

**An analysis of *Torikaebaya monogatari*:
the heuristic potential of Judith Butler's performative gender**

by

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Abstract

Torikaebaya monogatari (*The Changelings*, the late 11th century) is a late-Heian court tale about a half-sister and half-brother whose gendered roles get switched when they are still a child. The story primarily features the female protagonist, who needs to keep her anatomy secret in the society of other male aristocrats and of her principal wife. Her hardships resulting from this secret and the threats of the scandal drive much of the plot forward.

Ever since Fujioka Sakutarō, a Meiji-period scholar, judged this tale as perverse and decadent, modern scholarship on this work has been extremely limited both in number and in theme/approach. This trend changed, at least in Japan, with the emergence of gender and feminist studies in the 1980s, and in 1992, Gregory Pflugfelder wrote an article titled, “Strange Fates: Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in *Torikaebaya monogatari*.” After more than two decades since, this article still remains as one of the few English scholarly works that exclusively feature the tale.

Written only two years after the publication of Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Pflugfelder does not fully develop his own suggestion that the gender in the late-Heian period is perhaps better thought as performative. My paper takes this as the point of departure and attempts to apply Butler’s theory as a heuristic device. Butler’s performative gender deconstructs substantive identity and re-constructs it as produced by cultural intelligibility. This premise leads my paper to focus on the reception of *Torikaebaya* by its contemporaneous readers, represented by the author of *Mumyōzōshi* (*An Untitled Book*, 1196-1202). A close reading of the relevant section of *Mumyōzōshi* suggests an important conceptual distinction between the real and *realistic* that informs my textual analysis of *Torikaebaya*. And finally, this paper offers a close reading of *Torikaebaya* to argue that its female protagonist’s role

as a male courtier is carefully sustained by the tale's textual strategies, such as her interior monologues, to contain her presence on the margins of what is intelligibly feminine.

Lay Summary

In this thesis, I explore literary representations of gender and sexuality in premodern Japan. Specifically, I analyze a court tale written in the late-twelfth century that recounts the life of a female aristocrat who lives as a male courtier. The thesis attempts to comprehend how this gendered role reversal in the tale may have been perceived by the tale's contemporary readers, and it relies on the written critique of this tale from the same period. To provide a framework for this interpretation, I also utilize the theory of gender as proposed by Judith Butler.

Preface

This thesis is the original, independent, and unpublished work of the author, Kazuhiko Imai.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Lay Summary	v
Preface.....	vi
Table of Contents	vii
List of Abbreviations	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
Dedication	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Literature Review.....	2
Chapter 2: Judith Butler’s Performative Gender.....	7
Chapter 3: From Butler’s Gender through <i>Mumyōzōshi</i> to <i>Torikaebaya</i>	10
3.1 Introduction.....	10
3.2 A Distinction between the Real and the <i>Realistic</i>	14
3.3 Butler’s Gender and <i>Mumyōzōshi</i>	27
Chapter 4: An Analysis of <i>Torikaebaya Monogatari</i>	30
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	44
Bibliography	46

List of Abbreviations

Throughout this thesis, references to works from the series listed below are given in abbreviated form with the date of publication, publisher, etc., omitted. These series are a collection of annotated texts of premodern Japanese classics, and they are conventionally used and frequently cited by specialists.

SNKBZ *Shin Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*

SNKBT *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikai*

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Any mistakes, misspellings, or errors contained in this work are my own.

Dedication

To my family and friends

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

Torikaebaya monogatari, or *The Changelings*,¹ recounts a tale of a sister and brother in the Heian court who are raised respectively as a man and a woman. They struggle to keep the secret of their biological sex from the society of other aristocrats, until they switch their roles again to bring prosperity to their natal family. In the story, their role reversal is explained as being enabled through their physical resemblance despite their different mothers, and its cause is later revealed to be a curse cast by a *tengu* 天狗 (lit. heavenly dog), a supernatural being. Their hardships resulting from this cursed secret and the threats of its discovery drive much of the plot forward.

What is commonly known today as *Torikaebaya* is sometimes called *Ima torikaebaya* to differentiate it from the older version, *Furu torikaebaya*, which has been long lost. Little is known about the older version, save what can be inferred from a brief critique in *Mumyōzōshi* 無名草子 (*An Untitled Book*, 1196–1202) and a few poems compiled in *Fūyō wakashū* 風葉和歌集 (*Collected Poems of Wind and Leaves*, 1271). Almost nothing definitive is known about the authorship of either version, but *Ima torikaebaya* is thought to have been composed around twenty to thirty years before the composition of *Mumyōzōshi*.²

¹ Rosette Willig titles her English translation of *Torikaebaya* as such, originally published in 1983.

² *SNKBZ* 39, p. 528.

1.2 Literature Review

Modern scholarship at first received *Torikaebaya* unfavorably. A severe censure in Fujioka Sakutaro's 藤岡作太郎 *History of National Literature* (*Kokugaku zenshi* 国学全史) in 1905 has been repeatedly quoted:

Its penchant for the strange is close to disarray itself, and more than few parts are too unseemly to read. It does not at all aim to govern the story (*shōsetsu*) through moral principles, nor does it leave any aesthetics intact—these, I reproach.

Especially excessive is the part where Saishō has a sexual liaison with Yon no Kimi, the wife of Chūnagon, and then with Chūnagon; it is simply nauseating.³

Despite his intense disapproval, his exact target appears slightly unclear. Whereas many scholars interpret, as the below paragraph suggests, that Fujioka's accusation lies primarily in deviation from heteronormativity, Kimura Saeko 木村朗子 states:

[Fujioka] critiques as morally problematic the storyline in which [Saishō], who first has an affair with a wife of another man, comes to have a sexual liaison with that very husband (in reality, a female). [He] is, in fact, not reproaching homosexuality in itself, nor is he saying it is perverse. It is hardly necessary to

³ All translations in this study are mine unless otherwise stated. その奇変を好むや、殆ど乱に近づき、醜穢読むに堪えざるところ少なからず。敢て道義を以て小説を律せんとするにあらず、その毫も美趣の存せざるを難ずるなり。殊に甚だしきは、中納言が右大将の妻四の君と通じ、また右大将と契るところなど、たゞ嘔吐を催すのみ。(Fujioka 1974, p. 279).

index the example of Mori Ōgai's *Vita Sexualis*, but we should be cautious not to project male homophobia onto the Meiji period.⁴

What Kimura regards as the target of Fujioka's ethical problem still remains obscure, but her suggestion that Fujioka's real target has nothing to do with homosexuality is noteworthy.⁵

Contrary to Kimura's suggestion, Fujioka's moralistic commentary has been interpreted as concerned with gender and sexuality—or deviation from heteronormativity. Such interpretations by subsequent generations have influenced receptions of *Torikaebaya* until recently. For instance, Suzuki Hiromichi 鈴木弘道 argues that the tale should be more highly esteemed for its depictions of such ethical love (*rinri-teki na aijō* 倫理的な愛情) as family ties,⁶ and Imai Gen'ei 今井源衛 offers a close reading of the tale and concludes that the imminent task

⁴ 他人の妻と関係した挙句、その夫(実は女)とも関係するという道義的にもとる展開を批判するのであって、実のところ、同性愛そのものを難じているのでも、それを「倒錯」というのでもない。森鷗外の『キタ・セクスアリス』の例を出すまでもなく、明治期において男性の同性愛恐怖を直ちに読み込むことについては慎重であるべきだろう。(Kimura 2008, p. 261 n.1).

⁵ Alternatively, Fujioka's censure may be historically explained; the disapproval could have been for forming a national canon suitable for the language ideology of Meiji Japan. In his doctoral dissertation, Robert Khan speculates that the context in which the term, *giko-monogatari* 擬古物語 (lit. pseudo-classical tales), began to denote the works of post-*Genji* literature like *Torikaebaya* is connected to the *Genbun itchi* 言文一致 movement (Khan 1998, p. 62). As Patrick Heinrich explains, the *Genbun itchi* movement provided Japan with “a homogenous Japanese speech community” (Heinrich 2012, p. 58), to whose minds Ueda Kazutoshi 上田萬年 and others infused “a link between national language (*kokugo*), state (*kokka*) and nation (*kokumin*)” (ibid., p. 68). Although it is beyond the scope of the present essay, a further investigation into this historical coincidence (or relationship) between the conclusion of the *Genbun itchi* movement and Fujioka's publication, as well as between the movement and the Meiji canonization of classics, may offer a better explanation for the Meiji reception—or Fujioka's rejection—of *Torikaebaya*. For more information on this issue of the *Genbun icchi* movement and canonization of Japanese classical literature, see Suzuki 2008.

⁶ Suzuki 1971, pp. 307–40.

is “to explain the general ‘decadence’ of the tales in the end of the Heian period after ridding oneself of an easy critical view of equating pornographic depictions with the ‘unseemly.’”⁷

Despite their redemptive intentions, these scholars were unable to move away from their ethical frameworks around gender and sexuality, and ended up characterizing *Torikaebaya* by such phrases as “perverted sexuality” (*tōsaku-teki na sei* 倒錯的な性), “sexual perversion” (*sei no tōsaku* 性の倒錯), or “decadent sexuality” (*taihai-teki na sei* 頹廢的な性).⁸

With the rise of gender studies around the 1980s, scholarly receptions of *Torikaebaya* altered.⁹ Rather than judging its gender/sexuality by heteronormativity, scholars began postulating frameworks to comprehend the tale in its own right. For instance, Takeda Sachiko 武田佐知子 analyzes *Torikaebaya vis-à-vis* sartorial conventions in the Heian court and points out that “at the basis for such scenes to be successful [without becoming a comedy], there certainly lie unisex aesthetics, the custom of wearing loose clothes enveloping the entire body, and the

⁷ 官能描写をそのまま「醜穢」とする安易な批評態度を捨てたあと[で]、いかに末期物語一般の「退廃」を説明するか。(Imai 1977, p. 81).

⁸ e.g. Morioka 1967, pp. 495–510., Suzuki 1971, pp. 293–355., Nakamura 1985, pp. 124–26., or Imai 1976, p. 192.

⁹ In addition to the works discussed in this paragraph, more has been written on *Torikaebaya*. To list a few more: Matsushita Hitomi 松下ひとみ counts all adjectives praising the beauty of main characters in *Torikaebaya* and argues for “transgender” beauty in the tale (Matsushita 2015); Hasegawa Ai 長谷川愛 focuses on the usages of the word, “*hikari*” (light/shining), to make a similar point on “gender-neutral” beauty (Hasegawa 2006); Kanda Tatsumi 神田龍身 applies René Girard’s concept of “mimetic desire” to *Torikaebaya* to argue how every protagonist in post-*Genji* literature cannot be as central as Genji and is essentially exchangeable (Kanda 1992); Kawai Hayao 河合隼雄 applies psychoanalytic theories to *Torikaebaya* and claims that the switching manifests aspects of *anima* and *animus*, which lie in the unconscious mind according to Jungian psychoanalysis (Kawai 1991); and finally, Kimura Saeko lists several other articles on the politics of gender identity in *Torikaebaya* and explains the historical backgrounds for their publication and the need for further historicizing (Kimura 2008, pp. 262–63, n. 10).

style of clothes, especially underrobes, without a border between males and females.”¹⁰ Tanaka Takako 田中貴子 also analyzes depictions of beautiful hair in several Heian *monogatari* to suggest that the protagonists in *Torikaebaya* have a close affinity with *chigo* 稚児,¹¹ whom she characterizes as distinct from adult females in uniquely having “a hermaphrodite-like beauty” (*ryōseiguyū-teki na bi* 両性具有的な美).¹² While these articles demonstrate that an ideal male in the Heian period is hardly comparable to the modern construct of masculinity, their imprecise terminologies, such as “unisex,” “the hermaphrodite-like beauty,” and “gender-neutral,” implicitly risk over-extending their arguments to an ideal female in the Heian period, which they hardly discuss.

Addressing this problem of discussing Heian aesthetics in the present-day terminology, Gregory Pflugfelder offers a chiefly taxonomic examination of gender and sexuality in *Torikaebaya*, in which he demonstrates the utility as well as inadequacy of the theoretical tools of modern gender studies, and especially how insufficient are terms like “heterosexual” and “homosexual” in explicating the Heian period.¹³

¹⁰ こうしたシーンが成立する根底には、ユニセックスな美意識と、寛闊にして、身体全体を覆う衣服の着用慣行、そして男女の衣服、特に下着のボーダーレスな形態があったことはなんら揺らぐものではない。(Takeda 1994, p. 250).

¹¹ Paul Atkins explains that *chigo* are “adolescent males attached to Buddhist temples or aristocratic households who were educated, fed, and housed in exchange for personal, including sexual, services” (Atkins 2008, p. 947).

¹² Tanaka 2004, p. 33. Specifically, she explains that whereas the depictions of a woman’s hair tend to focus on “its volume and static grace” (*jūryō-kan ni michita taoyaka na kami*), the hair of *Torikaebaya*’s two protagonists are described more similarly to those of children and *chigo*, whose “tremors” (*yuragi*) and “disarray” (*midare*) are the distinct object of aesthetic adoration (Tanaka 2004, pp. 33–38).

¹³ Pflugfelder 1992.

More importantly, Pflugfelder's article "examine[s] the foundations of gender identity as portrayed in the tale"¹⁴ and analyzes three formative factors extracted from the tale's narrative: "the disposition of the individual, which begins to manifest itself during childhood...[but] is not necessarily a permanent condition"¹⁵; "habit or learning...the effect of 'socialization.'"¹⁶; and Buddhist karma as a "cosmic mechanism."¹⁷ Concluding that these examples demonstrate the flexible nature of gender in the Heian period, he suggests that such a feature is perhaps better understood as performative.¹⁸ Drawing on this suggestion, I will attempt to show that Judith Butler's theory of gender can serve as a useful heuristic tool for examining literary representations of sex, gender, and sexuality in *Torikaebaya*.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 348.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 352.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 354.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 353.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 368.

Chapter 2: Judith Butler's Performative Gender

One of the important theoretical cornerstones for Butler's theory of performative gender in her *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*¹⁹ is the premise of non-substantive identity, for it permits a conception of an individual's identity or personhood—the subject “I”—as a discursive construct rather than ontologically privileged, metaphysical substance.²⁰ As she asserts, “In other words, the ‘coherence’ and ‘continuity’ of ‘the person’ are not logical or analytical features of personhood, but, rather, socially instituted and maintained norms of intelligibility.”²¹ With this premise, gender is no longer relegated as a secondary/accidental attribute of the subject “I” that would otherwise be conceived as a pre-discursive given.

Instead, Butler's premise supposes gender as one formative element that renders individuals culturally intelligible or unintelligible—enabling or disabling their socially valid assertions of the subject “I.”²² Analyzing gender as appearing in hegemonic discourse, she demonstrates her definition of gender:

Gender can denote a *unity* of experience, of sex, gender, and desire, only when sex can be understood in some sense to necessitate gender—where gender is a psychic and/or cultural designation of the self—and desire—where desire is

¹⁹ Butler 1999.

²⁰ For more details, see *ibid.*, pp. 23–28 and pp. 183–85.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²² It is only for the sake of logical expediency that I discuss the premise of non-substantive identity before the topic of performative gender. Butler's following comment can serve as an important reminder: “It would be wrong to think that the discussion of ‘identity’ ought to proceed prior to a discussion of gender identity for the simple reason that ‘persons’ only become intelligible through becoming gendered in conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility” (*ibid.*, p. 22).

heterosexual and therefore differentiates itself through an oppositional relation to that other gender it desires... This conception of gender presupposes...a causal relation among sex, gender, and desire... The metaphysical unity of the three is assumed to be truly known and expressed in a differentiating desire for an oppositional gender—that is, in a form of oppositional heterosexuality.²³

Butler's insight here differentiates two facets of gender: "a unity of experience" and "a psychic and/or cultural designation of the self." The former is the very culprit that enables the façade of substantive identity, that is, the intended object for (or the imagined source of) an act of "a psychic and/or cultural designation of the self." In turn, "a unity of experience" can emerge only from a coherent series of practiced instances of such "designation," whose expressions or reflections are most readily identified in a differentiating practice of heterosexual desire. This circular causality of gender identity is what Butler means by her assertion that "within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative—that is constituting the identity it is purported to be."²⁴ As the following excerpt can further clarify:

[G]ender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*... If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time and not a seeming seamless identity, then the spatial metaphor of a "ground" will be displaced and revealed as a stylized configuration, indeed, a gendered corporealization of time. The abiding gendered self will then be shown to be structured by repeated acts that seek to approximate

²³ Ibid., p. 30. italics from the original.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 33.

the ideal of a substantial ground of identity, but which, in their occasional *discontinuity*, reveal the temporal and contingent groundlessness of this “ground.”²⁵

Butler thus replaces substantive identity with a “repetition of acts” that produces the semblance of such identity through its “stylized” adherence to “the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility.”²⁶ Her conception always harbors a subversive potential in an “occasional discontinuity” of such a repetition of acts that is always placed within, but not made unchangeable by, the existing power relations.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 179. italics from the original.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 23.

Chapter 3: From Butler's Gender through *Mumyōzōshi* to *Torikaebaya*

3.1 Introduction

With Butler's theory of performative gender, our question shifts from “what is the female Chūnagon's gender identity?” to “how does s/he become culturally intelligible according to the gendered cultural norms?” That is to say, the locus of the inquiry moves from the very “being” of the protagonist to his/her reception—by the public in the fictional reality as well as by Heian readers. I will attempt to understand the latter through the lens of the author of *Mumyōzōshi*.

It is commonly speculated as most likely that the author of *Mumyōzōshi* was Fujiwara no Shunzei's 藤原俊成 granddaughter (俊成女 Shunzei no Musume) or some other female writer close to that literary circle, but nothing definitive is known.²⁷ *Mumyōzōshi* is primarily known for its critiques of various *monogatari* and their characters, including *Genji* and *Torikaebaya*. Although this part occupies a majority of the work, it also includes discussions on such topics as female personages—both living and dead—as well as on *chokusenshū* 勅撰集 (imperial anthologies). The work's narrative opens with a description of an old nun who wanders into a quaint residence where a few young ladies-in-waiting are chatting among themselves; the various critiques take the form of the old nun mostly listening to these women.

In regard to modern scholarship on *Mumyōzōshi*, Mori Masato's 森正人 “The Structure of *Mumyōzōshi*” (*Mumyōzōshi no kōzō* 無名草子の構造)²⁸ and Teramoto Naohiko's 寺本直彦 *A Study of the Reception History of The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari juyōshi ronkō seihen* 源

²⁷ Takahashi 2001, p. 5, *SNKBZ* 40, pp. 295–97, and Ii 1999, pp. 3–4.

²⁸ Mori 1978.

氏物語受容史論考 正篇)²⁹ have been pivotal. The former stands as among the first attempts to examine the work not as a mere historical document about *monogatari*, but as a literary work in its own right, whereas the latter points out an affiliation between Shunzei's poetic/aesthetic concept, *en* 艶,³⁰ and *Mumyōzōshi*'s evaluation of *Genji*. Recent Japanese scholarship mostly follows the footsteps of these two scholars and offers an array of interpretations and analyses, as briefly introduced below, attesting to the literarily fertile nature of the work.

For instance, Kamio Nobuko 神尾暢子 analyzes the phrase, *torite* とりて (lit. in relation to), used in the opening for the series of *Mumyōzōshi*'s discussions, where the young ladies-in-waiting begin discussing what is most indispensable in the world.³¹ Exploring the phrase's connotations through its contemporary usages as well as by a contrast with the similar opening of *Hōbutsushū* 宝物集 (*A Collection of Treasures*, 1177–1183), a collection of Buddhist didactic

²⁹ Teramoto 1984.

³⁰ According to *SNKBZ*'s glossary related to poetics, this aesthetic concept “refers to delicate and elegant, or delightful and charming, beauty. It is Shunzei, who consciously featured this concept as an aspect of beauty in lingering sentiments and said, “When poems are plainly read out loud or recited with varying intonations, there should be times that they sound elegantly beautiful [(i.e. *en*)] as well as poignant [(i.e. *aware*)]” [(*SNKBZ* 87, pp. 251–52.)]. Poems that have been deemed as “*en*” tend either to have their objects of aesthetic appreciation in a concealed or elusively implied state, or to be rendered with a complex emotive/aesthetic structure through allusive variations [(i.e. *honka*, *honsetsu*)]” (上品で優雅な美しさ、明るく花やかな美しさという。「艶」を余情美の一樣相として意識的に取り上げたのは、「歌はただよみあげもし、詠じもしたるに、何となく艶にもあはれにも聞ゆる事のあるなるべし」(古来風躰抄)とした俊成である。「艶」と評された歌は、その美的対象が臙化・遮蔽された状態にある場合、あるいは、本歌・本説によって複雑な情調構成がなされている場合が多い。) (ibid., p. 622).

³¹ “At any rate, what is it that possesses the most indispensable matter in relation to this world? Each of you, if you have something in mind, please say it” (*satemo, satemo nanigoto ka kono yo ni torite daiichi ni sutegataki fushi aru. Ono'ono kokoro ni obosaremu koto notamahe* さても、さても何事かこの世にとりて第一に捨てがたきふしある。おのおの、心におぼされむことのたまへ。) (*SNKBZ* 40, p.181).

tales (*setsuwa* 説話),³² she concludes that the expression *torite*, along with the fictional settings within *Mumyōzōshi*, helps assure its readers of the serious quality of the critiques narrated within.³³ Similarly, Adachi Keiko 安達敬子 investigates various contemporary usages of a word, *imiji* いみじ (lit. extraordinary), which is the most frequently used among all *Mumyōzōshi*'s evaluative terms, and argues that rather than being mere personal impressions, *Mumyōzōshi*'s critiques on *monogatari* are written from a writer's analytical perspective.³⁴ In addition, other scholars analyze *Mumyōzōshi* based on an explicit premise of gender dichotomy: Ishino Keiko 石埜敬子 argues that the work was an attempt to "restore the status of women's

³² Kamio 2007. The following excerpt can sum up her main points. She says, "Whereas in *Hōbutsushū*, its question involves a topic of a treasure that yields real profit, *Mumyōzōshi* has a difference in that its question features taste/elegance within this world. Moreover, its phrasing employs *torite*, rather than *tameni* ために [(lit. for the sake of)]. The phrase, *torite*, is an expression used to articulate a precise point of discussions/arguments. In the Heian court, there is hardly any instance of its usage before *Genji monogatari*. At first, only males used this expression to persuade others, but in the late-Heian period, its usage expanded to both males and females, and, what is more, it was used where people evaluated *waka*—that is to say in judgments of poetry contests [(*utaawase* 歌合)]—in the beginning of the Kamakura period" (宝物集で実利をもたらす宝物は何かと提題して質問したのに対して、無名草子では、此の世での風情を質問した相違がある。さらに、提題して質問する場合に、「ために」ではなく「とりて」を使用した。「～にとりて」は、論点を明確にするための表現であった。平安王期では、源氏物語以前には、用例を検索しがたい。男性だけが、相手を説得するために使用する用例から、平安後期には、男女ともに使用する用法へと展開し、さらには、鎌倉初期には、和歌を評定する場すなわち、歌合の判詞に使用する。) (ibid., p. 131).

³³ Ibid., p. 132.

³⁴ Adachi 2008. Specifically, she first establishes a need for a closer analysis of the term *imiji* by comparing preceding scholarship that presents divergent interpretations of its various usages (ibid., pp. 82–83). She then draws on Teramoto Naohiko's argument about the affiliation between Shunzei's poetic concept, *en*, and *Mumyōzōshi*'s evaluation of *Genji* (ibid., p. 83), as well as on the term's usages in contemporaneous poetic treatises (ibid., pp. 84–83). After exhausting the possible connotations of the term in this way, she examines several instances of the term's use in *Mumyōzōshi* (ibid., pp. 88–95, 97–103) and concludes about an underlying perspective of a writer that *Mumyōzōshi*'s author possesses (ibid., p. 105).

monogatari” (*onna no monogatari no fukken* 女の物語の復権);³⁵ Tabuchi Kumiko 田渕久美子 explores didactic aspects of *Mumyōzōshi* to postulate it as an instructional manual for ladies-in-waiting;³⁶ Takahashi Tōru 高橋亨 attempts to situate *Mumyōzōshi* in a hypothesized generic history³⁷ and argue that it embodies a nostalgia for the women’s culture of the Heian court that

³⁵ Ishino 2003, pp. 434–35. Specifically, she attempts to, somewhat tenuously, support this claim by a textual analysis of the old nun’s setting (ibid., pp. 425–29), the expanding reception of *Genji* from the late-Heian to Kamakura period (ibid., pp. 429–30), and a close reading of *Mumyōzōshi* where its author apparently argues against existing public opinions (ibid., pp. 433–43).

³⁶ Tabuchi 2012. Specifically, she points out *Mumyōzōshi*’s overlaps of contents with several didactic tale collections (*setsuwashū*) (ibid., p. 44) as well as of themes/perspectives between its critiques of *monogatari* characters and *The Nursemaid’s Letter* (乳人の文 *Menoto no fumi*) written by Nun Abutsu (阿仏尼 Abutsu-ni) (ibid., pp. 45–47). She also examines *Mumyōzōshi*’s critique of *monogatari* to emphasize its need for realism as an instructional manual (ibid., pp. 48–50). For more information on *The Nursemaid’s Letter* and Nun Abutsu, see Laffin 2013.

³⁷ Takahashi 2001, and Takahashi 2004. More specifically, Takahashi states, “I would like to venture to hypothesize a genre called *sōshi* 草子 [that is, any writings or a bound book], and in its lineage ranging from *Makura no sōshi* 枕草子 (*The Pillow Book*) and *Tsurezuregusa* 徒然草 (*Essays in Idleness*), situate *Mumyōzōshi* as a literature of critiques in the eyes of ‘women.’ These writings from the mid-Heian period to the medieval era used to be referred to as “*monogatari*” at their own time, but I will categorize them as *sōshi*, a genre separate from *tsukuri-monogatari* 作り物語 [(fictional tales)], *uta-monogatari* 歌物語 [(poetry tales)], *rekishi-monogatari* 歴史物語 [(historical tales)], *setsuwa* 説話 [(didactic tales)], *gunki* 軍記 [(war chronicles)], and *nikki* 日記 [(diaries)], as well as early-modern *zuihitsu* 随筆 [(essays)]. This genre is close to *karon* 歌論 [(poetic treatises)] and a predecessor of the *zuihitsu* of the Edo period” (あえて「草子」というジャンルに仮説し、『枕草子』から『徒然草』にいたる系譜の中に、＜女＞の視点による批評文芸として『無名草子』を位置づけたい。平安朝中期から中世にかけて、当時の用語で言えば「物語」にあたるこれらの書物を、「作り物語」や「歌物語」「歴史物語」、「説話」「軍記」「日記」と区別し、近代の「随筆」とも別の「草子」として設定する。それは「歌論」書に近く、江戸期の「随筆」前史といえよう。) (Takahashi 2001, p. 4). On top of this postulate, he adds, “*Uchigiki* 打聞 [(written records of what one hears)] are a recording of *uta-monogatari* and *uta-gatari* 歌語り [(tales about *waka* or Japanese poems)] that are originally orally transmitted. In the past, by retracing this *uchigiki* as a part of the lineage ranging from *Makura no sōshi* to *Fukurozōshi* 袋草子 [(a poetic treatise by Fujiwara no Kiyosuke 藤原清輔)], I have once hypothesized *Mumyōzōshi* as belonging to a genre of literature of critiques called *sōshi* as well as a possible predecessor of *Tsurezuregusa* [(c.f. Takahashi 2001)]. Here, I would like to re-postulate this

had been lost after military conflicts.³⁸ Arguing specifically against Takahashi's conclusion and its corollary premise/view of historical decline (*kakō shikan* 下降史観), Hoshiyama Ken 星山健 offers a detailed textual analysis to reconceive *Mumyōzōshi* as a motivated and innovative literary attempt by a female writer to impress her own work onto subsequent generations.³⁹

3.2 A Distinction between the Real and the Realistic

Most of the above scholarly works agree that rather than an account of mere personal impressions on various matters, *Mumyōzōshi* is a deliberate work of literary criticism that was produced creatively. Also, several of them mention, in relation to their own arguments, that its critiques value realistic appearances or dismiss the supernatural,⁴⁰ and the same observation can be found in English scholarship, as Otilia Milutin explains in her doctoral dissertation that one overarching touchstone throughout *Mumyōzōshi* is truthfulness or what its author perceives as “realism” in both realistic and unrealistic settings.⁴¹ However, none of these scholars specify what it may have meant for *monogatari* to be “realistic” in the Heian period. A further

lineage with regard to its overlap with another lineage of *yotsugi* 世継 [(c.f. Takahashi does not specify this term, but this proposed genre seems to include historical tales and possibly some didactic tales)]” (「打聞」は、ほんらい口承された「歌語り」や「歌物語」を記録したものであった。それを『枕草子』から『袋草子』へと系譜としてたどる中に、『無名草子』をも「草子」という批評文芸のジャンルとして位置づけ、『徒然草』の先駆としてみることが出来るという仮説を提起したことがある。ここではそれを、「世継」の系譜との重なりにおいて捉えたいのである。) (Takahashi 2004, p. 44).

³⁸ Takahashi 2001, p. 11 and Takahashi 2004, p. 40 and p. 48.

³⁹ Hoshiyama 2007. Aside from his close readings of *Mumyōzōshi*, he also points out that the concept of historical decline towards the end of the Heian period is anachronistically superimposed by modern scholars who know the general course of history (ibid., p. 3).

⁴⁰ Suzuki 1971 p. 343, Takahashi 2001, p. 12, Ishino 2003, p. 434, and Tabuchi 2012, p. 46 and 50.

⁴¹ Milutin 2015, pp. 52–53.

examination of what was perceived as a “realistic” *monogatari* is necessary for illuminating factors that differentiate between what was intelligible and what was not for the Heian readers. A close reading of the relevant section of *Mumyōzōshi* can provide some insights.

The section concerned compares *Ima torikaebaya*, *Furu torikaebaya*, and another lost tale entitled *Kakure mino* (*The Invisibility Cape*). All these tales are thought to belong to the same category of tales revolving around *mezurashiki koto*, that is, denoting a novel thing but here meaning a plot twist or novel idea. Although the adjective *mezurashi* can denote a range of meanings such as “rare,”⁴² “unprecedented,”⁴³ “abnormal,”⁴⁴ or “absurd,”⁴⁵ it has positive connotations here.⁴⁶ Importantly, the author employs this word as distinct from another word, *makotoshikarazu* (unrealistic or untruthful), which is a combination of an adjective *makotoshi*

⁴² The above simple definition accompanies the following elaboration: “being rare, as in the existence or occurrence of something; ...the term is used not only when something is recognized as objectively rare, but also when it is rare to encounter within the scope of what a given individual may experience. In the latter case, especially, the term is much inclined to fuse the description of rareness with such accompanying emotional expressions as being enthralled, moved, surprised, or intrigued” (“そのことが起こること・存在することのまれであるさま ...客観的に稀少だと認定されることについても、その人の経験上で際会するのがまれなことについてもいうが、特に後者の場合、稀少さを表すだけでなく、それに新鮮さを感じて魅せられる情感やさまざまの詠嘆・感動、あるいは好奇的な興味・関心などをも融合的に表現する傾向が強い”) (Kadokawa 1982 vol.5, p. 626).

⁴³ “being different from what is customarily seen and heard of; also, the term synthetically expresses how the heart responds to such a thing” (“見慣れ聞き慣れているものとはことなる事のさま。また、そのさまに接して生じる心のさまをも融合的に表す”) (Kadokawa 1982 vol.5, p. 627).

⁴⁴ “being different from what is customarily recognized as typical” (“対象とする事柄が、従来から通例として認識されている事柄とは異なっているさま”) (Kadokawa 1982 vol.5, p. 627).

⁴⁵ “being different from the norms to the extent beyond what can be understood by common sense or an individual’s experiences” (“常識や経験で納得できる範囲をこえて、普通と変わっているさま”) (Kadokawa 1982 vol.5, p. 627).

⁴⁶ Nishimoto 2007, p. 217.

(lit. “truthful or realistic”⁴⁷) and the negative auxiliary verb *zu*. This latter word is used only when the commentator disapprovingly describes the older version of *Torikaebaya*. Other crucial adjectives in this section are: *osoroshi* and *obitatashi*, which respectively mean “terrifying, awe-inspiring, or tremendous”⁴⁸ and “excessive or exaggerated.”⁴⁹ And the latter word specifically expresses a feeling of discomfort that originates in such an excess or exaggeration.⁵⁰

These words collectively present a conceptual map with which the *Mumyōzōshi* commentator judges the three tales. The differentiation between *mezurashi* and *makotoshikarazu* can suggest that such interesting plot twists as *Ima torikaebaya*’s role reversal in and of themselves were considered to reside in the peripheries of the realistic/believable, always bordering on the realm of the unrealistic. And when a particular tale fails to successfully develop its plot twist (*mezurashiki koto*), it falls into the realm of the unrealistic (*makotoshikarazu*). The other two adjectives, *osoroshi* and *obitatashi*, function as important barometers indicating a specific tale’s placement within the borderland between the realistic and unrealistic.

⁴⁷ “まことらしいさま。本当と感じられるさま” (Kadokawa 1982 vol.5, p. 390).

⁴⁸ “Characterized by the quality of dignity or menace that can cause fear or awe in others; ...being overwhelmingly excellent; tremendous” (“相手に恐怖や畏敬の念を起こさせるような威厳や威力を属性として持つさま...脅威を感じるほど優れたさま。とてつもない。”) (Kadokawa 1982 vol.1, p. 553).

⁴⁹ “程度がはなはだしいさま。...ことごとしいさま。ぎょうぎょうしい” (Kadokawa 1982 vol.1, p. 582).

⁵⁰ “All usages [of this word (i.e. *obitatashi*)] in *Mumyōzōshi* denote more than the excessiveness of a degree, and its semantic core rather lies in the discomfort that results from such an excessive degree” (『無名草子』での用例はいずれも、ただ単に程度の甚だしさをいうだけでなく、むしろ、程度の甚だしさに起因する不快感のほうに意味の中心がある。) (Kataoka 1995, p. 62).

Within this evaluative system, *Furu torikaebaya* and *Kakure mino* are judged to lie in the realm of the unrealistic. The unfavorable critique on *Furu torikaebaya* demonstrates how the contemporary commentator regarded a poor execution of novel ideas, making the tale unrealistic:

That tale *Torikaebaya* [i.e. the older version] is poor in its flow and feels rather **terrifying** and **exaggerated**. Yet that state of things on the contrary appears to be such **an invented novelty**. It is said that there are some poignant parts as well. Its poems are indeed fine... The part where the female Chūnagon comes back to life after having died once is **terrifying** and **exaggerated**. The **unrealistic** parts such as when one brings out the magic mirror and sees through everything are indeed **terrifying**.

『とりかえばや』こそは、続きもわろく、もの恐ろしく、おびたたしき氣したるもののさま、なかなか、いとめづらしくこそ思ひ寄りためれ。思はずに、あはれなることどもぞあんめる。歌こそよけれ。... 女中納言の、死に入り、よみがへるほどこそ、おびたたしく恐ろしけれ。鏡持て来て、よろづのこと、暗からず見たるほど、まことしからぬことどもの、いと恐ろしきまでこそはべれ⁵¹

Despite good poems and a few excellent scenes, the overall assessment given at the onset is “terrifying and exaggerated” (*osoroshiku obitatashiki*), and the concluding remarks of the section provide concrete examples to corroborate such a view. The commentary on *Kakure mino* also receives a similar evaluation, with the commentator expressing her anticipation for as excellent a

⁵¹ SNKBZ 40, pp. 240–42, my emphasis. For Willig’s translation, see Willig 1983, pp. 243–44.

revision as was rendered for *Furu torikaebaya*. Together, these criticisms indicate that a novelty (*mezurashiki koto*) within a tale is a double-edged sword; while it can make a tale innovative and worthwhile, it always necessitates good execution lest the tale becomes unrealistic.

On the other hand, *Ima torikaebaya* is approved as believable despite its novelty (*mezurashiki koto*). This portion of *Mumyōzōshi* can be divided into two halves: the first discusses the siblings and their role reversal, and the latter criticizes Yon no Kimi and Saishō. The first half is as follows:

I do not know why, but tales like *Ima torikaebaya* that we have just discussed—how superior they appear to their originals! As a rule, imitation is a craft inevitably inferior to the original, yet it does indeed seem that this one is faultless and quite tasteful. Neither its diction nor poems are poor. **It looks like there are no exaggerated or terrifying parts, either.** In the original version, the female Chūnagon appears very distasteful, but in this version, she is very fine in everything. **How [she] comes to be as she is [i.e. the role reversal] does not seem to be a displeasingly bizarre storyline, and it is readily speculated that such a state should indeed derive from a karma of something truly reasonable.** Reading how she has come to recognize her own strange condition as awful and pathetic, I feel sorry for her. And Naishi no Kami is also excellent. As for how the female Chūnagon gives birth after turning back to a woman, and how Naishi no Kami becomes a man, both of them are indeed very fine in this version [i.e. *Ima torikaebaya*]. In the original version, it is quite **unrealistic** how the initial persons [i.e. the female Chūnagon and male Naishi no Kami] disappear once, and—without the tale’s saying where they have gone to—suddenly come

out anew [with their roles switched back]. **In this version, if a scene like where the siblings replace each other and return is a result of one's conceiving such a plot [e.g. the role reversal], it does indeed seem appropriate for the tale to be just as it is.**

ただ今聞こえつる『今とりかえばや』などの、もとにまさりはべるさまよ。何事もものまねびは必ずもとには劣るわざなるを、これは、いと憎からずをかしくこそあめれな。言葉遣ひ、歌なども悪しくもなし。おびたたくしく恐ろしきところなどもなかめり。もとには、女中納言のありさまいと憎きに、これは、何事もいとよくこそあれ。かかるさまになる、うたてけしからぬ筋にはおぼえず、まことにさるべきものの報いなどにてぞあらむ、と推し量られて、かかる身のありさまをいみじく口惜しく思ひ知りたるほど、いといとほしく、尚侍もいとよし。中納言の女になりかへり、子生むほどのありさまも、尚侍の男になるほども、これはいとよくこそあれ。もとののは、もとの人々皆失せて、いづこなりしともなくて、新しう出で来たるほど、いとまことしからず。これは、かたみにもとの人になり代はりて出で来たるなど、かかること思ひ寄る末ならば、かくこそすべかりけれとこそ見ゆれ。⁵²

Deeming *Ima torikaebaya* as superior to its original, the commentary begins by complimenting the way through which the siblings first become switched, and it ends with endorsing the

⁵² SNKBZ 40, pp. 243–44, my emphasis. For Willig's translation, see Willig 1983, pp. 244–45.

improved method of their replacing each other back again. The general appraisal indicates that the tale maintains a believable appearance, yet the consistent concern with its textual execution of the role reversal, especially when combined with the above assessments for the other two tales, indexes an inherent threat that this novelty (*mezurashiki koto*) is posing against such a presentation.

The above examination of the relevant section of *Mumyōzōshi* has introduced the measurement of realistic appearances (i.e. *makotoshikarazu*, *osoroshi* and *obitatashi*), especially in regard to the element of a novel idea (*mezurashiki koto*) serving as a double-edged sword for devising a good tale. Nevertheless, this preoccupation should not be—at least in this particular case—linked naively to any mimetic assumptions. In fact, the aforementioned distinction between *mezurashi* and *makotoshi* could be further differentiated from such words as *utsushi* (existing in a reality⁵³) or *masashi* (surely true, or undoubtedly real⁵⁴) that expressly denote the quality of being real and true—as opposed to being *realistic* and *truthful*. The suggestive absence of these latter words needs be considered in tandem with another point to be discussed in the next few paragraphs. Furthermore, the adjective *makotoshi* (realistic) is used only in the negative within the commentary; that is to say, nothing is positively affirmed as realistic in the commentary. Even the praise for *Ima torikaebaya* above is phrased with a due qualification. For instance, the word, “storyline” (*suji*), indicates that the commentator’s evaluation of the tale is

⁵³ “truly existing in a reality; being real, as opposed to an illusion or fake; being true” (“この世に現実に存在するさま。偽りや幻影でないさま。真実であるさま。”) (Kadokawa 1982 vol.1, p. 425).

⁵⁴ “being certain, rather than a lie or nonsense; ... being undeniably real; existing right before one’s eyes” (“うそやいいかげんでなく、確かであるさま。...否定しがたく現実にそうであることのさま。まざまざと目前に存するさま。”) (Kadokawa 1982 vol.5, p. 391).

from a meta-narrative level. The approval of the realistic appearance therefore is positively restricted to the fictional reality. In addition, the last sentence of the above quote suggests the same reservation. Although the two phrases *kakaru koto* (lit. such a thing) and *kaku koso subekarikere* (should be just like this) make this sentence elusive with their unclear referents, I extrapolate that the first phrase denotes “a plot,” as translated above, from the verb *omohi-yoru* (lit. come to think of / notice) while the second phrase is left as ambiguous as it is. With the addition of another conditional phrase *naraba* (i.e. “if”), this sentence again limits the overall approval. Collectively, these word choices demonstrate a crucial distinction between the *realistic* and the *true/real*.

Moreover, Nishimoto Ryōko also indexes this conceptual distinction between the real and realistic in her discussion on the same section of *Mumyōzōshi*. As she argues:

Until recently, the word *makotoshikarazu* [unrealistic/untruthful] in *Mumyōzōshi* has been interpreted as denoting unnatural settings or something unrealistic.

However, when we consider the term’s usages in the context of contemporary *waka* poetics, it seems that this word can be understood to denote a lack of truthfulness found in what is being expressed or written, in a slight contradistinction with the idea of whether or not it may actually happen in reality... Although these [four] tales [i.e. *Furu torikaebaya*, *Ima torikaebaya*, *Kakure mino*, and *Mitsu no Hamamatsu*⁵⁵] involve something that is impossible to occur in reality—such as role reversals between a male and female, intrusions enabled by an invisibility cape, and reincarnation—these unrealistic aspects are

⁵⁵ Another *monogatari* that has been long lost. This piece is highly regarded in *Mumyōzōshi*.

never directly criticized. They all share a commonalty of being valued for the novelty of their themes... It seems that some aspects of a *monogatari* are critiqued as *makotoshikarazu* when a particular event within the narrative accompanies no explanation for its inevitability—why things unfold in a particular manner—or when it appears to lack persuasiveness and truthfulness.

When we consider the existing usages in *The Poetry Contest in 600 Rounds* (六
百番歌合 *Roppyaku-ban uta awase*),⁵⁶ the word *makotoshikarazu* should be understood as “lacking in truthfulness.”⁵⁷

Just as in my preceding discussion, Nishimoto’s analysis cautions us that what may have been perceived as realistic in the Heian period needs be differentiated from present-day perceptions of the realistic. And alternatively, she claims that the Heian notion of the realistic seems to have required plausible accounts of an event’s inevitable causality; an occurrence beyond human nature or conventional understandings can happen in a *monogatari* as long as its account is persuasive and reasonable.

⁵⁶ For an English translation of this poetry contest, see McAuley 2019.

⁵⁷ これまで、『無名草子』の「まことしからず」は非現実的なことあるいは不自然な設定について言うて見られてきた。しかし、歌学用語としての用例を検討する時、現実にかかるか否かということとは少々別の、表現されたことの真実味の欠如と解されるように思われる。... この三つの物語[『とりかえばや』『隠れ蓑』『みつの浜松』]はそれぞれ男女の役割のとりかえ、隠れ蓑で姿を隠しての侵入、転生といった、現実世界ではおこり得ないことが取り入れられているにもかかわらず、そうした非現実性が直接非難されることはない。趣向の新しさが「めづらし」という語で高く評価されることで共通する。... 起きた事態について、なぜそうなるのか、その必然性が説明されず、あるいは説得力のない、真実味に欠けることが「まことならぬこと」「まことしからず」と批判されているようである。『六百番歌合』の判詞での用例を考慮するとき、「まことしからず」は「真実味のないこと」と解するべきではないか (Nishimoto 2007, pp. 216–17).

The didactic nature of a *monogatari*⁵⁸ also provides another helpful way to comprehend the Heian notion of the realistic in the context of *monogatari*. Arguing that *Mumyōzōshi* is an instructional text that “explicitly presents an exemplary attitude that an aristocrat in the Heian court must have,”⁵⁹ Tabuchi Kumiko 田渕久美子 states:

It is speculated that *Mumyōzōshi*’s author highly valued a *monogatari*’s complicity with the standards and paradigms of the Heian court... Traditionally, too, it has been argued that *Mumyōzōshi* is critical of the supernatural and unrealistic. To be more concrete, its criticisms can be considered as targeting that which is too unrealistic to be a conceivable occurrence in the court, or something just as absurd. Also, *Mumyōzōshi* as a whole tends to exclude topics that are grotesque, unseemly, and terrifying.⁶⁰

Tabuchi’s reading of the text as an instructional manual further specifies the Heian perception of the realistic to be situated within the court society. That is to say, *monogatari* may be deemed as

⁵⁸ Regarding the didactic elements of *monogatari*, Joshua Mostow explains with an example from *Ochikubo monogatari*:

Comparing oneself to a heroine in a fictional work, of course, was not something that women did all on their own—on the contrary, early fairy tales, romances, and novels were written by men with an aim to show girls how they should behave themselves, and demonstrating the wonderful things that would happen to them if they did, and the awful things that would happen if they didn’t. This function is quite clear in the mid-tenth century Japanese “Cinderella” tale, the *Ochikubo Monogatari*. (Mostow 2000, pp. 45–46.)

⁵⁹ 宮廷社会に生きる人間として持つべき態度を『無名草子』は明確に示している (Ibid., p. 46).

⁶⁰ 『無名草子』の作者にとって、物語は宮廷社会の規範・枠組みに沿っていることが重要であったと推測される。... 従来も『無名草子』が超自然的・非現実的な事に批判的であると言われてきた。具体的には、宮廷社会で起こり得ない余りにも非現実的な事、荒唐無稽なことへの批判であると考えられる。また全体に、露骨な話、下品な話、恐怖を覚える話なども、排斥されている。(Tabuchi 2012, pp. 48–49).

realistic as long as it is conceivable in the court or it has didactic relevance to female aristocratic readers, making them think and learn about how to better behave. Although a fuller grasp of the Heian concept of the realistic is beyond the scope of the present study, it is sufficient here to note that the concept itself requires to be historically situated in Heian court culture.

In addition to these secondary scholarly works, the famous critique of *monogatari* in the “The Fireflies” (Hotaru) chapter of *Genji monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*) likewise points to this separation between the real and realistic, and it suggests that the distinction is part of the nature of *monogatari* as a contemporary literary genre:

[Genji] laughed but then went on, “Without stories like these about the old days, though, how would we ever pass the time when there is nothing else to do? Besides, among these lies there certainly are some plausibly touching scenes, convincingly told; and yes, we know they are fictions, but even so we are moved and half drawn for no real reason to the pretty, suffering heroine. We may disbelieve the blatantly impossible but still be amazed by magnificently contrived wonders, and although these pall on quiet, second hearing, some are still fascinating. Lately, when my little girl has someone to read to her and I stand there listening, I think to myself what good talkers there are in this world, and how this story, too must come straight from someone’s persuasively glib imagination—but perhaps not.”

“Yes, of course, for various reasons someone accustomed to telling lies will no doubt take tales that way, but it seems impossible to me that they should be anything other than simply true.” [Tamakazura] pushed her inkstone away.

“I have been very rude to speak so ill to you of tales! They record what has gone on ever since the Age of the Gods. *The Chronicles of Japan* and so on give only a part of the story. It is tales that contain the truly rewarding particulars!” He laughed. “Not that tales accurately describe any particular person; rather, the telling begins when all those things the teller longs to have pass on to future generations—whatever there is about the way people live their lives, for better or worse, that is a sight to see or a wonder to hear—overflow the teller’s heart. To put someone in a good light one brings out the good only, and to please other people one favors the oddly wicked, but none of this, good or bad, is removed from life as we know it. Tales are not told in the same way in the other realm, and even in our own the old and new ways are of course not the same; but although one may distinguish between the deep and the shallow, it is wrong always to dismiss what one finds in tales as false. There is talk of “expedient means” also in the teaching that the Buddha in his great goodness left us, and many passages of the scriptures are all too likely to seem inconsistent and so to raise doubts in the minds of those who lack understanding, but in the end they have only a single message, and the gap between enlightenment and the passions is, after all, no wider than the gap that in tales sets off the good from the bad. To put it nicely, there is nothing that does not have its own value.” He mounted a very fine defense of tales.⁶¹

⁶¹ Tyler 2003, pp. 460–61. Alternatively, see Seidensticker 1992, pp. 436–37.

In this scene, Genji first posits a dichotomy between truth and falsity by labeling *monogatari* as a lie (*soragoto*). After Tamakazura's rejoinder, however, he shifts his position to provide a detailed exposition on the nature of *monogatari*. Although he does not affirm *monogatari* as truth in this modified stance, more significant is his move away from the initial dichotomy of truth and lies. Qualifying official records like *The Chronicles of Japan* as offering only a partial account, he discusses how *monogatari* complement the former through enumerating what they can convey—such as feelings that “overflow the teller's heart” and a Buddhist teaching—and we may add to the list “a life lesson” that Tamakazura was seeking before Genji's unwelcome interruption. In sum, Genji's exposition could offer a caveat that *monogatari* should not be measured in the spectrum of being true/real and false/unreal. Although it would be beyond the scope of the present essay to further explore and examine how the Heian readers may have regarded *monogatari*, my reading of the above scene from *Genji* supplements the preceding discussion on *Mumyōzōshi*'s assessment in regard to “realism.” That is, *monogatari* tell a story to communicate “something” important about reality; the recounted story thus aims to be realistic to accomplish its intended communication. For the very sake of this important “something,” in addition, it should not be measured against the criterion of truth/lie—and here, the notion of Buddhist “expedient means” (*hōben* 方便) may help vindicate its exemption.

This move away from the dichotomy of veracity helps explain why the *Mumyōzōshi* commentator does not dismiss novel ideas (*mezurashiki koto*)—although very close to being *unrealistic*. Such novelties are likely to have been valued for their potential to communicate that “something” important about reality. As the commentary on *Kakure mino* states, “It is quite regretful that [the work] is not at all remarkable when [its author] has come up with something sure to produce various highlights—poignant, tasteful, and unique” (あはれにも、をかしく

も、めづらしくも、さまざま見どころありぬべきことに思ひ寄りて、むげにさせることもなきこそ口惜けれ).⁶² This expectation helps conceptually situate the measurement of “realism” in *Mumyōzōshi*; it does not originate in the dichotomy with veracity, but instead it is subordinate to the primary question of whether or not a meaningful communication takes place in reading *monogatari*.

3.3 Butler’s Gender and *Mumyōzōshi*

As suggested by *Mumyōzōshi*’s general approval, *Ima torikaebaya* succeeds in triggering such a meaningful communication. We may further infer that as a consequence, the author of *Mumyōzōshi* has received the overflow of feeling, as the rest of the critique displays the commentator’s intensely sympathetic response to the tale’s protagonist, to a remarkable degree, especially in comparison with her emotional responses to the other two tales. For instance, the commentator drops *prima facie* a tangential line amid the critique of *Ima torikaebaya*’s “realism”: “Reading how she has come to recognize her own strange condition as awful and pathetic, I feel sorry for her.”⁶³ In addition, thorough reprimands against Yon no Kimi and Saishō constitute the second half of the critique on *Ima torikaebaya* and are equal in length with the preceding assessment of “realism.” Almost as if spoken from the viewpoint of the female Chūnagon or her intimates, this thorough censoring is inverted sympathy for the female protagonist, and its length could correspondingly indicate the intensity of sympathy that the author of *Mumyōzōshi* may have felt for her.

⁶² SNKBZ 40, p. 242. my trans. For Willig’s translation, see Willig 1983, p. 244.

⁶³ SNKBZ 40, pp. 243–44. my trans. For Willig’s translation, see Willig 1983, p. 245.

This sympathetic response is the nexus between my examination of *Mumyōzōshi* and Butler's theory of performative gender identity, for sympathy could be an indication that a character in a tale is regarded as culturally intelligible enough—or possessing identity full enough—to be humanized. Butler's performative gender is emancipatory in its genealogical excavations, but it is not the same as a utopian vision. In her discussion of the castigatory aspect of gender constructions, Butler notes:

Because gender is a project that has cultural survival at its end, the term *strategy* better suggests the situation of duress under which gender performance always and variously occurs. Hence, as a strategy of survival within compulsory systems, gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences. Discreet genders are part of what “humanizes” individuals within contemporary culture; indeed, we regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right... The construction [of coherent genders] “compels” our belief in [their] necessity and naturalness. The historical possibilities materialized through various corporeal styles are nothing other than those punitively regulated cultural fictions alternately embodied and deflected under duress.⁶⁴

According to Butler, the regulatory mechanism of dominant discourse polices “discreet genders,” by which she again implies the two aspects of the term: “a unity of experience” and “a psychic and/or cultural designation of the self.”⁶⁵ According to this additional formula, “discreet genders” occupy a crucial part of cultural intelligibility, and an individual becomes humanized

⁶⁴ Butler 1999, pp. 177–78. italics from the original.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 30.

only when she or he is culturally intelligible and hence eligible to be regarded as possessing full identity.

If we venture to apply this aspect of Butler's gender theory to the ongoing analysis of *Mumyōzōshi*: "realism" in *monogatari* helps their characters to be culturally intelligible; novel ideas (*mezurashiki koto*) risk turning *monogatari* unrealistic and their characters unintelligible, especially if without good textual contrivances; and finally, a reader's response could suggest the degree of *monogatari*'s success in balancing these two polarities as well as how humanized their characters are consequently recognized as—or the degree of fullness/incompleteness of identity with which the characters are rendered. Therefore, the intense sympathy for the female Chūnagon in *Ima torikaebaya* could indicate that she somehow appears culturally intelligible despite the role reversal whereas such responses as *osoroshi* and *obitatashi*, and the rather terse comments given for each character in *Furu torikaebaya* and *Kakure mino* that suggest the opposite. With the preceding analysis as a premise, I argue that one of the ways whereby *Ima torikaebaya* reconciles its unrealistic effect of the role reversal is to discursively produce and contain the female Chūnagon on the margins of cultural intelligibility as a woman. That is to say, although the female Chūnagon may *be* gendered masculine within the bounds of the tale's fictional reality, she *is*, or is constantly made intelligible as, gendered feminine to the tale's readers as represented by the author of *Mumyōzōshi*.

Chapter 4: An Analysis of *Torikaebaya Monogatari*

For instance, the scene that follows immediately after the female Chūnagon's coming-of-age ceremony as a man (*genpuku*) is illustrative as it describes her grief over her own condition:

While still a child [i.e. before the coming-of-age ceremony], *she* did not come to grasp such things as how *her* body and self are. “Surely, there should be someone like me,” *she* used to imagine. And *she* had whiled away the time behaving as *she* pleased, until gradually, *she* came to learn about how other people are. Knowing enough sense as an adult, *she* always felt *her* condition as devious and pathetic, but now, there was nothing *she* could do even by changing *her* mind. “Why am I unusually different from others?” *she* could not help asking herself. *Her* melancholy made *her* conduct upright, and *she* was always reserved, keeping *her* distance from other men. It was very admirable of *her*.

この君、なを幼きかぎりはわが身のいかなるなどもたどられず、かゝるたぐひもあるにこそはと、心をやりてわが心のまゝにもてなしふるまひ過ぐしつるを、やう[やう]人の有様を見聞き知りはて、物思ひ知らるゝまゝには、いとあやしくあさまじう思ひ知られゆけど、さりとて、今はあらため思ひ返してもすべきやうもなければ、などてめづらかに人にたがひける身にかと、うちひとりごたれつゝ、物嘆かしきまゝに身をもておさめて、物とをくもてしづめつゝ交らひ給へる用意などいとめでたきを⁶⁶

⁶⁶ *SNKBT* 26, pp.114–15, my emphasis. For Willig's translation, see Willig 1983, p. 23. The original Japanese does not always have the subject of sentences. Tentatively, for my English

While the coming-of-age ceremony consolidates her masculine gender within the fictional reality, these inserted interior monologues serve to contain her on the margins of what is intelligibly feminine. By referring to common sense and how other people are, the narrative invokes the normative cultural expectations arising from her female reproductive organs, thereby placing her outside of the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility. However, this supposed “outside” itself still remains within the very discursive field that centers on these norms of intelligibility. Consequently, her second interior monologue and the supplementary narration communicate her secret submission to the dominant discourse delimiting what is intelligible and human, thereby keeping her at the periphery of the intelligible. Such a textual strategy seems to have been keenly appreciated, as the *Mumyōzōshi*’s commentary pinpoints this juxtaposition and states, “Reading how she has come to recognize her own strange condition as awful and pathetic, I feel sorry for her” (かかる身のありさまをいみじく口惜しく思ひ知りたるほど、いといとほしく).⁶⁷ Also, the covert nature of her submission and the putative exclusivity that this dramatic irony affects for readers would partially explain how her presence does not become comic or dehumanized, and the mixture of interior monologue and near-omniscient third-person narrative may also bolster such a textual figuration.

Furthermore, similar interior monologues by the female Chūnagon keep recurring throughout the tale, and they collectively consolidate the female Chūnagon’s marginal subjugation to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility. In fact, soon after the coming-of-age

translations used in this essay, I use both *he* and *she* to denote the female Chūnagon while italicizing them so as to note the nuances of her gender presentations that I am discussing.

⁶⁷ SNKBZ 40, pp. 243–44. For Willing’s translation, see Willig 1983, p. 245

ceremony, the female Chūnagon does her first *kaimami* (lit. “looking through a gap in the fence”), as in the first episode of *The Ise Stories*⁶⁸:

On the fifteenth day of the ninth month, when the moon shone brightly,
Chūnagon, having been in attendance at a court concert, was on night duty. The
Emperor’s concubine, Umetsubo, was to go to the Emperor’s rooms that night.
Though Chūnagon did not especially want to see her, *he* nonetheless concealed
himself by the wall leading to the ladies’ quarters and looked on. The late night
moon lit every nook and cranny. A lady carrying a lamp came out, her gauze-like
outer garment transparent over thick underrobes, her hair beautifully cascading
over it. All the ladies-in-waiting looked lovely, their gauze cloaks over lustrous
robes flung loosely over their shoulders, reminding Chūnagon of the sky as it just
then shimmered with moonglow. It was graceful and beautiful the way the ladies
went to wait upon the Emperor, elegantly holding up their portable screens. “If
only my heart and body were normal!,” thought Chūnagon in dismay. “I would
surely have access to the Emperor’s rooms like this. How absurd! It seems unreal
that I should show my face and mingle in society as the male I am not.”

*Were I the moon, / Thus would I brilliant shine / Over the clouds. / Oh what sad
fate is this / That it may not be so!*

⁶⁸ For this classic example of *kaimami*, see Mostow and Tyler 2010, pp.14–16.

“Ill-fated indeed. If only my sister had been like other girls and mingled like this,
all would have been fine. Had that been the case, I might have assuaged my own
grief about myself by looking after her when she visited the Emperor.”⁶⁹

With the backdrop of the literary trope of *kaimami*, the female Chūnagon’s private grief contrasts the missing masculine voyeurism, and her interior monologue keeps her established as marginally feminine in the same way as discussed above. What is more, her self-marginalizing gesture even has her sibling less marginal than she is, as suggested by the underlined portion. Willig’s translation of this sentence should be slightly corrected to reflect the particle *dani* (at least) and the double negative expressed in *akanu-koto nakaramashi* (it would not have been unsatisfactory). The sentence therefore can be more precisely translated as: “*At least*, if my sister had been like other girls and mingled like this, *it would not have been unsatisfactory*” (姫君だに世の常にて、かやうの交らひし給はましかば、飽かぬ事なからまし).⁷⁰ In addition to her explicit wish for her brother, therefore, this sentence also implies her suppressed desire to be a high-ranking aristocratic lady. Moreover, the tale contains many shorter, less significant invocations of normativity that keep implying the female Chūnagon’s status as the marginally intelligible—for example, the phrase *yozukazu* (not adhering to the ways of the world), that Pflugfelder discusses in his article,⁷¹ haunts the narrative throughout. All of these examples index the same self-marginalizing gesture that contains the female Chūnagon within the dominant discourse.

⁶⁹ Willig 1983, pp. 29–30. underline for my emphasis.

⁷⁰ *SNKBT* 26, p. 122.

⁷¹ Pflugfelder 1992, p. 351.

The tale also describes that the female Chūnagon is initially fond of Saishō, and although their intimacy may appear to modern eyes as homoerotic/homosocial, in the light of the underlying representation of the protagonist discussed so far, it is more likely that contemporaneous readers saw this relationship as heterosexual with a homosocial guise. Although heteronormativity is a modern concept that is not simply applicable to Heian court society, given the prominence of heterosexual romance in the Heian literature, the female Chūnagon's initial liking for Saishō can serve to, at least in part, further consolidate her cultural intelligibility. Indeed, right after the *kaimami* scene discussed above, another scene opens with a third-person narration establishing the female Chūnagon's liking for Saishō: "[the female Chūnagon] did not at all let others become familiar with or casually talk to her. Even for such a detached mind/heart as hers, however, it was hard to dismiss Saishō. Only to him, she opened her heart/mind" (人は、いかにも、すべて身にならはしそめ語らひなどせず、いとあまり物とをくのみもてすぐる心にも、この人ばかりにはさし放ちがたうあはれなれば).⁷²

Followed by this opening, the female Chūnagon and Saishō have a revealing exchange:

Distressed at the situation [that she herself was in] and at the feelings he had experienced earlier [at the sight of Umetsubo], Chūnagon was most depressed...
Saishō considered the situation from every possible angle, hoping to fathom what was troubling Chūnagon. "I would search your thoughts and grant your wishes though it meant putting myself in your place. But you refuse to confide in me,"

⁷² *SNKBT* 26, pp. 123–24. Willig's translation of this part is not the standard interpretation today: "Saishō's captivating and delicate beauty was not without charm for Chūnagon even then. From the start the two had not spoken familiarly with one another on anything. But even in his excessive reticence, Chūnagon was moved and found it hard to dismiss Saishō" (Willig 1983, p. 31).

Saishō said reproachfully. “But you are not me. If we discussed the problem, you’d probably consider it something that could be easily solved, a matter of faithless love,” said Chūnagon, smiling, at a loss for a response.

Though no special care / Gives me cause to worry, / Each time I see the moon, / I wonder / how long this pain will last, / And sadness fills my heart.

[Her] voice was radiantly beautiful. Flooded with tenderness for [her], Saishō wept profusely, as was fashionable in those days.

*Oh so true it is, / In this inconstant world / Nothing stays the same. / Why then forever fret, / Ever buried in your cares?*⁷³

This opening and the subsequent exchange demonstrate that the female Chūnagon is fond of Saishō. In the fictional reality of the tale, this fondness exists as homosocial intimacy. However, in the eyes of the tale’s readers, it may assume a silhouette of heterosexuality harbored in her mind. Although we cannot assume heteronormativity in Heian society, this depiction of the Chūnagon’s affection may be another way to contain her on the margins of intelligibility as a woman. It is also notable that this scene eventually has the female Chūnagon confide in Saishō that she finds herself so sinful.⁷⁴ As this confidence elusively points to the secret of role reversal that the Chūnagon harbors, it can suggest how attached she is to him.

When their dangerous intimacy eventually results in Saishō’s discovery of the female Chūnagon’s anatomy, the narrative employs a conventional pattern for heterosexual intercourse to depict the female Chūnagon as a woman. In her doctoral dissertation that ventures to assess

⁷³ Willig 1983, p. 32.

⁷⁴ *SNKBT* 26, p. 125. いと罪深くのみ思ひ知られ侍れば. Or in Willig’s translation: “for I am always aware of my great sinfulness” (Willig 1983, p. 32).

the possibilities of rape in the Heian literature, Otilia Milutin describes a pattern of representation of sexual intercourse:

The pattern mentioned previously, which occurs repeatedly throughout scenes of sexual violence in later *monogatari*, is the following: a young man catches a glimpse of a beautiful young lady—sometimes as a result of *kaimami* (“peeping through a hole in a fence”); as a result, he is smitten with the young lady and risks intruding into her quarters, usually under the cover of the night; the young woman is terrified upon finding herself in close quarters with a complete stranger—the text is explicit regarding her fear; despite the young lady’s protests, the amorous man proceeds to approach her, embrace her, move her away, according to the case, and eventually sleep with her; the young woman is, throughout, frightened, in distress, on the verge of expiring, crying, sweating and generally, unable to answer any of the man’s entreaties; the young man eventually departs at the break of the dawn, making numerous promises and, sometimes, eliciting a reluctant response from the woman.⁷⁵

Although the relevant scene in *Torikaebaya* slightly alters this pattern, its correspondence is patent enough:

[Saishō] kept himself unnoticed by others, and when he slipped into the Western Wing, Chūnagon’s usual residence, Chūnagon was relaxing with *his* robes scattered about—as it was a hot day. Upon seeing Saishō, Chūnagon remarked, “How inconvenient. For it would be indecorous to see you as I am now,” and

⁷⁵ Milutin 2015, p.74.

retired to the interior. “My dear friend, do not mind and just stay,” said Saishō, but Chūnagon did not listen. There were no ladies-in-waiting around, so he followed Chūnagon easily. “How unseemly I am...,” responded Chūnagon with a little smile and grudgingly sat down... [Chūnagon] was wearing crimson raw-silk trousers and a white raw-silk under robe. Not as proper as usual, Chūnagon appeared exquisite to Saishō—*his* complexion, ever more delightful and charming with its beauty glowing in the heat—and just how *his* hands and body were—how *his* waist showed through clearly at where the trousers’ string was tied—and the whiteness of *his* skin, like a snowball, appearing fair and delicate... Seeing Chūnagon’s unparalleled beauty, Saishō thought, “How extraordinary *he* is. If there is a woman like *him*, how much of my affection I would devote and be afflicted with!” Enthralled by the sight of Chūnagon, Saishō could not help but sprawl right next to him. “It is too hot,” fretted Chūnagon, but Saishō paid no heed.

As they talked on, it became dark out. A refreshing breeze gave a distinct feeling that autumn had finally come, and Saishō did not appear at all to want to let Chūnagon sit up. Without anyone to deliver even one message to Naishi no Kami, he went on talking about how he would perish if his years of longing for *her* came to naught. Seeing how he complained with such pathos, Chūnagon thought, “He must have spoken to my wife in this very manner. Truly, for a woman’s vulnerable heart, how impossible it seems to remain unswayed. Be that as it may, his behavior is indeed unscrupulous—even when he sees his love secretly, until swaying her entirely to share the same feelings with him, he

laments it as an unparalleled misery. And now that his affair with Yon no Kimi is not one of such half-fulfilled quests for love, he is complaining about Naishi no Kami too in this manner—how restless and unreliable his heart reveals itself to be.” *She* felt distressed by *her* own reflections; in addition, various things around Saishō were going beyond *her* control. Overwhelmed, *he* said, “*Not one, your heart seems to desire / Seeing how you now compare / The love whom you are seeing / with the sorrow of your longing.*” How *he* elusively feigned a gentle smile instead of saying more... It was so alluring that the usual dignity of *his* somber indifference was not at all comparable.

Resting close to Chūnagon, who seemed relaxed rather than somber, Saishō was drawn to *him*. He felt as if he was relieved afresh of his love for the one he had been seeing and of the sorrow of his longing, and feeling so enchanted, he was not troubled, now, at realizing that Chūnagon had found out about him and Yon no Kimi. Embracing *him* closer and more tightly, Saishō said, “*After I compared all, / Any of them, I cannot recall. / Now that my heart has grown, / To you, so close and drawn.*” Annoyed by this, Chūnagon interrupted even before he had finished, “That does not seem reliable either. I think you are just regarding me as a memento linked to those you long for.” Chūnagon tried to rise, but Saishō again did not let *him*. “In fact—oh, you are being so absurd—In fact, there had been an order from Saidaijin, but it was so terribly hot that I was taking a little break. If I do not make haste and pay him a visit, he will think it strange. I will set off at once,” said Chūnagon, standing up. Yet—what was Saishō thinking?—he could not bring himself to part with Chūnagon even more. “My dear,” he said and

suddenly seized *him*. Saishō was now all over Chūnagon. “What are you doing? Have you lost your senses?” rebuked Chūnagon, but Saishō paid no mind. In spite of *his* reprimand, and although *his* distant demeanor and somber appearance had been indeed manly, there was nothing to do once *she* was completely held down. *Her* heart grew vulnerable. “What is the meaning of this?” Chūnagon thought, feeling disgraced, and even *her* tears began breaking free. Saishō found *her* condition in any case unprecedented and astonishing, but he felt as if his affections for his beloved ones were now all gathered in Chūnagon. “How deeply moving and endearing,” he thought, and it was certainly no ordinary occasion for him to criticize *her* bizarre state.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ SNKBT 26, pp. 180–83. For Willig’s translation (although rather freely interpretive), see Willig 1983, pp. 82–84. The original is as follows:

大方には忍びて、例の中納言の方なる西の対に忍びやかに入り給へれば、いと暑き日にて、うちとけ解き散らして居たりける、見つけて、「いと不便に、無礼にて侍に」とて逃げ入るに、「あが君、たゞさて」と言ふに、聞かねば、女も無き所なれば心やすくて、続けて入りたれば、「まことに見苦しう」とうち笑ひて、つい居ぬ。...中納言の、紅の生絹の袴に白き生絹の単衣着て、うちとけたるかたちの、暑きにいとゞ色はにほひまさきりて、常よりもはな[ばな]とめでたきをはじめ、手つきなり身つきなり、袴の腰ひき結はれてけざやかに透きたる腰つき、色の白きなど、雪をまろがしたらんやうに、白うめでたくをかしげなるさまの、似る物なくうつくしきを、あないみじ、かゝる女の又あらん時、わがいかばかり心を尽くし惑はんと見るぞ、いみじう物思はしうて、乱れ寄りて臥したるを、「暑きに」とうるさがれど、聞かず。

物語などして、暮れぬれば、風涼しくうち吹き、秋来にけるけしきことにおぼゆるに、いと起こすべくもあらず。尚侍の督の御方にもつゆの御消息伝ふる人もなく、こゝらの年比の思ひむなしうなりなば、我身の跡なくなりぬべきよしを言ひ続けて、恨むるさまのいみじうあはれなるに、このわたりにもかくぞ言ひけんかし、げに女にて心弱くなびかではえ有るまじくもあるかな、さてもうしろめたのわざや、忍びても、さばかりひとつ心になびかし果てでは、それをまたなき事に思ひ嘆きて、逢ひても逢はぬ恋

Although slightly altered, the above description follows the pattern that Milutin has described: Saishō sneaks into where the female Chūnagon is privately resting; the Chūnagon flees into an interior space, but Saishō follows; instead of the voyeurism of *kaimami*, the scene describes Saishō seeing the Chūnagon in her underrobes with renewed appreciation; Saishō persistently harasses the female Chūnagon by clinging to her; at last, the female Chūnagon becomes so disheartened that she starts crying; after sleeping with the Chūnagon, Saishō “pledging his love time and again...finally tore himself away.”⁷⁷ With an awareness of the dramatic irony regarding the female Chūnagon, this scene may at first appear rather commonplace as a heterosexual encounter. However, it is significant that the narrative conforms with the suggested pattern even

のひとつにてもあらず、またかく添へて思言ふよ、いかにひまなき心の内
ならんと苦しきにも、さま[ざま]あつかはるゝにしのびがたくて、
ひとつにもあらずなされてくらぶるに逢ひての恋と逢はぬ嘆きを
うちほゝ笑みたるけしきにて、まぎらはすけはひなど、すくよかにをし放
ちて見るめでたさは、物にもあらざりけり。身に近くうち添ひて、すくよ
かならず乱れたるなつかしさに、さらに逢ひての恋も逢はぬ思ひも、みな
慰みぬる心地して、思はしういみじきに、見けるをやと思ふいとをしさも
さしをかれて、いとゞかき抱き寄せられて、
くらぶるにいづれもみなぞ忘れぬる君に見慣るゝほどの心は
とも言ひやらず、うるさければ、「そも頼もしげなかなり。誰にも離れぬ
形見としもおぼさるらん」とて起くるを、さらに起こさず。「まことは、
あな物狂おし、殿の御前にの給事ありつれど、いみじう暑かりつればうち
休みしに、急ぎたちて参らねば、あやしとおぼすらん。まず参りてこん」
とて起くるを、いかにおぼゆるにか、あやにくにひき別るべき心地もせ
ず、「あが君」とつととらへて、わりなう乱るゝを、「こはいかに、うつ
し心はおはせぬか」と、あはめ言へど聞きも入れず。さはいへど、けゝし
くもてなし、すくよかなる見る目こそ男なれ、とりこめたてられてはせん
方なく、心弱きに、こはいかにしつる事ぞと、人わろく涙さへ落つるに、
さてもめづらかにあさましくとは思ひながら、あはれにかなしき事、方
[々]の思ひひとつにかきあはせつる心地して、あやしなど思ひとがめられ
んも、ことのよろしき時の事也けり。

⁷⁷ Willig 1983, p. 85.

before the female Chūnagon loses her masculine demeanor altogether, or before the explicit mention of the discovery by Saishō. Although the protagonist is still behaving as a man—however tenuously—in the fictional reality, the narrative is already presenting the Chūnagon as a woman, thereby rendering the character intelligible to the readers by its way of textual enactment.

Even more notable in this scene is that the female Chūnagon is in her underrobe or inner garment (*hitohe* 単衣) as the narrative explains that she is “relaxing with *his* robes scattered about.”⁷⁸ As Takeda Sachiko points out, the Japanese underrobe in the Heian court was unisex,⁷⁹ and the absence of gendered attire helps the narrative highlight the womanly physique of the female Chūnagon. In fact, the text insistently contrasts the female Chūnagon’s current state and how she usually is in the court. For instance: “How *he* elusively feigned a gentle smile instead of saying more... It was so alluring that the usual dignity of *his* somber indifference was incomparable” (うちほゝ笑みたるけしきにて、まぎらわすけはひなど、すくよかにをし放ちて見るめでたさは、物にもあらざりけり).⁸⁰ Already introduced above, this sentence contrasts her current appearance with her usual demeanor to indicate the diminution of her masculine pretense. The narration immediately follows this up by another description that “Resting close to Chūnagon, who seemed relaxed rather than somber, Saishō [was drawn to

⁷⁸ *SNKBT* 26, p. 180. For Willng’s translation, see Willig 1983, p. 82. The original sentence in Japanese has more connotation of having taken off the robes, as it states, “*uchitoke tokichirashite*” (うちとけ解きちらして).

⁷⁹ Takeda 1994.

⁸⁰ *SNKBT* 26, p. 182. For Willng’s translation, see Willig 1983, p. 83. Willig’s translation interprets the phrase “*woshihanachite*” (をし放ちて) as “when seen from afar.” Mine follows the interpretation in *SNKBT* 26.

him]” (身に近くうち添ひて、すくよかならず乱れたるなつかしさに).⁸¹ The word *sukuyokanari* in the previous sentence that refers to the protagonist’s usual self is thus negated twice, so that the contrastingly new aspect of the female Chūnagon is further emphasized. As if to suggest that only by virtue of her masculine attire can she affect her usual discreet coolness, her demeanor and appearance are presented as charming. Also, such words as *aga-kimi* (“my dear friend” and “my dear”) and *kokoro-yowashi* (i.e. “for a woman’s vulnerable heart” (*onna nite kokoro yowaku*) and “her heart grew vulnerable” (*kokoro yowaki ni*)) are also repeated twice during this scene to contrastingly present the female Chūnagon’s increasingly palpable womanhood through Saishō’s viewpoint as well as in terms of the psychological state of the Chūnagon.

Because the exposure of her body triggers a whole array of these textual contrasts, this scene adds the Chūnagon’s feminine body to the textual presentations discussed so far—her psyche expressed in the interior monologues, and desire implied in her initial fondness for Saishō—to consolidate the unity of her gendered experience and cultural intelligibility in the eyes of the tale’s readers. In fact, at the moment where the text suggests that Saishō has sexual intercourse with the female Chūnagon, the narrative explains that her affected masculinity was only in clothing or appearance. As it states, “In spite of *his* reprimand, and although *his* distant demeanor and somber appearance had been indeed manly, there was nothing to do once *she* was completely held down. *Her* heart grew vulnerable. “What is the meaning of this?” Chūnagon thought, feeling disgraced, and even *he* broke into tears” (さはいへど、けゝしくもてなし、

⁸¹ *SNKBT* 26, p. 182. Alternatively, Willng’s translation: “Chūnagon moved closer to Saishō and was warm and affectionate with him” (Willig 1983, p. 83). This translation seems to have gone overboard in its presentation of Chūnagon.

すくよかなる見る目こそ男なれ、とりこめたてられてはせん方なく、心弱きに、こはいかにしつる事ぞと、人わろく涙さへ落つるに).⁸² The subordinate clause of the first sentence is typically thought to refer to the way the female Chūnagon is actually resisting Saishō. However, because the text again repeats the word, *sukuyokanari*, this phrase likely has another layer of reference to the entire presentation of masculinity that she has endeavored to maintain.⁸³ Therefore, this narration similarly serves to textually contain the anomaly of the female Chūnagon by explaining it away just as the clothing being different—nothing more—and not enough for her to become unintelligible as a woman to the readers.

⁸² *SNKBT* 26, p. 183. For Willng's translation, see Willig 1983, p. 84.

⁸³ Hence, my choice of the past perfect tense in the translated excerpt.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This essay has taken as its point of departure Pflugfelder's taxonomy of gender in *Torikaebaya monogatari*, and his suggestion to employ Judith Butler's theory of gender as performative. The concept of performative gender has led to an awareness that the substantive identity is itself a metaphysical premise that tends to restrict the scope of possible analysis. This study has then examined how the female protagonist of *Torikaebaya* becomes culturally intelligible to its contemporaneous readers, represented by the author of *Mumyōzōshi*. My examination of the relevant *Mumyōzōshi* section has suggested a critical distinction between the realistic and real, and this interpretation has led us to see that the role reversal in the tale used to be thought as a potential threat to the realistic appearance of the tale. The final portion of the essay thus has focused on how the text offsets such a novel idea (*mezurashiki koto*) by presenting the female protagonist as a woman on the margins of intelligibility.

The present analysis certainly has its own limitations and flaws. For instance, it is heavily text-centered and may be accused of being too structuralist. I hope that I have been somewhat successful in offsetting this shortcoming by drawing from *Mumyōzōshi*'s commentary—although my reading of it has the same flaw. However, a more historicized, holistic approach would necessitate further examination of such aspects as: socio-historical background such as the period of rule by retired emperors (*Insei* 院政); male homosexuality in the Heian court, as recorded in such journals as *Taiki* (1136–1155) written by Fujiwara no Yōrinaga 藤原頼長 (1120–1156), as well as in Buddhist monasteries (c.f. *chigo*); other literary “gender bending” texts such as *Mushi mezuru Himegimi* (“The Lady Who Loved Insects”) and *Ariake no Wakare*

(*Parting at Dawn*)⁸⁴; the literary representation of female homosexuality in *Wagami ni tadoru Himegimi* (*The Princess in Search for Herself*), etc. They are out of the scope of the present study and will need to wait for further opportunities for study. These conspicuous lacks notwithstanding, I hope my suggestions drawn from close readings of both the *Mumyōzōshi* section and portions of *Torikaebaya monogatari* are not entirely groundless.

It may at first appear that this study denies a possibility of gender fluidity in the Heian period. Such a finding would indeed be disappointing. However, as the above section on Butlerian gender performativity has suggested, gender is an always already fluid concept, not in the sense that it is completely detached from what we commonly call biological sex, but in the sense that it represents an ever-changing sum of repeated acts that presents themselves as metaphysically substantial. Rather than falsely idealizing (or orientalizing/self-orientalizing) the Heian court as some gender-neutral utopia, I believe, we all have to strive to employ this heuristic concept called gender in a self-aware manner so that we will be able to yield more constructive discussions and implications for re-thinking the present. Regardless of however successful the present study has been in executing this intention, I hope my present study will lead to a further research on how the rest of the tale exploits the textual strategies described above to uncover “the temporal and contingent groundlessness”⁸⁵ of gender in the Heian court.

⁸⁴ A partial English translation can be found in Khan 1998.

⁸⁵ Butler 1999, p. 179.

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