



Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal

announces the winner of the
Best Article Prize for Volume 9 (2014–15)

Satoko Naito

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Beyond *The Tale of Genji*: Murasaki Shikibu as Icon and Exemplum in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth- Century Popular Japanese Texts for Women

Satoko Naito's "Beyond *The Tale of Genji*" complicates the claim that *Genji* is a tale by women for women. By tracing the relationship between the tale and its female readership, it concludes that, while Murasaki is held up as the ideal woman, her story is often viewed as dangerous reading for women. Through its broad mix of sources, the article demonstrates a deep knowledge of how the relationship between women and writing in Japan developed over the centuries, thus exemplifying the interdisciplinary ethos of *EMWJ*. It is also pitched exactly right for the readership of the journal, by unobtrusively explaining what readers unfamiliar with Japan need to know to understand her points. Naito's teasing out of differences in the evaluation of Murasaki Shikibu as a woman and of *Genji* itself provides a model for studies of female writers and their works in the West, as well as suggesting broad implications for the history of women's literacy.

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