

GENJI'S TOXIC FEMININITY

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CAPSTONE ABSTRACT

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This thesis presents the argument that Genji, the seeming rake at the heart of Murasaki Shikibu's *Tale of Genji*, is, in fact, a transgendered subject. As such, as a consequence of his failure to acculturate into Heian femininity, he is a dangerously immature and phallic woman whose amorous pursuits are, in fact, irresponsible and damaging doll play. Genji, provided the chance to achieve feminine maturity by a series of potentially nurturing stepmothers, fails to do so. Instead, he wreaks havoc on the series of women whose misfortune it is to fall under his immature and increasingly deranged female gaze.

Genji's Toxic Femininity

At the center of *The Tale of Genji* is the story of a woman trapped in a man's body, a woman whose experience of femininity is consequently acutely schismatic and ultimately fatally toxic, given the extreme disenfranchisement that accompanies coming out as a woman, not just for Genji, the protagonist, but for the women whose lives are irrevocably affected by his attempts to come to terms with his femininity, something that he always seeks to find in those masochistic and submissively unhealthy experiences of the feminine that the society he lives in visits upon the female person.

While Genji is nominally enfranchised by having been born into a male body, he is simultaneously acculturated into the feminine experience through his experience of being a liminal subject, someone whose life is contoured by the demands of the Emperor, the dislike of the phallic Kokiden Consort, a powerful enemy, and his toxic attempts to build a coherence around his anomalous and fraught status. Consequently, not only is Genji born a woman in a man's body, he becomes a woman through his experience of lack and repression. The keenest period of this acculturation happens following Yugao's death, wherein Genji is feminized into beauty by the attenuation caused by his suffering. "His face was drawn and thin, which gave him a youthful, ethereal beauty (*Genji*, 87)." Feminine beauty is consistently linked to attenuation as when the Emperor stares at the dying Kiritsubo and "the expression of weariness in her eyes made her all the more alluringly vulnerable as she lay there in a semiconscious state (*Genji*, 6)."

It can be argued that Genji's latent femininity is visible to other women. Not just does he become the subject of male fantasies, thus subject to disenfranchising objectification, he is also a surface that can be utilized to articulate female desire. Genji "was so elegant that they would experience an embarrassed excitement whenever they saw him (*Genji*, 15)." This is the case, for instance, with the consorts and ladies at the Kokiden chambers. This embarrassment is a consequence of their erotic titillation – they have been acculturated to think themselves recipients of desire, not progenitors of it. Genji's femininity serves as a safety valve for them to articulate desire. Simultaneously, Genji's femininity allows him to become the object of simultaneously maternal and creative desire – women can indulge their otherwise curbed penchant for doll play by imagining ways to contour his body. For instance, the Hitachi Princess can dare to imagine Genji garbed in the garments she sends him.

We observe characters like the Third Princess and Murasaki engaged in doll play, an act that allows them creative agency. When we first encounter Murasaki, much of her fulfillment and childish bliss stems from her doll play, something which allows her to exert power over her passive subjects, such as her Hina court dolls. However, doll play is denied women after they reach a particular age – this exercise of imaginative power is taken from them in a manner that is akin to mutilation, or castration. When Murasaki begins to sustain the Third Princess' existence at the Rokujo-in by opening the door between them, she sympathizes about "how difficult it had been for her to give up her dolls (*Genji*, 674)," suggesting that this relinquishment results in a real and painful lack. Niou joins Kuominkari in her doll

play; something her sex will ultimately exile her from. The subversive potential of women who are allowed to retain their doll play can be seen through characters such as the Kokiden Consort, who is able to have a material and displacing effect on Genji's life. Genji, being marked as male, is able to engage in doll play past his puberty. He misuses this power in his usual toxic fashion, displacing women into individual, torpid positions of unease in the Rokujo-in; and exposing Tamakazura, his memento or doll, to the attentions of suitors for his own childish amusement.

Like a woman, Genji can be rendered more feminine through both attenuation and consolidation. Crucially, unlike with other men, women can gauge Genji as a feminine body affected by material circumstances outside its control. For instance, the nun who looks after Murasaki assesses him critically. "He had filled out since then and was a little better proportioned (*Genji*, 383)." Genji's emaciation and listlessness following the death of Yugao makes him more attractive to the men and women who observe him. Genji, as a surface tintured and rendered hyper-visible by his "radiance," allows women the power of the potentially disempowering male gaze. Consequently, just as women like Yugao and Ukifune, Genji is akin to that feminine surface disenfranchised by status that can be acted upon by other women to consolidate their position as attendants, nuns, or stepmothers.

While Genji is disenfranchised by his anomalous status, he is enfranchised to a degree that "true" women are not. I distinguish "true" femininity from femininity in general, because it is my argument that the authentic experience of femininity in the world of *Genji* only accrues to those women whose only safeguard and anchor is their social status, women who are enforced into torpidity by those who see their

status markers as uniquely marketable commodities, be these men, mothers, or serving maids. Women like Yugao, Utsusemi and the Hitachi Princess, cloistered by their status and imprisoned in a number of torpid poses calculated to please the male eye, constitute the “true” feminine. Their creative doll-play is taken from them when they enter puberty – for instance, this is a fate that both Murasaki and the Third Princess must undergo. In contrast, the attendants of these women, desirous of utilizing them to further their own comfort and status, possess a phallic agency that makes them dangerous kin to Genji, even as they assist him in his predatory attention upon their charges. Other phallic women include mothers, stepmothers and nuns, who exercise creative agency in their utilization of the torpid female subject. These phallic women consolidate their own existence – both emotionally and materially - through their predation upon the female subject whose experience is defined by lack and cloistering. Consequently, when they are drawn to their beauty, they are also drawn to their economic potential – even the Hitachi Princess can be dislocated by Kojjiu, her attendant, to entrench her own status. Not only does Kojju bring her reluctant mistress into the full radiance of Genji’s humiliating attentions, she becomes complicit in the attempts of the Princess’ aunt to displace her from her sanctuary. Another example of such a woman would be the nun who looks after Ukifune after her discovery – it is because Ukifune sustains her lonely existence that she is reluctant to allow her to become a nun. Instead, she berates her for failing to respond to Kaoru with the requisite ardor, accusing her of being awkward. She feasts upon Ukifune with avidity, subconsciously aware that her possession of Ukifune allows her to cohere both emotionally and materially.

Like the attendants and nuns who are materially and emotionally invested in furthering his amorous exploits, Genji is a phallic woman. In this, he is uneasily kin to the Kokiden Consort, whose possession of power allows her to engage in the sort of doll play that dislocates her victims, including Genji. She is able to exert her influence on Suzaku and is complicit in Genji's exile. That Genji's femininity, despite his phallic creativity, makes him femininely liminal, is suggested by the troubling attentions of the Kokiden Consort, who can have a devastating impact on his life. Genji can, through her machinations suffer the same fate as Lady Qi who "was a concubine of the founder of the Han dynasty, Gaozu. After Gaozu died, his empress, who had long been jealous of her rival, had Lady Qi and her son murdered (*Genji*, 231)."

She comments that "his looks are enough to captivate the gods in the heavens. It seems weirdly unpleasant (*Genji*, 150)." The Kokiden Consort's fixation with Genji stems from the beguiling nature of his marked/radiant existence – she is driven to violence towards him because of his liminal femininity, so much at odds with the masculinity of his peers.

Just as Genji can subject his victims to extraordinary dislocation, so does the Kokiden Consort dislocate Genji by engineering his exile. Potentially, this could have resulted in him becoming a truly compliant victim for her – had it not been for the Sea Dragon King tantalizingly making Genji aware of the perils of his compliant femininity, Genji's femininely enfranchising encounters with his own sex as gracious mistress of his retinue would have acculturated him into doll-like femininity..

The true strength of Genji's phallus, nominally the consequence of his biological reality, is his creative femininity, a potentially productive force he is allowed to retain as a consequence of his masculinity. That he is a phallic woman is not to the advantage of the women who have the misfortune of coming under his radiant gaze – Genji is also a dangerously immature woman who has not been acculturated into adult femininity by his experience of feminine lack and repression. This is despite the fact that certain events Genji experiences should have matured him in feminine lack. For instance, after Yugao's death, he experiences a period of the hyper-visible confinement that is normally the preserve of the menstruating female. Yugao's death also enfeebles him, attenuating his appearance, making him more femininely attractive to male and female onlookers. Like other women, grief also restricts him behind a curtain.

Genji's feminine creativity, the phallus he is allowed to retain, ultimately becomes toxic. This is despite the fact that his femininity betrays itself in essentially maternal actions. Yugao and Utsusemi are subjected to being carried in Genji's arms. Utsusemi was "so petite that Genji swept her up in his arms (*Genji*, 46)," knowing that he could displace her with ease. Similarly, he swept Yugao "up in his arms and carried her to his carriage (*Genji*, 74)." What saves Utsusemi from Yugao's terrible, enfeebling fate is that she has already been inscribed into a household – her relationship with her husband may be joyless, but it prevents her from the fatal bewilderment visited upon Yugao, a bewilderment that is expressed by the desolate and disenfranchising surroundings in which she dies.

What makes this displacement, routinely visited upon women, so terrible is that it prevents them from being allowed to form cohering links with their environment. They are unable to contour their surroundings into expressions of – and protectors of – their personalities. Given that they can be swept off their feet into disenfranchising new environs, they have little incentive to creatively infuse their environs with their voice. Like Genji, Yugao and Utsusemi can dream of a well-appointed boudoir where they are regnant. But they are as powerless as Genji to make this an actuality.

Subsequently, he actually displaces Yugao, causing her death by transporting her to a place that reflects his wild and neglected femininity. “He swept the woman up in his arms and carried her with ease to his carriage (*Genji*, 74).” The desolation where Yugao dies and Genji’s feminine spirit manifests itself reflects the damage done to his psyche by his attempts to become masculine, attempts that subconsciously seek to narcissistically locate himself in his victims. “It was overgrown and desolate and gave no sign of human presence... The trees and grasses closer to the villa were not especially attractive either, and the turgid pond was choked with weeds (*Genji*, 76).” Like this desolate place, Genji’s femininity, denied true expression, has gone haywire. The feminine spirit is the elegant woman who demands Genji’s attention – she is the woman he could become were he not to obsessively seek to identify and then embody the placid submissiveness he locates in Yugao. At its healthiest, Genji’s feminine spirit would most closely resemble Fujitsubo and Murasaki, his most enfranchising mother. Indeed, Fujitsubo’s femininely pretty son, whose teeth resemble the blackened teeth of a girl, allows us

to imagine such a positive outcome. However, because Genji is also mothered by Rokujo, his closeted feminine spirit imbibes her obsessiveness, manifesting this as the fog that surrounds Genji's predations.

What seems male predation and is, in fact, a species of predation, is also an essentially feminine and maternal action. Genji is cradling these women in his arms, prior to his creative and maternal attempts to mold them into the torpid femininity he mistakenly sees as the ideal femininity he must escape from. By cradling Yugao and Utsusemi, Genji is rehearsing the moment when he carries Murasaki in his arms, prior to birthing her as an ideal woman through his doll play with her. Displacing her from her home with Shonagon, "he easily swept the girl up in his arms and brought her out (*Genji*, 123)."

Unlike biological women, Genji is not forced to curb his feminine creativity. Consequently, it festers and grows out of control. Like Genji himself, his creativity becomes an annexing and destructive force, obscuring the minds and hearts of the women he pursues. It is this that allows him to "conjure" an image of the Hitachi Princess, "thinking in sympathy how sad and anxious she must be (*Genji*, 336)."

Unfortunately, Genji's condescending and literally dislocating sympathy (he ultimately moves the Hitachi Princess into the Rokujo-in, robbing her of that desolate place which had been her sanctuary for so long) cannot be transformed into the empathy Murasaki can evolve to display. That Genji's creativity is destructive and not creative is highlighted by the succoring and stabilizing nature of Murasaki's creativity. In her attenuated way, Murasaki encourages growth and sustains her own existence by sustaining others, looking after the Akashi Princess

and her daughter (to Genji's great jealousy), and even the Third Princess. For Genji to identify with the Hitachi Princess, with her phallic nose, would for him be an acknowledgement of his own failure to embody Murasaki's femininity – like the Hitachi Princess, he is incapable of evincing such tenderness. It is because his fear renders him more the fallow and unregenerative Hitachi Princess than the fertile (in terms of creating social networks, that is) Murasaki that he is offended by the idea of wearing the robes she picks out for him. The Hitachi Princess is a mother he must reject – he cannot mould himself in her image.

Genji's creativity manifests itself as the thick fog that debilitates both his victims and his stepmothers. As the protagonist, Genji is afforded the possibility of normative female development by many potential *mothers* – that these women remain stepmothers is due to Genji's failure to embrace all aspects of his femininity. Genji is most molded by the lady at Rokujo, because her obsessiveness and anxiety mirrors Genji's own. However, he is also afforded the chance to become a functioning adult woman by Fujitsubo and Murasaki. Genji's pursuit of the Rokujo lady is informed by his awareness that he cannot replace her biological daughter in her affections. Similarly, Murasaki's feminine son affords Genji distressing confirmation that he cannot reach the place in her affections he truly aspires to. Genji also resents Murasaki's attentions to both the Akashi Princess and her daughter, remarking on the oddity of her continued ministrations to the child – he feels that his own place in her affections has been usurped.

Obscuring and enervating, Genji's fog carries with it the psychosis that Genji displays at the Rokujo in. This psychosis takes the form of a femininely creative doll

play that cannot be allowed healthy expression in a society that strips such doll play from biological females. Genji subjects Tamakazura to the depredations of importunate suitors like the Lesser Captain to satisfy his immaturely malignant desire for titillation and vicarious masochistic suffering. Through Tamakazura's travails, Genji can safely experience the erotic helplessness that comes from being conventional pursuit by a suitor. This experience, of course, is a continuation of the masochistic thrills Genji derives from his own pursuit of Yugao, a woman he cannot unlearn seeing as an ideal of femininity despite the examples provided him by Fujitsubo and Murasaki. It is ironic that Genji attributes this fog to the Rokujo lady, because it is, in fact, engendered from the obsessiveness and anxiety that are the only lessons Genji is able to pick up from her. Places that Genji obsessively visits are clouded by fog. Unlike the normatively masculine rake, that is, like To no Chujo, Genji must return to his victims, clouding their existence, in his desperate attempts to read himself by reading them. When Genji pursues Utsusemi, "heavy morning fog and dew drenched everything (*Genji*, 75)." This fog is a manifestation of Genji's obsessiveness. It is the same fog that clouds the skies when Aoi is on her deathbed – Genji is obsessively reading her in his ambivalent attempts at discovering his femininity – alerted to her suddenly helpless beauty as she lies dying, he finally sees in her an exemplar of femininity; she is without the icy perfection that distances him. "He gazed possessively (*Genji*, 197)," that is, desiring to possess her, precisely because her appearance was now "heartbreakingly sweet (*Genji*, 196)," "so weak and pale that he could hardly tell if she were dead or alive (*Genji*, 197)." The blame for this fog, however Genji desires, cannot be imputed to the Rokujo lady, except in

the sense that she engendered Genji. It is Genji's obsessiveness and anxiety, traits sharpened by his interaction with the Rokujo lady, that are manifested in the fog. In fact, when Genji pursues the stepmother attempting to cut herself off from him, his obsessiveness manifests as the fog that enervates her. "A thick fog had settled over everything (*Genji*, 222)."

Kaoru and Niou, twinned manifestations of Genji's psyche, also possess his power to conjure and overwhelm. That Kaoru and Niou are entwined manifestations of Genji's psyche is suggested powerfully by Ukifune's dream of a twinned cedar trunk – they stem from the same fragrant source, Genji. A thick fog accompanies Kaoru's visit to the Uji villa. In contrast, what undermines the idea that the lady at Rokujo could haunt Aoi or Yugao, is the fact that women are more likely to be the victims of fancy and fog, set adrift by stories in much the same manner that they are displaced by male predators. For instance, during a discussion at the palace organized by Fujitsubo with regard to such texts as *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* and *Tales of Ise*, they are "completely caught up in the discussions, living and dying with every word (*Genji*, 367)." Women can be transformed, destroyed or dislocated through creative fancy; they cannot transform, destroy or dislocate, except as stepmothers.

Genji is unable to look beyond the versions of femininity privileged by masculine discourse, to accurately see true femininity in that strength and independence that is, of course, only enabled by social status and material privilege for women like his wife, Aoi.

Consequently, he fears and disdains the strength and independence of women like Aoi and the lady at Rokujo. This limitation in Genji's vision is the consequence of that acculturation in male Heian society that Genji's biological masculinity allows him. This acculturation permanently blinkers him and, like other men of his acquaintance, he is most likely to see feminine beauty in the fear and helplessness that is engendered by his own relentless pursuit. The extent to which women are disenfranchised by male rhetoric is instructively shown by the conversation Genji has with other young rakes at the beginning of the novel (in the *Hahakigi* chapter, *Genji* 22-53,), rakes who are not undermined in their rapacious masculinity by Genji's feminine obsessiveness. The Warden's biting commentary predicts our encounter with the Hitachi Princess, "the highborn lady who brings together both pedigree and public reputation, yet who in private lacks personal breeding and manners, is eccentric and not worth discussing (*Genji*, 25)." At the same time, even a woman who attempts to acculturate herself in feminine elegance, cannot escape masculine contempt. To no Chujo remarks that, "I've come across many who have passable skills in the arts, who can write flowing characters that create an impression of superficial elegance, who show a kind of facile understanding of how to respond in verse on certain occasions (*Genji*, 24)." He is confident that such a woman, disagreeably, will "swell with pride (*Genji*, 24)." Just as Genji is most aroused by Murasaki when she is driven to jealousy by neglect, one of these male paragons of excellence, To no Chujo, remarks with pride of when "the women were being petulant or impatient with me for keeping them waiting (*Genji*, 23)." With considerable regret, these men undervalue women like Aoi when they

remark, as the Warden does, that “it’s the cold, distant, slightly unpleasant woman who, depending on the occasion, is able to perform well in front of others and bring honor to your house (*Genji*, 28).” Women like Aoi, brought up to be perfect hostesses and wives, cannot escape masculine censure even when they dedicate themselves to performing those roles that bring them a certain limited agency as a consequence of their social status.

During the discussion in the *Hahakigi* chapter, Genji is most often passive, striking an elegant pose against a tree. Crucially, surrounded by exemplars of Heian masculinity, this passivity is, in fact, concerted. Genji is learning how to locate the ideal feminine in himself, discovering that this is an extremely constricting situation. Consequently, Genji is unable to locate the ideal feminine in Aoi, the Rokujo Lady, or even the Hitachi Princess, finding their pride, courage and solitariness disagreeable. Instead, he pursues the helplessness and bewitching fear of women like Yugao. His pursuit of Yugao draws from the lessons he learns during this discussion – by dislocating his victim, he forces her to throw back at him a vision of himself as the ideal woman. He is driven to her when Utsusemi fails to submit thoroughly to him. It is through the turmoil and confusion of the women he pursues that he seeks to create his own feminine persona, locating femininity in masochistic submissiveness.

But just as Yugao and Utsusemi revolt against the torpid helplessness that is enforced upon them as a consequence of their femininity, Genji’s feminine nature also revolts against those masochistic suppositions that are the consequence of his fatal adherence to the heterosexist beliefs of his companions. Genji’s feminine nature first does so when it confronts Genji as a female spirit, interrupting his

predatory attentions upon Yugao, first manifesting itself as “an extraordinarily lovely woman sitting by his pillow (*Genji*, 77).” Genji’s feminine spirit charges him with not visiting her despite the fact that it endows upon him “deepest feelings of affection (*Genji*, 78).” Its affection is born of a sincere desire to be expressed by Genji – for the spirit and Genji to both flourish, Genji has to embrace his feminine spirit, the inner self he keeps trapped in that well-appointed boudoir where the lady at Rokujo witnesses its incredible assault upon Aoi. That the Rokujo lady imagines the spirit to be her is perhaps because it has been molded by her by Genji’s attempts to grow in her image – it certainly has her obsessiveness and anxiety. In a sense, the Rokujo lady has mothered Genji’s feminine spirit. Genji’s feminine spirit assaults Aoi because it refuses to be mothered by her – Genji cannot come to accept that Aoi’s icy perfection is a more appropriate and healthy version of femininity than the masochistic submissiveness that thrilled him during his encounter with Yugao.

This is why Genji finds his dispossessed victims, victims who can be dislocated, as a consequence of their womanhood, with ease, in forlorn places – through masochistically exploring bewildered and fascinated womanhood, he delusively seeks to set free the independent, but increasingly deranged woman who is his feminine spirit. Surrounding this lavish psychic boudoir is Genji’s fog and confusion. Closely invested in keeping its femininity secret, his mind is disordered and chaotic. It desperately seeks order by toxically reifying Genji’s masculinity through visits to places that mirror its chaos. For instance, the house of the Hitachi Princess “had fallen to ruin (*Genji*, 332)” and had “an indescribably eerie atmosphere (*Genji*, 322).”

His ambition is hubristic and by the time we encounter Genji's feminine spirit in the lady at Rokujo's dreams, she is already on the way to the full-blown psychosis we see her demonstrate at the bedside of Murasaki and the Third Princess.

However, Genji is horrified by the independence and pride of this manifestation of his submerged femininity. Simultaneously, he is fearful of the social censure that would visit him were he to give in to his femininity and come out as a woman. Consequently, he determines that the feminine spirit that unsettles him is, in reality, the lady at Rokujo. That Genji identifies his rebellious feminine spirit with the lady at Rokujo is instructive – it suggests that he is *engendered* as a woman trapped in a man's body by his erotic identification with that stepmother whose obsessiveness and anxiety inform his own. The lady at Rokujo is the stepmother he resents, but is unable to fully repudiate. Unlike Fujitsubo whom he is informed early on closely resembles his own mother, the Rokujo lady is a stepmother he *appears* to have chosen, but whom, in fact, he is compelled to choose because her obsessive and brooding make-up is so much like his own. She shares his alienation, unlike Fujitsubo and Murasaki, his other stepmothers, who are able to entrench themselves in stable and generative surroundings through their normative exercise of femininity. Despite Genji's fearfulness, he obsesses about his feminine potential, invoking the spirit: "He dreamed instead of the woman he had seen at the villa. She was sitting by his pillow again, exactly the same way she had been sitting that terrible evening. A spirit living in that desolate, run-down place must have been attracted to him (*Genji*, 92)." The desolate, run-down place, of course, is the

mind whose fog he allows to permeate his surroundings while predictably blaming it upon his much-maligned stepmother, the Rokujo lady.

Genji's feminine spirit is briefly liberated at Suma, where Genji allows himself to behave in a feminine fashion, enchanting a messenger with his feminine courtesy, beguiling the rough-hewn woodcutters with his feminine beauty, and looking after his guests with feminine grace. Prior to this, Genji has been acculturated into femininity by suffering and lack as a consequence of Yugao's death. Like a menstruating girl, Genji goes through a "period of confinement necessitated by his defilement (*Genji*, 87)." He experiences the full power of female insecurity and grief during a visit to the Minister of the Left's residence prior to setting out for Suma – "hiding behind blinds like a woman, his visit had a sad, dream-like quality (*Genji*, 256)." For the moment, however, perhaps driven by guilt at the effects of his reckless masculinity/doll play, Genji embraces his enfeeblement and goes to Suma with an open heart and mind.

It is in this pristine rural place that Genji can safely come out as a woman. The woodcutters and priests regard him as a torpid beauty. He enchants a messenger with his gentle grace. In addition, his "gentle, familiar behavior helped his attendants forget the care of the world (*Genji*, 275)." At Suma, "he looked so resplendent, he made the sophisticated, urbane young men travelling with him appreciate the profound beauty of the setting (*Genji*, 217)." These "sophisticated, urbane men" who use Genji as a conduit to an appreciation of the feminine landscape, open for plunder, are, of course, the same sort of predatory men as those whose masculinist discourse is so illuminating in the *Hathakigi* chapter. Perhaps

the erotic delight and anxiety their attentions engender in Genji lend to the devastating impact of his dream regarding the Dragon King. It is because these men allow Genji to feel like a feminine surface submissively open to plunder that he is horrified by this dream – his dream makes him discover his vulnerability to being completely consumed by such a rapacious masculine force as the Dragon King. “The Dragon King in the sea was known to be a connoisseur of genuine beauty, and so Genji realized he must have caught the deity’s eye. The dream gave him such a horrifying, uncanny sensation that he could no longer stand residing in this abode by the sea (*Genji*, 287).” It is because Genji does not want to let go of the agency he discovers as a man that the dream closes him to the possibility of becoming the woman he plays at being during his interactions in Suma. The “genuine beauty” the Dragon King savors is, in Genji’s eyes, a torpid one. Part of the horror of the dream comes from its erotic charge. I would argue that the radiantly handsome man Ukifune sees prior to being submerged is Genji’s spirit and that he is using her, as a doll, to continue masochistically savoring the helplessness of being the Dragon King’s victim.

The curious slippage in the manner in which Murasaki Shikibu describes him in the period before his pilgrimage to Suma (in the *Sakaki* chapter) suggests how close he is to the normative femininity he aspires to. Writing to Oborozukiyo, “his appearance while he was making these preparations looked so effortlessly graceful that the women who were in service to him at the moment gossiped among themselves, wondering who it could be, this lady who warranted such special attention (*Genji*, 238).” The woman in question is Oborozukiyo, but it could equally

well be Genji, the woman whose good looks is provoking the gratified and aroused attentions of his attendants. At Suma, “as part of the Purification Ritual, a large doll to which all defilements and malign spirits had been transferred was placed in a boat and set adrift on the waves (*Genji*, 285).” Genji identifies himself with this doll condemned to being set adrift and derives melancholy pleasure from the thought. Later, Ukifune, compared by the elder Uji sister to a Purification Doll, will allow Genji’s spirit to vicariously play out that submissive rootlessness again.

Genji’s exploration of his femininity is truncated by his erotically charged discovery of the submissiveness and dispossession that the feminine experience entails. It is certainly evident that he has been slowly embracing his femininity with the masochistic narcissism he has been taught to regard as integral to the feminine experience during his exile to Suma. For instance, he “experienced a sweet, sublime sorrow at the thought that living here would allow him to contemplate to the full the sadness of life (*Genji*, 305).” In this, of course, he is curiously akin to the Hitachi Princess, a woman who arouses his fearful contempt, but who is living the sort of somewhat enfranchised existence Genji is denied.

It is the intoxicating and debilitating attentions of the Dragon King that reminds Genji that to become normatively female, he will have to give up the creative potential of his phallus. “The Dragon King in the sea was known to be a connoisseur of genuine beauty, and so Genji realized he must have caught the deity’s eye. The dream gave him a horrifying, uncanny sensation that he could no longer stand residing in this abode by the sea (*Genji*, 286).” Having lived, happily, as a gentle and lovable woman, he has now had his first erotic dream as a woman.

However, given his perceptions about what it is to be feminine, the dream has also made him aware of the fascinated, bewildered and fettered erotic helplessness that is attendant upon sexual self-realization as a woman in Heian society. Consequently, he repudiates the femininity he has been acculturated into, first by suffering, and then by bliss. Subdued but also tantalized, he returns to his confining existence at the Heian court.

Genji's predation is, in reality, a pernicious species of doll-play. In the early years of his adulthood, he converts women into fetishes and mementoes, artifacts he can plunder in his attempts to reify his masculinity. Later, much the same steps will be retraced by Yugiri and by Kaoru, among other men. However, Yugiri (like his other progeny), will not be rendered schizoid by a transgender experience. What will assist the creation of his normative masculinity will be his Oedipal fascination with Murasaki, who, as Genji's wife, functions as a mother figure. "Her gentle allure was like a fragrance that seemed, almost cruelly, to waft over his face as he stared at her in hopeless longing. She was more splendid than any woman he had ever seen before (*Genji*, 543). In contrast, prior to Yugao's death, while Genji is under the delusion that he is becoming more masculine, he is, in reality, engaged in a subconscious attempt to discover his femininity, an attempt that is fatally flawed from the very beginning. Pathologically, Genji locates his victims in desolate and forlorn spaces that reflect his own untended femininity. Here, he obsessively reads his victims, discovering them as most truly feminine when they are bewildered and helpless under his obdurate attentions. Rather than engaging in masculine plunder, Genji is confirming those delusions about femininity he derives from masculine

discourse. He is teaching himself how to be truly feminine, but in reality, he is allowing his healthy expression of his femininity to be obscured by normative views. Consequently, he is prevented from entering the well-appointed boudoir that his increasingly frenzied feminine spirit inhabits, a boudoir that exists only in his mind.

In his later years, as a paterfamilias who is, in reality, an unhealthily obsessed stepmother, dependent on the erotic consumption of her victims for her survival, Genji collects his fetishes, otherwise alive women, under one roof. Their trials and vicissitudes allow him to experience femininity from a distance, a distance that is, however, also erotic and masochistic. Like torpid dolls, Genji's women are separated from each other by geography and protocols – Genji would have them submissively wait for his attention. However, Genji's suppression of his femininity makes him and his feminine spirit increasingly more psychotic. Like the psychotic stepmother, endowed with phallic power but stigmatized by society for her hubris, Genji uses his charges to entertain himself, feeding off their virtuous lack. In one case, he watches one of these women flail under the amorous attentions of predatory men, a woman who is the subject of his own predatory attentions. However, it is instructive that Tamakazura does not see him as fully masculine, reacting to his advances with a disgust that is not tinged by fear. Unable to give Tamakazura the counsel of a true mother, he bombards her instead with heterosexist narratives that derive from his own experiences as a predatory male. For instance, there is nothing healthily maternal about this advice he gives Tamakazura: "Speaking from experience, whenever a woman failed to send me a reply, I was apt to resent her, to think her cold and cruel, to wonder perhaps if she

lacked judgment or training, or if the woman was of lower status, to dismiss her as impudent and above herself (*Genji*, 504).” In advising Tamakazura to mold herself to the male gaze, Genji is both the cruelly distant stepmother and the cruelly consuming one, who renders her victim fit for male consumption by breaking her down first.

Following this, when Genji “worried that the Akashi Princess might get the idea that all stepmothers (*Genji*, 522)” were like the ones in stories, he is genuinely frightened that she might see some of his more unsavory qualities in these women. He is guiltily aware that his behavior closely resembles that of these unpleasant characters. However, when Genji appears a psychotic stepmother with relation to his charges, he is also merely an overly creative, immature and unhappily juvenile young child. He tells Tamakazura, “now that you’re in residence, however, I’ve been thinking it might be interesting, given how bored and lonely I am, to have you help me to test the depth or shallowness of the feelings these young gentlemen profess to have for you (*Genji*, 502)”. This speaks to the extraordinary entitlement and arrogance his spurious masculinity gives him, a masculinity that allows him to wield the phallus of a degenerative rather than generative creative femininity.

By the time Genji establishes himself as the maternal spider at the toxic center of the Rokujo in (only to be displaced later by Murasaki, who converts his debilitating and malicious predation into sustaining and healthy empathy), he has been able to play at motherhood through his attentions to Murasaki. Prior to his stint at Suma, where his acculturation into femininity is interrupted by the dangerous and castrating truths the Dragon King arouses, Genji is somewhat of a

normative mother, commissioning doll houses and other playthings for his daughter. Having cradled her in his arms and brought her out from the darkness of her desolate environs, environs that reflect Genji's own desolate femininity, Genji has, in effect, birthed himself by birthing her. He is himself aware that he is attempting to emulate Fujitsubo, who is his stepmother both in terms of their relationship to each other and through his attempts at self-creation. Fujitsubo's attempts to evade Genji are not only those of a pursued woman, but also that of a mother whose overgrown and immature child refuses to relinquish her. (The Rokujo lady similarly attempts to outrun her maternal connection to Genji, the stepchild who brings her much suffering.) "It occurred to him that his desire to see her grown up was kindled by her uncanny resemblance to Fujitsubo, the woman to whom his heart was eternally devoted. She resembled Fujitsubo so closely that he was completely taken with the notion that he might be able to make her a replacement for the woman he loved (*Genji*, 99)." Ironically, Murasaki will also afford Genji the possibility of growth through her maternal care – she will be that last stepmother whose maternal care and talent for creative generation he will tragically be unable to emulate.

However, Genji is unable to properly move from regarding Murasaki as his plaything – playing mother does not allow him to transition from petulant and pampered girlhood into true motherliness. The Dragon King interrupts this transition. Consequently, alarmed by the powerlessness of depropriating femininity, rather than learning to be a woman by rearing his charge, Genji merely moves from

regarding Murasaki as his precious plaything to a plaything that can be taken for granted as he undergoes amorous exploits in an effort to shore up his masculinity.

At Yugao's bedside, Genji's feminine spirit is, even if furious, calm and composed. However, at the bedside of the Third Princess, a woman who mirrors Yugao closely in that Genji chooses her as prey due to her childish helplessness, Genji's feminine spirit is unsettlingly deranged. Its "harsh shriek of laughter (*Genji*, 770)" is directed at the man who, by failing to give it expression, has irrevocably damaged both it and himself. By this time, Genji has moved from callow youth to superficially resembling a respectable paterfamilias. The spirit's vindictiveness comes from its childish spite – it has been denied normative growth as a woman. When the spirit leaves, Genji "felt sorry for his young wife and mortified at the same time (*Genji*, 770)." He is mortified by shame at his own conduct.

Prior to this, Genji's feminine spirit surfaces during Murasaki's illness. It's true victim is Genji – it taunts him for placing all his hopes of self-realization on the woman he increasingly neglects. It renders Genji delusional, making him imagine that the true culprit of the possession is the lady at Rokujo. He restrains the little page girl at Murasaki's bedside, a girl who has been unsettled by her own sympathetic identification with Murasaki's travails. "The little girl was shaking her hair wildly and weeping loudly until she began to take on the appearance of that spirit Genji had seen long ago (*Genji* 738)." The little page girl, in her empathetic horror, reminds Genji of the woman he could have been, which Murasaki is, an empathetic and strong individual. Delusively, he sees "traces of the modest refinement that had distinguished his lady at Rokujo (*Genji* 739)." That is, the little

girl reminds him of his own deranged and psychotic feminine spirit, a damaged part of his psyche that *could* have had the refinement of the stepmother he behaved cavalierly to. What is “modest refinement” in the lady at Rokujo has been rendered monstrous by his neglect of his feminine psyche. When the spirit declares that “my grievance over your behavior has transformed me into this hideous figure and brought about your wife’s crisis,” we are certain that it is not the lady at Rokujo talking. She has been guilty only of maladaptive guilt, a guilt barbed into her spirit by her monstrous step-daughter, Genji. The monstrous figure is Genji’s feminine spirit, once a radiantly handsome young woman, now as crippled by neglect and neurosis as he is. The page girl is, tragically, a victim of Genji’s horror at the manner in which he has perverted his own life and tragically maimed that of Murasaki – unable to lock away his turbulent femininity, he merely locks her away instead. Genji’s neglect of Murasaki and its devastating potential is, of course, revealed by the travails of her half-sister, the Major Captain’s wife and Tamakazura’s husband, who is driven mad by her husband’s neglect, whose “mental condition deteriorated, until finally she collapsed in prostration (*Genji* 589).” She is exiled from her own children.

Furthermore, there are moments when Genji’s femininity slips out in ways that are embarrassing and aberrant. His auditors are filled with shame, for his sake. This first happens when Genji charges Utsusemi’s brother with not attending to his needs. His tone is that of a pampered young woman and Utsusemi’s brother, not otherwise especially sensitive, is shamed for Genji’s sake, seeing him properly for the first time as an effeminate male. Later, when he is the master of the Rokujo in,

he languorously confesses to his embarrassed male auditors that they showed up at the right time, since he was in the need of “something a little intriguing and eye-opening to stir me from my torpor (*Genji*, 524).” It is the feminine coquettishness of this statement that alerts them, to their embarrassment, with regard to Genji’s femininity. Genji is less and less able to hide that he is a pampered girl child protected by his sympathetic victims from the consequences of his failure to acculturate into womanhood, that he is only able to exist by yoking himself to the woman whose empathy is a healthy transmutation of his obsessive predation, Murasaki.

It can be surmised that Genji’s fearful desire for masochistic submission can be traced to the experiences of his birth mother, who is not only constrained by the love of the emperor, but also subjected to tremendous insult and abuse. Like an animal, she is forced to pace back and forth within a closed space. Following her visits to the emperor, “her rivals would arrange for the doors at both ends to be closed off so that she could neither proceed forward nor turn back, trapping her inside and making her feel utterly wretched (*Genji*, 5).” This desire is reinforced by the incredibly misogynistic rhetoric of his fellow men, who covertly reinvent him as a woman, even as they expound on the virtues and frailties of the ideal woman. It becomes immediately clear from their vitriol that there is no way to be a normative woman in their society – even the most quiescent and childlike of women is to be dismissed as shallow, or prone to incredible jealousy. From their rhetoric and from his own sexual adventures, Genji comes to see obsessiveness and anxiety as integral to the female condition. Obsessiveness and anxiety also become integral to Genji’s

own psyche, partly because of his anomalous position, partly because he is truly *engendered* by two obsessive and anxious women, Fujitsubo and the Lady at Rokujo.

If Kiritsubo is Genji's birth mother, his stepmothers are the Lady at Rokujo and Fujitsubo. Genji is drawn to Fujitsubo by her resemblance to his mother. His predatory attentions towards her are those of a step child desperately attempting to gain coherence, to become a person through erotic identification. Fujitsubo is rendered obsessive and anxious by her need to protect her person from the unkind attentions of personages such as the Kokiden Consort. Genji's predation only makes her condition more fraught. Genji inherits from the lady at Rokujo the obsessiveness and anxiety he is determined to associate only with her. In reality, he engenders within himself these negative qualities he derives from her.

The anxiety and obsessiveness of both women stem from their liminal positions and from the manner in which male attention can radically transfigure their existences. Their fear is of being trapped between closed doors in the same manner as Genji's birth mother. The Rokujo Lady is perennially afraid of her reputation being besmirched by gossip.

In relation to Fujitsubo and the lady at Rokujo, Genji can only be the unwanted step child, forlorn, immature, and best kept at a distance. Through Fujitsubo's attentions to the child fathered by Genji, we can see the possible happy outcomes for Genji had he been normatively assimilated. Fujitsubo allows her child to explore his femininity, to express himself with creativity. Reizei is allowed the normative growth denied Genji. "His eyes sparkled in the most endearing way, and the older he got, the more it seemed as if he had slipped Genji's face over his own.

His teeth were a little stained, making the insides of his mouth look dark, as if he has blackened his teeth like a girl, and when he smiled an innocent beauty seemed to flow out of him so that Fujitsubo longed to see what he might have looked like as a girl (*Genji*, 232).” He grows up to be the Emperor. This is in keeping with the rest of Genji’s children, such as Genji’s other son, who are permitted to grow up normatively and to enter into heteronormative relations. On the other hand, Genji can never displace the lady at Rokujo’s daughter, the priestess at Ise, who is being carefully groomed by her mother to achieve a position that will bring the family glory and security.

Consequently, his attentions towards Fujitsubo and the lady at Rokujo have the desperation of an insecure stepdaughter who knows that she will never be secure in her mother’s affections. This renders Genji’s feminine nature all the more unstable. Genji’s desperation for validation and his true identity as an unwanted, but needy, step child can be seen in the desperate attentions he pays to Fujitsubo during her illness. “He tugged at her robes to pull her to him. She tried to wriggle free and escape his grasp, but to her dismay her hair was caught in his clothing. In grief and shame she knew it was her fate to be entangled with him in this sin and was distraught at the realization (*Genji*, 229).” Fujitsubo is made aware that unlike a normatively brought up daughter, Genji will not transition into a womanhood wherein the mother becomes peripheral. She is stuck with this stepdaughter because he refuses to grow up normatively.

The normal girl child is acculturated into her femininity through being groomed to be the companion for a man. She moves away from her mother, who

becomes remote and unknowable. Perhaps the prevalence of stories about evil stepmothers can be traced to the tendency of the mother to become the stepmother, cruelly distant, or uneasily consumptive, unhealthily molding her daughter towards securing the family fortunes. Genji is denied such closure. Consequently, he has to undergo a radical break from his maternal figures, that is, his stepmothers, Fujitsubo and the lady at Rokujo. Fujitsubo dies and the lady at Rokujo wisely decides to turn a blind eye towards Genji's obdurate importuning. This is what brings Genji to the shrine at Suma and the possibility of giving a healthy birth to his femininity. Unfortunately, however, the figure of the Dragon King reminds Genji of the castrating potential of his conversion to femininity, that is, the abdication of his creative potential, unhealthily and psychotically manifested through Genji's continued predation upon the women he now keeps in solitary proximity at the Rokujo in.

While Fujitsubo and the lady at Rokujo cannot secure Genji the growth or security he so desires, there are other women who can potentially serve as his stepmothers. However, Genji's stubborn adherence to the unhealthy predation through which he expresses his feminine creativity prevents him from growing under their tutelage.

The first of these stepmothers is Aoi, whom he resents for making him feel like an unaccomplished and tainted child. "Her flawless beauty and manners made him lose confidence when he was in her presence (*Genji*, 156)." This is because he is reminded that far from being an accomplished young buck, he is, in reality, a girl out of control, who needs to be taught how to be properly feminine. It is through

learning from Aoi, despite her being only four years older than him, that Genji can grow into the independent and beautiful woman who surprises him at Yugao's bedside. While Genji castigates Aoi as proud and independent, running away from her like an errant child to pursue his amorous adventures, he also resents her for being the conduit through which he can become a woman. Consequently, he haunts her at her bedside. Physically, he forces himself upon her bewildered person, choosing to see in her exhaustion and debility the sort of exsanguinated feminine torpidity he is taught to regard as attractive. "As she lay there in her vulnerable, helpless condition, she struck him as not just precious but voluptuous (*Genji*, 194)." She now *strikes* him as voluptuous because he has been taught to see feminine erotic potential in bewildered debility. When he is away, but obsessively focused upon her, his feminine spirit haunts her, as the lady at Rokujo witnesses in her dreams. What causes the lady at Rokujo's depression, rendering her susceptible to anxiety and guilt, and these dreams, is being ignored by Genji during the Aoi Festival. "She would find herself in the beautifully appointed, luxurious quarters of some woman – Genji's wife, she assumed – and would then watch in horror as her living spirit, completely different from her waking self, would move around the woman, pulling and tugging at her, and then, driven by menacingly obsessive emotions, violently striking and shaking her (*Genji*, 192)."

The spirit that assaults Aoi in these dreams, "completely different from her waking self" does not have the lady at Rokujo's countenance, but is uncannily enough like her that she is driven to guilt and self-loathing. This is because the spirit is Genji's feminine spirit, modeled upon the lady at Rokujo through Genji's

obsession. The feminine spirit assaults Aoi in much the same way as Genji assaults Fujitsubo, desperately seeking validation and a last chance to mould herself through Aoi. In the lady at Rokujo's dreams, the "beautifully appointed, luxurious quarters" are not the fetid chambers where Aoi breathes her last, but the part of Genji's psyche where his feminine spirit has entombed itself, protecting itself from the ridiculous damage Genji does to himself by engaging in masculine escapades that confirm his maladaptive ideas about what (his) ideal femininity should be.

The second of these stepmothers is the Hitachi Princess. While shy and retiring, she is able to express her femininity in an easy way that Genji is not. The effect of her cloistered isolation is to make her uncloistered. That the Hitachi Princess has maternal designs upon Genji is suggested that the robes she sends him. She wants to mould him, to mother him. However, the Hitachi Princess' visions of a femininity set free in the wilderness terrify immature Genji. It is with considerable anxiety that he makes his unkind jokes about her nose – it is the phallic potential of the Hitachi Princess' nosiness with regard to him that terrifies him. In conversation with Genji, "Taifu appreciated his wicked references, which managed to link not only red noses and flowers, but also Mikasa, where maidens served the deity of the Kasuga Shrine and Hitachi, the province where the Kasuga deity originated (*Genji*, 146)".

The third and most potent of these stepmothers is Murasaki. Genji intends for Murasaki to be his memento, his plaything. He feels for her much the way a girl regards her doll, paying attention to her upkeep and appearance, but not bothering about her thoughts. Murasaki, however, transcends Genji. Murasaki converts,

through her actions, Genji's catholic predation into empathy. Like the evil stepmother, another phallic woman, Genji moves between icy aloofness towards his female victims and unhealthy, predatory consumption of their bodies and thoughts. Murasaki, however, renders this consumptive gaze into an empathetic one, caring even for the women with whom she has a potential rivalry. Murasaki, by building the Rokujo in into a community, moves from the immature doll play Genji is mired in to a normative womanhood. She achieves, despite her childlessness, a truly generative femininity that is based on building empathetic networks. Murasaki moves from an angry jealousy at Genji's philandering to a weary understanding and a maternal concern. He becomes one of her daughters, though perhaps not as precious as the Akashi Princess.

Genji is haunted by Fujitsubo and the lady at Rokujo. This is because he has internalized them – these stepmothers are the only mothers he has known. They have a larger-than-life presence in his psyche, terrifying maternal figures who remind him of his conscience. In one of his dreams, Fujitsubo mauls him. Throughout his life, he places the blame for his obsessiveness and anxiety at the door of the lady at Rokujo. Consequently, it is striking that Genji is also haunted by Murasaki. When he is engaged in one of his amorous exploits, it is her spirit that recalls him to shame, and brings him home. "Murasaki's spirit appeared at his pillow and he rushed back to her quarters (*Genji*, 866)."

It is my argument that Genji disappears from the narrative, but that the schismatic nature of his persona is rendered clear by the amorous exploits of Kaoru and Niou, the two heroes of the so-called Uji chapters. He resurfaces as the

radiantly handsome man who becomes integral to Ukifune's rescue, and also the events that subsequently threaten her with torpidity. Ukifune reports that a "radiantly handsome man approached (*Genji*, 1232)" and importuned her to let him carry her to his home. This is in much the same way as Genji carries Yugao, Utsusemi and Murasaki, attempting to dislocate them so that he can study them at his leisure, converting them into mementoes that reflect his ideas about torpid femininity. Later, "a man stepped from beneath a large tree (*Genji*, 1250)" and Ukifune has the "feeling that he took me somewhere (*Genji*, 1250)." Genji's spirit, unable to achieve its femininity even in death, lingers, trapped between becoming a woman and becoming a man through Genji's typical predation, a predation that reflects his subconscious masochistic desire to be the "true" female of his society, a helpless and recumbent beauty. That there is something demonic about his continued obsessive actions is suggested by a priest wondering if "a demon snatched the soul of Hachinomiya's daughter and brought it here (*Genji*, 1267)." It is instructive that Ukifune is brought here – her relentless and debilitating pursuit by Kaoru and Niou will allow Genji's spirit to play the part of the titillated voyeur. His alter egos, Kaoru and Niou, will allow him vicarious masochism – the suffering they wreak upon Ukifune will allow Genji to imagine both the pleasures of predation and the delightful pain of being predated. This is in keeping with his fascination with the manner in which importunate suitors wreak havoc upon the women he possesses at the Rokujo in.

Kaoru and Niou reflect aspects of Genji's nature – but the difference between them is not that of black and white. They represent, on separate points of the

continuum, Genji's fatal division between enfranchisement and disenfranchisement, masculinity and femininity. Kaoru, enfranchised by his more common status, is also disenfranchised by it when it comes to being chosen as a potential partner. His is a wild femininity, capable of extending empathy to its victims, but equally capable of the hubristic chaos Genji brings into the lives of his victims. Niou, as a consequence of his royal status, is more enfranchised, more likely to be chosen as a potential partner. However, unlike Kaoru, Niou is cloistered by his royal status. He is also subject to those forces that threatened to cloister Genji, to be rendered painfully aware of the lack that accompanies an enforced femininity. Unlike Kaoru, he goes through the same process of feminizing confinement that is visited upon Genji. While Kaoru is allowed to retain his wildness and to continue to be a predatory force, Niou is comparatively domesticated, consequently engaging in the same species of doll play that Genji does. It is this doll play that is reflected in his displacement of Ukifune to the Uji Villa, where he abandons her after an idyll of two days to return to his cloistered femininity. Both Kaoru and Niou, however, are driven to predation by their desire to confirm their masculinity. Kaoru, in particular, is driven by a desire to escape his early reputation for primness.

The depredation Kaoru and Niou visit upon Ukifune allows us to see the essentially schizophrenic nature of Genji's pursuit of women. This depredation is rehearsed through the attentions these men pay to the Uji Princesses, one of whom dies as a consequence, while the other finds herself entombed by her torpid position, a sepulchral haunter of the same Rokujo in where Genji's women found themselves saved from the torpidity of being mementoes by Murasaki's empathy.

The Uji Princesses are the victims of Niou's obsessiveness and Kaoru's anxiety, an anxiety that makes him fatally slow to react. So is Ukifune. Kaoru befuddles Ukifune with his wild femininity, rather more empathetic than Genji's neurotic attentions. Niou promises Ukifune status and a quieter empathy, one that is, however, geared towards the installation of Ukifune in his household in a secondary status. He is incapacitated from being a fruitfully loving partner by his insecurity. By pursuing Ukifune, Kaoru and Niou rehearse Genji's damaging romantic exploits. Ukifune is Yugao, damagingly displaced. While Ukifune is allowed to become a nun, the well-meaning women who surround her prevent her from enjoying the pristineness and comfort that is associated with this condition – she continues to be exposed to the attentions of Kaoru. Ukifune is also Utsusemi and this is brought home most tellingly by the fact that just as Utsusemi's brother seeks to garner masculinity by pandering to Genji and serving as his look-out and accomplice, so does Ukifune's brother. Ukifune may strive for agency, but she is to be ultimately converted to a memento, or more appositely, a purification doll, kin to the one let into the waters during Genji's splendidly feminine sojourn at Suma. Like this purification doll and like the countless other purification dolls sacrificed for Genji, his many victims, Ukifune must be sacrificed to the depredatory and schizoid attentions of Kaoru and Niou, twinned healthier versions of Genji, so that Genji's feminine spirit, still trapped in the garb of a radiantly handsome man, might have another erotic and masochistic vision of itself as a woman through Ukifune's hapless femininity.

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