Through the Eyes of Ladies-in-Waiting

Female Spectatorship and the Power of Knowledge in the *Genji Scrolls*

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Abstract: Scholars have long noted the essential role of *nyōbō*, or ladies-in-waiting, in *The Tale of Genji*. Although rarely taking center stage, these seemingly peripheral characters have been understood to constitute networks through which information could flow, often "offstage," thus setting in motion much of the tale's drama and propelling the narrative forward. This article examines the prominence of ladies-in-waiting in the tale's earliest extant adaptation, the mid-twelfth-century *Genji Scrolls*. My study, employing both art historical and literary textual analyses, demonstrates that the *nyōbō*'s function informs their treatment and placement in the scrolls' images as well as several aspects of the work's visual structure. It also adds to scholarship on voyeurism in *Genji* by noting the ways in which information gathering is shown to be multisensory rather than limited to the use of vision and to be the purview of female as well as male characters. Finally, paralleling the role of *nyōbō* as points of connection in the tale's narrative structure, I show how images of the ladies-in-waiting in the *Genji Scrolls* tie together disparate elements of the tale and also reveal hidden meanings to astute readers and viewers.

Keywords: *The Tale of Genji*, *Genji Scrolls*, ladies-in-waiting, *nyōbō*, *emaki*, Heian literature, *monogatari*

It has been said that no other literary text has left as indelible a mark on Japanese cultural production as Murasaki Shikibu's 紫式部 Heian 平安 (794–1185) classic *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The Tale of Genji; ca. 1008). And while readers have most often been drawn in by the exploits of the tale's major characters, not least the shining prince himself, scholars have long noted the outsize role played by *nyōbō* 女房, or ladies-in-waiting, who function as narrators, messengers, confidantes, and keepers—or, at times, transmitters—of secret knowledge. Although rarely taking center stage, these seemingly peripheral characters have been understood

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(and occasionally shown) to constitute networks through which information could flow, often "offstage," thus setting in motion much of the tale's drama and propelling the narrative forward.

This article focuses on the role of the lady-in-waiting in *Genji*'s oldest extant adaptation, the mid-twelfth-century *Genji monogatari emaki* 源氏物語絵巻 (Illustrated Scrolls of "The Tale of Genji"; below, the *Genji Scrolls*). It is believed that the surviving work (twenty paintings and twenty-nine textual passages)[1] represents only one-fifth of the original, yet even in its present state the work affords ladies-in-waiting a conspicuous presence, featuring them in fifteen of the twenty illustrations.[2] In the current study I argue that the *emaki* adaptation foregrounds the ladies-in-waiting in ways that demonstrate their significance as conveyors and shapers of the *Genji* narrative.

The function of ladies-in-waiting in the *Genji Scrolls* is predicated on their active participation in female-centered networks of spectatorship, surveillance, and exposure. These themes, of course, lay at the heart of *Genji* and are exemplified most famously in the so-called *kaimami* 垣間見 ("glimpsing through the fence") topos. A common motif in the *Genji* narrative and in Heian literature more broadly, *kaimami* is a literary trope that signals the beginning of a new love affair. Such scenes are typically associated with a male character, who, catching a glimpse of a female character from afar, becomes infatuated. Scholarship on *kaimami* has historically privileged acts of looking performed by men in ways that are appropriative and transgressive. This article will broaden the discussion of the role of voyeurism in the tale by focusing on a variety of spectatorship that has received less attention. The forms of surveillance in which ladies-in-waiting are engaged in the *Genji Scrolls* involve their own dynamics of desire that set them apart from the acts of voyeurism performed by men. Furthermore, they are shown to be multisensory, involving not just the eyes but also the ears and even, on occasion, the nose.

Its nature as a visual medium lends the *Genji Scrolls* the ability to interact with its audience in particular ways. First, the scrolls are capable of drawing viewers in and implicating them in acts of one-sided seeing, providing them with access to

1 The work is designated a Japanese National Treasure (Kokuhō 国宝). Its twenty-nine textual passages include the text that accompanies the twenty paintings, seven fragments that do not accompany paintings, and two additional short textual fragments from the "Kashiwagi" 柏木 sequence.

2 The work is thought to have consisted of ten to twelve scrolls and included two or three scenes (text and accompanying painting) from each of *The Tale of Genji*'s fifty-four chapters. See Lippit, "Figure and Facture in the 'Genji Scrolls,'" p. 49. Some scholars believe that the *Genji Scrolls* was originally a set of twenty scrolls similar to (or corresponding to) those mentioned in the thirteenth-century *Genji higishō* 源氏秘義抄 (Notes on the Secret Meaning of Genji), in the section known as the "Genji-e chinjō" 源氏絵陳状 (Genji Defense). The omnipresence of ladies-in-waiting is also evident in the tale itself: the word *nyōbō* (along with such variations as *nyōbōtachi* and *nyōbōdomo*) occurs over one hundred times, and approximately eighty ladies-in-waiting are explicitly named in the text. Horton, "They Also Serve," p. 95.

secret information and the pleasure of obtaining special insight. Moreover, in the cultural and political economies of late-Heian and early medieval Japan (the period in which the scrolls were produced), expert knowledge in cultural touchstones such as *Genji* functioned as sources of social and cultural capital. Viewers of the time would have been privy to such learning and thus would have brought to their experience of the *Genji Scrolls* a cache of prior knowledge that would have further enhanced their pleasure in seeing the scrolls. Furthermore, the ladies-in-waiting depicted in the *emaki* have the capacity to direct the viewer's attention to certain underlying features in the scrolls, facilitating a recollection of scenes from other points in the narrative and thus extending the viewer's "vision" beyond the current picture frame.

The roles of *nyōbō* both in real life within Heian society and as characters within the *monogatari* 物語 these women produced began to attract scholarly attention in the mid-twentieth century. Yoshikai Naoto 吉海直人 identifies three influential approaches regarding ladies-in-waiting, or "classic" *nyōbōron* 女房論 (lady-in-waiting discourses). The first of these is represented by the work of historical sociologist Masuda Katsumi 益田勝実, who contrasted the social realities of ladies-in-waiting—often members of the middle class (i.e., part of the *zuryō* 受領 class of provincial governors)—with common conceptions of the glamorous world of courtly female literature.[3] Of particular relevance to the current study is the fact that ladies-in-waiting occupied a social position in the middle ranks of court society that came with fewer restrictions pertaining to women being seen and heard compared to high-ranking women, who were for the most part sequestered behind blinds; thus ladies-in-waiting were able to serve as go-betweens and have greater access to information. Akiyama Ken 秋山虔 has pointed out the increasingly active role ladies-in-waiting play in the *Genji* narrative as it progresses. Although they begin by merely "accompanying the protagonist in the development of the story," by the last third of the tale they "actively lead the plot."[4] Finally, Shimizu Yoshiko's 清水好子 work pioneered the recognition of key distinctions among *nyōbō*—particularly the importance of wet nurses (*menoto* 乳母), who were associated with confidentiality and trust.[5] This special status extended to the wet nurses' biological children (*menotogo* 乳母子); these so-called "breast siblings" established lifelong companionships with the highborn children who grew up alongside them and were thereby positioned to act as accomplices to these main characters in their secret affairs.[6] Research subsequent to the work of these three scholars has further

3 Yoshikai, "Genji monogatari no nyōbō to menoto," p. 314.

4 Akiyama Ken, "Nyōbōtachi," p. 460.

5 See, for example, Shimizu Yoshiko, *Genji no onna gimi*.

6 Yoshikai, "Genji monogatari no nyōbō to menoto," pp. 314–15.

diversified and expanded our understanding of the complexity of the functions of ladies-in-waiting.[7]

An additional line of inquiry is critical to elucidating the function of ladies-in-waiting in the *Genji Scrolls*: the examination of mid-ranking *nyōbō* as narrating figures. In his "oral recitation theory" (*ondokuron* 音読論), Tamagami Takuya 玉上琢彌 famously argued that the many ladies-in-waiting we encounter in *The Tale of Genji* were meant to be taken not only as *characters in* but also as *narrators of* the tale itself. In his theory, *The Tale of Genji* is meant to be understood as originating in stories told by ladies-in-waiting who witnessed the events described in the tale.[8] Jinno Hidenori 陣野英則 expands this paradigm by showing that *written* materials in the form of poems, letters, and the like that were viewed, remembered, and/or collected by ladies-in-waiting were an additional avenue through which *nyōbō* knowledge entered the fabric of the tale.[9]

The importance of ladies-in-waiting in *Genji* and the emphasis they placed on the power associated with astute observation and cultural expertise is perhaps not surprising when we consider the fact that real-life women of the same social class were deeply involved in the production and early reception of *monogatari*. The legacy of female cultural production behind works such as *The Tale of Genji* can be traced to the early eleventh-century salons surrounding high-ranking women at the Heian court. Female writing and reading flourished at a time in world history when elsewhere illiteracy was the norm and women possessing these skills were rare. The political system dominated by regents (*sekkan seiji* 摂関政治), a position secured by marrying one's daughter into the imperial line, greatly impacted the production and valuation of women's writing, as it generated an atmosphere of competition among the emperor's consorts. A lady-in-waiting such as *Tale of Genji* author Murasaki Shikibu performed a critical role: she served as a companion-cum-tutor to enrich her mistress's literary prowess (and appeal) and brought prestige and cultural cachet to her mistress's salon via her own writing talent. Furthermore, the *nyōbō* lived their lives in close proximity to those they served and in residences with little to no privacy. Such circumstances, explains Mack Horton, allowed "ladies-in-waiting [to]

7 Other categories include, for instance, *nyōbō* who are employed at the palace versus those who are employed in the residences of aristocrats. Ladies-in-waiting serving at the imperial palace, known as upper ladies-in-waiting (*ue no nyōbō* 上の女房) were further stratified by rank. The mid-twelfth-century *Taiki bekki* 台記別記 describes a system of senior-grade ladies-in-waiting (*jōrō nyōbō* 上臈女房), who served as wet nurses and assistant handmaids (*naishi no suke* 典侍); middle-grade ladies-in-waiting (*chūrō nyōbō* 中臈女房); and, finally, junior-grade ladies-in-waiting (*gerō nyōbō* 下臈女房). Yoshikawa, "Ladies in Waiting in the Heian," p. 285. Recent scholarship has also extended the examination of ladies-in-waiting in *monogatari* beyond *The Tale of Genji*. For a comparison of *nyōbō* across tales, see Chino Yūko, *Nyōbōtachi no ōchō monogatari ron*. For an examination of *nyōbō* in *Eiga monogatari* 栄花物語 through the lens of its *nyōbō* network, see Moroi, "'Eiga monogatari' to nyōbō nettowāku."

8 For a discussion of Tamagami's *ondokuron*, see Horton, "They Also Serve," p. 101.

9 See Jinno, *Genji monogatari ron*, pp. 93–232.

hear a great deal of privileged information" such that "their gossip fills the tale's pages. Accordingly, they also function as an intelligence network."[10]

The *Genji Scrolls* were completed roughly 150 years after this flourishing of women's cultural production, combining calligraphy, paper decoration (for example, small illustrations, decorative stamps, and sprinkled gold and silver foil), and painted images to create the oldest extant picture scroll illustrating *The Tale of Genji*. Viewers of a given scroll would read a carefully crafted *kotobagaki* 詞書 (textual passage) from the tale before unrolling the scroll to reveal the accompanying illustration. For the purposes of this article, it is important to note that the *Genji Scrolls* do not merely reproduce or illustrate the tale but must be understood as a form of commentary that displays the producers' "reading" of particular scenes and their characters. That the scrolls provide their own unique version of the tale is evident in the ways scenes are depicted both visually through the paintings and textually through the *kotobagaki*. Although completed more than a century after Murasaki Shikibu is thought to have composed the tale, the textual portions of the *Genji Scrolls* constitute the oldest extant excerpts from *The Tale of Genji* and contain idiosyncrasies not seen in later full manuscripts of the work.[11]

There is a scholarly consensus that the scrolls were produced between 1120 and 1150, most likely at the behest of a powerful retired emperor; that their production was supervised by a woman of the *nyōin* 女院 class of retired imperial ladies; that they were created with the cooperation of aristocrats; and that they were painted by professional (and presumably predominantly male) artists in the imperial Bureau of Painting (*edokoro* 絵所).[12] The heights of artistry exhibited in the scrolls were clearly the product of great political power and financial wealth. In addition, the scrolls reveal a deep understanding of and interest in the content of *The Tale of Genji*, in no small part due to the presence of women as supervisors: these women would have been passionate about *Genji* and would have constituted the tale's core audience.[13] Furthermore, based on the surviving records in court diaries of *Genji-e* 源氏絵 (the broad genre of "Genji paintings," including the *Genji Scrolls*) these works seem to

10 Horton, "They Also Serve," p. 97.

11 *The Tale of Genji* text published in the most recent compendium of classical Japanese literature, *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (SNKBZ) 新編日本古典文学全集, is based on several works including the manuscript attributed to Fujiwara no Teika 藤原定家 (*Den Teika hitsubon* 伝定家筆本, Kamakura 鎌倉 period [1192–1333]), the *Myōyū rinmobon* 明融臨模本 attributed to Reizei Myōyū 冷泉明融 (Muromachi 室町 period [1336–1573]), and the so-called Ōshima 大島 manuscript attributed to Asukai Masayasu 飛鳥井雅康 (Muromachi period).

12 The possibility of the participation of female painters has been explored in Akiyama Terukazu, "Inseiki ni okeru nyōbō no kaiga seisaku." For this source in English, see Akiyama Terukazu, "Women Painters at the Heian Court." See also Minamoto, *Dare ga Genji monogatari emaki o kaita no ka*.

13 See Mitani and Mitamura, *Genji monogatari emaki no nazo o yomitoku*, p. 70.

have been linked to, and often sponsored by, avid female readers of *The Tale of Genji* occupying powerful positions in the twelfth century.[14]

Importantly, the scrolls were produced in a milieu colored by the emerging impulse to objectify and preserve court culture during the Insei 院政 period (period of rule by retired emperors; 1086–1185). This tendency is evident in the burgeoning of commentary culture, including the first *Genji* commentary—Fujiwara no Koreyuki's 藤原伊行 (1139?–1175?) *Genji shaku* 源氏釈 (ca. 1175).[15] The scrolls show commonalities with two forms of late Heian and early Kamakura 鎌倉 (1192–1333) *Genji* reception discussed by Haruo Shirane. First, like "narrative reincarnations" (i.e., a cohort of female-authored tales that provide a record of reader responses to *The Tale of Genji* in their active incorporation of the tale's character types and storylines), through which readers could enjoy encountering familiar characters in new scenarios, viewers of the scrolls could take "pleasure in seeing variations on a familiar scene from the *Genji*."[16] Second, the scrolls reveal their creators' keen interest in the poems of *The Tale of Genji*, an interest that was also displayed by thirteenth-century male poet-scholars Fujiwara no Shunzei 藤原俊成 (1114–1204) and his son Teika 定家 (1162–1241).[17] This is seen in the fact that many of the *kotobagaki* end with a poem that is central to the accompanying painting's import.[18] Such reconstruction in the scrolls of scenes from the *Genji* narrative can be seen as a form of commentary that displays the producers' "reading" of a particular scene and its characters (often with references to other scenes and to the broader themes of the tale). Seen in this light, the *Genji Scrolls* seem to have been produced at a midway point along the traditionally posited timeline of *The Tale of Genji*'s journey from being an object of casual entertainment written "by a woman, for women,

14 These records document a period spanning slightly over a century where women played prominent roles in court-sanctioned productions of *Genji-e*. Extant records of late Heian and early Kamakura *Genji-e* all describe women playing key roles ranging from sponsor to artist to custodian. These include *Chōshūki* 長秋記 (Record of the Long Autumn), 11.1119 diary entry of Minamoto no Morotoki 源師時 (1077–1136); the thirteenth-century *Genji higishō* 源氏秘義抄 (Notes on the Secret Meaning of *Genji*); *Genji chūshaku* 源氏注釈 (Genji Commentary), 1419 copy by Fushiminomiya Sadafusa 伏見宮貞成 (1372–1456); and *Meigetsuki* 明月記 (Record of the Clear Moon), March 1233 diary entry of Fujiwara no Teika. For these records, see Uehara, "'Nijikkanbon Genji monogatari emaki' kotobagaki no honbun shi," p. 83.

15 See Komine, *Inseiki bungakuron*, pp. 12–22. According to Komine Kazuaki 小峯和明, one of the defining characteristics of Insei cultural production is the recognition of "the other"—a category that includes the literary accomplishments of the past.

16 Shirane, "'The Tale of Genji' and the Dynamics of Cultural Production," p. 16. For a discussion of *Genji*'s poetic reception and narrative reincarnations, see pp. 10–17.

17 Shunzei famously said that "to compose poetry without having read *Genji* is inexcusable." This declaration in the *Roppyakuban utaawase* 六百番歌合 (1193) nearly two hundred years after the tale was written is seen as a turning point in attitudes toward *The Tale of Genji*. See Harper and Shirane, *Reading "The Tale of Genji,"* p. 339.

18 See Shimizu Fukuko, *Kokuhō "Genji monogatari emaki" o yomu*, pp. 231–33.

and about women"[19] to becoming an object of serious scholarly commentary predominantly conducted by men.[20]

Not only is the *emaki* adaptation an important vestige of *Genji*'s early reception history, with the scrolls granting a high profile to ladies-in-waiting, it stands out among *Genji-e* from later eras. These works tend to focus on the male consciousness and on *miyabi* 雅 (the aesthetic of courtly elegance), while in contrast the *Genji Scrolls* have been described as displaying a "dynamic women's culture reflected in rich color through the viewpoint of the lady-in-waiting."[21] The shift toward a male perspective in later *Genji-e* has been explained in terms of sociopolitical developments following the transition from a court-based society in the Heian period to shogunal dictatorships in the Kamakura period—namely, the stagnation of women's cultural production due to their decline in status, the diminishment of salons that accompanied the end of the regent system, and the fact that explication of the *Genji* narrative became an increasingly male prerogative.[22] However, as Melissa McCormick has shown, this shift was not absolute: *Genji-e* in the *hakubyō* 白描 (medieval amateur ink line drawing) tradition that emerged during the thirteenth century were linked to female "inner salons" of the imperial court, and throughout the medieval period "female readers were responsible for the [genre's] maintenance and vitality."[23]

The connection between artistic endeavors and the accrual of social and cultural capital in Heian Japan is well documented and can be seen in cultural practices such as artistic competitions (*awase* 合).[24] Similarly, the scrolls are believed to have been created by five competing groups of artists.[25] Scholars have also investigated possi-

19 Harper and Shirane, *Reading "The Tale of Genji,"* p. 337. This famous quote regarding *The Tale of Genji*'s primary female producers and audience is by Tamagami Takuya. In terms of esteem, *monogatari* were at the bottom of the Heian/Kamakura hierarchy of literary genres. See Sarra, *Fictions of Femininity*, pp. 1–2; Shirane, "'The Tale of Genji' and the Dynamics of Cultural Production," pp. 4–5.

20 For a discussion of the thirteenth-century impetus to collate the "ideal" manuscript from existing versions of Murasaki's work among aristocratic families—primarily father-son duos—see Harper and Shirane, *Reading "The Tale of Genji,"* pp. 339–40. See also Cook, "Genre Trouble," pp. 129–53.

21 Takahashi, *Genji monogatari no shigaku*, p. 583.

22 See Mitani and Mitamura, *Genji monogatari emaki no nazo o yomitoku*, p. 149; McCormick/Makōmikku, "Genji no ma o nozoku," pp. 102–105.

23 McCormick, "Monochromatic Genji," p. 102.

24 See Okada, *Figures of Resistance*, pp. 232–49; Sorensen, "Politics of Screen Poetry."

25 See Mitani and Mitamura, *Genji monogatari emaki no nazo o yomitoku*, pp. 72–73; Sano, *Jikkuri mitai "Genji monogatari emaki,"* p. 88. Scenes are thought to have been divided among the five groups as follows: Group 1: the "Kashiwagi" sequence (parts I, II, and III), "Yokobue" 横笛, "Suzumushi" 鈴虫 (I and II), "Yūgiri" 夕霧, and "Minori" 御法; Group 2: "Yomogiu" 蓬生, "Sekiya" 関屋, "E-awase" 絵合, and "Matsukaze" 松風 (textual passage only); Group 3: "Wakamurasaki" 若紫, "Suetsumuhana" 末摘花 (textual passage only), "Sawarabi" 早蕨, "Yadorigi" 宿木

ble links connecting this artistic competition to competition in the world of court politics, as the power to re-create *The Tale of Genji* in visual formats represented an effort to "reassert a continued claim to cultural authority."[26]

Mirroring the ways that artistic skill and specialized knowledge could be parlayed into other forms of influence and power in the period in which the scrolls were produced, the analysis below sheds light on how the *Genji Scrolls* utilize images of ladies-in-waiting to relate expert knowledge about the *Genji* narrative. That ladies-in-waiting—often the keepers of knowledge in the *Tale*—should occupy prominent positions in the paintings is in line with the scrolls' emphasis on themes of exposure and secrecy, which can be viewed as a means of showcasing the producers' knowledge of the tale and thus bolstering their "claim to cultural authority." In this article I employ a holistic methodology combining art historical analysis of the illustrations with literary textual analyses of the *kotobagaki* and their place within the greater context of the *Genji* narrative. My aim is to bring to the fore the producers' interest in multiple valences of spectatorship and exposure and the power to show hidden layers of the tale via the figure of the lady-in-waiting.

In the pages that follow, I begin by examining the ways in which the *Genji Scrolls* highlight the multisensory modes of observation employed by the *nyōbō* and how these figures are implicitly tied to the transmission of key information, either to other characters in the tale facilitating the forward momentum of the narrative or to the readers and viewers of the scrolls in the form of narration. In the article's second section I examine cases in which the networks in question are more explicitly depicted—and the *nyōbō* become more obvious and active participants in the narrative as keepers, bearers, or transmitters of secrets. In the final section, I provide an analysis of a scene in which certain *nyōbō* figures in the *Genji Scrolls* can be seen as bearers of their own secrets, subtly tying together disparate elements of the narrative and—through hints concerning a puzzle embedded in the image—providing

(I, II, and III), and "Azumaya" 東屋 (I and II); Group 4: "Takekawa" 竹河 (I and II) and "Hashihime" 橋姫; and Group 5 (comprising only textual passages): "Usugumo" 薄雲, "Otome" 乙女, "Hotaru" 蛍, and "Tokonatsu" 常夏.

[26] Jackson, *Textures of Mourning*, p. 40. Mitani Kuniaki 三谷邦明 and Mitamura Masako 三田村雅子 have proposed that the scrolls (or at least Group 1's "Kashiwagi" sequence) were created against the backdrop of the court intrigues surrounding Retired Emperor Shirakawa 白河 and Taikenmon'in 待賢門院 (Emperor Toba's 鳥羽 empress) via an entry in Minamoto no Morotoki's 源師時 (1077–1136) diary *Chōshūki* in the year 1119. See Mitani and Mitamura, *Genji monogatari emaki no nazo o yomitoku*, p. 89. One problem with linking the extant *Genji Scrolls* to the aforementioned entry in Morotoki's diary is that this is at odds with estimations based on the paper decoration, which date the scrolls much later (between 1130 and 1151). See Nakajima, "'Genji monogatari emaki' kotobagaki ryōshi sōshoku to monogatari no kankei," p. 26. Alternatively, Jackson has proposed that the two death scenes within Group 1 ("Kashiwagi II" and "Minori") function as a means of "manag[ing] loss" due to the court's political dispossession in late Heian (based on a date of production that is later than Mitani and Mitamura's and instead closer to, or even directly following, the turmoil of the Hōgen 保元 [1156] and Heiji 平治 [1159] rebellions). See Jackson, *Textures of Mourning*, p. 9.

viewers with an opportunity to revel in their own astute acts of observation as they solve the riddle.

Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, and Telling

Gender and Power in Acts of Observation. Scholars of *The Tale of Genji* and the *Genji Scrolls* have commonly called attention to the sense of vision and, in particular, acts of seeing that might be described as "voyeuristic." Although the terms "voyeur" and "voyeurism" have valences in English that may differ from the Heian context, I use "voyeur" to signal the witness (whether as viewer, listener, or both) to a scene where the person being observed is unaware of the fact, and I use "voyeurism" to include a range of activities that involve surreptitious looking and eavesdropping (*nusumigiki* 盗み聞き). In *The Tale of Genji*, characters of both genders furtively glimpse through blinds at others (*nozokimi* 覗き見); additionally, the literary trope of *kaimami*—in which a male character catches a serendipitous glimpse of a woman—sets the protagonist's pursuit in motion and is a precursor to a number of the tale's romantic couplings.

Of course, tales and their illustrations provide a form of entertainment that also affords readers and viewers a privileged vantage point. The *Genji Scrolls* betray an interest in visual spectatorship by featuring "looking" in various forms. This is evident in scenes of *kaimami* (such as "Takekawa II" 竹河二 and "Hashihime" 橋姫) or, as pointed out by Akiyama Terukazu 秋山光和, via architectural elements that allow viewers of the scrolls to "see through," so to speak, the impossibly thin lines of bamboo blinds (*sudare* 簾) and get a glimpse of the figures behind them (as in "Takekawa I" 竹河一 and "Kashiwagi III" 柏木三).[27] Hase Miyuki 長谷美幸 has compiled a list of scenes from the *Genji Scrolls* that depict actions driven by the desire to secretly observe someone, including instances of *nozokimi*, *kaimami*, and *nusumigiki*.[28]

While the voyeuristic proclivities of historical readers and viewers are difficult to verify, the preponderance of such pictorial and narrative elements suggests that one of the pleasurable aspects of these works is their enabling a form of spectatorship for high-ranking women in particular that allowed them to escape the boundaries of behavioral "norms" calling for modesty and reclusion. This hypothesis stands in contrast to the fact that the most highly recognized form of voyeurism in tale literature is *kaimami*, which has been conceived nearly exclusively as a signifier

27 See Hase, *Genji monogatari emaki no sekai*, p. 100.

28 I group these scenes according to the type of observation they feature: "Takekawa II" and "Hashihime" (*kaimami*); "Takekawa I" and "Yokobue" (*nozokimi*); "Yūgiri," "Yadorigi II," and "Azumaya I" (*nusumigiki*); "Yadorigi I" (*nozokimi* and *nusumigiki*). I categorize the scene in "Azumaya I" differently than Hase, who argues that it is an example of the furtive glimpse (*nozokimi*); however, as I show in the following analysis, only the main character Naka no Kimi is shown looking at Ukifune 浮舟 in that scene. The *nyōbō* are featured in the act of listening instead. Hase, *Genji monogatari emaki no sekai*, p. 104.

of physical, political, and sexual possession—a phenomenon most often ascribed to the masculine domain.[29]

Some scholars, however, have sought to deconstruct established formulations that posit the seer (usually male) and the seen (primarily female) as unwavering categories[30] and to disrupt notions of the primacy of vision and male libidinal desire in *The Tale of Genji*. Importantly, this dichotomy is destabilized by the fact that both the one who is seeing and the one who is seen are objects in the "eye" of the female narrator, as pointed out by Edith Sarra.[31] However, in terms of the historical circumstances of real-life Heian women, their active looking from a gap in the blinds has been described by Joshua Mostow as "a fragile power" likened to watching from behind a veil, a position that affords some protection from being seen from without while still "allow[ing] her some opportunity to gaze at the male."[32] Mostow argues further that women were at times able to escape their passive role in the binary construction of the pleasure of looking (active equated with men and passive with women); he points to instances where the female narrator (as well as her readers/viewers in the case of illustrated tales) takes up the position of the male voyeur, "internaliz[ing] the masculine gaze.[33] He also proposes that the pleasure found by women in looking through their own eyes via the "feminine re-guard" is "predicated on oneself being unseen."[34] The ladies-in-waiting of the *Genji Scrolls*

29 The connection between vision and possession stems from ancient times when "seeing" (along with "eating," "knowing," and "hearing") was associated with passion (*jōnen* 情念) and had the meaning of ownership, control, and possession. See Mitani, *Monogatari bungaku no hōhō*, p. 223. It is epitomized by the practice of *kunimi* 国見 (surveying the land) found in *Kojiki* 古事記 (712) and elsewhere, in which the ruler views the land from a place of high elevation, symbolically asserting kingly control. The overemphasis on the appropriative function of looking in tale literature is seen in Shinohara Yoshihiko's 篠原義彦 survey of voyeurism in early Japanese literature and his resulting typology of three scenarios of *nozokimi*. Only one of the scenarios incorporates the feminine gaze (i.e., *nyōbō sanbi* 女房賛美; admiration by a lady-in-waiting); however, it fails to take into account instances where the female engaged in seeing does not sing the praises of the seen but instead looks with a critical eye. See Shinohara, "Genji monogatari ni itaru nozokimi no keifu." For a critique of Shinohara's typology, see Sarra, *Fictions of Femininity*, pp. 232–38.

30 Norma Field's analysis of *The Tale of Genji* destabilizes this dichotomy by showing that there is a shift of interest from the seen to the one seeing, which is caused by the tension between the allure of the seen and the taboo of seeing. Field, *Splendor of Longing in the Tale of the "Genji,"* p. 269. Doris Bargen describes the "ghost gaze" of the female author who monitors *kaimami* scenes. Bargen, *Mapping Courtship and Kinship in Classical Japan*, p. 58.

31 Sarra, *Fictions of Femininity*, pp. 241–42.

32 Mostow, "E no gotoshi," p. 54.

33 Mostow, "E no gotoshi," p. 46; Royall Tyler also examines the utilization of the male gaze, arguing that the author, rather than risking offense to readers (who were most likely high-ranking women themselves) with explicit descriptions of the heroine's eager gaze, instead employed the gaze of another male character to relate erotic displays such as the sight of the hero in a state of disarray. See Tyler, "Lady Murasaki's Erotic Entertainment," pp. 74–78.

34 Mostow, "E no gotoshi," p. 48.

give us an opportunity to expand this notion of female spectatorship by recognizing that their experience of both vision and visibility "belies a superior depth of experience and knowledge. . . . Vision potentially invests [ladies-in-waiting] with the power to understand, if not the power to possess."[35]

Recent research in Japanese literary studies opens up new avenues for apprehending the scrolls' unique preoccupation with the viewpoint of ladies-in-waiting. One such approach is the adoption of a heightened focus on the link between ladies-in-waiting and the term *irogonomi* 色好み ("connoisseur of *iro* [color]=eros")[36]—a term that has dominated *Genji* scholarship; another is the call to reconsider the singular focus on "seeing" in recognition of the multisensory nature of voyeuristically charged scenes. In regard to the former, Jinno has reexamined *irogonomi*, which emerged as a key concept in discussions of the construction of the amorous hero as a character type in Heian court fiction.[37] Jinno's expanded analysis of the term *iro* and its derivatives (for example, *iromeku* [verb form], *iromekashi* [adjectival form]) in *The Tale of Genji* found that nearly half of the twenty-five instances referred to women, and of these the vast majority were ladies-in-waiting.[38] The women in question display an erotic interest mirroring that of their male counterparts and express romantic or sexual desire. But, according to Jinno, their erotic interests extend beyond those of the male characters and play an important role in the creation of the *Genji* narrative itself.[39] Specifically, he discusses another mode of desire on the part of these women depicted in the tale: those who express a quasi-erotic interest not in the main characters themselves but in gossip or stories (*monogatari*) about the romantic exploits of those characters. These desires are matched and answered by other women who have access to information regarding such affairs and who desire to respond by creating *monogatari*. Jinno points to sections of the text in which the narrator speaks directly to the audience to justify the revelation of uncomfortable details about Genji's private life in response to the urging of curious

35 Sarra, *Fictions of Femininity*, p. 225.

36 See Sarra, *Unreal Houses*, pp. 36–38.

37 For foundational commentary on *irogonomi*, see Orikuchi, *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū*; Takahashi, *Irogonomi no bungaku to ōken*.

38 Jinno, *Genji monogatari ron*, pp. 29–35. Of the twelve examples of *irogonomi* (or one of its derivatives) applicable to women in *The Tale of Genji*, ten examples apply to ladies-in-waiting: Suetsumuhana's *nyōbō* Taifu no Myōbu 大輔命婦 (2 entries); the eccentric and sexually explicit older lady-in-waiting Gen no Naishi 源典侍; the *nyōbō* serving the Akashi 明石 Empress; Ukifune's 浮舟 *nyōbō*; the First Princess's *nyōbō*, Ben 弁; Ukifune's serving girl, Komoki こもき; Tamakazura's 玉鬘 *nyōbō* Saishō 宰相; and two others. The outliers are Ukifune (this description occurs in Kaoru's 薫 thoughts and conveys his displeasure after discovering Ukifune's relationship with Niou 匂) and the girl from Ōmi Province whose eccentricity is often comedic.

39 As Jinno points out, in contrast to *irogonomi*'s tie to kingship, which is most applicable to the "main narrative" (chapters 1–41, Genji's birth to his last chapter, "Maboroshi" 幻), the ties between *irogonomi* and ladies-in-waiting are found in both the main narrative and "the sequel" (chapters 42–54, "Niou" to "Yume no ukihashi" 夢浮橋). Jinno, *Genji monogatari ron*, pp. 22–25.

others.[40] These passages "expose the mechanism whereby creation and consumption meet," as Genji does not tell his own tale; rather, the narrative structure is such that figures on the sidelines who possess knowledge of the events create *monogatari* in response to the audience's demand for realistic, intimate (*iro*) details.[41]

Through the Eyes (and Ears and Noses) of Ladies-in-Waiting. The "Takekawa I" scene of the *Genji Scrolls* showcases the configurations of *irogonomi* women described by Jinno: those who display the desire for *iro* by directly flirting with the male protagonists and those who demonstrate the link between female spectatorship and the desire for (illustrated) *monogatari* (to be discussed in more detail below).[42] These scenes also highlight the ways in which "spectatorship" in the *Genji Scrolls* involves use of not only the eyes but the ears and even the noses of observant ladies-in-waiting.

The target of observation and flirtation in "Takekawa I" is Kaoru 薫, whose moniker ("The Fragrant Captain") refers to his uncanny fragrance: so powerful is it that "he was unable to hide behind a screen without his scent revealing his presence."[43] Having come to pay a visit at the residence of Tamakazura 玉鬘 (Genji's adopted daughter), Kaoru sits exposed on the veranda, his visibility highlighted by the *kotobagaki*'s opening emphasis on the eyes (*me* 目) of the ladies-in-waiting:

> Among the many young men present—each easy on the eyes (*me yasukari* めやすかり) and flawless in his way—this latecomer [Kaoru] drew all eyes (*me tomaru* 目とまる), prompting the susceptible young women to remark, "He really is different." Another added naughtily, "I would like to *see* him matched up (*narabete mime* 並べて見め) with the elder daughter of our mistress."[44]

40 For example, at the conclusion of the "Yūgao" 夕顔 chapter, in a passage of *sōshiji* 草子地 (narrative aside), the narrator defends herself for telling all of the gritty details of Genji's tragic affair with the ill-fated heroine Yūgao. She explains that she wrote her tale in response to the urging of *others* who were critical that she had been holding back the "imperfect (*kataho* かたほ)" parts of Genji's private life that "he was intent on hiding" (*kakuroe shinobitamaishi* 隠ろへ忍びたまひし). Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 1, pp. 195–96. Translations mine unless otherwise noted.

41 Jinno, *Genji monogatari ron*, pp. 35–38.

42 Jinno, *Genji monogatari ron*, pp. 35–39.

43 Adapted from Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 788.

44 *Kotobagaki* from Komatsu, *Nihon no emaki*, p. 71; English translation adapted from Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, pp. 807–808. Throughout this article, translations of *kotobagaki* are adapted from Tyler's or Washburn's translations of *The Tale of Genji*, taking into account differences between the source text of the translations and the *kotobagaki*. In cases where the misalignment is not easily overcome by modification, I use my own translation. Where I include Japanese text, I follow the wording of the *kotobagaki* but use the orthography of the SNKBZ version of *Genji monogatari* for ease of reading.

"Takekawa I" serves as an example of the focalization of a scene through the spectatorship of ladies-in-waiting and its link to the "eye" of the narrator. The text of the *Genji Scrolls* differs from later editions of the *Genji* texts in that it lacks the qualifier "seemed" in the line "the latecomer [seemed] to draw all eyes" (*me tomaru* [*kokochi shite*] 目とまる心地して). While a small detail, this elimination of uncertainty gives the *nyōbō* narrator a more authoritative voice and increases the immediacy of her perspective, through which the reader becomes more fully immersed in the act of looking performed by the ladies-in-waiting. The painting, in which three *nyōbō* are conspicuously visible in the top left corner and another four can, with just a little effort, be seen peeping at Kaoru, reinforces the *kotobagaki*'s focus on *eyes* and depicts the immediacy of their perspective (figures 1 and 2).[45]

The curious faces of these figures point to the pervasive pleasure found in looking, which, as Hase suggests, "permeated everyday life regardless of gender."[46] These figures might also be drawn to the blinds to take in Kaoru's fragrance, which is the central theme of the flirtatious poetic exchange between Kaoru and the lady-in-waiting Saishō 宰相. Initiating the exchange, Saishō provocatively uses the command form of a verb related to *irogonomi*: "I imagine if I were to pluck you, that your fragrance would smell even sweeter (*orite miba itodo nihoi mo masaru* 折りて見ばいとどにほひもまさる). Show your colors (*iromeke* 色めけ) a little, first blossoms of the plum ["plum" meaning Kaoru]!"[47] In addition to their sense of vision, the sense of smell of the ladies-in-waiting also highlights the immediacy of their perspective from behind the blinds. Furthermore, both senses provide the eros-inspiring content demanded of *monogatari*. In fact, the *kotobagaki* is cropped so as to end with the final word on the subject issued by the ladies-in-waiting: coming close enough to grab provocatively at Kaoru's sleeves, they intone an allusion to a poem (*hikiuta* 引歌)—"rather than the color" (*makoto ni iro yori mo* まことに色よりも)—leaving it to readers to draw upon their cultural knowledge in order to understand the full context of the source poem (*Kokinshū* 古今集 33: "Rather than the color, the scent is what moves me").[48]

45 This feature has been made even more apparent through a project that combined the efforts of scientists, art historians, literary scholars, and artists to re-create the paintings based on new scientific data. Their findings—presented in a 2005 documentary film and an accompanying book, both titled *Yomigaeru Genji monogatari emaki* よみがえる源氏物語絵巻 (The *Genji Scrolls* Reborn)—highlighted the fourth peeping face, which is barely visible in the lower left corner of the frame. See NHK Nagoya, *Yomigaeru Genji monogatari emaki*, p. 76.

46 Hase, *Genji monogatari emaki no sekai*, p. 99.

47 Komatsu, *Nihon no emaki*, p. 72. Translation adapted from Washburn, *Tale of Genji*, p. 906. The *kotobagaki* also features Kaoru's reply, which reiterates the combination of olfactory and visual senses from Saishō's poem as he slyly reminds his spectator that looks can be deceiving: "At a cursory glance (*yoso ni mite* よそに見て), you may see a barren tree stripped of leaves, but fragrant flowers (*nioeru hana* 匂へる花) within glisten with dew."

48 Komatsu, *Nihon no emaki*, p. 72; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 808. This observation of multiple senses in a voyeuristically charged scene is in line with recent scholarship on *kaimami* that highlights

FIGURE 1. Detail of illustration from "Takekawa I" (*Genji monogatari emaki*; mid-twelfth century). Courtesy of the Tokugawa Art Museum (Tokugawa Bijutsukan 徳川美術館).

FIGURE 2. Detail of illustration from "Takekawa I" (see figure 1), highlighting the positions of ladies-in-waiting.

The "Azumaya I" 東屋一 scene showcases another of Jinno's configurations of *irogonomi nyōbō*—women desirous of *monogatari* and intimate details of the romantic exploits of others. And just as the female spectators in "Takekawa I" use a

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the importance of auditory and olfactory senses and the overlap between *kaimami* scenes and other scenes of focalization, such as descriptions of Kaoru in places where he is "seeing, hearing, and thinking." See Yoshikai, "*Kaimami*"*ru Genji monogatari*; Jinno, *Genji monogatari ron,* p. 415. According to Shimizu Fukuko, *hikiuta* are found in scenes such as "Yomogiu," "Takekawa I," and "Yadorigi III," all of which quote the *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (Collection of Ancient and Modern Japanese Poems; ca. 905). For a discussion of *hikiuta* and their place in *The Tale of Genji* and the *Genji Scrolls*, see Shimizu Fukuko, *Kokuhō "Genji monogatari emaki" o yomu*, p. 99.

combination of senses to observe and assess the fragrant Kaoru, "Azumaya I" draws our attention to one of the most critical senses for the *nyōbō* in the *Genji Scrolls*: hearing. As pointed out by Andō Tōru 安藤徹, women's ears are usually covered by their long hair, which creates "difficulty of listening"; however, in contradiction to this norm ladies-in-waiting are sometimes portrayed with sensitive "hearing ears."[49] Andō argues further that "in the world of *monogatari*, ears that deviate from those of a 'beautiful woman' and are exposed in order to listen and work well are more appropriate for ladies-in-waiting."[50] This understanding is confirmed by the character Yūgiri 夕霧, who warns, "Gossiping ladies-in-waiting, especially, keep their ears open (*mimi todomure* 耳とどむれ).[51] As visual corroboration, Andō points to the lady-in-waiting sitting in the lower right-hand corner of "Azumaya I," noting that the "blank space" within the hair is used to suggest the presence of the woman's ear and functions as a method of depicting her act of listening (figure 3).[52]

In "Azumaya I," the character Naka no Kimi 中君 (who appears seated on the lower left-hand side of the image with her back to the viewer, having her hair combed) has her gentlewoman Ukon 右近 read the text of a *monogatari* aloud while her half-sister, Ukifune 浮舟, looks at the pictures. The lady-in-waiting who is combing Naka no Kimi's hair is depicted, like the figure on the lower right, with a "blank space" in her own hair, such that "listening *nyōbō*" flank both sides of the image. In addition, the lady-in-waiting just to the right of the standing curtain (*kichō* 几帳) that separates her from Ukon's storytelling tilts her head toward it, a gesture that suggests she too is pricking up her ears (adopting what hereafter I shall refer to as a "listening pose").

While the ladies-in-waiting in "Takekawa I" exhibit *iro* in the form of overt flirtation, in "Azumaya I" they instead call to mind those whose access to private knowledge allows them to tell tales of the main characters' affairs. The two scenes also stand in contrast to each other in other ways: the painting in "Azumaya I" emphasizes listening *nyōbō* while eliding their acts of looking, whereas the text and image in "Takekawa I" place the spotlight on looking (and perhaps smelling). The *kotobagaki* of "Azumaya I" lacks a line found in standard *Genji* texts: "[The

49 Andō, "'Genji monogatari' no jiden," p. 105.

50 Andō, "'Genji monogatari' no jiden," p. 105. In *The Tale of Genji*, the practice of "tucking one's hair behind one's ears" (*mimi hasami* 耳挟み) is a sign of the "dutiful frumpy housewife," who—in her devotion to the domestic realm—falls short in poetic sensitivity, as seen in the "Rainy Night Discussion of Women" (*amayo no shinasadame* 雨夜の品定め) in the "Hahakigi" 帚木 chapter. Similarly, in the "Yokobue" scene of the *Genji Scrolls*, Kumoi no Kari 雲居の雁 is featured with her hair behind her ear, which, in addition to the image of her breastfeeding, emphasizes both her domesticity and her deviation from feminine standards of beauty. See Andō, "'Genji monogatari' no jiden," pp. 101–102.

51 Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 3, p. 320.

52 Andō, "'Genji monogatari' no jiden," p. 100.

FIGURE 3. Illustration from "Azumaya I" (*Genji monogatari emaki*; mid–twelfth century). Courtesy of the Tokugawa Art Museum.

ladies-in-waiting] could see Ukifune quite well (*miitarikeru* 見ゐたりける)."[53] This line from the full *Genji* narrative places the eyes of the ladies-in-waiting at the scene; "Azumaya I" instead focuses on Naka no Kimi's interior monologue as she visually compares Ukifune, who is sitting before her, with poignant memories of her late sister Ōigimi 大君. The painting mirrors the *kotobagaki* in this regard: Naka no Kimi alone is allowed a straight view of Ukifune. That the ladies-in-waiting are not invoked here using their sense of vision draws attention to a subsequent line that describes the sound of Naka no Kimi's voice as she "made conversation (*monogatari*) with her sister with familiar warmth."[54] Just after the passage presented in the *kotobagaki*, the tale continues: "It was nearly dawn when they lay down to sleep after a long talk (*monogatari* 物語)."[55] The ladies-in-waiting in "Azumaya I" shown pricking up their ears are just as eager to "hear" Naka no Kimi's "*monogatari*"—that is, her conversation with Ukifune—as they are to hear the actual *monogatari* read by Ukon. This scene was used by Tamagami in support of his oral recitation theory, as it features the recitation of a *monogatari* by a lady-in-waiting while others listen to the tale being read aloud.[56] In fact, ladies-in-waiting give an audience to multiple *monogatari* in this scene, including information that will later be collated to form the story currently being told. By highlighting the *ears* of ladies-in-waiting who take in multiple *monogatari*, "Azumaya I" hints at the active role played by the sense

53 Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 6, p. 72. Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 994.

54 Komatsu, *Nihon no emaki*, p. 87.

55 Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 6, p. 74. Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 994.

56 See Horton, "They Also Serve," p. 101.

of hearing not only in the enjoyment of tales but also in the construction of them, offering simultaneously a macro view of the oral transmission of *monogatari* and a peek at the in-progress construction of one of its microcosms, the tale of Ukifune.

***Nyōbō* as Narrators and Transmitters in the *Genji Scrolls*.** As we have seen, the *Genji Scrolls* present ladies-in-waiting in a manner that highlights their sensory receptivity. The scrolls also suggest, however, that these women are not merely passive receivers but also conveyers of private information. In fact, the *Genji Scrolls* strategically position the *nyōbō* in ways that signal their role as narrators—that is, their role in the construction of the very tale in which they appear. Here I follow Sano Midori 佐野みどり, who, applying the same logic to the visual presentation of *nyōbō* in the *Genji Scrolls*, argues that narrators "who have no form in the world of words," in other words, who are not explicitly mentioned in the *kotobagaki*, are materialized in the picture scrolls as listening ladies-in-waiting.[57] Mitamura Masako 三田村雅子 also suggests that the looking and listening *nyōbō* seen in "Yadorigi I" 宿木 一 and other scenes represent the narrator and, by extension, the means by which the narrator came by the juicy tidbits that helped inform her tale.[58] This fundamental layer of the *Genji* narrative—its production and propagation—often goes unseen in the written text, save for the periodic instances of *sōshiji* 草子地 (narrative aside), when the narrator calls attention to herself by addressing the reader directly.[59]

The use of *sōshiji* is an example of how perspective in the *Genji* narrative is a dynamic presence moving through a multilayered construction of not only time but also types of narration, including narrative description (*ji no bun* 地の文), the inner thoughts of individual characters (*shinnaigo* 心内語), and quoted speech (*kotoba* 言葉). The paintings of the *Genji Scrolls* are executed in a nonlinear pictorial perspective. In Western linear perspective, the larger the figure, the closer the figure is assumed to be to the viewer. In the *Genji Scrolls*, however, we find that a character's size is not determined by its relative distance from an assumed vantage point.[60] This lack of a single vantage point allows for multiple points of view in a single scene.[61] This technique is similar to the use of shifting viewpoints found in the full narrative of *Genji*. Termed "psycho-perspective" (*shinteki enkinhō* 心的遠近法) by Takahashi Tōru

57 Sano, *Jikkuri mitai "Genji monogatari emaki,"* p. 64. See also Ishii, "Egakareta nyōbō," p. 112.

58 Mitamura's insights are described in NHK Nagoya, *Yomigaeru Genji monogatari emaki*, p. 117.

59 See, for instance, the narrator's speech at the end of the "Yūgao" chapter discussed in footnote 40.

60 See Akiyama Terukazu, *Nihon emakimono no kenkyū*, pp. 13–15. See also Murase, *Iconography of the Tale of Genji*, p. 7; Kaori Chino, "Gender in Japanese Art," pp. 22–25.

61 Takahashi, *Monogatari to e no enkinhō*, p. 10.

高橋亨, this commonality in both text and *emaki* fosters the audience's ability to move from character to character, identifying psychologically with each in turn.[62]

The scene in "Yūgiri" (figure 4) is constructed with the conspicuous presence of these multiple perspectives. The right half of the painting features Yūgiri and his wife Kumoi no Kari 雲居の雁, who stands behind him with a hand outstretched, ready to snatch away a letter (that she assumes is from another woman); on the other side of the sliding door (*shōji* 障子), two ladies-in-waiting are seen eavesdropping on the drama. In the *kotobagaki* that accompanies this image, the letter is described using details that could only be known to one who has seen the letter and overheard the conversation between the two main characters. The positioning of the two ladies-in-waiting in the frame leaves little doubt about who could be sources of such privileged information.

By depicting the figures from a bird's-eye view, the image posits the existence of an omniscient narrator. Sano theorizes that in contrast to this transcendental narrative perspective, the ladies-in-waiting we see in "Yūgiri" bring before our eyes the fundamental doubt that underlies the acts of seeing and knowing. She terms these women "fake/false narrators" (*nise no katarite* 偽の語り手) due to their imperfect knowledge, arguing that their status in the world of *monogatari* is made clear by their position in the painting: since they are peripheral characters not directly related to core events, they are relegated to the right edge, segregated from the main characters by a partition.[63] And yet, as I will discuss below, the ladies-in-waiting exert an increased impact on the central narrative as the tale progresses; rather than serving as "fake/false narrators," these and other *nyōbō* are instead active narrators who serve as a pivot point between previous and future scenes (especially those in which ladies-in-waiting themselves play an important role).

This inclusion of peripheral characters on the main stage ties the scrolls to the broader context of female side characters occupying narratological roles, a folkloric trope belonging to multiple traditions. In the case of *The Tale of Genji*, as Horton explains, "having a subsidiary character hear or recount the thoughts and feelings of the main one allows the author to 'show' rather than 'tell' details of character and plot."[64]

It is also critical to recognize that time and space are not presented as linear progressions in the compartmentalized picture scroll format (*danrakushiki emaki* 段落式絵巻), and the links between the text and picture are often finespun and

62 Takahashi, *Monogatari to e no enkinhō*, p. 14.

63 Drawing from Russian formalist thinker Boris Uspenskiĭ, Sano further argues that as *observers* of the scene, the ladies-in-waiting serve to embody the unfolding events, becoming "figures who hold a viewpoint of 'defamiliarization' which brings about a shift in seeing." Sano, *Fūryū, zōkei, monogatari*, pp. 314–21. In Uspenskiĭ's use of "defamiliarization" (Russian: остранение, transliterated *ostranenie*), this term describes an artistic technique whereby familiar items are used in an unexpected way so that the viewer is afforded a new perspective.

64 Horton, "They Also Serve," p. 98.

FIGURE 4. Illustration from "Yūgiri" (*Genji monogatari emaki*; mid–twelfth century). Courtesy of the Gotoh Museum (Gotō Bijutsukan 五島美術館). Unauthorized reproduction prohibited.

complex.[65] Further, it is well established that the paintings of the *Genji Scrolls* frequently reference scenes from other points in the tale, thus requiring great familiarity with the full narrative of *The Tale of Genji*.[66] The "Yūgiri" and "Yadorigi I" scenes share with many of the scenes in the *Genji Scrolls* a compositional scheme that is particularly suited to displaying multiple moments of narration. Both utilize the *fukinuki yatai* 吹抜屋台 ("blown-off roof") technique for exposing private interior spaces, which "gives the gazer the pleasure of seeing that which is intimate and kept secret."[67] Along with the bird's-eye view enabled by this technique, the artists also made use of what Masako Watanabe terms a "doubled compositional arrangement"—that is, using a "severed beam (or standing screen) to divide a rectangular space into two narrative spaces that are placed side-by-side," a composition that is seen in six of the twenty extant paintings."[68]

Turning back to "Yūgiri," the physical division between the main characters (the letter-snatching Kumoi no Kari and her hapless husband Yūgiri) and the listening

65 Watanabe, "Narrative Framing in the 'Tale of Genji Scroll,'" p. 116.

66 See Sano, *Jikkuri mitai "Genji monogatari emaki"*; Kawazoe, "'Genji monogatari emaki' to monogatari no 'kioku' o meguru danshō." In English, see Watanabe, "Narrative Framing in the 'Tale of Genji Scroll'"; Wittkamp, "'Genji monogatari emaki' as Trans- and Intermedial Storytelling."

67 Watanabe, "Narrative Framing in the 'Tale of Genji Scroll,'" p. 131.

68 Watanabe, "Narrative Framing in the 'Tale of Genji Scroll,'" p. 133. This composition is seen in the following scenes: "Kashiwagi" II and III, "Yūgiri," "Yadorigi" I and II, and "Azumaya II." Of these, two scenes do not utilize the partition to divide the world of the main characters from that of the ladies-in-waiting ("Kashiwagi III" and "Azumaya II").

ladies-in-waiting seems to operate as a device prompting the recognition—paradoxically, perhaps—of the *interconnections* between main and supplementary actions.[69] The first of these interconnections pertains to the economy of romantic letter writing and exchange. Before opening the scroll further to uncover the illustration, the reader/viewer is primed to focus attention on such correspondence through the careful selection of the *kotobagaki*, such that the text is bookended with direct references to the letter.

> "[Kumoi no Kari] was lying in the day sitting room when the reply was brought in [and presented to Yūgiri]. The writing was so unusual, like the strange tracks of birds, that he could not immediately make it out. His wife had seemed safely behind a curtain, but now she slipped up behind him and seized the letter. "Oh no!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing? You should be ashamed of yourself! . . . Read it if you like! Does it look like a love letter? . . ." She didn't look at the letter right away after all; still she decided to hold on to it.[70]

Furthermore, the *kotobagaki* resists closure with its final line: "She didn't look at the letter right away after all; still, she decided to hold on to it" (*futo mo sasuga ni mitamawade motamaeri* ふともさすがに見たまはで持たまへり). The text thus leaves open the question: Will Kumoi no Kari (or anyone else) read the letter?

This letter would be of prime interest to the eavesdropping ladies-in-waiting and is fundamental to their roles as narrators in the scene. The emphasis on the letter is readily apparent in the painted image: the letter that Yūgiri holds in his hands and the inkstone box placed before him are depicted as inordinately large, to the degree that one would be hard-pressed to lift the box were it to exist in real life.[71] Prop-like items within the painting offer a "hyper-perspective"[72] that serves as a tool to capture a character's view of the events, often "stimulat[ing] the viewer's mind to envision [other episodes that are not] related explicitly in the text."[73] Accordingly, it has been argued that the letter's size reflects Kumoi no Kari's keen interest in reading it (and further fuels her jealousy).[74] The size, along with

69 See Sano, *Fūryū, zōkei, monogatari*, pp. 315–20; Watanabe, "Narrative Framing in the 'Tale of Genji Scroll,'" p. 136.

70 Komatsu, *Nihon no emaki,* pp. 65–66; translation adapted from Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, pp. 730–31.

71 Hase, *Genji monogatari emaki no sekai*, p. 123. Hase quotes Yoshida Hidekazu's observation concerning the inkstone box.

72 Hase, *Genji monogatari emaki no sekai*, pp. 122–23.

73 Watanabe, "Narrative Framing in the 'Tale of Genji Scroll,'" p. 137. Watanabe argues that the "writing implements inside [the inkstone box] may be interpreted as a visual allusion to the two letters Yūgiri has written to Kashiwagi's widow [Ochiba 落葉] after he left her villa the previous night." Watanabe, "Narrative Framing in the 'Tale of Genji Scroll,'" p. 138.

74 Hase, *Genji monogatari emaki no sekai*, pp. 122–23.

Yūgiri's proclamation—"Read it if you like (*mitamae* 見たまへ)! Does it look like a love letter?"—would also be a tempting provocation for the ladies-in-waiting. As Mitamura argues, the fact that these gentlewomen go unmentioned in the *kotobagaki* and yet have such a high profile in the paintings creates "a close-up on the process of transmitting [to the reader/viewer] the information that was collected and written in *The Tale of Genji*."[75] Furthermore, Jinno's expansion of the paradigm privileging the oral transmission of *monogatari* to include written materials casts the relationship of the ladies-in-waiting to the letter in the "Yūgiri" scene in a new light. As Jinno has shown, ladies-in-waiting have exceptional access to their charges' letters and other correspondence, which informs the narratives in *Genji* and accounts for the conveyance of the content of these written materials to the tale's readers via the *nyōbō* narrator. In "Yūgiri," such knowledge is suggested in the description of the letter's handwriting (it resembled "the strange tracks of birds"), which hints that the letter was seen by one or more *nyōbō* who reported these details to others.

The association of the eavesdropping ladies-in-waiting in the "Yūgiri" scene of the *Genji Scrolls* with the collection of material that would eventually form part of the *Genji* narrative itself is supported by the narration at the close of the "Yūgiri" chapter of *The Tale of Genji*. The chapter closes with a passage of *sōshiji* in which a lady-in-waiting acting as narrator explicates the construction of Yūgiri and Kumoi no Kari's tale, indicating that the "relationships of Genji's son [Yūgiri] are really too complicated to explain . . . or so it was said."[76] Importantly, this passage suggests that the sources of the narrator's information were the women who had served as wet nurses to Yūgiri and Kumoi no Kari during their childhood. I will take up the topic of wet nurses and their role in the *Genji* narrative in the following section.[77]

In addition to implicating *nyōbō* in sharing information with the audience in the form of narration, at several points the *Genji Scrolls* strongly suggest that ladies-in-waiting play a pivotal role in the transfer of information between characters. Their propensity to share secrets is most evident in the ways in which *nyōbō* figures serve as points of connection linking "Yadorigi I" and "Yadorigi II" 宿木二 as well

75 NHK Nagoya, *Yomigaeru Genji monogatari emaki*, p. 117.

76 Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 4, pp. 489–90; translation adapted from Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 752. The SNKBZ editor notes that "too complicated to explain" is a common method of omission by a narrator and that the ending "so it was said" (. . . *to zo*) is a marker of the narrator's speech indicating that "the preceding account is told just as it has been passed down from long ago." Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 4, p. 490n1–2.

77 The suggestion that the wet nurses were the source of the narrator's information can be found in the passage's opening line, which makes reference to a specific event in the "Otome" chapter ("Long ago, when Kumoi no Kari's father was keeping his daughter and Genji's son [Yūgiri] apart . . ."). Intimate knowledge of this event would have belonged to the aforementioned wet nurses. Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 4, pp. 489–90; translation adapted from Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 752.

as "Kashiwagi I" 柏木一 and "Kashiwagi II" 柏木二. Both of these sequences will be analyzed in more detail in the next section. For the moment, however, it is important to note that in both pairs of scenes we find *nyōbō* in part 1 positioned in ways suggesting they are privy to sensitive information, and then we witness in part 2 the consequences of this information having been somehow relayed to other characters through unnamed channels.

In a manner strikingly similar to that seen in "Yūgiri," discussed above, "Yadorigi I" features a divided frame allocating separate spaces for listening/peeping ladies-in-waiting and the main figures they observe (figure 5). There are other parallels as well. Both Kaoru, featured in "Yadorigi I," and Yūgiri are labeled as *mamebito* まめびと (stalwart gentlemen), but both also share a fear of being the target of gentlewomen's gossip.[78] In the "Yūgiri" scene, Yūgiri's fear of a certain gentlewoman spreading "unpleasant rumors" and "whisper[ing] all sorts of awful things" is ironized by the strategic placement of eavesdropping *nyōbō* on the other side of the partition. "Yadorigi I" places Kaoru in the same position, and in this scene the ever-present *nyōbō* act not only as observers but play an additional role as relayers of information.

In "Yadorigi I," two listening *nyōbō* just behind a sliding door take in the interaction between Kaoru and the emperor as they play a game of go. "Yadorigi II" then reveals the consequences that have followed from this act of eavesdropping: having "heard the news" that the emperor has offered Kaoru his daughter in marriage, Yūgiri decides to marry his own daughter to someone else. "Kashiwagi I" similarly illustrates a private conversation, in this case between Retired Emperor Suzaku 朱雀, his daughter the Third Princess, and her husband Genji. During their talk, which takes place in the presence of the princess's ladies-in-waiting, the princess convinces her father to allow her to take the tonsure. Readers/viewers coming to the *Genji Scrolls* with a prior understanding of the *Genji* narrative would know that soon after this exchange—which from the standpoint of the main characters is presumably private—Kashiwagi will receive the critical information that the Third Princess has taken vows to become a nun and that this news will result in his collapse and eventual death (depicted in "Kashiwagi II").[79]

Both the Yadorigi and the Kashiwagi sequences are propelled by a transfer of private information that could only have flowed through networks of female attendants. In the next section we turn to examples of ladies-in-waiting whose role in the narrative grows more obvious as matters progress and whose networks are depicted with increasing clarity.

78 *Mamebito* in classical Japanese refers to a person with a straight and serious character. It is often contrasted with *irogonomi* (one inclined to amorous affairs). For Kaoru, his concern that "old women are always such gossips" stems from the unwanted prospect that his secret paternity might be exposed. Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 5, p. 201; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 860.

79 Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 4, p. 310; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 682.

FIGURE 5. Illustration from "Yadorigi I" (*Genji monogatari emaki*; mid–twelfth century). Courtesy of the Tokugawa Art Museum.

"Nyōbō Networks": Wet Nurses and Breast Siblings as Surrogates and Confidantes

We continue our examination of the strategic placement of *nyōbō* figures in the *Genji Scrolls* with an analysis of some of the most explicitly detailed networks of ladies-in-waiting in *The Tale of Genji*. In the discussion that follows I demonstrate how female attendants at times went beyond the roles of observer and narrator that we examined earlier and took on the more active functions of surrogate or bearer of secrets. This latter role was particularly essential in the scheme of the narrative itself, as bearers of secrets had the potential to upend the lives of the protagonists. Below I return once again to "Yūgiri" and examine as well the full Kashiwagi sequence (Kashiwagi I, II, and III). In these scenes, the roles played by wet nurses—a particular category of *nyōbō*—and by breast siblings are on display. As Shimizu Yoshiko and Yoshikai Naoto have noted, in the *Genji* narrative wet nurses were associated with confidentiality and trust by the main characters whom they had a part in raising, thus fulfilling a role similar to that of a surrogate parent.[80] Furthermore, a wet nurse's own children, having grown up with the main characters, came to be regarded as surrogate siblings. These so-called breast siblings, or *menotogo*, are shown serving as companions to the tale's protagonists and additionally play a special role as accomplices in secret affairs.

Depictions of key scenes involving these networks also seem to bear out Akiyama Ken's observation of the evolving role of *nyōbō* in the *Genji* narrative, from characters on the sidelines to agents in their own right. This observation is in line with literary scholarship on the wet nurses of Kumoi no Kari and Yūgiri,

[80] See notes 5 and 6.

who have been described as radical departures from previous ladies-in-waiting in the tale. As Akiyama explains, these two women "are not simply functional figures who mediate the negotiations between the protagonists," as was the case with ladies-in-waiting who came before; rather, they have their own opinions and are considered to be meaningful as spokespersons for the considerations of others.[81] Yoshikai argues further that an important innovation in the representation of *nyōbō* takes place in the Yūgiri/Kumoi no Kari saga: the so-called nanny proxy war.[82]

The "Nanny Proxy War." Although it is not described in the *kotobagaki* and not depicted in the scrolls, readers/viewers of "Yūgiri" and its depiction of the confrontation between Yūgiri and Kumoi no Kari over the mysterious letter would likely have been aware of the couple's backstory as described in earlier chapters of the *Genji* tale. This backstory colors the ways in which we interpret the figures of the two ladies-in-waiting who witness the scene. In short, Yūgiri and Kumoi no Kari were cousins, raised together at the home of their grandmother. When, at the ages of twelve and fourteen, respectively, they began to develop romantic feelings for one another, Kumoi no Kari's father decided to separate the two, moving her to his own residence. The parties with the most knowledge of those events were undoubtedly their wet nurses, characters who factored heavily in that scene and beyond. While Yūgiri's wet nurse was sympathetic to his position, wishing to encourage the budding romance between the two cousins, Kumoi no Kari's wet nurse, Taifu 大輔, saw better prospects for her elsewhere and derided Yūgiri's low rank.

It is significant that the ladies-in-waiting in "Yūgiri" can be seen mirroring the two main characters in the image in ways that suggest they are actively "taking sides" in the dispute.[83] The *nyōbō* who serves as Kumoi no Kari's "agent" is, like she, positioned to the right of her counterpart (see figure 4). Moreover, this attendant exhibits a similar forward tilt and faces the viewer at the same forty-five-degree angle; her right hand conspicuously clutches her robe in the same fashion as Kumoi no Kari's left hand, creating a mirroring effect. Meanwhile, as Sano has pointed out,

81 Akiyama Ken, "Nyōbōtachi," pp. 459–60.

82 Yoshikai, *Genji monogatari no menotogaku*, p. 186.

83 Kuge Hirotoshi 久下裕利 calls attention to the presence of this kind of visual trope in both the "Yūgiri" and the "Hashihime" scenes. Kuge, "Kokuhō 'Genji monogatari emaki' o yomu," p. 15. Kuge points to an instance in the "Hashihime" scene in which the serving girl, who is situated on the veranda, mirrors the movements of the main character, Naka no Kimi. The girl points a fan at the moon in a way that mimics Naka no Kimi's pointing of her biwa plectrum, acting as an agent on her behalf and depicting in parallel the latter's assertion that "though it is not a fan" (as in a famous Chinese verse, *Wakan rōeishū* 和漢朗詠集 587, that suggests one can call forth the moon from behind clouds with a fan), she could call forth the moon with her biwa plectrum. See Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 5, p. 140n29; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 837n13.

there is a correspondence between the decorative paper of the fan held by the lady-in-waiting on the left-hand side of the *nyōbō* pair and the decorative paper of the letter held by Yūgiri: both have a dark reddish background painted with a silver dot pattern.[84] All of these visual correspondences serve to remind the observant viewer that in the world of ladies-in-waiting, there were certainly those who took sides. In their long-standing positions as witnesses to Yūgiri and Kumoi no Kari's romance, the attendants depicted in "Yūgiri" may be seen as embodiments of all those who facilitated (or thwarted) their relationship.

Viewers of the "Yūgiri" scene who are intimately familiar with *The Tale of Genji* would also have other reasons to associate the *nyōbō* figure on the right with Kumoi no Kari's wet nurse, Taifu. In *The Tale of Genji*, Taifu is featured prominently just after the section recounted in the *kotobagaki* of "Yūgiri." In this passage of the full *Genji* narrative, Yūgiri fixates on being the target of ridicule from ladies-in-waiting spreading gossip about a new affair he has undertaken with a high-ranking woman. These *nyōbō*, he reflects, must be "smiling wryly" (*hoho emuran mono o* ほほ笑むらむものを)" to hear of his new dalliance.[85] When he tries to reassure Kumoi no Kari that he is still devoted to her, he singles out her nurse Taifu—without, however, directly naming her—demonstrating how her critical remarks long ago (as recounted in the "Otome" 乙女 chapter) have plagued him since:

> Someone must have been telling you unpleasant rumors—no doubt someone who for some reason never approved of me in the first place. I expect that she invokes those miserable light-blue sleeves [of the sixth rank] of mine even now to convince you. She must whisper all sorts of awful things. . . . [Meanwhile] Taifu listened in pained silence."[86]

Taifu's criticism reverberates throughout both the tale and its representation in the *Genji Scrolls*. Yūgiri voices his gripe against Taifu over multiple chapters, composing various poems on the subject of his bitterness over her remark on his low starting rank (the "light-blue sleeves" of the sixth rank).[87] The painting for the "Yūgiri"

[84] Sano, *Jikkuri mitai "Genji monogatari emaki,"* p. 67.

[85] Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 4, pp. 431–32; Washburn, *Tale of Genji*, p. 824.

[86] Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 4, p. 429; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 731.

[87] Yūgiri and everyone around him expected him to start at the fourth rank upon his coming-of-age. However, Genji—in an attempt to right his own wayward path as a youth—appointed Yūgiri two ranks lower, therefore delaying his entrance to court so that he could focus on his education. In response to Taifu's initial critical remark, Yūgiri composes the first of his poems on light-blue sleeves (*asagi* 浅葱): "How can she dismiss as a light and worthless blue these sleeves I must wear, dyed a far deeper color by the scarlet of my tears? I feel so ashamed." Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 3, p. 57; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 393. For the scene in "Hotaru," see Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 3, p. 217. For the scene in "Fuji no uraba" 藤裏葉, see Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 3, p. 455.

scene in the *Genji Scrolls* includes a trace of this earlier moment in "Otome" (when Taifu's complaint "came from right behind the screen")[88] via its placement of a listening lady-in-waiting (calling Taifu to the minds of educated viewers) on the other side of the panel, a witness once again to the couple's drama. Referring to this feature of the scroll as an "afterimage" (*zanzō* 残像), Kawazoe Fusae 河添房江 argues that such elements may remind viewers that Kumoi no Kari and Yūgiri's relationship includes a long prehistory of turmoil that has led up to this moment.[89] Viewers attuned to the scene's connections with the "Otome" scene might also register the unique prehistory of *nyōbō* in the couple's affairs.

In the Kashiwagi sequence, wet nurses and breast siblings play pivotal roles in the realization of forbidden romance, becoming in the process the bearers of consequential secrets. Of the many hidden truths in *The Tale of Genji*, of course, secrets of paternity loom the largest. It is not incidental that ladies-in-waiting—many of whom not only bear such a secret but also shoulder some responsibility for its dire outcomes—are prominently featured in each of the paintings of the Kashiwagi sequence, which depict the tragic consequences of Kashiwagi's illicit affair with one of Genji's wives (the Third Princess). Secrets have been variously conceptualized as constituents of public and private spheres. In this sense, *nyōbō* and the secrets that they carry are deeply connected to a moral order of shame. As James McMullen explains, "The chief sanction against transgression is external to the individual and social. It takes the form of shame and the accompanying threat of [public] disgrace. As a result, secrecy is paramount; it protects the individual from damage to an essential aspect of selfhood."[90] Thus, ladies-in-waiting have a key role in managing the social, public-facing selves of those whom they serve. Further, on a narrative level, the secrets that they bear correspond with sociologist Georg Simmel's argument that "an immense expansion of life is achieved with the secret because its various contents cannot make an appearance at all with complete publicity. The secret offers the possibility of a . . . second world next to the apparent one, and this is influenced by the former most strongly."[91] These two roles

88 Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 3, pp. 56–57; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 393. The SNKBZ editor notes that this is an instance of deliberately bad-mouthing someone so as to be overheard. See Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 3, p. 56n17.

89 Kawazoe observes that embedded in the image for the "Yūgiri" scene are pictorial elements derived from the scene in the "Tokonatsu" chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, including the appearance of Kumoi no Kari dressed in *usugi* 薄着 (a gauze shift). He notes that this is seasonally out of place in "Yūgiri" (which is set in the middle of the eighth month—autumn in the lunar calendar then in use); "Tokonatsu" is set in the sixth month (summer). The embedded element was likely included to recall her father Tō no Chūjō's 頭中将 having chastised her for taking a nap, insinuating that such a lapse had led to her early sexual initiation. Kawazoe, "'Genji monogatari emaki' to monogatari no 'kioku' o meguru danshō," pp. 53–54.

90 McMullen, "Ritual, Moral Personhood, and Spirit Possession in *The Tale of Genji*," p. 104.

91 Simmel, *Sociology*, p. 325.

of ladies-in-waiting (expanding the narrative and managing social selves) rise in prominence in the last two-thirds of the tale, beginning with the "Kashiwagi" storyline, owing to what Yoshikai terms a "*nyōbō* network" that is the most extensive seen in *The Tale of Genji*.[92] It is through these interconnections that the influence of ladies-in-waiting—as managers of the tale's shameful secrets—comes to the fore. Below in my analysis of the "Kashiwagi" sequence, I call attention to the visible representation of this dramatic shift by highlighting those who are responsible for the stewardship—and ultimate revelation—of the tale's secrets.

The primary secret in Part I of *The Tale of Genji* arises from young Genji's affair with his father's consort, Fujitsubo 藤壺, which produces a son, Reizei 冷泉, whom they allow the world to believe is the emperor's son. Later in life, Genji is cuckolded by his wife, the Third Princess, who has an affair with Kashiwagi. That coupling produces a son, Kaoru, who—in a change of fortunes—Genji must pass off as his own son, thus leading to the primary secret of Parts II and III of the tale.[93] In Part I, the one who comes forward with the secret of Reizei's paternity is a "wise and holy man" (*yo ni kashikoki hijiri* 世にかしこき聖) in the "Usugumo" 薄雲 chapter.[94] However, in Part III, the one who is tasked with revealing the secret of Kaoru's paternity is an elderly lady-in-waiting, Ben 弁. Unlike the "wise and holy man," her role spans not only successive reigns but also successive parts of the narrative and its differing locales. Ben serves as a miraculous link between, on the one hand, the affair of Kashiwagi and the Third Princess (Ben was Kashiwagi's breast sibling) in Part II and, on the other hand, the disclosure of Kaoru's secret paternity twenty years later in Part III, when the tale moves away from the center of the Heian world—the capital—to explore the romantic possibilities of one of its peripheries, Uji 宇治, where Kaoru encounters Ben.

In addition to this shift in the gender and station of the one who preserves knowledge of the past and discloses the tale's secrets to later generations (i.e., from a "wise and holy man" serving in the imperial court to a lady-in-waiting serving on the periphery), one of the key features that separates Kashiwagi's story of a scandalous affair from Genji's is the text's focus on the aforementioned *network* of ladies-in-waiting who not only enable the affair but also move the narrative forward after Kashiwagi's death to focus on the bearer of his legacy, Kaoru, in the Uji chapters. This network is connected in part by genealogical ties among the ladies-in-waiting themselves, as exemplified by the fact that Kashiwagi first learns about the Third

92 Yoshikai, *Genji monogatari no menotogaku*, p. 218.

93 *The Tale of Genji* is broadly divided into three sections: Part I (chapters 1–33, "Kiritsubo" 桐壺 to "Fuji no uraba"), which recounts the first half of Genji's life; Part II (chapters 34–41, "Wakana jō" 若菜上 to "Maboroshi"), which narrates the second half of his life, particularly his marriage to the Third Princess and its dire consequences; and Part III (chapters 42–54, "Niou" to "Yume no ukihashi"), which begins several years after Genji's death and chronicles the lives of his real and purported descendants (Niou and Kaoru, respectively).

94 Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 2, p. 449; Washburn, *Tale of Genji*, p. 400.

Princess via the familial ties between his own nurse and the Third Princess's nurse (who are sisters). Kashiwagi and the Third Princess are further connected by their breast siblings, Ben and Kojijū 小侍従, who are themselves cousins. To begin with, it is Kojijū, the biological daughter of the Third Princess's wet nurse, who becomes instrumental in delivering Kashiwagi's impassioned love letters to the princess and in convincing her to write a sympathetic letter in response.

This network of secrets and private knowledge is on full display in the first painting of the "Kashiwagi" sequence, which illustrates the scene in which the Third Princess begs her father, Retired Emperor Suzaku, to allow her to become a nun. The "Kashiwagi I" painting is set in the *moya* 母屋, the central room that served as the bedroom for the residence's primary occupants—in this case, the Third Princess. There is much to conceal in this scene: the Third Princess and Genji must hide the fact that their child is the result of an illicit affair, while Suzaku, unaware of his daughter's indiscretion, secretly blames Genji for his daughter's unhappiness. The *kotobagaki* preceding the painting relays the conversation among these three characters. Suzaku dominates these interactions and is, accordingly, the central figure in the painting.[95] Also mentioned in the scene are the Third Princess's gentlewomen (人々 *hitobito*), who take the princess down from her sleeping platform (*michōdai* 御帳台) to meet her father.[96] In the painting, the Third Princess is seen lying on the tatami below the bed; however, her ladies-in-waiting are not pictured by her side as they would be if the artists followed the text of the *kotobagaki* literally. Instead, they populate the right half of the painting and are separated from the main characters by a series of blinds that break up the composition with sharp angles, creating a scene "divided into two worlds" (figure 6).[97]

This visual separation of the *nyōbō* from the main characters is elucidated by Suzuki Kai's 鈴木夏衣 observation that the configuration of various blinds works to demarcate the space into concentric circles of differing levels of knowledge.[98] The first, innermost, of these circles, starting on the left side of the painting, subsumes the Third Princess and Genji, who are the only two main characters with knowledge of the extramarital affair. Genji can be seen directly below the retired emperor, recognizable from his lacquered hat (*eboshi* 烏帽子). The second circle subsumes the figure of Retired Emperor Suzaku, whose frame of reference stems from his role as the Third Princess's father. The third and fourth circles subsume ladies-in-waiting who hold different frames of reference depending on their roles of *menoto*, *menotogo*,

95 Watanabe, "Narrative Framing in the 'Tale of Genji Scroll,'" p. 142.

96 Komatsu, *Nihon no emaki*, p. 49; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 680.

97 See Shimizu Fukuko, *Kokuhō "Genji monogatari emaki" o yomu*, p. 195.

98 See Suzuki, "Tokugawa, Gotōbon Genji monogatari emaki no 'tobari' to 'jinbutsu.'" Suzuki's conception of concentric circles of knowledge draws from Sano's analysis of the psychological importance of triangular formations in the painting. See Sano, *Fūryū, zōkei, monogatari*, pp. 313–14.

FIGURE 6. Illustration from "Kashiwagi I" (*Genji monogatari emaki*; mid–twelfth century). Courtesy of the Tokugawa Art Museum.

or "audience" (a group of external witnesses). Accordingly, circle three is occupied by the Third Princess's wet nurse (Jijū 侍従; seen in the lower center of the painting), whose close relationship as a surrogate parent is reflected in her greater proximity to the primary action and whose "listening pose" behind the blinds reflects her deep concern during this key moment in her charge's life. The placement of a lady-in-waiting in the "listening pose" in close physical proximity to the Third Princess not only underscores the immediacy of her knowledge of the events taking place in the scene, it also mirrors a strategy seen in the "Yadorigi" sequence: In "Yadorigi I" a listening *nyōbō* is situated just behind the sliding door, and subsequently in "Yadorigi II" we witness the consequences of the main character having "heard the news." Similarly, soon after the events portrayed in "Kashiwagi I" there is an information leak that upends Kashiwagi: "He lapsed into unconsciousness when the news of the Third Princess [becoming a nun] reached him (*kakaru onkoto o kikitamō ni* かかる御事を聞きたまふに), until very little hope remained," a line that anticipates his death in "Kashiwagi II."[99]

Another critical presence is pictured in Suzuki's "fourth circle," which includes both the pair of ladies-in-waiting on the far right[100] and the figure in the upper right corner. Suzuki argues that in scenes with multiple *nyōbō*, those placed in a group represent an "audience," that is, ladies-in-waiting who observe the main characters as external witnesses. In contrast, figures such as the lady-in-waiting in the top right corner—who is slightly secluded from the others and drawn in such a way as to stand out from the crowd—mirror the treatment of the main characters, whose high profiles serve as an indication of their importance in the narrative.[101] Suzuki thus identifies the figure in the top right corner as the Third Princess's breast sibling, Kojijū (who shows a clear resemblance to the "listening" figure who may represent her mother, Jijū). Far from being an innocent bystander, Kojijū, "having guided the affair, is the person who knows everything that happened in the past within the space that is closed off by the meticulously placed blinds in the room."[102] The top right figure's placement in the opening of a sliding door, peering into the

[99] Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 4, p. 310; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 682.

[100] One lady-in-waiting sits with her back to the viewer, her long hair visible trailing behind her; the other sits across from her near the right edge of the image and is seen partially covering her face with a sleeve.

[101] Suzuki, "Tokugawa, Gotōbon Genji monogatari emaki no 'tobari' to 'jinbutsu,'" p. 41. A similar configuration appears in several paintings. In "Yokobue," Kumoi no Kari's wet nurse is seated separately from the group of unidentified ladies-in-waiting in the lower right corner; in "Sawarabi," Naka no Kimi's lady-in-waiting, Ben, is seated on the right side and the group of unidentified ladies-in-waiting populates the left side of the painting; and in "Azumaya I," Naka no Kimi's lady-in-waiting Ukon, who is seen reading *monogatari*, is separated from the other ladies-in-waiting by blinds. See the following analysis for a discussion of a similar distinction between a high-profile lady-in-waiting character (Ben) and a *nyōbō* audience in "Kashiwagi II."

[102] Suzuki, "Tokugawa, Gotōbon Genji monogatari emaki no 'tobari' to 'jinbutsu,'" p. 41.

Third Princess's bedroom, is a suggestive detail that further hints at Kojijū's role as the one who led Kashiwagi to her mistress's bedroom in the first place.[103] According to Mitamura, the raised sleeping area (*michōdai*) in the top left of the image "represents the stage for her secret relationship with Kashiwagi," and as such it looms over the prostrate princess as a symbol of her sense of guilt.[104] The figure, possibly Kojijū, who is seen "vacillating"[105] in the open door in the opposite (right) corner may serve as a reminder that the princess's guilt is shared.

This scene exemplifies the ways in which readers/viewers of the *Genji Scrolls* are guided by the *nyōbō* serving as narrators—the sources of whose knowledge are often the main characters' wet nurses or breast siblings—in combination with certain details depicted in the images. This perspective, while only semi-omniscient, frequently allows readers to possess more knowledge of the tale's secrets than some of its main characters; in this way, moreover, it links them to the ladies-in-waiting with whom they share knowledge of the truth. Further, Suzuki's recognition of individual differences among *nyōbō* has important implications for understanding the scrolls' implied statements about who bears and passes on knowledge. The heightened presence in "Kashiwagi I" of a lady-in-waiting who seems to resemble Kojijū is a feature that calls attention to the role of the breast sibling as a coconspirator to the events that led to this moment. In my analysis of the next two paintings in the "Kashiwagi" sequence, I highlight the emergence of the breast siblings as the core of the *nyōbō* network. Wet nurses represent a special class of ladies-in-waiting who were considered trusted figures (owing to their role as surrogate parents) and who were preoccupied with finding suitable, high-ranking partners for the characters they had nursed. Breast siblings, meanwhile, did not always share the same agenda. Less preoccupied with the suitability of the pairings, breast siblings "would often act as an intermediary in romantic affairs without the wet nurse's knowledge," facilitating secret assignations that would be scandalous if exposed.[106]

[103] The use of a half-opened *shōji* to indicate an intrusion is well documented in the *Genji Scrolls*. Examples include the door in the "Yokubue" scene, which is thought to represent the shutter through which the *mononoke* もののけ (possessing spirit) entered; the door in "Azumaya I," which recalls Niou's earlier intrusion into Ukifune's room; and the door in "Azumaya II," which seems to let in Kaoru's scent, thus alerting Ukifune and her gentlewomen to his presence on the veranda. See NHK Nagoya, *Yomigaeru Genji monogatari emaki*, p. 89; Ikeda, *Nihon Kaiga no joseizō*, pp. 35–36; Kuge, "Kokuhō 'Genji monogatari emaki' o yomu," pp. 5–7.

[104] Mitani and Mitamura, *Genji monogatari emaki no nazo o yomitoku*, p. 131. The raised bed is most legible if viewers recognize that the dark rectangular area on the left of the image indicates the elevation of the *hamayuka* 浜床 (raised floor).

[105] Mitani and Mitamura, *Genji monogatari emaki no nazo o yomitoku*, p. 130.

[106] Yoshikai, *Genji monogatari no menotogaku*, p. 214. Yoshikai also notes here that there are numerous examples of secrets being kept from *menoto*. In "Yūgao," for instance, Genji made sure that Yūgao's death did not reach the ears of her *menoto* and swore his breast sibling, Koremitsu, to silence; another such case is found in the Azumaya chapter of the larger narrative of *The Tale of*

FIGURE 7. Detail of illustration from "Kashiwagi II" (*Genji monogatari emaki*; mid–twelfth century). Courtesy of the Tokugawa Art Museum.

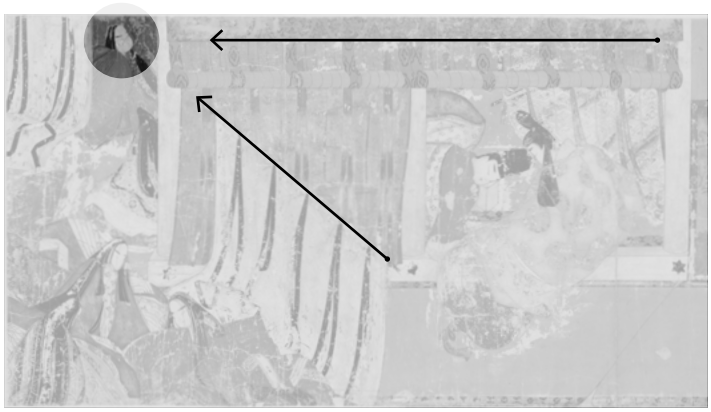

FIGURE 8. Secluded lady-in-waiting in the illustration from "Kashiwagi II" (see figure 7).

The "Kashiwagi II" scene captures Kashiwagi's final moments, with his dearest friend Yūgiri, Genji's son, by his bedside (figure 7). Previous scholars have focused their attention on the right half of the frame—where Yūgiri gazes upon the dying Kashiwagi—as the focal point of the image and have given less attention to the left half, which is populated with ladies-in-waiting. But the two halves are in conversation with one another, as made evident by the compositional allocation of space to the *nyōbō* network.

Genji, where Ukifune's breast sibling Ukon does not want to tell her nurse about Niou's intrusion into Ukifune's room.

The ladies-in-waiting on the left-hand side of the painting go unmentioned in the textual passage and yet are critically linked to the scene's depiction of Kashiwagi's confession as well as to the tale's overarching discourse on the revelation of secrets. Beginning with the *kotobagaki*, this discourse can be seen when Yūgiri urges Kashiwagi to divulge his hidden truth. What follows is a confession of sorts, though Kashiwagi gives no concrete details regarding "the secret turmoil in [his] heart" (*kokoro no uchi ni omoi midaruru koto* 心の中に思ひ乱るること) beyond "the little matter on which I wronged His Grace of Rokujō 六条 [a.k.a., Genji]."[107] In contrast to the equivocal statements of Kashiwagi's verbal confession in the *kotobagaki*, which left Yūgiri with "an idea what the matter might be, [though] he could not be certain,"[108] the painting itself is more explicit about the cause of Kashiwagi's terminal despair.

Scholars have argued that certain visual motifs in the construction of "Kashiwagi II" allow for a "flashback" that serves to remind viewers of previous events that are part of the full *Genji* narrative but not pictured in the *Genji Scrolls*, events that flesh out the particulars that are absent from the *kotobagaki* version of Kashiwagi's verbal confession.[109] But as I will detail below, the presence of the ladies-in-waiting in the scene points to the possibility that the painting may also allow viewers familiar with the entire *Genji* tale to experience a flash-forward. First, it is important to recognize that Hase's list, discussed earlier in this article, of paintings from the *Genji Scrolls* that depict furtive observation could be expanded to include "Kashiwagi I" (given the possible import of the lady-in-waiting in the "listening pose" discussed previously) and "Kashiwagi II" (as it employs the technique discussed by Andō of the "blank space" of a listening ear, in the figure of the lady-in-waiting in the lower left corner). This visual detail of an exposed ear signals that the disconcerted throng of ladies-in-waiting in the lower left corner—"the audience," to use Suzuki's term—is engaged in the act of overhearing Kashiwagi's confession.

Furthermore, in this demarcated space behind the blinds there is another lady-in-waiting who seems to stand apart from the crowd. The image is composed in such a way that the line of the rolled-up blinds above Kashiwagi and Yūgiri and the diagonal of the standing curtain converge at a point that is occupied by this female attendant (figure 8).

[107] Komatsu, *Nihon no emaki*, pp. 54–55; the first quote is my translation and the second is from Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 684.

[108] Komatsu, *Nihon no emaki*, p. 56; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 684.

[109] Several scholars have noted the use of the cherry blossom motif in "Kashiwagi II" to superimpose the *kaimami* scene from the "Wakana jō" chapter of *The Tale of Genji* (i.e., the spring day on which Yūgiri and Kashiwagi glimpsed the Third Princess among the blossoms when she stepped outside of her blinds.) As cited in NHK Nagoya, *Yomigaeru Genji monogatari emaki*, p. 88, Haraoka Fumiko 原岡文子 asserts that the cherry blossom motif serves as a roadmap of Kashiwagi's psyche during his final days. See also Kawazoe, *Genji monogatari ekkyōron*, p. 207.

Though according to artistic conventions she cannot be viewed as a direct observer or eavesdropper given her upturned head, the narrative possibilities of the secluded lady-in-waiting in the left-hand corner are brought into sharp relief when "Kashiwagi I" and "Kashiwagi II" are considered together. Taken as a pair, the two scenes can be understood to illustrate the dire consequences that the secret affair exacted on both the Third Princess and Kashiwagi, in contrast to previous scholarship contending that there is a disconnect between the ladies-in-waiting and the main events in these paintings.[110] The *nyōbō* included in proximity to these tragic scenes are placed as mirror images of one another (the ladies-in-waiting in "Kashiwagi II" populate the left side of the painting, rather than the right as in "Kashiwagi I"). Importantly, in both paintings the top corner of the side of the image where the ladies-in-waiting are situated is occupied by a figure who is slightly removed from her cohort of gentlewomen. These two secluded figures share a number of other characteristics that suggest they are thematically linked: they both draw the viewer's eye via the lines of architectural elements that converge in their vicinity, they both occupy a side room (*hisashi* 廂) but sit conspicuously next to a pillar (*hashira* 柱) of the protagonist's main room, and they are both flanked on opposite sides with blinds decorated with the *kuchiki* 朽木 (decayed wood) pattern.[111] As previously discussed, the secluded figure in "Kashiwagi I" seems to resemble the Third Princess's breast sibling, Kojijū, and thus calls to mind the responsibility that this peripheral character bears in the events at hand. Mitani Kuniaki 三谷邦明 and Mitamura Masako have characterized the cluster of ladies-in-waiting in "Kashiwagi II" as "unaware of the circumstances transpiring in the shadow of the blinds."[112] However, the full *Genji* narrative reveals the existence of an important witness later in the "Hashihime" chapter. The lady-in-waiting Ben (daughter of Kashiwagi's wet nurse and cousin to Kojijū) recounts that "when [Kashiwagi] lay dying, he called me to his side and told me a certain number of things."[113] With the final words "My time has come" (*ware nao ikubeku mo arazu ni nari ni tari* 我なほ生くべくもあらずになりにたり) on his lips,[114] he handed her a bundle of letters written in both his and the Third Princess's hand. It is possible that the "Kashiwagi II" scene not only illustrates Kashiwagi's last moments with his comrade Yūgiri on the main stage but also in a more subtle fashion alludes to a similar moment of reckoning with his own breast sibling, Ben.

[110] According to Sano, the ladies-in-waiting in "Kashiwagi I" and "Kashiwagi II" are present but refrain from looking, as if to subvert the tragedies that are unfolding by turning toward each other rather than the main events. See Sano, *Fūryū, zōkei, monogatari*, p. 321.

[111] For detailed descriptions of the furnishings, architecture, and placement of figures in "Kashiwagi I" and "Kashiwagi II," see Kurata, *Genji monogatari emaki no sekai*, pp. 50–57, 60–67.

[112] Mitani and Mitamura, *Genji monogatari emaki no nazo o yomitoku*, p. 126.

[113] Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 4, pp. 300–301; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 839.

[114] Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 4, p. 163.

In fact, the question of to whom Kashiwagi might fully unburden himself is a topic of the *kotobagaki*:

> Now with the hour of my death approaching, I wonder [if not to you] to whom I should confide this secret I can no longer hide within (*shinobigataki koto wa tare ni ka ureehaberan* 忍びがたきことは誰にか愁れへはべらむ). I have many brothers, but there are complicating circumstances and it would be awkward to even drop a hint about this matter to them.[115]

Although Yūgiri—as Kashiwagi's oldest friend and confidant—takes center stage in the painting and is the one to whom Kashiwagi addresses his confession in the *kotobagaki*, after Kashiwagi's death Yūgiri still "longed to know what that hint [Kashiwagi] had felt impelled to give him could possibly mean."[116] In *The Tale of Genji*, at the very end of Kashiwagi's life all is revealed to his breast sibling Ben, who "waited intimately on him day and night" and to whom he "confided things that he had told no one else but could not keep to himself," rather than to his best friend or biological siblings.[117] The *kotobagaki* for "Kashiwagi II" in the *Genji Scrolls*, meanwhile, calls attention to the fact that Kashiwagi's dying wish is to regain control of his own narrative before it is too late, and the carefully constructed composition of the scene's painting, with the *nyōbō* seen waiting in the side room in the upper left corner, may give the answer to the text's question concerning who will receive his full deathbed confession and become the caretaker of his legacy: his breast sibling, Ben.

The implied statement of the *Genji Scrolls* on the importance of the *nyōbō*, and particularly wet nurses and breast siblings, in both the public and private realms is mapped out visually in "Kashiwagi III," the last scene in the sequence, which according to Mitani and Mitamura is divided diagonally by bamboo blinds into private, indoor space on the left and public, outdoor space on the right.[118] Crucially, ladies-in-waiting occupy both realms (figure 9). In this scene, the *kotobagaki* outlines Genji's monologue as he holds his putative son Kaoru on the boy's fiftieth-day celebration (*ika no iwai* 五十日の祝) (an occasion that served to present Kaoru's supposed legitimacy to the public).[119] Shimizu Fukuko points out that while at first the right-hand side of the painting appears to be wasted space, it in fact showcases the gentlewomen's *uchiide* 打出 (ladies' robes protruding through blinds), a colorful spectacle that helps to indicate the formal/public (*hare* 晴) character of the event and serves as

115 Komatsu, *Nihon no emaki*, pp. 54–55; Adapted from Washburn, *Tale of Genji*, pp. 772–73.

116 Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 4, p. 325; adapted from Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 687.

117 Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 5, p. 146; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 939.

118 Mitani and Mitamura, *Genji monogatari emaki no nazo o yomitoku*, 118.

119 Inamoto, "'Genji monogatari' no e o meguru kaishaku to gensetsu," p. 93.

FIGURE 9. Detail of illustration from "Kashiwagi III" (*Genji monogatari emaki*; mid–twelfth century). Courtesy of the Tokugawa Art Museum.

an indicator that the scene was drawn with an awareness of the eyes of the public outside of the room.[120]

Ladies-in-waiting contribute to the scene as they are positioned as the safeguards of the social, public-facing selves of those whom they serve (in this scene, they even deflect their mistress's shameful secret by touting the *hare* character of the event despite Kaoru's true lineage). Furthermore, their presence in both realms signals that they serve as a bridge between the outside public view and the secrets of the interior. This viewpoint is in contrast to that of previous scholarship, which has largely focused on Genji, as seen in the argument that the scene's meaning would not change were the image cropped to reveal only Genji's figure.[121] However, a close analysis of the *kotobagaki* and the images of the ladies-in-waiting inside the blinds sitting directly across from Genji sheds light on the scene's preoccupation with the broader theme of private knowledge and its disclosure, which links it thematically with "Kashiwagi" I and II.

[120] Shimizu Fukuko, *Kokuhō "Genji monogatari emaki" o yomu*, p. 201. The fact that Genji "had a little room beautifully done up [for the occasion] on the front, south side" (i.e., the front and most public-facing part of the residence) highlights the aim to stage a grand ceremony befitting a biological child born to him late in life. See Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 4, p. 320n12; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 686.

[121] See Hase, *Genji monogatari emaki no sekai*, p. 108. Shimizu Fukuko notes the tendency to make Genji the focal point, namely, the interpretation that "Kashiwagi III" highlights Genji's karmic retribution; she argues instead that the scene brings Genji's sympathy for Kashiwagi to the fore. See Shimizu Fukuko, *Kokuhō "Genji monogatari emaki" o yomu*, p. 198.

In the mere two sheets that comprise the textual passage (in contrast, "Kashiwagi II" contains eight sheets), the question of "those who know" (*kokoro shireru hito* 心知れる人) and "those who don't know" (*kokoro shirazaran hito* 心知らざらむ人) the secrets behind Kaoru's true parentage is repeatedly foregrounded.

> There must be someone among her ladies-in-waiting who knows the truth. What is more, I don't even know who that person is. There must be people who see me as a complete fool, Genji thought uneasily . . . but Genji's face betrayed none of these thoughts. He observed the child's innocent babbling and laughter, the precious expression of his eyes and mouth—how does he look to people who do not know? The resemblance is very close though . . .

Furthermore, the *kotobagaki* includes two phrases describing "people" (underlined above) that are not present in other, later versions of the *Genji* tale. According to Shimizu Fukuko, these phrases highlight Genji's keen awareness of the eyes of people who surround him, a theme that is taken up pictorially in the placement of the two ladies-in-waiting directly in front of him, visually representing the opening line ("There must be someone among her ladies-in-waiting who knows the truth."). The figures of the *nyōbō* link to "people" outside of the narrative as well. While Genji is left with only his suspicions, sensing that the culprit may be right in front of him and complaining about "not knowing" the identity of the lady-in-waiting who led Kashiwagi to the Third Princess, the reader/viewer knows exactly who served as the go-between: the Third Princess's gentlewoman, Kojijū. As with "Kashiwagi I," the presence of *nyōbō* triggers the viewer's recognition of a shared knowledge of the truth. In this scene, readers/viewers join the ranks of "those who know" Kaoru's secret—but who, unlike Genji, also know who was responsible.

Scholars note that "Kashiwagi III" is carefully edited to highlight a particular reading of the tale, with Kuge Hirotoshi 久下裕利 asserting that it presents a revised scenario that overlooks male sin and showcases Genji's capacity for forgiveness.[122] However, it is also possible that the artists' editorial choices place the ladies-in-waiting in a position to reveal what Genji's composure conceals. Specifically, for example, the lady-in-waiting in the lower left corner who holds a fan to her face as if she has something to hide draws attention to the secret rather than concealing it. It would stand to reason that she is meant to represent Kojijū herself. We can see in "Kashiwagi III" that the role these peripheral characters play in suggesting the secret is more important than the role of the Princess herself, who is all but absent from the painting (her presence behind the blinds in the upper left of the frame is perhaps suggested by the edge of the curtain, which bows slightly outward at the point just below the rolled *sudare* blinds in the upper left corner).[123] This role

[122] Kuge, *Genji monogatari emaki to sono shūhen*, pp. 41–49.

[123] Mitani and Mitamura, *Genji monogatari emaki no nazo o yomitoku*, p. 121.

becomes clearer in the "Hashihime" chapter of *The Tale of Genji* when a grown Kaoru seeks answers to the secret of his paternity. It is none other than the elderly lady-in-waiting Ben (to whom her breast sibling Kashiwagi confided on his deathbed) who comes forth with the story of his past.

Bearers of Their Own Secrets: Nyōbō, Picture Puzzles, and the Mysteries of "Yadorigi I"

As we have seen, in addition to their roles as observers, narrators, and transmitters of vital information *nyōbō* function throughout the *Genji Scrolls* as visual cues, calling to mind and tying together disparate scenes from the full *Genji* narrative, including some that are not represented in the *emaki* adaptation. In this final section, I examine the ways in which the composition of "Yadorigi I" calls special attention to *nyōbō* and their role as points of connection situated in the interstices between various scenes from the *Genji* tale. These compositional strategies are subtle, taking the form of a visual riddle to be solved by the astute viewer—who is thus provided with the twin pleasures of "seeing" what others may not have grasped and displaying expert cultural knowledge. In this final example of a scene from the *Genji Scrolls*, we see how the figures of ladies-in-waiting gesture toward deeper layers of meaning operating in the interconnections of text and image. My analysis will center on the scene's visual representation of a *hikiuta* (a partially quoted poem)—in this case, a partially quoted Sinitic poem (*inshi* 引詩)—and will address two unresolved issues scholars have raised regarding the painting.

"Yadorigi I" invokes the qualities of a "poem picture" (*uta-e* 歌絵), a painting in which encoded elements such as *ashide* 葦手 (*kana* that resemble natural objects) and phonetic imagery allowed viewers to "decipher . . . a complete poem on the basis of a few clever clues" in the manner of solving a "picture puzzle."[124] What began as a technique for screen poems was taken up by courtiers such as Murasaki Shikibu for smaller-scale works incorporating original poems. However, at the time that the *Genji Scrolls* were produced *uta-e* were already a popular format for pictorializing well-known classic verses.[125] On display in "Yadorigi I" is the specialized knowledge required not only to create such scenes but also to decode them. And this picture puzzle, as we shall see, also foregrounds the vital role of the *nyōbō* as unobserved witnesses and transmitters.

In the "Yadorigi I" scene, the textual passage begins with the emperor's call for Kaoru to join him for a game of go—a game that he has no intention of winning. Rather, the emperor wishes to see the young man prevail and then to offer him as a "prize" the hand of his daughter, the Second Princess, in marriage. After losing two out of three rounds, the emperor offers a chrysanthemum flower from the garden. Kaoru steps out into the garden to collect this material prize (symbolizing

[124] Meech-Pekarik, "Disguised Scripts and Hidden Poems in an Illustrated Heian Sutra," p. 58.

[125] See Mostow, "Painted Poems, Forgotten Words," pp. 329–30.

the Second Princess), and the *kotobagaki* closes with an exchange of verses between the emperor and Kaoru that is laden with poetic allusions and innuendo. As shown above in figure 5, the painting depicts the game of go on the right, while the left side of the scene is occupied by two *nyōbō* who have come to spy.[126] Given the narrative content of the textual passage, one would expect a close-up of the right side of the scene, yet here the left side is equally emphasized.[127] In addition, scholars have observed two unresolved issues centering on the painting's deviation from the *Genji* text: the location of the game of go has been moved from the princess's quarters to the emperor's, and the garden scene has been omitted.[128] An analysis that posits the left side of the painting as being integral to the workings of text and image sheds light on these unique features. It also complicates the view of Ishii Masami 石井正己, who argues that while the figures of the ladies-in-waiting in "Yadorigi I" are meant to represent the narrator, they are absent from the textual passage and thus do not participate directly in the narrative content or impact the flow of events.[129]

First, I would like to consider the implications of the change in location of the scene as it relates to the figures of ladies-in-waiting in the painting. The text in the full *Genji* narrative that precedes the "Yadorigi I" scene presented in the *Genji Scrolls* establishes the connection between the Second Princess and the chrysanthemum in the garden outside of her quarters (the Fujitsubo 藤壺 Pavilion). It is in the Fujitsubo Pavilion that the emperor first plays a game of go with his daughter, "when the chrysanthemums in the garden were most beautifully touched by frost and a cold rain" (just as his daughter is touched by the recent death of her mother and her resulting dreary marriage prospects). As evening approaches, the sight of "the sun's last light color[ing] the chrysanthemums" prompts the emperor to act on her behalf, and he summons Kaoru for an altogether different game of go.[130] Despite this lead-up emphasizing the scenery of the princess's garden and pinpointing the location of the game within her quarters, the painting for "Yadorigi I" depicts the sitting room (*asagarei no ma* 朝餉間, literally "breakfast room") of the Seiryōden 清涼殿 (the emperor's main living quarters). This change of location allows the artists to include the decidedly feminine space of the Table Room (*daibandokoro* 台盤所) seen on the left side of the painting.[131] For all of the emperor's

[126] The activities of the two *nyōbō* in "Yadorigi I" have been described variously by scholars as *nozoku* 覗く, *nozokimiru* 覗き見る ("peep"; Hase and Ishii, respectively), and *mikiki suru* 見聞きする ("see and hear"—i.e., observe; Sano). I choose the word "spy" as the ladies-in-waiting are depicted as both looking and eavesdropping. See Hase, *Genji monogatari emaki no sekai*, p. 103; Ishii, "Egakareta nyōbō," p. 111; Sano, *Jikkuri mitai "Genji monogatari emaki,"* p. 64.

[127] See Ishii, "Egakareta nyōbō," p. 111.

[128] See Shimizu Fukuko, *Kokuhō "Genji monogatari emaki" o yomu*, pp. 230–31.

[129] See Ishii, "Egakareta nyōbō," p. 109; Sano, *Fūryū, zōkei, monogatari*, p. 320.

[130] Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 5, p. 376; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 930.

[131] Although it also allowed occasional interaction with high-ranking men, the Table Room was the designated space for upper ladies-in-waiting in attendance on the emperor. See Yoshikawa,

power to manipulate the actions of men and control his daughter's destiny, within the "Yadorigi I" painting he is made to share the narrative space with the ladies-in-waiting of the Table Room.

A comparison of the "Yadorigi I" scene and later renditions from the Edo period makes abundantly clear the artists' choice to allocate roughly equal space to the women working behind the scenes and the main male characters. A depiction of "Yadorigi I" by Sumiyoshi Jokei 住吉如慶 (1599–1670), for instance, is in line with the characteristics prescribed in the late sixteenth-century handbook of illustrations *Genji monogatari ekotoba* 源氏物語絵詞, namely, that "Kaoru, having played a game of go with the emperor, plucks a chrysanthemum blossom from the garden and returns."[132] In this and other Edo-period images,[133] figures are drawn from a vantage point outside in the garden, and their compositions split the focus between Kaoru in the garden and the palace interior, where just the lower half of the emperor and the go board are visible. Thus the change in venue depicted in the *Genji Scrolls* to one in which the spying ladies-in-waiting could be featured should be seen as a deliberate departure made for a particular purpose.

Next, let us turn to the second unresolved issue in "Yadorigi I," which is its lack of any indication of chrysanthemums or the garden in which they grow. This omission is particularly surprising given the pervasive *uta-e* quality of the scrolls in general and the importance of chrysanthemums in the poetic exchange that closes the textual passage.[134] Shimizu Fukuko has detected *uta-e* at work in other scenes of the *Genji Scrolls*.[135] Mostow argues that such images pictorializing poetic references in the text were "designed to allude to a poem in a manner of a 'picture puzzle.'"[136] Thus to account for the absence of a chrysanthemum-themed poem picture in "Yadorigi I," we must look deeply for more subtle clues.

To understand how the pieces of this particular puzzle fall into place, let us begin with the *kotobagaki*. After losing the game, the emperor says: "Today, in any

"Ladies in Waiting in the Heian," pp. 287–88.

132 Text of *Genji monogatari ekotoba* taken from Shimizu Fukuko, *Kokuhō "Genji monogatari emaki" o yomu*, p. 231. For Sumiyoshi's painting, see Shin Jinbutsu Ōraisha, *Genji monogatari emaki*, pp. 114–15.

133 For example, a similar composition is seen in *Eiri Genji monogatari* 絵入源氏物語, by Yamamoto Shunshō 山本春正 (1610–1682). See Shimizu Fukuko, *Kokuhō "Genji monogatari emaki" o yomu*, p. 231.

134 Shimizu Fukuko, *Kokuhō "Genji monogatari emaki" o yomu*, p. 231.

135 According to Shimizu, several scenes in the *Genji Scrolls* pictorialize elements of the poems that appear in the *kotobagaki*. In "Kashiwagi III," for instance, the image of ceremonial serving trays conveys both the fiftieth-day (*ika* 五十日) celebration of Kaoru's birth and the quasi-homophonic *ikaga* ("What reply?") of Genji's poem in the *kotobagaki*: "What reply will he then give, the pine planted on the rock?" (*ikaga iwane no matsu wa kotaen* いかが岩根の松はこたへむ). Komatsu, *Nihon no emaki*, p. 57; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 687. See Shimizu Fukuko, *Kokuhō "Genji monogatari emaki" o yomu*, p. 201.

136 Mostow, "Painted Poems, Forgotten Words," p. 326.

case, I allow you a single branch of these flowers" (*kyō wa mazu kono hana hitoeda yurusu* 今日はまづこの花一枝ゆるす).[137] Here we find a partially quoted Sinitic poem from the *Wakan rōeishū* 和漢朗詠集 (Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing; ca. 1013), written by a man to the parent of a woman asking for her hand in marriage:

I hear that flowers bloom brilliantly in your garden,	聞得園中花養艶
so I ask of you: Won't you allow me to pluck a single branch of spring?	請君許折一枝春[138]

As Shimizu points out, the emperor's mention of "a single branch" in partial quotation of the above Chinese poem poses a riddle for Kaoru to solve. Without saying a word, Kaoru goes into the garden, plucks a chrysanthemum blossom, and then composes a poem that eschews references to the *Wakan rōeishū* source poem, specifically avoiding elements that refer to marriage. By thus refusing to solve the riddle, Kaoru sidesteps the emperor's implied marriage proposal,[139] but the emperor responds by doubling down on the intended allusion in his final poem:

しもにあへずかれにしそののきくのはなのこりのいろはあせずもあるかな

Shimo ni aezu	This chrysanthemum
kare ni shi sono no	comes, alas, from a garden
kiku no hana	withered by the frost,
nokori no iro wa	yet what color lingers on
asezu mo aru ka na	glows as ever fresh and new![140]

The emperor's poem incorporates "chrysanthemum . . . from a garden" (*sono no kiku no hana* 園の菊の花) to match the *Wakan rōeishū*'s "flowers . . . in your garden" (園中花), where "chrysanthemum" (*kiku* 菊) works as a pivot word to trigger an association with its homophone "to hear" (*kiku* 聞く), which is in the first stanza of the

[137] Komatsu, *Nihon no emaki*, p. 83; adapted from Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 931.

[138] *Wakan rōeishū 783*, by Ki no Tadana 紀斉名 (957–999). Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 5, pp. 378–79n8.

[139] Shimizu Fukuko, *Kokuhō "Genji monogatari emaki" o yomu*, p. 233. Rather than reworking the imagery of the partially quoted poem, Kaoru instead introduces the line "a flower blossoming on a common hedge" (*yo no tsune no kakine ni niou hana* 世の常の垣根ににほふ花), composing the following response to the emperor's thinly veiled offer of marriage: "Were this a flower blossoming very sweetly on a common hedge, I would have followed my heart and picked it for my pleasure." Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 5, p. 379; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 931.

[140] Komatsu, *Nihon no emaki,* p. 83; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 931.

source poem: "I hear that flowers bloom brilliantly" (聞得園中花養艷).[141] The last lines of the *kotobagaki* further hint at the connection between the chrysanthemum flower "from a garden withered by the frost" (i.e., the emperor's daughter, who is still in a state of bereavement) and the "single branch" (i.e., eligible woman) that the suitor of the source poem has heard of and requests to marry.

Shimizu argues that the "Yadogiri I" scene includes an *inshi* for the edification of female viewers. Building on this, I suggest that the "missing chrysanthemum" in the painting worked to challenge *Genji*-educated female readers/viewers to solve the emperor's riddle. While Shimizu argues that the omission of the garden and its chrysanthemum was meant to facilitate recognition of the original meaning of the source poem (which centers on spring), it should also be noted that the painting embeds this poetic scenery via a visual pun. This is facilitated by one of the mechanisms of *uta-e*, which Mostow terms the "visual pivot word."[142] Again, the emperor's final poem utilizes the pivot word *kiku*, where the chrysanthemum of his poem works to trigger recognition of its homophone meaning "to hear" in the source poem ("I hear that flowers bloom brilliantly"). This *verbal* pivot word is transformed into a *visual* pivot word in the painting that follows, as the image of the "hearing" lady-in-waiting conjures up its homophonic partner, "chrysanthemum." Such examples of visual punning shed new light on the importance of the left side of the painting, exposing the role of the ladies-in-waiting in allowing the viewer to solve the emperor's riddle.

Finally, I would like to point to a further expansion of the polysemantic valences of listening and looking ladies-in-waiting in "Yadorigi I." Noting the lady-in-waiting on the right in figure 5, who is depicted looking through the space created by the slightly ajar *shōji*, Kuge argues that from the standpoint of *kaimami*, traditional roles (male as seeing subject and female as seen object) are reversed. And yet, he claims, even taking into account the more active role of the female in this configuration, the one who sees in this case (the peeping gentlewoman) does not influence the tendencies of the seen or assert her will in any way.[143] However, as discussed earlier, the progression of the plot is not unaffected by the gentlewoman's voyeurism. After all, seeing and hearing—the mainstays of the *nyōbō* perspective—are intricately linked to the act of telling in various forms. In the text of *The Tale of Genji* whose narrative corresponds to the moment following the conclusion of the *kotobagaki*, Yūgiri's reaction to the outcome of the game is explained: "This unexpected development annoyed [Yūgiri] when he caught wind of it" (*kakaru*

[141] See Shimizu Fukuko, *Kokuhō "Genji monogatari emaki" o yomu*, pp. 232–33.

[142] An example is found in Murasaki Shikibu's poetry collection (*Murasaki shikibu shū* 紫式部集), in which an *uta-e* is described as including an image of firewood (*nageki* 投木), which pictorializes a pun in the accompanying poem and triggers recognition of the word's homophone (*nageki* 嘆き, meaning grief). See Mostow, "Painted Poems, Forgotten Words," pp. 329–30.

[143] Kuge, "Genji monogatari-e o yomu," p. 45.

koto o udaijin hono kikitamaite かかることを、右大殿ほの聞きたまひて),[144] since he had been hoping that Kaoru would marry his own daughter, wishing to trade his role of father figure to Kaoru for the role of an actual father-in-law. However, as news of the decisive game reaches his ears, he turns his attention from Kaoru to Kaoru's friend and rival, Niou 匂. The "hearing" (*kiku*) of "Yadorigi I" works in multiple ways: the image also alludes to "word getting out" (*hono kikitamaite*) about the emperor's game of go with Kaoru, the consequences of which are on display in the next painting of the sequence, "Yadorigi II," which showcases the brilliance of the marriage ceremony between Yūgiri's daughter and Niou. This interpretation is in line with Kuge's assertion that the *Genji Scrolls* are to be understood by examining not only the links between text and image but also the links between image and image.[145]

By calling attention to the listening ladies-in-waiting as a possible solution to the puzzle embedded in "Yadorigi I," the *Genji Scrolls* remind the viewer of the deep layers of meaning that can be uncovered when we attend to the interconnections that are rarely explicit but instead subtly hinted at by these recurring female figures. The recognition of the workings of the periphery is a feature manifested in the higher profile given to ladies-in-waiting (and their networks) in the *Genji Scrolls* compared to the majority of later *Genji-e*. As a result, the scrolls often bring to bear both the inner and outer layers of the narrative, dilating on the distinction between public and private knowledge. As spectators, commentators, and active (though unseen) participants within the world of the main characters, ladies-in-waiting have vast connections to the inner workings of the tale. Their roles as messengers, confidantes, and keepers of secret knowledge render them eminently well placed to make tangible that which is left unsaid, as well as that which is hidden on a deeper narrative level.

Ladies-in-waiting, whether the infamous wet nurses recalled in "Yūgiri" or the anonymous figures of "Yadorigi I," are intricately linked to the happenings of the private realm and are uniquely positioned to guide the attention of the readers and viewers of the *Genji Scrolls* to the inner layers of the narrative—and often to the secrets that lie at its heart.

144 Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 5, p. 380; Tyler, *Tale of Genji*, p. 931.

145 Kuge, "Kokuhō 'Genji monogatari emaki' o yomu," p. 2. Examples of such interpictorial motifs discussed by Kuge include the use of parasols (*kasa* 傘) in the "Yomogiu" and "Azumaya II" scenes, as well as several scenes that employ strategically placed fans. Inamoto Mariko 稲本万里子 points out that Roku no Kimi 六の君 (in "Yadorigi II") and Naka no Kimi (in "Yadorigi III") are positioned as mirror images of one another, yet the marked differences in the positioning of their fans reveal their true feelings toward Niou, the man in the center of the love triangle. See Inamoto, "'Genji monogatari' no e o meguru kaishaku to gensetsu."

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