads these two aging women to the "other realm," is the impulse to Eros, not jealousy, love or attachment to their lost youth. When Sano hears Yukiko's voice from somewhere, it corresponds to the "other woman's" voice heard by Suô. The blending of childlikeness and aging in their appearances, and the scenes where they watch themselves in the mirror are also common. In addition, judging from the shift of the heroines' names in the trilogy: Shio-Suô-Shiga, the name Sano may be seen as the fourth heroine of "wandering souls."

Nevertheless, we can also see significant differences between Suô and Sano. The "other woman" in Wandering Souls embodied the heroine's private self, and she was completely integrated with that part of Suô. Although Yukiko possesses the characteristics of the "other women," in Wandering Souls (Tome and Yoshie), she is provided with a fully independent entity, and she does not function as a spirit who realizes Sano's private desires. Yukiko perhaps embodies the real selves of all womankind, including Sano.
Even though Sano's relationship with Yasuo occurs because she is possessed by Yukiko and the high priestess, she realizes her hidden, real self by having an actual physical relationship with a man she likes. This is a major difference between Sano and the heroine of Wandering Souls, who realizes her desires only in an illusional way. Thus Sano is a modern symbol of femininity, whereas the high priestess and Yukiko represent the past and illusion.

Because it is the essential element of femininity, the mediumistic quality of Yukiko and the high priestess can be transmitted to any woman. This becomes evident when one looks at other female characters in this work. Katsuko is an efficient secretary to Sano. She compares the relationship of Sano and herself to an actress and her stagehand. The relationship may be associated with that of Yukiko and Kariya. Always dressed in black, she looks like a traditional Japanese spy called ninja, an appearance which seems appropriate to her supportive role. Katsuko understands Sano, so she can criticize her, too. Katsuko plays an important role in seeing Sano in an objective way. Since Katsuko is a realistic, ordinary person, she is afraid that Sano is possessed by Yukiko and changes strangely, for she notices that Sano and Kajita are pulled to each other with an unusual power. However, even such a practical woman as Katsuko starts to feel somewhat affected by the scroll. This appears in the unusually intimate way she tries to keep her young lover, Kajita.

Although Sano's grandchild, Akemi, has no direct relation to the scroll, she possesses some medium-like characteristics. Instead of Yukiko, it is she who appears in Sano's dream in the center of the fire at Yukiko's cottage. Moreover, according to Shinoda's experience, a girl who resembles Akemi appears in the ritual fire of Zoroastrianism in Iran. By including Akemi, probably Enchi intends to say that it is possible to find a woman who has inherited the characteristics of the high priestess in our
actual life.

Compared with the female characters, male characters are not given significant roles in The Mist in Karuizawa. In general, most of the male characters are given a kind of autonomy, and they are not controlled by the women's perceptions, though their self-expression is limited and insufficient. They are basically simple vehicles for the women to express their real selves. Therefore, the valet and Yukiko's lovers die after their admirable women realize their selves. Even in the case of Yasuo and Sano, when Sano burns the scroll painting, he also helps make the fire burn more strongly. This suggests that after Yasuo accomplishes his role as a vehicle for Sano's self-expression, he even helps to destroy a symbol of his affair—the scroll. Usually a Genji or Kingo type plays quite an important role in Enchi's works. But in The Mist in Karuizawa even a Genji type, Duke Katsurai, does not mean anything significant to his lover, Yukiko.

Although Sano may still be called a repressed and introverted woman in keeping with Enchi's other heroines, she has released her hidden, real self from social suppression and her public self in this novel, through going back and forth between reality and the "other world." This is not a simple phenomenon of "wandering souls," for her whole entity, her mind and body, go into the other realm. This fact is reflected in the style of the work. The story is told by a third person narrator, and it is often told through the protagonist's point of view as usual, revealing her interior monologues, too (217-220, etc.). However, Sano talks to herself aloud in the mirror as if to another person, with straightforward expressions: "It is fun to have an affair with a man" (395). Since she is close to her secretary, Katsuko, and her nephew-in-law, Yasuo, she expresses some part of her self to them. Moreover, she is described through the eyes of other characters such as Yasuo, Young Kajita and Shinoda. Katsuko criticizes
Sano's pedantic nature and her concern with the social status of men. This suggests that the heroine of The Mist in Karuizawa is more released from her confined self-consciousness or outer self than Enchi's other heroines, and that the other characters are also more released from her perceptions.

Such a quality of release is found also in numerous dialogues in Sano's story. In these, Enchi does not use heavy, intellectual vocabulary. Even Sano's expressions in her conversations are non-rhetorical, unlike those in Wandering Souls. At the same time, one finds no straightforward descriptions of sex in the story. Sano's eroticism is all veiled in illusion. Enchi is not explicit in the last scene in which Sano and Yasuo have a physical relationship. She uses classical words in the Japanese original text to refer to male and female sexual organs (395). However, the scene which I quoted previously is erotic enough to be effective, though its eroticism is not direct or vulgar. This applies equally to the scroll painting and Yukiko—who is described mainly in terms of a supple body and an erotic mood. Therefore, the "discordant beauty" of Enchi's language is not as explicit as before. Nevertheless, the shifting of styles which we found in Tale of the Mediums does occur in the story of the "Picture Story of the High Priestess of the Kamo Shrine," though it is not as complicated as in Tale of the Mediums. The combination of the three stories may be seen as an example of discord in style. These three plots make one literary world, while they often interrupt and intersect with each other. We can say that Enchi employs her method of writing as freely as she likes to create the universe of The Mist in Karuizawa, and for this reason The Mist in Karuizawa may be seen as Enchi's most mature work.

Related to the greater sense of maturity and release in The Mist in Karuizawa, Enchi shows an increasing tendency to accept things as they
are. We have already seen this in Enchi's treatment of characters. It is also related to her increasing acceptance of nature. This was evident in Wandering Souls, but in the story of Sano, there is a notable increase in natural scenes. In Enchi's previous works, nature was described only as a setting for human events, but descriptions of the natural world of Karuizawa are themselves given more attention. However, the fact that Enchi confines her descriptions of natural scenes only to the fantasy world of Karuizawa suggests that nature is not a part of her "natural" situation, but belongs to the world of fantasy. Probably because of this, Yukiko, who possesses a kind of "naturalness," can be seen as a fantasy figure.

Aging and death represent the most natural of human events. Both imply a decline in life. We can see Enchi's appreciation of "declining beauty" in Sano, Yukiko and the high priestess, who are all facing these realities. As discussed, they possess a quality of youth despite their age. This has been one of Enchi's favorite motifs since Wandering Souls. Perhaps, this is an expression of an aesthetic of aging, related to the eroticism of aging.

Enchi's taste for Edo decadence and the grotesque disappears from the surface of this work. We see few grotesque descriptions. However, Sano does have a taste for Kabuki, which is representative of Edo cultural decadence. Yukiko's "idiotic" beauty is associated with the beauty of Kabuki. Therefore, her cottage in Karuizawa can be seen as a Kabuki stage. On her stage, the men who were drowned by love died unnaturally. In this sense, some kind of grotesque quality exists. Since Kabuki was an expression of people suppressed by the feudalistic society of Edo, it can be understood as an expression of the real self of a suppressed woman. This stage is a symbol of the "other realm." Enchi expresses her taste for Edo culture only through a form of stage in The Mist in Karuizawa. On
this Kabuki-like stage of the other world, Yukiko, who is a reincarnation of the high priestess of the Heian court, and Sano, who is possessed by Yukiko, express their desires.

On the other hand, Enchi's inclination toward The Tale of Genji is expressed both in her motifs and style: the idea of a high priestess and the classical work of the scroll painting. So, it is more explicit than her taste for Edo fiction. However, Enchi employs these motifs in an elaborate way, and she does not borrow these ideas directly from The Tale of Genji. Here, we can see that Enchi's relationship with Genji becomes less pronounced. This may also be proof of her maturity as a writer. And since a motif from Edo fiction provides a stage for the heroine's dream to be realized, Edo and Heian styles are dissolved into one at a fundamental level in this work.

Thus Enchi's knowledge of and inclination toward the Japanese classics are evident in the style of The Mist in Karuizawa as in her other works. In contrast to this classical taste, however, Enchi also expresses an interest in the real, present-day society. Through Sano, Enchi comments on various issues: the dispassion of the young people in Japan, the educational problems caused by the competition of the entrance examinations, students' political activities such as the terrorist bombing of the Mitsui buildings in 1974, the conflicts within the red army groups of the left wing, the Vietnam war, the deportation of Solzhenitsin from the Soviet Union in 1974, and so on. Sano fantasizes about the Utopian idea of world union. Here, we can see the influence of Enchi's past involvement in the communist movement. However, in fact, Enchi's Utopian thought, which may actually be anti-society, or anti-reality, is related to her inclination toward Japanese classics, especially The Tale of Genji, which, as we have seen, symbolize the illusional, free world in her view.

Thus the element of fusing, which is related to a diminishment of
discordant beauty in Enchi's style, takes place at many levels. Ambiguity begins to blur the clearcut distinctions between various apparent dichotomies: a woman to be feared by men and a woman to be loved by men, aging and youth, stupidity and intelligence, abnormality and normality, senility and eroticism, one's own self and the other's self, life and death, the past and present, and reality and illusion. Enchi creates such a literary world to express the release of the real female self, or the attainment of freedom on the part of the woman. To do this, she employs a sophisticated method of paralleling the three main plots in The Mist in Karuizawa, which are conflated to create a layered, three-tiered high priestess figure.

However, even at the end Enchi does not erase the distinction between man and woman. She does quite often treat obsessions as human, as opposed to gender specific problems in her works, by referring to the characters in Japanese classics, such as the Rokujo lady in The Tale of Genji, Komachi on the Stupa, Stories New and Old, Tales of Ise, The Vine of Teika, and "Love in Two Lives" in Harusame monogatari. But even then, Enchi values the original mother—the high priestess—more, as the entity men cannot conquer. Considering that she was once a communist, shows an interest in social problems and creates a world in which most dualities are fused, the fact that Enchi sees the gap between man and woman as a fundamental distinction is striking. Enchi does not dissolve that distinction even in her later few works.

In The Mist in Karuizawa, Enchi writes about the meaning of writing through Sano: "To live, I have to write. The pain in writing, like that of a heavily-laden horse climbing sorrowfully up a slope without making a sound, seems to prove that I am alive" (238). The figure of Tomo in The Waiting Years, who continued to climb up the slope into her old age, can be overlaid with Enchi. Enchi continued writing until she died in 1986.
Conclusion

It can be seen from the preceding analysis that Enchi dealt with suppressed women—vengeful woman, lovable woman, and elderly women facing aging and death—and the release of their hidden, real selves from suppression. Their self-liberation was more or less connected with their mediumistic ability, which in Enchi's view constitutes the essential quality of femininity, the unity of spirit force and Eros. Enchi developed a mysterious world in which illusion and reality were fused, a world associated with *The Tale of Genji*. Her style was one of "heavy make-up," influenced by both *The Tale of Genji* and late Edo fiction, including Kabuki. But in her later works, her style became lighter, as the influence of Edo fiction diminished. The fantasies, dreams, and salvations of Enchi's heroines are connected with the world of *Genji*. In order to create a world of conflated illusion and reality, related to the Heian world, her structures became sophisticated, or even a bit over-complicated. In her first two works, *The Waiting Years* and *Tale of the Mediums*, her literary world was a bit too starkly drawn, especially in the heroines' characters, but in her last two works, *Wandering Souls* and *The Mist in Karuizawa*, this black-and-white simplicity disappears. In this sense, the later works reflect reality more clearly, though they describe illusional worlds, and are more mature than her earlier works.

Evaluating Enchi as a writer, I think that her works are valuable mainly in terms of theme and style. As for her themes, although Enchi tries to write about the liberation of the true, subjective female self, the self independent of the male point of view, she sees the spiritual medium as the quintessential realization of femininity. However, this notion of the powerful spiritual female, the "irrational earth mother" is itself based on a male point of view, a fact which Enchi seems not to have
considered. However, Enchi's attempt to shed light upon the inner world of human beings, especially of women, is still worth discussing. As for her style, it was greatly influenced by the Japanese classics, and is, I think, superb. However, Enchi's characterization is weak. Based upon a theory of archetypes, her view of men and women is not particularly incisive, and she constructs her characters through rather formulated points of view. She deals in types rather than individuals, and this is perhaps her greatest weakness. This is why her characters in general are not likely to have much reality as human beings, but are rather vehicles for the expression of her thoughts about women, men and human beings. As a result, her novels are interesting as novels of ideas, but not as explorations of life.

It may be helpful to look briefly at the criticism of Enchi in Japan, in order to understand her works better. Her reputation as the author who best deals with evil karma, or obsession is solidly established. Let us first consider the commentary of harsh critics. Itagaki Naoko criticizes Enchi for wanting to show off her knowledge, for using unnecessary foreign words and poems in a careless way, and says her characters are repetitive and facilely rendered; her "mysterious" literary world, she says, is merely a copy of Heian court literature ("Enchi Fumiko" in Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō 72). Hasegawa Izumi also points out Enchi's incautious use of foreign loan words (181). On the other hand, Enchi's works have received numerous high evaluations. For Okuno Takeo, the importance of Enchi's works lies in her fearsome female characters who are independent of men, and who are not found in the work of other writers (105). Mishima Yukio also valued her literary world highly:

It [the theme] is the union of sensuality and mysteriousness presented through the medium of Japanese classics. This field has an enormous potential which has never been touched on by the previous Japanese writers, even Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, who also had knowledge of the Japanese classics, but did not develop this
Thus, whether Enchi is ranked high or low, it is true that she is regarded as one of Japan's most important writers. And Enchi, who wrote even on the day before her death, was a true writer, for whom "writing was living."

As for her contribution to the literary world, I would like to suggest that the significance of her literature lies in the fact that her literary world is a product of a fusion of modern and classical literatures, with the flavor of Western literature. She might be the last Japanese author with such a command of the Japanese classics and who used it freely in modern literary works. Her translation of The Tale of Genji into modern Japanese is a great contribution to modern Japanese literature. While translating this work for over five years in her late sixties, she went through two operations for a detached retina. But she said that she wanted to finish the translation by any means, even if she lost her sight. This shows how strongly attached to this work she was. Probably while she was working on it, she was like a spirit medium, possessed with the spirit of Murasaki Shikibu or the Rokujō Lady. Furthermore, it is said that just before she died at age eighty-one, she started to translate Genji again. Translating The Tale of Genji may have been a form of salvation for Enchi. Although there are also translations by Yosano Akiko, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, and Tanabe Seiko, Enchi's translation has a high reputation. In some parts, she adds her own interpretations to the original, and those parts are expertly written so that contemporary readers can understand the world of Genji very well. Unfortunately nowadays this world-famous work is not widely read in the original in Japan, because it is too difficult and too long for contemporary readers. Therefore, Enchi's translation forms a good bridge to the Japanese classics. In addition, Edward Seidensticker mentioned
that when he was translating *The Tale of Genji* into English, he used Enchi's modern translation of this work as a reference.

In general, the idea of suppression or suppressed women which Enchi deals with looks incompatible with the openness of liberated Western society. Nevertheless, even in modern Western society, it is impossible for us to express completely the deepest parts of our psychology. Therefore, I think Western people as well can find significance in Enchi's works, in that her writings explore the repression experienced by people living in society. I hope that Enchi's works will continue to be read in both the East and the West in the future.
Notes


2. Translation of this and other excerpts from Masks is taken from Juliet Winters Carpenter's Masks.

3. Translation of this and other excerpts from The Waiting Years are taken from John Bester's The Waiting Years. All quotations in Chapter One are taken from The Waiting Years unless otherwise indicated.


5. Translation of this and other excerpts from Masks are taken from Juliet Winters Carpenter's Masks. All quotations until note 6 in Chapter Two are taken from Masks unless otherwise indicated.

6. Translation of this and other excerpts from Tale of the Mediums are taken from Namamiko monogatari, and all translations are mine. All quotations after note 5 in Chapter Two are taken from Namamiko monogatari unless otherwise indicated.

7. Translation of this and other excerpts from Wandering Souls are taken from the trilogy, Yukon, and all translations are mine. All quotations in Chapter Three are taken from the trilogy, Yukon, unless otherwise indicated.

8. Translation of this and other excerpts from The Mist in Karuizawa are taken from Saimu, and all translations are mine. All quotations in Chapter Four are taken from Saimu unless otherwise indicated.
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