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understand that you have no need to worry." He spent the whole day trying to make her feel better.<sup>65</sup>

That night a brilliant moon illumines the snow, and Genji waxes eloquent as he strives for reconciliation.

"More than the glory of flowers and fall leaves that season by season capture everyone's heart, it is the night sky in winter, with snow glittering under a brilliant moon, that in the absence of all color speaks to me strangely and carries my thoughts beyond this world."<sup>66</sup>

Although justly famous, his praise of winter is not a good sign. He is becoming overwrought.

Keen to act and to be amused, Genji sends the girls down to the garden to roll their snowball, while exaltation sweeps him on to dream aloud about Fujitsubo. It is not that the thought of Fujitsubo, having filled his mind all the time he courted her stand-in, Asagao, has at last spilled over into words. His thoughts of Fujitsubo and his interest in Asagao are unrelated, belonging as they do to the realms of private feeling on the one hand and of public ambition on the other. Having failed with Asagao, he seeks solace and reassurance in memories of Fujitsubo, and he also seeks to bring Murasaki closer to him by confiding in her. Thus he flirts not only with betraying what Fujitsubo was to him but with taking her name in vain, so to speak, by putting her memory to the ends of his own self-satisfaction. "The smallest thing she did always seemed miraculous," he says. "How one misses her on every occasion...She made no show of brilliance, but a talk with her was always worthwhile...No, we shall never see her like again." He then goes straight on to compound his fault towards her and Murasaki by comparing Murasaki explicitly, and unflatteringly, to her and then to Asagao.

"For all her serenity, [Fujitsubo] had a profound distinction that no other could attain, whereas you, who despite everything have so much of the noble *murasaki*,<sup>67</sup> have a difficult side to you as well and I am afraid you may be a little headstrong. The Former Kamo Priestess's [Asagao's] temperament seems to me very different. When I am lonely, I need no particular reason to converse with her, and by now she is really the only one left who requires the best of me."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> TTG, 372; GM 2:489.

<sup>66</sup> TTG, 373; GM 2:490.

<sup>67</sup> "Who are so much like her."

<sup>68</sup> TTG, 373-4; GM 2:492.

A discussion of Oborozukiyo and others follows, without comparisons. In the guise of confiding in Murasaki, Genji has complacently reviewed his secure emotional assets while simultaneously placating her and reminding her that she depends on his indulgence. Nonetheless, her protest has worked as a loyal wife's was supposed to in the "rainy night conversation": it has convinced him of his folly and returned him to her. After a day spent talking her round, he has come round himself. Having indulged in calling up the image of Fujitsubo, he sees that Murasaki, there before him, has exactly her quality. This is not a new discovery for him. He has made it before when failure to grasp some petty prize has opened his eyes again to the treasure he already has. Disappointment with the Third Princess will affect him the same way, but by then it will be too late.

Later that night Genji falls asleep thinking of Fujitsubo, and his performance earns its reward when "he saw her dimly—it was not a dream—and perceived her to be extremely angry. 'You promised never to tell, yet what I did is now known to all. I am ashamed, and my present suffering makes you hateful to me!'"<sup>69</sup> He awakes with a pounding heart to hear Murasaki crying out, "What is the matter?"

Murasaki's challenge to his willful ways has provoked a play of ambition, treachery, love, conceit, cajolery, and contrition with an eerie outcome, and this pattern will recur in connection with the Third Princess. Murasaki's open unhappiness over Asagao recalls her behavior as a girl, when her sulking persuaded him to stay home instead of going out for the night. While her conduct then appeared wanton, she was really only an innocent child, and her feelings in "Miotsukushi" or "Asagao" are natural to any wife. Still, to Genji's mind, especially when he compares her to Fujitsubo or Asagao, the sharpness of her temper is a flaw, even if an attractive one. It is the inner counterpart, and perhaps the consequence, of her flawed origins. "Who can have brought you up such a baby?" he asks. The girl he reared himself, hoping to form her entirely to his will, has a will, an "I" of her own. She has "a difficult side to her" (*sukoshi wazurawashiki ki soite*) and is "perhaps, alas, a little headstrong" (*kadokoshisa no susumitamaeru ya kurushikaran*). That could not be said of Fujitsubo, who despite her great depth "never put herself forward" (*moteidete rōrōjiki koto mo mietamawazarishikado*). Supremely distinguished, she betrayed no sharp glint of wit or temper. No more does Asagao, who, apart from her stubborn refusal to engage with Genji, seems utterly bland. These two great ladies do not have Murasaki's "prickles." Murasaki is too

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<sup>69</sup> TTG, 374–5; GM 2:495.

proud, cares too deeply for Genji, and depends on him too much to hold her peace; while Genji, more headstrong even than she, loves her too much either to ignore her or to scold her outright. It is the exceptional strength of the bond between them that allows their story to grow through crises like these towards real disaster.

### **Suzaku's daughter: preliminary remarks**

The disaster comes in the opening pages of "Wakana One," which in character and quality, as well as in narrative content, represent a new departure for the tale.<sup>70</sup> It is as though the author paused after the preceding chapter ("Fuji no Uraba") to look back over what she had done, reflect on her future purpose, gather all her skill, and then re-launch the work.

Feeling that he has little longer to live, Retired Emperor Suzaku seeks for his favorite daughter, the Third Princess, the "protector" (husband) she needs, and his choice settles on Genji. Genji's acceptance culminates the series of Murasaki's "three perils." The danger does not pass this time. Neither her life nor his will ever be the same again.

In her thirteenth or fourteenth year, the Third Princess is still a child. Like Murasaki, she is a niece of Fujitsubo. Unlike Murasaki, she is, in her own person, a nonentity, but her father loves her extravagantly. Before leaving the world to prepare for death, he gives her almost everything of value that he owns. Rank and wealth make her a prize coveted by many ambitious gentlemen of the court. One of them is Genji.

In this connection, it is worth reflecting on what Genji is really like. Whether hero or villain, he is to most readers the lover, the man of endless charm and wandering fancy, whose unerring style and taste define a courtly age. However, he is also a man of ambition, power, and pride. For example, after returning from exile he spares none of those who had earlier turned their backs on him. The author only rarely and briefly evokes him as a statesman or political patron, a maker and breaker of men, but he is that, too. Early in "Wakana One," Retired Emperor Suzaku puts it lightly but well.

"Yes," he said, "it is true, [Genji] was exceptional [in his youth], and now, in his full maturity, he has a charm that reminds one still more of just what it means to say that someone shines. When grave and

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<sup>70</sup> Ōasa Yūji, Akiyama Ken, and others have noted that the writing in the "Wakana" chapters is qualitatively new (Ōasa, *Genji monogatari seihen no kenkyū*, 75; Akiyama, *Genji monogatari no sekai*, 150).

dignified he has so superbly commanding a presence that one hardly dares to approach him, and when relaxed and in a playful mood he is sweeter and more engagingly amusing than anyone in the world.”<sup>71</sup>

The enchanting lover and host can also inspire awe.

The reader glimpses this Genji directly in “Wakana Two.” Aware of Kashiwagi’s transgression with the Third Princess, Genji has nonetheless been expressing publicly the most generous affection for him; but the reader also knows that he, who is now the honorary retired emperor, is outraged beyond forgiveness. Genji then hosts a party that the frightened Kashiwagi must attend and singles him out for attention with a venomous show of friendly banter.

“The older you are, the harder it gets to stop drunken tears,” Genji said. “Look at [Kashiwagi], smiling away to himself—it is so embarrassing! Never mind, though, his time will come. The sun and moon never turn back. No one escapes old age.” He peered at [Kashiwagi], who seemed far less cheerful than the others and really did look so unwell that the wonders of the day were lost on him.

Kashiwagi goes home ill, thinking, “I am not that drunk, though. What is the matter with me?”<sup>72</sup> He soon takes to his bed, and a few months later he is dead. As *Mumyōzōshi* puts it, Genji has “killed him with a glance.”<sup>73</sup> One does not trifle with such a man.

Hikaru Genji’s “light” (*hikari*) therefore suggests not only beauty, grace, and so on, but danger. Kashiwagi is already dying when he confides to Kojijū, the gentlewoman who knows his secret, “Now that [Genji] knows what I did, I shrink from the prospect of living—which I should say only shows what a special light he has...As soon as I met his gaze that evening my soul fled in anguish, and it has never come back.”<sup>74</sup> Genji has extraordinary potency and charisma. However, that does not shield him from error. He may simply err more gravely than lesser men.

He does so in marrying the Third Princess, as once he had wished to marry Princess Asagao. The error springs from ambition and pride. Genji believes that he can successfully achieve perfect prestige by adding to his panoply the last ornament that it lacks (a suitably exalted

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<sup>71</sup> TTG, pp. 579–580; GM 4:26.

<sup>72</sup> TTG, 669; GM 4:280.

<sup>73</sup> Higuchi and Kuboki, *Matsura no Miya monogatari, Mumyōzōshi*, 199. For this, the text calls Genji “despicable” (*muge ni keshikaranu ōnokoro*).

<sup>74</sup> TTG, 677; GM 4:295.

wife), while at the same time keeping the unreserved love of the only woman who really matters to him. In acquiring the first, he begins to lose the second, and as he does so he begins to lose himself. He soon compromises himself in the eyes of Suzaku and of society at large, for, despite his decision to marry Suzaku's daughter, his love for Murasaki will prevent him from honoring the Third Princess as he should. Then his inability to tear himself away from Murasaki when at last she becomes ill leaves the door open for Kashiwagi to violate the Third Princess. That incident, which remains secret, nonetheless leads to the Third Princess becoming a nun, which reveals to all the failure of her life with Genji. Genji's marriage is therefore a private disaster with respect to Murasaki and a public failure with respect to the Third Princess.

### The Third Princess and Murasaki

Murasaki and the Third Princess make a contrasting pair, as many scholars have noted. The circumstances of the Third Princess's birth and upbringing, described early in "Wakana One," also suggest a mirror-image contrast with Genji himself. Suzaku's daughter is visibly conceived as, so to speak, an anti-particle dangerous to both.

Most Japanese scholars, and all writing in English,<sup>75</sup> agree that Genji accepts the Third Princess because of her link to Fujitsubo. Some also point out an element of pity for Suzaku. Ōasa Yūji even suggested that Genji hopes for a new Murasaki and called the marriage a mistaken attempt on Genji's part to relive the past. Fukasawa Michio, who saw the key theme of the tale in the stark contrast between the glory of Genji's Rokujō estate and the miseries caused by the arrival of the Third Princess, held that the "occasion" of these miseries is none other than Murasaki's jealousy.<sup>76</sup>

It is Genji's acceptance of the Third Princess, not Murasaki's jealousy (her growing wish to disengage herself from Genji), which causes the misfortunes of "Wakana One" and beyond. However, Murasaki's

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<sup>75</sup> Haruo Shirane (*The Bridge of Dreams*, 39) wrote that "ultimately it is Genji's amorous ways, particularly the memory of the Fujitsubo lady, that lead him to marry the young lady"; Norma Field (*The Splendor of Longing*, 25) called the Third Princess "a hoped-for Fujitsubo substitute"; Doris Borgen (*A Woman's Weapon*, 128) held that "Genji is attracted to the idea of becoming her guardian because of her blood relationship to Fujitsubo"; and Charo D'Etcheverry (*Love After The Tale of Genji*, 95) described the Third Princess as "Genji's own final substitute for Fujitsubo."

<sup>76</sup> Ōasa, *Genji monogatari seihen no kenkū*, 85, 88; Fukasawa, "Murasaki no Ue: higekiteki risōzō no keisei," 20.

feelings are certainly central to these misfortunes. Akashi was no threat, even if the inexperienced Murasaki thought she was. Asagao resembled distant storm clouds that melted into the sky. However, the Third Princess actually moves into the Rokujō estate and she far outranks even Asagao. "By birth [Asagao] is worth what I am," Murasaki assures herself in "Asagao" (in other words, "My father is a prince, too!"); but she knows that that is not the whole truth and must conclude, "I shall be lost if his feelings shift to her."<sup>77</sup> The Third Princess allows not even that spark of hope. Insignificant in her person, she is of crushing rank. Murasaki yields in silence. Senseless protest would only demean her further.

### Decorum and discretion concerning Genji's motives

Concerning Genji's motives in general, the narrator of the tale is not necessarily as frank as she sometimes seems to be. For example, to excuse or explain his behavior she may cite his "peculiarity" (*kuse*), as she does in the opening passage of "Asagao." The word resembles a wry apology, as though to say, "No, one cannot approve, but on the subject of so great a lord I can hardly say more, and besides, the things he does make such a good story." When the narrator represents Genji himself, she may allow him to acknowledge a "warped and deplorable disposition," but the effect is similar. The author of *Mumyōzōshi* likewise remarked that it is not for her to criticize Genji, even though there are many things about what he does that one might wish otherwise.<sup>78</sup>

What are these things? Every reader can imagine some, and the Genji narrator certainly spells some out, to a degree. It appears early that Genji's *kuse* is in the realm of *irogonomi* (gallantry, a penchant for lovemaking). It is romantic—a compelling urge to seek to make love to certain women. However, the subjective content of that urge in particular cases remains undisclosed. Why, really, does Genji (or would a living man in Genji's place) find Akikonomu or Tamakazura all but irresistible? How does he weigh the attraction of each and the consequences of success? Both are daughters of former lovers, which suggests the erotic nostalgia stressed by Ōasa Yūji.<sup>79</sup> Still, other motives are possible as well—for example, a wish in the case of Akikonomu secretly to appropriate yet another woman destined (like Oborozukiyo, but higher in rank) for the emperor, or in that of

<sup>77</sup> TTG, 368; GM 2:478.

<sup>78</sup> Higuchi and Kuboki, *Matsura no Miya monogatari*, *Mumyōzōshi*, 198.

<sup>79</sup> Ōasa, *Genji monogatari seihen no kenkyū*, 87.



Tamakazura to leave his mark less on Yūgao's daughter than on Tō no Chūjō's. The narrator could not possibly attribute such thoughts to him. Then there is Utsusemi, a provincial governor's wife. Genji was experimenting after the "rainy night conversation," and he took Utsusemi's flight from him as a challenge. Naturally he felt driven to win, especially since he had nothing at stake in the matter except his self-esteem. However, talk of his *kuse*, or the claim that "[Asagao's] coolness maddened him, and he hated to admit defeat,"<sup>80</sup> does not suffice fifteen years later, when Asagao is a respected princess and he has recently been offered the office of chancellor. Discretion seems to have restrained the author from attributing to him the ambition, and the maneuvering to achieve that ambition, without which his actions make little sense.

A classic study of court society by Norbert Elias shows that discretion, reticence, and caution are essential to the courtier's failure or success.<sup>81</sup> Court society is a network of hierarchical relationships sustained by a sophisticated etiquette that is not vain show. Instead it is the substance of each courtier's (male or female) legitimate concern, since skill yields heightened prestige and a lapse can mean social ruin. The courtier strives to divine the motives and feelings of others while studiously avoiding betraying his own.

The veil, or filter, that intervenes between Genji and the reader is therefore double. First, Genji veils himself from others. Nothing in the tale contradicts Elias on this point. He is also likely at times to veil his motives even from himself. Second, the narrator of the tale, and even the author of an appreciation of the tale (*Mumyōzōshi*), protect him because, fictional or not, he is a great lord in the very court society to which they themselves belong. The representation of Genji, as of everyone else in the tale who "is anyone," is therefore bound to be compressed in dynamic range and painted in permissible colors. The earlier chapters relate about Genji all sorts of more or less scandalous stories of which the narrator often claims to disapprove, but these do not actually breach decorum because Genji at the time is relatively junior and because in any case it is made clear from the beginning that they do not impugn his essential dignity. Later, when he rises to palace minister (in "Miotsukushi") and beyond, his risk-taking will cease as far as the audience knows. Most of those who write on the tale would then have it prolonged not by continuing maneuvers to enhance his prestige, as Elias leads one to expect of the successful courtier, but

<sup>80</sup> TTG, 372; GM 2:488.

<sup>81</sup> Elias, *The Court Society*, 78–116.

by nostalgic pursuit (Asagao) or acceptance (the Third Princess) of only coincidentally prestigious women—women who merely represent someone else for whom he felt passion in the past.

### **Suzaku's daughter: Genji's motive**

Decorum and discretion are vital to the negotiations conducted between Genji and Suzaku over the marriage of Suzaku's daughter. That is because Genji's deeper motives have to do with the kind of self-interest that a skilful courtier, particularly one of Genji's exalted rank, prefers to keep out of sight. As Mitoma Kōsuke recognized unequivocally from his perspective, that of the study of myth and folklore, Genji wants the Third Princess above all because of her rank and wealth, and he therefore maneuvers to obtain her.<sup>82</sup> The Introduction notes the significance of this reading, which affects any conception of Genji's character, ability, and role in the tale. It rests on the direct testimony of the Third Princess's senior nurse, in conversation with Suzaku, and of this nurse's report to Suzaku concerning what she has heard from her brother, a left controller (*sachūben*) in Genji's service.<sup>83</sup>

If Genji is to marry Suzaku's daughter for her rank and wealth, he must nonetheless be seen by the audience to do so without compromising his dignity. The way the negotiations are narrated, without comment and almost entirely in the words (voiced or unvoiced) of the concerned parties themselves, helps to achieve this goal. Genji never expresses himself plainly to Suzaku on the issue and may even say the opposite of what he thinks. This sort of thing is probably typical of sensitive negotiations anywhere.

Suzaku believes that Genji is the only suitable match for his daughter. However, he cannot invite Genji straightforwardly to marry her without risking the embarrassment of being refused. He cannot safely approach Genji unless he already knows that Genji will say yes. For this reason he needs intelligence on the matter from informed bystanders (the nurse and her brother) who can speak plainly. Meanwhile Genji, who wants the Third Princess, cannot ask for her without lowering himself to the level of all the others, far beneath him, who have already done the same. He must therefore maneuver Suzaku into offering her to him. For this reason he needs a back channel (the nurse and her brother) that can convey his real wishes to Suzaku. Throughout these negotiations Genji has ample opportunity to let Suzaku know that, if asked, he would refuse. Since he does not, the process continues.

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<sup>82</sup> Mitoma, *Genji monogatari no minzokugakuteki kenkyū*, 364.

<sup>83</sup> TTG, 581; GM 429.

The weight and delicacy of these negotiations for both men can be gauged from the way they end. Even when the two at last discuss the matter face to face (by which time Suzaku knows Genji's likely response), Suzaku still does not dare to ask Genji openly to marry his daughter. He asks him only to take on the responsibility of finding her a suitable husband, and on the surface that is all Genji agrees to do. However, the narrator immediately confirms that each man knows exactly what the other means. "With these words," she says, "Genji accepted."<sup>84</sup> Things then move quickly.

Nowhere in these pages, in speech or thought, does Genji mention any scruple toward Murasaki. She does not figure in his calculations. Suzaku's only concern about her is that she might make local trouble for his daughter. She does not count, either, for the nurse, her brother, or the retainers whom they represent.

Speaking for herself and her brother, the nurse reports to Suzaku that everyone in Genji's household recognizes the close relationship between Genji and Murasaki, but that they also take for granted Murasaki's inadequacy as Genji's wife and therefore would gladly see him properly married. Similar people were saying similar things ("Those two would not go at all badly together") when Genji courted Asagao. The nurse also tells Suzaku that Genji himself "deeply desires a lofty alliance, and that he has so little forgotten [Asagao] that he still corresponds with her."<sup>85</sup> She further reports that, according to her brother, "[Genji] would undoubtedly welcome the idea [of marrying the Third Princess], since it would mean the fulfillment of his own enduring hopes."<sup>86</sup>

All this makes sound, if heartless, social sense. It illustrates the practical truth that underlings know about their masters many things their masters do not want spread abroad. However, it is so incompatible with accepted views of Genji that few writers on the tale in Japanese, and none in English, mention it; and those who do, do so only to dismiss it. According to Ōasa Yūji, the reader understands that Genji's courtship of Asagao sprang from a "retrospective passion," and the nurse's report is therefore a "petty, irresponsible assumption." "Ordinary people," he wrote, "are hardly capable of understanding Hikaru Genji's inner feelings."<sup>87</sup> Similarly, Akiyama Ken doubted that the nurse could possibly believe what she says and refused to take

<sup>84</sup> TTG, 587; GM 4:49.

<sup>85</sup> TTG, 580; GM 4:27.

<sup>86</sup> TTG, 581; GM 4:29.

<sup>87</sup> Ōasa, *Genji monogatari seihen no kenkyū*, 76.

her brother's words seriously.<sup>88</sup> No two readings of the same material could diverge more completely, in the absence of explicit authorization for one of them by the text itself. Without the nurse's testimony Suzaku might never resolve to approach Genji, but the reader remains free to dismiss it because the narrative never confirms it.<sup>89</sup> Fortunately, it is not really necessary to argue that the Third Princess's connection with Fujitsubo plays no role in Genji's thoughts. It would naturally intrigue him, although his failure to inform himself about her as a person suggests that his determining interest in her is elsewhere. As in the case of Asagao, the old tie might make her seem somehow familiar and accessible. It might even tip the balance for him after a period of thoroughly justified hesitation. However, that would still not make it his main reason for accepting to marry her.

### Murasaki's initial reaction

Murasaki first hears the news from rumor, but she who objected to Akashi and feared Asagao does not believe it. "He had seemed in earnest when he was courting the Former Kamo Priestess, too, she told herself, but he avoided taking courtship to its extreme conclusion. She did not even bother to ask him about it."<sup>90</sup> After all these years, she finally trusts him.

Genji, who surely know this, still does not understand the gravity of what he has done. He thinks that he will manage to redeem himself yet again, sooner or later. Nonetheless, he lets a night go by without a word to Murasaki and brings the matter up only the next day, in the voice of the man who once claimed to be bored by the birth of his daughter at Akashi.

"[Suzaku] is not at all well," he remarked, "and I called on him yesterday. It was all very touching, you know. The thought of leaving Her Highness his third daughter has been a great worry to him, and

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<sup>88</sup> Akiyama, *Genji monogatari no sekai*, 165 and 183, n. 4.

<sup>89</sup> Bitterly disappointed by the Third Princess, Genji eventually blames himself in an interior monologue passage for having (in the Tyler translation) "allowed a wanton weakness to get the better of him" (TTG, 593, GM 4:64). This "wanton" seems to confirm an erotic motive, but whether the original term (*adaashiku*) does or not remains a matter of interpretation. "Frivolous" might be more accurate. While the note to the SNKBT edition (3:240, n. 9) specifies that Genji laments his excessive erotic susceptibility, the GM note (4:64, n. 2) explains that he regrets having been drawn by foolish curiosity to the idea of marrying a princess and then having been unable to refuse Suzaku's request. The idea of marrying her for her rank, too, would now undoubtedly look frivolous to him.

<sup>90</sup> TTG, 588; GM 4:50-1.

































































































































































































































































































































































































































































