



Michiko Niikuni Wilson

Professor
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Michiko Niikuni Wilson has worked extensively both in the field of literary criticism and as a translator of modern Japanese literature. Her particular interest is the intersection of literature as an activator of the imagination with the relevance of literature to larger humanistic concerns. Her first encounter with the West as an American Field Service scholarship high school student in Missouri awakened her to the richness of cross-cultural discourse. She subsequently returned to the U.S. as an undergraduate English major to advance her love of literature and completed her masters in Japanese literature and doctorate in comparative literature.

Ms. Wilson's appreciation of literary inquiry was further enriched by an examination of marginality and outsiderhood as developed in cultural anthropology. These notions converged with her research on comparative cultural perspectives, semiotics, and gender and other feminist issues in modern Japanese literature. She is a ranking expert on Nobel Laureate Kenzaburo Oe and on Minako Oba, both of whose work she has been instrumental in introducing to an English-speaking audience. More recently, she has been concentrating on critical essays written by modern and contemporary Japanese women writers whose iconoclastic and re-visionary voices as cultural critics speak to a broad audience hungry for new vehicles for social change. Ms. Wilson is also the editor of *Japanese Horizons* (a Japanese literature-in-translation series).

In all of her roles, she takes pleasure in introducing the writings of a wide range of Japanese writers to students, classroom teachers, non-Japanese literature specialists, and the general public.

Research Interests

Modern Japanese literature and poetics, women writers as cultural critics, feminist literary criticism, semiotics, satire, intercultural communication.

Courses:

Japanese Language Seminars (Reading works by such writers as Kawabata, Soseki, Oba, Oe, Murakami and Banana Yoshimoto; modern poetry; investigative journalism; mystery-detective fiction); Introduction to Modern Japanese Literature; Modern Japanese Women Writers; Japan's Nobel Laureates in Literature.

Selected Publications:

2011. *Of Birds Crying*. An English translation, with an Introduction, of Minako Ôba's 1985 novel *Naku tori no*. Cornell East Asia Series, forthcoming.
2007. "Kenzaburo Ôe: Laughing Prophet and Soulful Healer," the official Nobel Foundation Web site, http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/oe/index.html
1998. *Gender Is Fair Game: (Re)Thinking the (Fe)Male on the Works of Minako Ôba*. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe.
1994. *The Pinch Runner Memorandum*. Translation of Kenzaburo Ôe's 1976 novel *Pinchi runnaa chôsho*. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe.
1986. *The Marginal World of Ôe Kenzaburo: A Study in Themes and Techniques*. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe.