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Shōjo Murasaki, Seinen Genji: Sexual Violence and Textual Violence in Yamato Waki's *Fleeting Dreams* and Egawa Tatsuya's *Tale of Genji* Manga

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Introduction

The *monogatari* 物語 or court tale genre cannot be extricated from its complex and complicated relationship with gender, be it that of its authors, readers, or main characters. The earliest extant examples, tales such as *Taketori monogatari* (竹取物語, The tale of the bamboo cutter, mid-ninth century), *Ochikubo monogatari* (落窪物語, The tale of Ochikubo, late tenth century), and *Utsuho monogatari* (うつほ物語, The tale of the cavern, ca. 970–983) dating from the early Heian period (794–1185) are attributed to male courtiers but were produced for feminine audiences.¹ Starting with Murasaki Shikibu's (紫式部 c. 973 or 978–c. 1014 or 1031) eleventh-century masterpiece *Genji monogatari* (源氏物語, The tale of Genji, ca. 1008), the genre came to be dominated by female authors who produced tales for the entertainment and the education of their aristocratic mistresses, although they also sometimes gained secret male readers as well.² Always a high stake in the tug of war between masculine and feminine influences in the history of Japanese literature, the *monogatari* genre teaches a significant lesson to literary scholars: that the meaning of its corpus of texts is not dictated so much by the texts themselves, as by whoever controls them culturally, economically, or politically.

Thus, court tales like the *Genji* became, in turn, a source of poetic and literary inspiration for medieval poets and *nō* (能) theater playwrights. They served as a clever visual strategy employed by Edo-period (1603–1868) *ukiyo-e* (浮世絵, “pictures of the floating world”) artists to achieve their ironic *mitate-e* (見立絵, parody pictures), which associated the high culture of the Heian period with the low culture of the “pleasure” quarters in early modern Japan; the *Genji* tale corpus has also been the target of



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numerous parodic rewritings by fiction writers. Modern and postmodern writers and artists have also reinterpreted *Genji monogatari*, turning it into a representative of traditional Japanese culture, national pride, and world literature.³ Some of the most recent forms of media to engage with Murasaki's court tale are manga, anime, and movies.⁴ These contemporary interpretations of the *Genji* are similarly colored by the complex interrelationships between artists, audiences, and genre constraints, but also, ultimately, by the persistently relevant issue of gender.

These contemporary artists are no strangers to the long artistic traditions that came before them. In fact, of the forty-odd *Genji* manga versions circulating today, none were created in a cultural vacuum. The 1996–1997 *Genji* by Hasegawa Hōsei (長谷川法世, b. 1945) relies heavily on painting techniques employed in the first *Genji monogatari emaki* (源氏物語絵巻, Tale of Genji picture scrolls, ca. 1120–1140), specifically the “blown-off” roof technique, and the artist himself admitted that he consulted early painter manuals and digests for inspiration.⁵ Additionally, Egawa Tatsuya's (江川達也, b. 1951) *Genji monogatari* (源氏物語, 2000–2005) was, according to Lynne K. Miyake, inspired by Edo period *shunga* (literally, “spring pictures” which means, in fact, pornographic prints).⁶ While some manga versions function as digests of the tale for a variety of audiences, others serve mainly entertainment purposes.

In this article, I examine two manga adaptations of *Genji monogatari*, one by a male and the other by a female manga artist, belonging to two different subgenres, *seinen manga* (青年漫画, manga directed at young men) and *shōjo manga* (少女漫画, manga aimed at young girls) respectively. The first is probably the most famous and widely consumed *manga* version of *Genji monogatari*, titled *Asaki yumemishi* (あさきゆめみし *Fleeting dreams*, serialized between 1980–1993) by female manga artist Yamato Waki (大和和紀, 1948–).⁷ The second is the more recent, sexually explicit “eropop” (*eroppoppu* エロポップ) version of *Genji monogatari* by male artist Egawa Tatsuya released between 2000 and 2005.⁸ My selection of these two manga was guided by a series of factors: the gender of the artists and that of their intended audiences; the genres to which the two works belong and their respective popularity within those genres; the different time periods during which they were produced; and, finally, the way in which their approaches to and adaptation of the *Genji* text contrast with each other thematically and stylistically.

I examine how these versions complicate previous readings of the tale, especially representations of sexual violence, and how the classical text,

created by Murasaki Shikibu for her fellow Heian noblewomen, finds new expressions in the adaptations aimed at present-day audiences.⁹ Focusing on how manga artists known for pushing the envelope deal with the complex topic of sexual violence in their works, I argue that the gender of the reader and the writer shape and influence the interpretation of sexually problematic scenes, seemingly almost independently, at times, from the classical text itself. This study is important because it helps us better understand the role of gender in contemporary manga, anime, and *Genji* movies and the complex interplay between a classical text, its author, contemporary artists, directors, and audiences.

The scenes I have selected are the earliest episodes of sexual violence in the tale, detailing encounters between Genji 源氏 and two different women, Utsusemi 空蟬 and Murasaki 紫, in chapters 2 “Hahakigi” 帚木 and 9 “Aoi” 葵 respectively. The former scene is the first episode of sexual violence in the tale, while the latter is probably the most critically examined scene in *Genji* scholarship. The classical text has been subject to extensive analyses, but there has been little scholarly work on the visual representations of sexual violence in these two episodes in contemporary media.¹⁰

“To Be or Not to Be”: Erasing Sexual Violence in the “Hahakigi” Chapter of *Genji monogatari*

The encounter between Genji and Utsusemi is the first sexual episode of the tale. Seventeen-year-old Genji is forced to stop for the night at the house of one of his retainers, the governor of Kii 紀伊守, and while there, he hears the voice of the governor’s young stepmother, the lady known as Utsusemi.¹¹ Bored and expecting female companionship, Genji leaves his sleeping quarters at night and roams around in search of the female voice he had heard before. He stumbles upon a sleepy Utsusemi, who initially takes him for her female servant. Genji picks Utsusemi up intending to move her to a secluded location, but on his way, he comes across the servant she has called for. The female servant, named Chūjō 中将, realizes what is happening, but also recognizes Genji and understands that there is nothing she can do to help her mistress. Genji, because of his high rank, can do what he pleases with impunity. Having secluded himself with Utsusemi, Genji initially tries to persuade her of his love, but she is adamant in her resistance. Tired of trying to convince her, Genji feels he is left with no choice, and rapes Utsusemi, leaving her as dawn breaks.

I have argued elsewhere that this episode is one of the most obvious

and the most egregious cases of sexual violence in the tale.¹² The language used is clear and unequivocal as demonstrated by the most recent *Genji* translation by Dennis Washburn, who comes the closest to the classical version of the tale. The translation clearly illustrates Utsusemi's frightened first reaction to Genji's unwelcome intrusion:

The woman had no idea what was happening and, feeling as though some spirit were assaulting her, she called out in fright. Since her robes were covering her face, however, her cry was muffled.¹³

Upon Genji's encounter with the servant, both women's reactions are very explicit:

Had he been a man of ordinary rank, she might have forcibly pulled her lady from his arms. But doing so would have ended up exposing the situation to the entire household. So she simply followed them, her heart in her throat.

Genji seemed unperturbed as he carried the lady into an interior chamber. Just before he closed the sliding doors, he told Chūjō: "Come for your mistress at dawn." The young wife was mortified at the prospect that Chūjō would now assume she had planned this affair with Genji in advance. Because she was drenched in perspiration and in obvious distress, Genji took pity and spoke tender words to her...¹⁴

Finally, after all his efforts of persuasion fail, Genji has no reservations about having sex with Utsusemi despite her protests:

She was compliant by nature, but in forcing herself to be resolute, she resembled supple bamboo, which, though it looks fragile, will not break easily.

The lady was now genuinely unhappy and found it unspeakably base that he had selfishly forced himself upon her. After it was over, he was moved to pity by her weeping. Although it pained him to see her in this state, he would have regretted it had he not taken her. Still, it was annoying that she should be so inconsolable.¹⁵

While the classical text is more subtle, Utsusemi's reactions and those of the eyewitness Chūjō 中将 speak for themselves.¹⁶ As the first case of sexual violence in *Genji monogatari*, the episode is powerful and hard to overlook. So how then have manga artists, like Yamato and Egawa, dealt with this scene?

In Yamato's case, because *Asaki yumemishi* belongs to the *shōjo* or

“young girl” genre, its focus is mostly on romantic encounters and prioritizes main female characters like Murasaki and Fujitsubo 藤壺 over secondary female characters like Utsusemi, Yūgao 夕顔, or Suetsumuhana 末摘花. Nevertheless, the *manga* comprises twelve volumes, and thus has plenty of space to dedicate to even less important characters. In fact, Suetsumuhana, the lady mentioned above, whose chief characteristic is a nose that resembles a red safflower, does make an appearance and serves as comic relief. Utsusemi, however, is completely erased from the *manga*.

It is telling when the only strategy an artist can find to tackle an uncomfortable episode is outright deletion; but in her choice to omit this scene, Yamato is by no means alone. One can only speculate how the earliest extant illustrated *Genji* scrolls, or *Genji monogatari emaki*, might have approached this episode since the entire chapter has been lost, but no other artist afterwards chose to engage with this encounter. For example, the “Hahakigi” illustration in the eighteenth-century *Genji gojūyonmai no uchi* (げんじ五十四まいのうち, *Genji* in fifty-four sheets) by Nishimura Shigenaga (西村重長, 1697?–1756) at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts simply depicts *Genji* leaving at dawn, with Utsusemi longingly seeing him off (Fig. 1). This is completely at odds with the events in the chapter, but very much in accordance with what the artistic canon prescribed.¹⁷



Figure 1. Nishimura Shigenaga. *Genji in Fifty-Four Sheets*. “The Hahakigi Chapter.” Woodblock print, ca. 1735. Photograph © 2021. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Without examining the entire corpus of *Genji* art it is difficult to make a definitive statement about why, in this chapter’s standard iconography,

Genji artists seem to avoid the scene of sexual violence between Genji and Utsusemi. Still, the fact that Yamato Waki, a female artist creating a *Genji* manga for mostly female readers, failed to explore this episode is disappointing because her influence extends beyond her work. A best-seller that sold over twelve million copies, Yamato's manga turned *Genji* into *Asaki yumemishi Genji* for generations of readers, as did the manga's later adaptation into a TV drama, an anime series, and a Takarazuka Review musical.¹⁸

The most recent *Genji* anime is *Genji monogatari sennenki* (源氏物語千年紀, The tale of Genji—A millennium-old journal, 2009, directed by Dezaki Osamu 出崎統, 1943–2011) for the one-thousand-year anniversary of *Genji monogatari* in 2008. Dezaki's series uses Yamato's manga as a source of inspiration and equally erases the character of Utsusemi from its episodes, among other such directorial decisions meant to exaggerate the romanticism of the tale and obscure its sexual violence.¹⁹

Egawa Tatsuya takes the opposite approach, greatly extending the length of Genji's encounter with Utsusemi: he dedicates some twenty pages to this episode, from Genji's initial stumbling upon the woman until the sexual act—and a proper sexual act it is, since in Egawa's manga the concept of sexual violence, as such, does not seem to exist at all. To put it differently, all sexual encounters in Egawa's *Genji* are presented as consensual and quite enthusiastically so, as I will demonstrate below. Egawa Tatsuya uses a sex-positive attitude in order to completely avoid the topic of sexual violence, while Yamato Waki over-romanticizes the story to obscure the same episodes.

One would think that by the twentieth century, artists would be able to display more nuance in their representations of sex and sexual violence, but in Egawa's *Genji* there are no clear lines between mutually desirable encounters (of which the tale provides plenty of examples) and episodes of sexual violence and rape. What is even more striking is that Egawa presents his version as an authoritative reading of the tale, bolstered not only by (mostly) accurate translations from classical Japanese into contemporary language, but also by crowding his frames with the text in classical Japanese. He also attempts, at times, a cursive script reminiscent of the *hentaigana* used in the manuscripts of the distant past.

In the frame below (Fig. 2), readers learn of Utsusemi's reaction to Genji. Egawa's version is perfectly accurate in both its use of the classical text, namely *mono ni osowaruru kokochi* (she felt as if assaulted by an evil spirit in a nightmare) and of its contemporary translation: *mono no ke ni*

toritsukarete iku kankaku ni osowarete (overwhelmed by the feeling of being possessed by an evil spirit).²⁰ In a later frame, which compares Utsusemi to “young bamboo,” both classical text and contemporary translations align perfectly: *nayotake kokochi shite, sasuga ni oru beku mo arazu* (she felt like the young bamboo, which indeed cannot be broken) becomes *shinayaka na take no yōna kanji ga shite, sasuga ni kantan ni oresō mo nai* (she felt like the flexible bamboo, which indeed cannot be broken easily) (Fig. 3).²¹



Figure 2. The *mono no ke* frame. Utsusemi feels “overwhelmed by the feeling of being possessed by an evil spirit.” Egawa, *Genji monogatari*, 2000–2005. Vol. 2, 153.

What does not align, with either classical or modern text, are the frames that follow, wherein Utsusemi just succumbs and seems to really enjoy Genji’s advances (Fig. 4). These frames alone would be enough to indicate that to Egawa, all *Genji* sex is consensual, unproblematic sex. His reading of the eleventh-century tale goes beyond just that, however. The last scenes of this episode, which turn from *shunga* to *hentai* (変態 contemporary pornographic anime), have Utsusemi exclaim, as she orgasms: “Aaaaah! Lord Genji! Your hand touches my dirty place, aaah!”

(*Aaa, Genji no kimi. Kōki no ote ga, atashi no kitanai tokoro ni....aaaaaaa*).²² The jump feels quite abrupt, especially in a context that includes the tale’s text in classical Japanese and attempts to claim authenticity. Needless to say, there is no phrase in Murasaki’s tale to correspond to the passage above.



Figure 3. The *nayotake* frame, where, to Genji, Utsusemi “felt like the young bamboo, which indeed cannot be broken.” Egawa, *Genji monogatari*, 2000–2005. Vol. 2, 166.

Egawa’s artistic choice might be explained by the publisher’s requirements. His version of *Genji monogatari* was serialized in *MANGA Ōru-man* (MANGA オールマン, All man), a comic book magazine for young men (*seinen*), as opposed to Yamato’s *shōjo*, and the artist even admitted that “his dual purpose in creating *Genji monogatari* was to provide a resource for study and a ‘night friend’ for his target audience, teenagers preparing for college examinations.”²³ While Yamato introduces the tale as a wonderfully romantic story of love and loss, Egawa similarly wants to convince his young male audience that they should read *Genji monogatari* as a story of sex with no strings attached, where anything goes. After all, as professional artists in a competitive industry, both need to

respond to the demands of their readers and create works within the confines of their genres, more than they need to follow closely a court tale written a millennium ago.



Figure 4. Genji has sex with Utsusemi. Egawa, *Genji monogatari*, 2000–2005. Vol. 2, 170.

Romance and Pedophilia: Murasaki’s Sexual Initiation in the “Aoi” Chapter of *Genji monogatari*

The second episode examined here is also the most contested one in the tale. It involves Genji and the heroine Murasaki. The episode takes place in chapter 9 titled “Aoi” (“Heart-to-Heart,” or “Leaves of Wild Ginger”) but the first encounter between the two characters happens long before that, in chapter 5, “Wakamurasaki” 若紫 (“Young Murasaki,” or “Little Purple Gromwell”) from which the Murasaki character derives her name.

In chapter 5, eighteen-year-old Genji goes into the mountains to meet a famous ascetic to find a cure for his unnamed illness. There, he spies on young Murasaki and her grandmother, who is a nun. The little girl is crying because another child has freed her pet sparrow. Genji is immediately struck because the ten-year-old girl resembles his first love—his

stepmother Fujitsubo, who looks similar to his own mother Kiritsubo 桐壺—and decides to do everything in his power to take possession of young Murasaki and raise her as his ideal woman. Their initial encounter—him spying on her from a hidden place (*kaimami* 垣間見)—is probably the most famous *Genji* scene and also the one most widely illustrated.

Many premodern *Genji* artists depict this scene in very similar manners: Genji, often accompanied by his retainer Koremitsu 惟光, hides behind a brushwood fence and spies on young Murasaki who is crying because one of her play friends has released her pet sparrow.²⁴ One such example is the following “Wakamurasaki” illustration in the manner of Tosa Mitsuyoshi (土佐光吉, 1539–1613) dating from the mid-seventeenth century (Fig. 5).²⁵



Figure 5. In the manner of Tosa Mitsuyoshi. “Wakamurasaki.” Album leaf; ink, color, and gold on paper, mid-seventeenth century. Courtesy of Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Gift of Charles Parker.

Both Yamato and Egawa draw from this traditional iconography when illustrating the initial encounter between Genji and Murasaki. They portray Genji and his faithful retainer Koremitsu spying through a fence on the little girl and her grandmother. In the Egawa manga, the two men look outright ridiculous, craning their necks to catch a glimpse of the inside chambers, but it is not Egawa who pushes the boundaries in deviating from established *Genji* iconography this time around. Because Yamato’s *Asaki yumemishi* is a *shōjo* manga, romance is the first and most important ingredient. This scene in the “Wakamurasaki” chapter

introduces the girl Murasaki, who is the most important female character of the tale, Genji's future wife, and the love of his life. To young readers of *shōjo* manga, this is not just an encounter but a “fated encounter” (*unmei no deai* 運命の出会い). Therefore, Yamato must romanticize it to the extreme, more than just depicting it as a simple act of spying. Thus, while Genji does not interact at all with Murasaki in the classical text, in Yamato's manga, the two play together and seem to bond immediately (Figs. 6 and 7). Other artists follow similar choices, such as Dezaki's 2009 anime, which embellishes this encounter even further by depicting Genji as a heroic figure who succeeds in retrieving Murasaki's lost sparrow and returning it to her.



Figure 6. Genji first encounters Murasaki 1. Yamato, *Asaki yumemishi*, 1980–1993. Vol. 1, 166.

In addition to introducing the fated meeting of the lovers, the manga and anime scenes serve yet another purpose: to mitigate and excuse Genji's subsequent behavior towards young Murasaki. Genji soon finds out that the girl not only resembles his stepmother Fujitsubo, but is actually related to her. Murasaki is the daughter of imperial prince Hyōbu (*Hyōbukyō no miya* 兵部卿宮), who is Fujitsubo's brother, and as such Fujitsubo's niece. Murasaki's mother was a lower-ranking consort who had died and left the child in the care of her grandmother. Determined to have the girl as his

own and raise her into his ideal woman, Genji attempts to persuade the grandmother to just hand her over to him. The grandmother refuses, thwarting Genji's plans for the present.



Figure 7. Genji first encounters
Murasaki 2. Yamato, *Asaki
yumemishi*, 1980–1993. Vol. 1, 167.

The grandmother eventually dies, and Genji, hearing that the girl's father plans to take her in, abducts young Murasaki before it happens, hiding her away in his mansion. The scene of this abduction is another case of courtship-related violence and the language of the classical text attests to it: Murasaki is terrified to be taken away in the middle of a stormy night, her ladies-in-waiting are outraged and scared, and her wet nurse is forced to choose between staying behind to face the princely father's wrath or to follow her mistress into the unknown.

Once the girl is under his control, Genji takes on a parental role, educating Murasaki in a series of skills and arts, providing for her, and bringing young companions to play with her. He, in fact, instructs the girl to think of him as her father and, to his credit, does behave fatherly for several years, until Murasaki comes of age at fourteen.²⁶ In chapter 9 "Aoi", Genji loses his principal wife in childbirth. Returning to his

mansion after his wife's funeral, he is surprised to discover a much grown Murasaki and decides he should not wait any longer to make her his wife.

Murasaki's sexual initiation is very elliptical in the classical text and readers are unsure what happens between the two during the night. What the text clearly indicates, however, is Murasaki's reaction the day after, a reaction so powerful and visceral that it should be taken as a sign that the girl's sexual initiation might have constituted sexual violence. The only hint that sex occurred is a very brief sentence telling us that "one morning Genji woke up early, but Murasaki refused to get up. Her behavior worried her attendants. 'What's wrong?' they whispered. 'She seems unusually out of sorts today?'"²⁷

Genji then tries to placate her and leaves her a poem in which he expresses his feelings of love, but Murasaki does not react well to this either:

It had never crossed her mind that he might be the kind of man who harbored such thoughts about her, and she burned with shame when she recalled their sordid first night. *How could I have been so naïve? How could I have ever trusted a man with such base intentions?*²⁸

Genji returns to Murasaki during the day, but she still refuses to leave her bed or answer his inquiries.

Murasaki was still lying facedown. She pulled the bedding up over her face so that she would not have to look at him. When her attendants withdrew, Genji went over to her.

"Why are you acting so despondent? Are you displeased with me? I never imagined that you could be so cold. Your women must think this is all very queer."

He tugged her bedding away. *She was bathed in perspiration, and tears had soaked the hair framing her forehead.*²⁹

How do contemporary artists negotiate this scene between a mature Genji and a very young Murasaki, which may be interpreted as pedophilic by modern standards? Some artists, like Dezaki Osamu in the *Genji* anime, prefer to treat this scene as consensual and present it as the long-expected marriage between Genji and Murasaki. The preliminary events are depicted in such a way as to convince the audience that what happens is mutually desirable or even that it is Murasaki, not Genji, who initiates the relationship. In the last episode of the anime series, Murasaki is shown

putting on makeup and getting ready to welcome Genji back, then urging him to see her as a potential lover and not as a child. The consummation scene is presented tastefully, focusing on the beauty of both characters depicted in a wonderful color palette, as if basking in their mutual love.

Surprisingly, although inspired by Yamato's manga, Dezaki does not use her approach to this scene, because Yamato follows closely the classical text (Figs. 8–11). Her Murasaki is shocked, feels betrayed, cries to be left alone and refuses to engage with Genji the next day (Figs. 10, 11), just as she does in the original tale. It is interesting to consider why Yamato might have decided to keep this episode when she so easily scrubbed the Utsusemi episode from her rendition of the tale. According to Lynne Miyake, Yamato's artistic decisions about omitting, expanding, or reducing episodes, can be traced to "her roots in *shōjo* manga" and the attempt to highlight "the romance and love encounters between the principals at almost every turn and effectively rewrites *Genji monogatari* in both word and image in the style of 1970s–1980s *shōjo* manga."³⁰ The artist focuses, therefore, more on romantic episodes like the love between the emperor and the Kiritsubo Consort or, as in this case, between Genji and Murasaki, than on episodic encounters like the one between Genji and Utsusemi.

Indeed, Yamato creates the kind of romance that allows for the inclusion of some episodes of sexual violence by creating the first encounter between Genji and Murasaki as a "fated meeting"; by presenting Murasaki's abduction as nothing more than a relocation; by having Murasaki address Genji not as "father" (お父様, *otōsama*) but as "big brother" (お兄様, *onīsama*) (Fig. 9), thus dispelling the quasi-incestuous undertones of this episode; and by portraying Genji as unbearably beautiful and fascinating.³¹ In that respect, her approach is no different from the strategies adopted by contemporary popular romances in the West, such as *Twilight* and *Fifty Shades of Grey*, where abusive and predatory behavior is often disguised as utterly romantic.³²

The most problematic approach to the Genji-Murasaki relationship comes from Egawa Tatsuya's *Genji* manga, ironically so since he does not even illustrate the episode. His manga series ends with chapter 7, just two volumes short of chapter 9 "Aoi" in question. Nevertheless, he sexualizes young Murasaki long before the classical text does, by illustrating Genji's thoughts and fantasies of her, even while she is a prepubescent ten-year-old, which happens four separate times.³³ The result is highly disturbing. Page after page, we are being shown Genji disrobing and touching a child's



Figure 8. Genji first sleeps with Murasaki 1. Yamato Waki, *Asaki yumemishi*, 1980–1993. Vol. 2, 218.



Figure 9. Genji first sleeps with Murasaki 2. Yamato Waki, *Asaki yumemishi*, 1980–1993.



Figure 10. Genji first sleeps with Murasaki 3. Yamato, *Asaki yumemishi*, 1980–1993. Vol. 2, 220.



Figure 11. Genji first sleeps with Murasaki 4. Yamato, *Asaki yumemishi*, 1980–1993. Vol. 2, 221.

body, only to understand at the very end that he does not go through with it and realizes Murasaki is still too young to have sex.

In volume 5 of Egawa's *Genji monogatari*, page 216 reads: "Close at hand, there is this young grass. From this young girl, I will raise my ideal woman. Ah, she is so cute.... 'Do you feel good?' petting, petting (background). I will make her into a woman who will feel love...."³⁴

On page 218 of the same volume, the upper two panels read: "Yes, but it tickles a little.' However,...she's still a child. Not to mention I cannot go all the way.... I cannot even go to the point of feeling good (feeling it). It's unbearable, this uncertain feeling...."³⁵

While it is true that Egawa is playing on our contemporary discomfort regarding Murasaki's age, he also exploits and distorts the text. As I have already argued more generally about Egawa's manga, choosing to graphically illustrate the sexual encounter between Genji and the tale's women is in accordance with Egawa's own professed purpose. In Egawa's *Genji*, two chapters are conflated: chapter 5 "Wakamurasaki," that does not include anything sexual between Murasaki and Genji, borrows the sexual elements of chapter 9 "Aoi," where Murasaki's sexual initiation takes place. As much as Egawa takes great pains not to portray Genji as a rapist in the Utsusemi episode, here he depicts him as a pedophile. Most disturbing, however, is that the manga is intended to function both as educational and as masturbatory material for adolescent boys; presenting the naked body of a very young girl for masturbatory purposes offers a clear view into the pervasive sexism and misogyny of *seinen* manga and its fetishizing of childhood innocence.³⁶

There is one other aspect that makes Egawa's *Genji monogatari* manga offensive: his use of the classical text within his frames, like we saw in the Utsusemi episode. In both Fig. 2 and Fig. 3, the upper sections include Egawa's translations in standard font, while the lower sections provide the original text in a hand-written script. While Yamato Waki has adapted the text in classical Japanese in *Asaki yumemishi* and loosely translated it into contemporary colloquial Japanese, Egawa has included not only a modern translation of the *Genji*, but also the classical text, with the stated intention of encouraging young men to read the *Genji* in its entirety or maybe help them memorize it for university entrance exams.

Why would Egawa's reliance on the classical Japanese text make his manga an even more egregious act of textual violence than it already is? To put it simply, because he borrows a feminine text—Murasaki Shikibu's own words and phrases—to support a misogynistic reading of the tale.

Murasaki Shikibu's description of Utsusemi, who "resembled supple bamboo, which, though it looks fragile, will not break easily" (*nayotake kokochi shite sasuga our beku mo arazu* なよ竹心地してさすが折るべくもあらず) is reduced, in both length and meaning, only two pages later to her "dirty place" (*kitanai tokoro* 汚いところ).³⁷ The *Genji* author's beautiful simile becomes in Egawa's manga a vulgar reference to female genitalia, while the female character's sustained resistance to Genji's unwanted advances turns into eager acceptance and subservient self-deprecation. Similarly, the act of rape has been transformed into enthusiastic sex, little girls' bodies are sexualized, and women's bodies are often "dirty" (*kitanai* 汚い). The problem with Egawa's version is, therefore, not its sexual explicitness or attempts at humor and irony, but his erasure of sexual violence and crass objectification of women. Egawa's female characters become bodies to be possessed, while the tale's author serves as a tool to enhance the male manga artist's authority.

These strategies of erasing or reframing sexual violence in the tale and attempts by artists and directors to push new readings that their audiences might find more palatable are not limited to the manga milieu: the latest *Genji* movie, *Genji monogatari sennen no nazo* (源氏物語千年の謎, The tale of Genji. A thousand-year-old enigma, 2011), directed by Tsuruhashi Yasuo (鶴橋康夫, 1940–) and released in 2011, opens with a scene of rape, whose protagonists are not immediately identified.³⁸ Despite the unprecedented opening for a *Genji* movie, Tsuruhashi's version ends up rehashing the same refrain that court tales written by men one thousand years ago also supported: that sometimes women must put up with rape in order to succeed in life.

Starting with *Ochikubo monogatari* (落窪物語, The tale of Ochikubo, late tenth century), authored most probably by a male courtier, young aristocratic Heian ladies were encouraged to endure hardship—sexual violence included—without complaint, just like their literary models. Such endurance was encouraged in order that they might reach the pinnacle of Heian success: becoming an empress or giving birth to one. According to Joshua S. Mostow,

Comparing oneself to a heroine in a fictional work, of course, was not something that women did all on their own - on the contrary, early fairy tales, romances, and novels were written by men with an aim to show girls how they should behave themselves, and demonstrating the wonderful things that would happen to them if they did, and the awful things that would happen if they didn't. This function is quite clear in the mid-tenth

century Japanese “Cinderella” tale, the *Ochikubo monogatari*. Here, a perfectly passive heroine, whose sole meaningful action is the writing of poems, is rescued from an evil stepmother by a handsome prince and becomes the mother of a future empress—the acme of power for a Heian woman.³⁹

The opening scene of Tsuruhashi’s movie, however, is not about *Genji monogatari*, but about its author: it is Murasaki Shikibu being raped by Fujiwara no Michinaga (藤原道長, 966–1028), the most powerful aristocrat of his day and the father of her literary patron, Empress Shōshi (藤原彰子, 988–1074). The movie goes on to argue that it was because of this rape that Murasaki Shikibu started writing *Genji monogatari* and that her hero, Genji, was Michinaga in disguise. In fact, Michinaga himself takes credit later in the movie, for putting this idea into Murasaki’s head. Like the character Lady Ochikubo in the eponymous tale, in order to become not the mother of an empress, but rather a famous *monogatari* writer, Murasaki Shikibu must put up with sexual violence as a price to pay for success or as a rite of passage. In Tsuruhashi’s movie, just like in Egawa’s manga, female voices, female scripts, and female literary authority have faded into insignificance. It is men, be they the artists or the male protagonists, who shape the meaning of the tale and whose voices should be heard, sometimes at the expense of the most important voice of them all: that of *Genji*’s own female author.⁴⁰

Gender, Graphics, and Style

The differences between the *shōjo* and *seinen* manga genres extend beyond content choices and the works’ focus on romance and sexual titillation respectively. Graphically, the two manga subgenres determine the illustration style chosen for the main characters, the use of color, and the inclusion of background detail. A cursory examination of Egawa’s drawing style highlights a series of characteristics very much distinct from Yamato Waki’s style.

Egawa’s main characters, including even the Shining Genji, are moderately good-looking and more realistically depicted than most of the characters in *shōjo* manga. They are believably drawn, with normal-sized eyes and unexaggerated facial expressions (Fig. 13). Unlike the frames in Yamato’s manga (Fig. 12), in Egawa’s *Genji* there are few superfluous background details or unnecessary costume details, keeping the viewer’s focus on the main characters, their expressions, and the accompanying text.

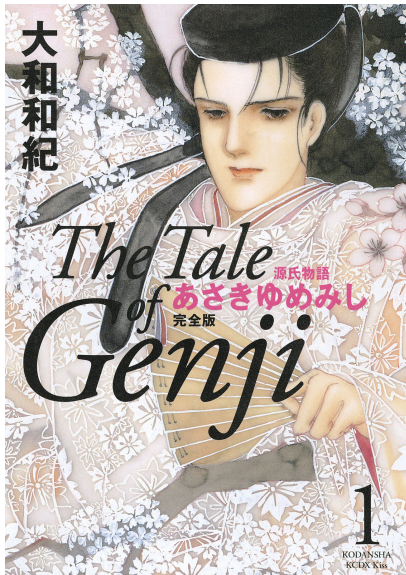


Figure 12. Volume 1, cover, Yamato, *Asaki yumemishi*, 1980–1993.

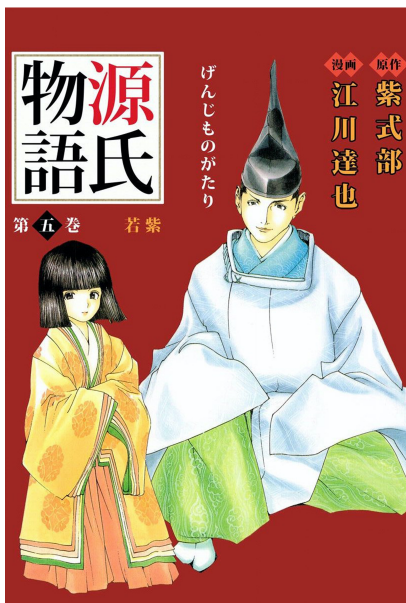


Figure 13, Volume 5, cover, Egawa, *Genji monogatari*, 2000–2005.

Even the choice of colored frames differs: Egawa opts to color his most graphic sexual scenes, pausing the flow of the manga for maximal effect and keeping the viewer's gaze drawn to the relevant "bits," which, most of the time, are the female characters' naked breasts (Fig. 4).

In fact, nakedness is always gendered in Egawa's *Genji*: in both episodes, only the female characters are depicted naked, while Genji remains not only mostly robed, but his garments are also drawn with some care for detail. For instance, in the "Utsusemi" frames, the female character goes from wearing the typical Heian undergarments consisting of unlined white robe and red trousers, both depicted as simple and without any decorating patterns, to gradually losing both and ending up naked in the final frames of the episode. Genji, by contrast, remains fully clothed, in a green-leafed patterned yellow robe, and even gets to keep his *eboshi* (烏帽子, tall, black headgear worn by Heian male aristocrats).⁴¹

In the "Murasaki" sequence, both characters start out fully clothed and end up naked, but while Murasaki's prepubescent body is on full display, Genji's remains in the shadows. Here, too, he gets to keep his headgear, his erect *eboshi*, a not-so-subtle stand-in for the invisible penis.⁴² Egawa undoubtedly prioritizes the male gaze throughout these episodes, with breasts as a focal point, mostly due to the Japanese censorship laws, which require the blurring of pubic areas.

According to Heian period aesthetic preferences, depictions of nakedness were regarded as uncouth and stood in contrast to the refined, clothed body, the result of an impeccable aristocratic taste and cultural connoisseurship.⁴³ Indeed, in Egawa's manga, the naked female bodies are not particularly refined in their depiction: there is an awkwardness at work in the way Utsusemi's breasts are shaped and her body looks unnaturally contorted in the final orgasm scene. Her limbs and waist are unrealistically thin and her skin is covered in beads of sweat in a mock reinterpretation of the classical text, in which sweat imagery symbolizes physical and psychological distress and trauma. With sexual secretions pouring down her legs, Utsusemi becomes a body controlled by animalistic sexual urges, while Genji gets to keep his clothes, dignity, and personhood.⁴⁴

In the "Murasaki" sequence, the naked female body is objectified by different means: deprived of secondary sexual characteristics because Murasaki is too young to have developed them, and of any sexual urges as well, the young heroine becomes a docile doll that Genji gets to disrobe, touch, and position however he sees fit, maintaining throughout these

frames a serenely empty expression as Genji's thoughts (and his alone) are being revealed to the readers. Since this scene is ultimately just a figment of Genji's imagination, being a witness to his thoughts alone might not seem unusual; but taken in conjunction with the apparent lack of responsiveness on the part of Murasaki, the final effect of silencing the young girl is disquieting at the very least.

Independently of whether Egawa subscribes to the Heian-period view of bodies, both episodes examined here employ artistic strategies fairly common in the *seinen* genre directed at teen and young adult male audiences: just like a usual harem subgenre work (*harēmu mono* ハーレムもの, or harem works) in which a young male protagonist is surrounded by numerous female characters vying for his attention and succumbing to his appeal, Egawa's Genji too encounters and seduces a variety of women, from the highly sexualized Utsusemi to the Lolita-esque Murasaki. The depictions of naked female bodies here are very much in tune with those in the harem manga, where big-breasted always-horny women are objectified, and so too are the innocent and virginal prepubescent girls, reinscribing again the fundamental misogyny on part of the *seinen* genre.

Yamato's *shōjo* style is almost the absolute opposite of Egawa's: the *Asaki yumemishi* characters are unrealistically attractive. Female protagonists are always depicted with huge, oversized eyes and lustrous hair and Genji is androgynously gorgeous, reminiscent of a Takarazuka rendition of this role.⁴⁵ Yamato's style abounds in detail: the costumes are lavishly decorated, characters' hair becomes a distinct narrative feature, and frames overflow with flower blossoms, trees, and other vegetal elements, much like traditional *Genji* paintings would enhance the narrative moment by means of natural elements (Fig. 12).

In *Asaki yumemishi*, colored pages are rarer than in Egawa's *Genji* and tend to be limited to frontispieces or chapter covers. Frontispieces usually feature lavish portraits of Genji (Fig. 12) or of significant female characters, while chapter pages generally show Genji and a female character together, with Murasaki being a clear favorite. When sex happens in the manga, Yamato chooses tasteful but rather prudish illustrations relying more on implicit rather than explicit nakedness, showing only a naked leg or exposed collarbone, a conspicuously arched neck or tensed arm. She also employs the classical Heian poetry favorite, courtesy of poet Izumi Shikibu (和泉式部, 976–1030), the *midare-gami* (乱れ髪, hair in disarray) in order to hint at the sexual act, consensual or not (Figs. 9 and 10). In that respect, her graphic choices are not unrelated

to Murasaki Shikibu's classical text, equally elliptic when it comes to sexual description and relying similarly on metaphors, metonyms, and subtle hints to describe sexual encounters in the tale.

Ultimately, by including the female voices, albeit in a narrative, which prioritizes romance and safeguards the male protagonist's perfect image, Yamato's female characters are rarely two-dimensional or reduced to their bodies: the readers can follow their thoughts and understand their feelings, both when they fall in love with Genji and when they are deeply hurt by him. The episodes of sexual violence, when they are illustrated, draw from the classical text of the tale as well. However, like Egawa, Yamato is aware of the requirements of her genre and sometimes change sacrifices accuracy in order to provide "fan service" towards her readers.⁴⁶

Conclusion

The analyses of the two manga versions of *Genji monogatari* examined here, together with the brief incursions into significant scenes from *Genji* anime and movies, provide a new insight into the *shōjo* and *seinen* manga genres and other contemporary media and their engagements with premodern literary texts. In particular, by focusing on various artistic choices in illustrating episodes of sexual violence from the *Genji* text, I have highlighted how genre constraints and gendered readership shape, transform, limit, and dictate new ways for manga artists to reimagine premodern literary texts.

In Yamato Waki's vividly illustrated *Asaki yumemishi* version of *Genji monogatari*, the *shōjo* genre, with its focus on love and romanticism, demands that the artist omit episodes that she cannot otherwise romanticize. Thus, Yamato prefers to completely erase from her work episodic characters such as Utsusemi, whose background story cannot be spun into heroine material, because she is an already married woman relentlessly pursued by young Genji, and who exits the tale for a long time before briefly returning to the tale in chapter 16 "Sekiya" 関屋. Her story line does not allow the manga artist to make her into a lifelong romantic interest of the hero and so her first violent encounter can never be explained away in hindsight as Genji's forgivable outburst of passion.

Murasaki, Genji's lifetime companion and one of his wives, on the other hand, has been viewed as the ultimate heroine of the tale—though she does share the spotlight with an entire cast of other women who have aroused Genji's amorous interest.⁴⁷ As such, by staging their first meeting as a "fated encounter" and by spending time developing the relationship

between her and Genji both prior to and after her sexual initiation, Yamato can well afford to follow closely Murasaki's tale and emphasize a melodramatic development that requires suffering and anguish before love and conjugal happiness. Therefore, while in the former episode the artist completely erases the classical tale in order to avoid an uncomfortable scene of sexual violence, in the latter, she illustrates Murasaki's profound distress after her sexual initiation, but frames the scene as part of a larger, romantic love story.

Egawa's *seinen* version of the *Genji* might seem superior in terms of closeness to the classical text: he does not erase the "Utsusemi" episode and the only reason he has not produced a scene showing an adult sexual encounter between Murasaki and Genji is because his series ended prior to the chapter in question. In fact, should he ever take it up again, it is highly unlikely he would shy away from the most famous sexual scene of the tale. Moreover, unlike Yamato, who provides a translation of the classical text into colloquial contemporary Japanese, Egawa generously offers the text in classical Japanese in addition to a contemporary translation. And yet, his shallow engagement with sexual violence makes his *Genji* at times deeply disturbing, arguably with strong misogynistic undertones.

In his "Utsusemi" episode, sexual violence becomes consensual sex that the woman vocally asks for; the female body is naked, contorted, misshapen and, most importantly, "dirty," all while the male body preserves its inherent dignity. In addition, in the absence of a "Murasaki" episode, the glimpses readers see in the preliminary chapters are suggestive enough to conclude that Egawa's approach to Murasaki's sexual initiation would not have been much different, possibly with a Murasaki that remains doll-like and passive in her acceptance of Genji's active manipulation or, even worse, with one that actively asks for it, like Utsusemi.

Director Dezaki's artistic choice in the *Genji monogatari: sennenki* anime series demonstrates that this imagined version of an Egawa Murasaki, one who initiates the sexual relationship with Genji instead of being the one initiated into, is a plausible one. It also draws an ironic connection between two works and two genres which should not have many common points, from style, to content, to themes and tropes, to markets and audiences: Dezaki selects the Egawa interpretation of *Genji* sex, which is a staple of most sex in *seinen* manga—as vocally enthusiastic and consensual, especially on the part of the woman—and grafts it to the

romantic *shōjo* version of the *Genji* of Yamato Waki's *Asaki yumemishi*.

The resulting Frankenstein of manga crossbreeding highlights one unique characteristic of the manga engagement with premodern texts: that genre and gender of the artists and their readers matter the most and do result in completely different interpretations of the same classical text, different drawing styles, and emphasis on different themes and characters. When sexual violence enters the picture, however, both *shōjo* and *seinen*, female and male manga artists, young girls or young men readers, seem to prefer to obscure it, erase it or explain it away as primary strategies not so much of engagement, as of deflection and effacement. In the twenty-first century, one can only look forward to a more nuanced reading of *Genji*'s sexual encounters and a sharper distinction between mutually pleasurable sex and sexual violence.

NOTES

¹ For a more nuanced discussion of the interplay of gender and genre in the early history of *nikki* 日記 (women's diaries) and *monogatari* respectively, see Joshua S. Mostow, *At the House of Gathered Leaves: Shorter Biographical and Autobiographical Narratives from Japanese Court Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), and Tomiko Yoda, *Gender and National Literature: Heian Texts in the Constructions of Japanese Modernity* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 2004).

² The *Genji* author's account on how the tale started to circulate and her humble bragging about having Emperor Ichijō (一条天皇, 980–1011) as one of her readers are described in her diary. See Richard Bowering, trans., *The Diary of Murasaki Shikibu* (London: Penguin Books, 2005).

³ See, for example, Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki, eds., *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001); Michael Emmerich, *The Tale of Genji: Translation, Canonization, and World Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Thomas Harper and Haruo Shirane, eds., *Reading the Tale of Genji Sources from the First Millennium* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

⁴ Unlike the other *Genji*, Minamoto no Yoshitsune (源義経), who inspired and became the protagonist of the popular PlayStation 2 video game *Genji: Dawn on the Samurai* (ゲンジ, Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2005), Hikaru Genji

(光源氏) has yet to reach similar popularity in the world of video games. Still, he is featured in educational games such as *Minna de dokusho DS: Genji monogatari + Chotto dake bungaku* (みんなで読書DS：源氏物語+ちょっとだけ文学, Let's read together DS: The tale of Genji + A little bit of literature, Nintendo DS Games, 2008) and serves as inspiration, albeit in an indirect manner, for dating simulation games such as *Gyaku Genji monogatari: josei muke ren'ai gēmu mur'yō* (逆源氏物語：女性向け恋愛ゲーム無料, The reverse tale of Genji: Free romance games for young women) (Ciagram Co. LTD., 2020).

⁵ Lynne K. Miyake, “Graphically Speaking: Manga Versions of “*The Tale of Genji*,”” *Monumenta Nipponica*, 63.2 (2008): 361. See also Kitamura Yuika 北村 結花, “Sexuality, Gender, and *The Tale of Genji* in Modern Japanese Translations and Manga,” in *Envisioning the Tale of Genji: Media, Gender and Cultural Production*, ed. Haruo Shirane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 329–59.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 370.

⁷ Yamato Waki, *Asaki yumemishi: Genji monogatari* (Kodansha, 1980–1991). In his article in this special edition, Joshua S. Mostow comments on the commercial and popular success of this manga series, as opposed to educational manga adaptations of other Heian classics.

⁸ Egawa Tatsuya, *Genji monogatari* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2000–2005).

⁹ A working definition of sexual violence that is not anachronistic and still applies to Heian period sexual encounters, their twentieth century reiterations, contemporary Japanese society, as well as contemporary U. S. society, is impossible to achieve. Therefore, I have employed elsewhere a very basic definition of sexual violence (used as an umbrella term) and of rape (as a specific instance of sexual violence), that states that “sexual violence and rape, share a series of communalities: they are unwanted, unwelcome, and unpleasant for the women involved. What this means is that the focus in the textual analyses included here is entirely on the ways women react to various types of male behavior. The heroines’ embodied experiences take precedent and are used in determining the patterns of representing sexual violence in the text.” Otilia Milutin, “Sweat, Tears and Nightmares: Textual Representations of Sexual Violence in Heian and Kamakura *Monogatari*” (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 2015), 47.

¹⁰ See, for example, the works of Japanese feminist Komashaku Kimi 駒尺喜美, *Murasaki Shikibu no messēji* 紫式部のメッセージ (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1991), and of *Genji* translator Setouchi Jakuchō 瀬戸内寂聴 *Genji monogatari no onnagimitachi* 源氏物語の女君たち (Tokyo: Nihon hōsō shuppan kyōkai, 2008), and Setouchi Jakuchō, *Genji ni aisareta onnatachi* 源氏に愛された女

たち (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1993) or, in English, Margaret H. Childs, “The Value of Vulnerability: Sexual Coercion and the Nature of Love in Japanese Court Literature,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 58.4 (1999): 1059–1079, and Royall Tyler, “I Am I: Genji and Murasaki,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 54.4 (Winter 1999): 435–80; “Marriage, Rank and Rape,” 2002; *The Disaster of the Third Princess: Essays on The Tale of Genji*, available at http://epress.anu.edu.au/third_princess/html/frames.php.

- ¹¹ The characters’ ages throughout this article are given by the Japanese count, according to which the calendar year of birth marks age one. A seventeen-year-old Genji is, by a non-Japanese age count, only sixteen. Utsusemi’s age is harder to estimate, but she is certainly older than Genji, but much younger than her spouse, probably closer in age to the governor son than to her husband.
- ¹² Milutin, “Sweat, Tears and Nightmares,” 126–156.
- ¹³ Dennis C. Washburn, trans., *The Tale of Genji* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016), 45. For the classical text, see *Genji monogatari*, vol. 1, *Shin Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新日本古典文学全集 [henceforward cited as: *SNKBZ*], vol. 20 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1994), 99–102. This passage appears as follows: 物におそはるる心地して、「や」とおびゆれど、顔に衣のさはりて音にも立てず。
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 46. The classical text reads: 並々の人ならばこそ荒らかにも引きかなぐらめ、それだに人のあまた知らむはいかがあらむ、心も騒ぎて、慕ひ来たれど、動もなくて、奥なる御座に入りたまひぬ。障子を引き立てて、源氏「暁に御迎へにものせよ」とのたまへば、女は、この人の思ふらむことさへ死ぬばかりわりなきに、流るるまで汗になりて、いとなやましげなる、いとほしけれど、例の、いづこより取う出たまふ言の葉にかあらむ。
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 47. The classical text reads: 人がらのたをやぎたるに、強き心をしひて加へたれば、なよ竹の心地して、さすがに折るべくもあらず。まことに心やましくて、あながちなる御心ばへを、言ふ方なしと思ひて、泣くさまなどいとあはれなり。心苦しくはあれど、見ざらましかば口惜しからましと思す。慰めがたくうしと思へれば....
- ¹⁶ Chūjō is a witness to the scene in both Murasaki’s tale and in Egawa’s manga.
- ¹⁷ In the pre-sixteenth century *Genji monogatari ekotoba* 源氏物語絵, the instructions setting the scene for this “Hahakigi” episode specify:
- “It is about the middle of the month.... The still bright in the dawn sky and the cocks should be crowing in the garden. Genji, who has made his way through to the side of Utsusemi (the lady of the locust shell) is returning at dawn. She sees him to the door. There should be the serving woman, Chūjō. The house comes to life, as Genji’s men awaken. Genji summons the governor of Kii to his palace.”
- See Miyeko Murase, *The Iconography of The Tale of Genji: Genji monogatari ekotoba* (New York: Weatherhill, 1983), 47.

- ¹⁸ Miyake, 2008, 369. Miyake’s source for the *Asaki yumemishi* sale numbers is *Manga jinmei jiten* (漫画人名辞典), (Tokyo: Nichigai Associates, 2003), 404.
- ¹⁹ *Genji monogatari sennenki* (源氏物語千年紀, The tale of Genji—A millennium-old Journal), dir. by Dezaki Osamu 出崎統 (Tezuka Productions, January 15, 2009–March 26, 2009). The series premiered in 2009.
- ²⁰ Egawa, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 2, 153. Unless otherwise specified, all translations are my own. The original text reads: もののけにとりつかれていく感覚におそわれて.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 166. The original reads: しなやかな竹のような感じしてさすがに簡単に折れそうもない.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 171. A literal translation would be even more cringe-worthy: “Aaaah! Your highness Genji! Your honorable hand in my dirty place....aaah!” The original reads: 「ああっ、源氏の君、高貴な御手が、あたしの汚いところに、ああああっ. Egawa, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 2, 171. The original illustrations could not be included due to their sexually explicit content.
- ²³ Kitamura, 2008, 349. Kitamura cites Frederik L. Schodt, *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1986), 18. The meaning of the term is not explained but seems to be a euphemism for pornography.
- ²⁴ The scene is a famous literary trope known as *kaimami* 垣間見 (lit. “peeping through a hole in a fence”).
- ²⁵ The *Genji monogatari ekotoba* describes the scene as follows:
 Genji is seventeen years old. The place is in the northern hills, and the time is either late in the Third Month, or the first of the Fourth Month. Genji, accompanied by Koremitsu, peers over from behind the wattled fence. The blinds are slightly raised. A nurse, perhaps in her forties, is making an offering of flowers. She is leaning against a central pillar and has a holy text spread out on an armrest. There should be two women and some children. Murasaki has on a soft white singlet and a russet robe, and her hair spreads over her shoulders like a fan. She is lamenting for the baby sparrows that have got loose.
 Murase, 1983, 58.
- ²⁶ I would like to remind the reader that Murasaki is fourteen by the Japanese count and thirteen by the Western count. Still, by Heian standards, a woman at Murasaki’s age would have been considered mature.
- ²⁷ Washburn, 210. See also *Genji monogatari*, volume 1, *SNKBZ*, 70–72. The classical text reads: 男君はとく起きたまひて、女君はさらに起きたまはぬ朝あり。人々、「いかなればかくおはしますならむ。御心地の例ならず思さるるにや」.

- ²⁸ Ibid., 211. I have added the emphasis. The classical text reads: かかる御心おはすらむとはかけても思しよらざりしかば、などてかう心憂かりける御心をうらなく頼もしきものに思ひきこえけむ、とあさましう思さる。
- ²⁹ Ibid. My emphasis. The classical text reads: いよいよ御衣ひき被きて臥したまへり。人々は退きつつさぶらへば、寄りたまひて、源氏「などかくいぶせき御もてなしぞ。思ひの外に心憂くこそおはしけれな。人もいかにあやしと思ふらむ」とて、御衾をひきやりたまへれば、汗におし漬して、額髪もいたう濡れたまへり。
- ³⁰ Miyake, 2008, 369.
- ³¹ It may seem counterintuitive to state that having sex with *onīsama* お兄様 (big brother) is less incestuous than with *otōsama* お父様 (father), but in contemporary Japanese, *onīsama* can be used when addressing older male friends, *senpai* 先輩 (upper classmen), or just men older than the female speaker in general (just like *onēsan* お姉さん, older sister, can be applied to both older sisters and, politely, to women slighter older than the speaker). *Otōsan/otōsama*, on the other hand, can only refer to the father. For men considerably older than the speaker, one can use *ojisan/ojisan* おじさん/おじいさん (uncle/grandfather and, accordingly, older man/much older man).
- ³² Stephanie Meyer, *Twilight* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2005); E. L. James, *Fifty Shades of Grey* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012).
- ³³ Egawa, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 5, 216–218. The original illustrations could not be included due to their sexually explicit content featuring a prepubescent Murasaki and an adult Genji.
- ³⁴ The original reads: 和の手元にはこのかわいい若草がいる。この若さから私の思うような理想の女性に育てあげるのだ。Egawa, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 5, 216. Then, on the next page: ああ、かわいい。撫でて。『気持ちいいかい?』愛を感じる女に『うん』。Egawa, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 5, 217.
- ³⁵ The original reads: 『でもちょっとくすぐりたい』しかし、まだ子供。最後までいかないどころか。感じるどころまでいかん。たまらんな、このモヤモヤした気持ち。Egawa, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 5, 218.
- ³⁶ For an interesting study on highly sexual and highly sexualized schoolgirls in *seinen* manga, see Joel Gwynne, “Japan, Postfeminism and the Consumption of Sexual(ised) Schoolgirls in Male-Authored Contemporary Manga,” *Feminist Theory* 14.3 (2013): 325–343. That sexism and misogyny are not unique to the manga medium, but more pervasive in contemporary Japanese media aimed at young men is discussed in more detail in Patrick W. Galbraith’s “Adult Computer Games and the Ethics of Imaginary Violence: Responding to Gamergate from Japan,” *U.S.–Japan Women’s Journal*, 52 (2017): 67–88. The cross-pollination between manga and video games, with the former being

adapted into the latter medium and manga artists contributing to game graphics, partially explains the proliferation of similar issues in the two media.

- ³⁷ *SNKBZ*, vol. 20, 99 for the *Genji monogatari* quotations and the Egawa, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 2, 171, for the manga quotation.
- ³⁸ *Genji monogatari sennen no nazo* (源氏物語千年の謎 The tale of Genji. A thousand-year-old enigma), dir. by Tsuruhashi Yasuo 鶴橋康夫 (Tokyo: Tōhō, 2011).
- ³⁹ Joshua S. Mostow, “On Becoming Ukifune: Autobiographical Heroines in Heian and Kamakura Literature,” in *Crossing the Bridge: Comparative Essays on Medieval European and Heian Japanese Women Writers*, ed. by Barbara Stevenson and Cynthia Ho (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 45–46.
- ⁴⁰ My attempt to locate direct interviews with Egawa Tatsuya, in which he comments on his artistic process and decision making behind *Genji monogatari* has been, so far, unsuccessful. Such sources may very well exist in Japanese media, but depending on publisher and publication, availability, distribution, and sales, they may be difficult to access outside Japan.
- ⁴¹ Egawa, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 2, 171. The original illustration could not be included due to its sexually explicit content.
- ⁴² Another interpretation would be that Egawa, in the manner of the *Genji monogatari emaki* illustrations, always depicts his male characters in a very dignified manner. In fact, starting with one of the illustrations for the “Kashiwagi” chapter in the *Genji monogatari emaki*, in which the eponymous Kashiwagi receives his best friend, Yūgao, on his deathbed but still wearing his courtier *eboshi*, the *Genji-e* (源氏絵 *Genji* pictures/illustrations) tradition has rarely ever depicted aristocratic men without their headgear. The difference between a moribund Kashiwagi and an aroused Genji, however, is ironic at best.
- ⁴³ There are few descriptions of nakedness in Heian-period literature and those few were seldom deemed erotic, but rather maternal. For examples, see Helen Craig McCullough and William H. McCullough, trans., *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Japanese Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1980). Instead, the body is expressed through metonymical elements such as hair and facial elements, or, more often, descriptions of garments. For more information, see Rajyashree Pandey, *Perfumed Sleeves and Tangled Hair: Body, Woman, and Desire in Medieval Japanese Narratives* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2016); Hitomi Tonomura, “Black Hair and Red Trousers: Gendering the Flesh in Medieval Japan,” *The American Historical Review* 99.1 (1994): 129–154; and Mitamura Masako 三田村雅子, “Yowa no nezame no koromo toshintai 夜半の寝覚の衣と身体,” in *Genji monogatari e Genji monogatari kara: Chūko bungaku kenkyū 24 no shōgen* (源氏物語へ源氏物語から—中古文学研究 24 の証言), ed. by Nagai Kazuko (Tokyo: Kazama shoin, 2007), 367–395.

- ⁴⁴ Egawa, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 2, 171. The original illustration could not be included due to its sexually explicit content.
- ⁴⁵ It is no wonder that the 2001 *Genji monogatari: sennen no koi* (The tale of Genji: A thousand-year love) has Amami Yūki 天海祐希, the famous Takarazuka 宝塚 *otokoyaku* actor, playing Hikaru Genji, in the first and only cross-gender rendition of his character.
- ⁴⁶ I am misusing the term “fan service” here. Normally, “fan service” refers to the scenes in *seinen* or *shōnen* anime or manga that offer glimpses of the female characters’ underwear, ass or breasts, for the enjoyment of the male audiences. Here, I use it with the meaning of “giving one’s readers what they expect or might enjoy” in order to keep them entertained.
- ⁴⁷ Murasaki Shikibu’s own sobriquet comes from the character Murasaki and not any of the other *Genji* heroines, indicating that starting with the author’s own contemporaries, the character Murasaki was seen as the true heroine of the tale in the first forty-one chapters. In the last ten Uji chapters, however, Ukifune becomes the new heroine, seeing as most of the cast of the previous forty-four chapters are dead by that point.