

Greg Rothman

ENG 202 - Wentworth Scholar Profile

On July 28th 2014, Henry Blanton will stand outside the international departure gate in the Atlanta airport. In his left hand, he'll hold a boarding pass for flight 1397 to Tokyo, Japan, scheduled to depart 35 minutes from this very moment and exactly two days after Henry's 25th birthday. In his right hand, a copy of Murasaki's *The Tale of Genji*, the classic Japanese text written by Murasaki around the year 1012. Although Henry had already read the book 1000 times, he planned to read it for the 1001 time on his flight, and maybe the 1002 if there is enough time.

As part of UNCW's Wentworth Scholarship Program, Henry received funding to travel to Japan, research Murasaki's book, and truly immerse himself into the text as if he was part of the novel himself. Although Henry has always been a fan of Japanese Pop Culture, he is truly looking forward to the opportunity to "examine in what ways [his] unacknowledged cultural attitudes shape critical perceptions of the world..." He will be... "uncover[ing] what commonalities, if any, exist outside of culture (or as a persistent epiphenomenon of culture)." While visiting Kyoto, the former capital of Heian Japan, Henry will be exposed to a relatively similar city to which is described in the book, as many of the Heian era structures are so well preserved that it closely resembles the area Murasaki lived and wrote long ago.

While most dread the thought of a 12 hour flight over the Pacific Ocean, Henry can't wait. With his copy of Murasaki's *Genji* in hand, and a strong desire to find answers and new perspectives, Henry will anxiously board his flight, pondering what knowledge and experiences await 20+ hours and 2/3 of the globe away.