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Jinno Hidenori

Monogatari Literature of the Heian Period and Narratology

On the Problem of Grammatical Person and Character

Translated by Jeffrey Knott

Abstract. From the 1970s onward, Japanese research on the *monogatari* literature of the Heian period (794–1185) saw attempts to make use of Western narratology. Most such debates, however, failed to move beyond the mere interpretation of *monogatari* stories to an analysis of their discourse. In this paper, whose chief concern is precisely such analysis of discourse itself, I examine the problem of (grammatical) 'person' within *monogatari* narratives, showing how these works share in common a tendency to leave the characters of their narratives focused (objectified) only very indistinctly. I argue furthermore that, particularly in the 'Tale of Genji,' one can observe an aspiration, buttressed by certain unique features of Japanophone prose, to realize an 'intersubjective' relationship between the characters within the story, the narrator, and the reader without.

1. Introduction

This article will begin by reviewing, briefly, both the history of Japanese research into the *monogatari* 物語—fictional tale—literature of the Heian period (794–1185), as well as the role played in that history by modern narratology.

From the mid-1970s onward, among Japanese scholars of *monogatari* literature there arose a movement, centered around the '*Monogatari* Research Group' (Monogatari Kenkyūkai 物語研究会, often called Monoken モノケン) to proactively study—and make use of—Western European thought, literary theory, and narratology. For their achievements in this effort one might point to examples such as (in order of birth) Mitani Kuniaki 三谷邦明, Fujii Sadakazu 藤井貞和, Takahashi Tōru 高橋亨, Kobayashi Masaaki 小林正明, Kanda Tatsumi 神田龍身, Hijikata Yōichi 土方洋一, Higashihara Nobuaki 東原伸明, and Andō Tōru 安藤徹.

Nonetheless, in Japan such research on *monogatari* literature neither attempted to systematically apply the theories of fiction which Franz K. Stanzel, Gérard Genette, and others had constructed, nor gave rise to anything that might instead vie with those theories. Their efforts were in largest part directed—imitating here Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and scholars like Mikhail Bakhtin—at deriving from the texts of *monogatari* literature some kind of 'richer' meaning.

Despite a recognition of the importance of *monogatari* discourse, in other words, the chief demand was for theories that could be put to service in the analysis and interpretation of *monogatari* stories. To take only one example, while Japanese research on *monogatari* literature indeed made quite extensive use of 'narrative' (*katari* 語り) as a technical term, in most cases this led not to more discussion of 'narrative' as something to be analyzed and studied *per se*, but rather to new ways of 'reading' that paid more due attention to a work's narrative characteristics. Against this background, it has long been my personal hope that our debates might give greater prominence to the consideration of discourse itself.

At the same time, moreover, in fields of study concerned primarily with genres beyond the *monogatari*, such as *waka* 和歌 poetry or Sinographic texts (*kanshibun* 漢詩文), most Japanese scholars tended as ever to either ignore Western European thought and literary criticism, or indeed take an active dislike to it. Yet what of those *kana* 仮名-medium diaries known

collectively as 'diary literature,' with their similarities to the *monogatari* as works of prose written in the phonographic *kana* script? Here too, while there was a long-standing general recognition of the fictionality or narrativity this diary literature possessed (in contrast to, e.g., the Sino-Japanese diaries of the nobility), the majority of scholars specializing in diary literature almost never made use of literary theory or narratology. At most there were a few scholars, such as Hijikata and Higashihara, who made parallel studies of diary literature alongside their research into the *monogatari*. (In this sense the publication in Japanese of Balmes' study of the 'Tosa Diary' in 2017 was truly valuable.)

In the years since, at least from the beginning of the twenty-first century, even as the field of *monogatari* literature has seen a vigorous growth in more painstaking studies of textual manuscripts, and in studies of textual reception in all its variety, one has the impression of a correspondingly reduced role in the field for questions of thought, theory, and narratology. If, however, as a tool for studying narrative there is any universal valence to it, then narratology in particular should be brought to bear readily, it seems to me, whenever one attempts to discuss issues of 'narrating' in Heian-period *monogatari* literature. It is equally important, moreover, based on an accurate understanding of the uniqueness of Heian-period Japanese (especially *kana*-medium Japanese prose), that we try to identify those areas and issues where Western European-style narratology comes up short.

Over the years I have often written about such concepts as 'narrating' and 'writing' as they appear in the 'Tale of Genji' ('Genji monogatari' 源氏物語, early 11th c.) by Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 (Jinno 2004; 2016a; etc.). I also had an opportunity to review the history of research into these themes, and consider in detail what seemed to be the most important articles on the subject (Jinno 2008). In what follows, however, I will mostly be unable to touch upon what I wrote then—a point on which I ask for the reader's understanding.

The question that has most occupied me recently regarding *monogatari* literature, and also (*kana*-medium) diary literature with all its *monogatari*-like elements, is that of grammatical 'person' (*ninshō* 人称). Among the list of scholars of *monogatari* literature given above, Fujii Sadakazu in particular has developed his own unique theory about grammatical person (Fujii 1997 and series of articles following). Though over the years there has been little response to Fujii's ideas on the subject, either positive or negative, in a 2016(b) article I considered them at length, criticizing Fujii's theories on the one hand, yet also arguing that grammatical person and questions related to it are indeed issues that future research on the 'Tale of Genji' will need to address. Drawing in part on this earlier article of mine, below I want to examine how character manifests itself in the *monogatari* literature of the Heian period, and in its Japanophone prose more generally. Ideally one would want to trace also its broader historical development, but here I will limit myself to the period up to the 'Tale of Genji.'

2. Sinographic Writing and Writing in *Kana*

At the outset we have to make note of the fact that Japanese was not written using phonographic *kana* alone, and that for a long time the Sinographic script with its mostly logographic usage was the more predominant one, and possessed the greater authority. Indeed, in their origins both *hiragana* 平仮名 and *katakana* 片仮名 were themselves derived from Chinese characters. As opposed to *kana* 仮名, moreover, whose very name conveyed the script's 'provisional' (*kari* 仮) nature, Chinese characters were known as *mana* 真名, with the implication that they represented the 'true' (*makoto* 真) script. The written language used during the Heian period by men of the imperial bureaucracy was, accordingly, primarily Sinographic.

While my investigation is not concerned with the narrative style of Sinographic prose (*kanbun* 漢文), as an example of such a text I offer here a passage from 'Gonki' 権記 ('Record of the Provisional [Major Counse-

lor]'), the diary of Fujiwara no Yukinari 藤原行成 (972–1027) and also a work roughly contemporary with the texts I focus on hereafter, like the 'Tale of Genji.' It is the beginning of an entry on the day of Empress Teishi's 中宮定子 move to the residence of Taira no Narimasa 平生昌, an event recounted in the 'Pillow Book' ('Makura no sōshi' 枕草子, ca. 1000) by Sei Shōnagon 清少納言 under the section 'To the House of the Senior Steward Narimasa' ('Daijin Narimasa ga ie ni' 大進生昌が家に). It describes how Minister of the Left (*sadaijin* 左大臣) Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長 sought to hinder Empress Teishi's move by, on the morning of the very same day, leading the court's upper-ranking nobles away as a group down to Uji 宇治.

(a) 'Gonki' 権記, Entry for Chōhō 長保 1 [999].8.9 (first half)

九日　己未。

参内。次亦参左府。申今日中宮行啓事、可仰上卿不参之由。左府與右大将宰相中将遊覧宇治。即還参内、奏。今日行啓事、依上卿之不参非可延引。且仰外記令誡諸司、且重可遣召上卿之由有勅許。

仍且召外記為政、仰事由、且差内豎、遣召上卿之間、右兵衛府生縣富永、為藤中納言使到、大蔵卿案内。今日之召事、若重者破物忌可参云々。即余書消息。申送早可被参之由。亦参職御曹司、案内夕行啓事。

The 9th, Day of the Earth Sheep [56th of the sexagesimal cycle]

Went to court. Afterwards then went [to the residence of] the Minister of the Left. Regarding the matter of the Empress' move today, reported that no one of upper rank suitable to send [with her] had come to court. [Learned that] the Minister of the Left would be going on an excursion to Uji with the Major Captain of the Right and the Consultant Captain [two courtiers of upper rank, respectively Fujiwara no Michitsuna 藤原道綱 and Fujiwara no Tadanobu 藤原斉信]. Returned immediately to court and reported this to the Emperor. Today's move unable to be postponed [merely] on account of upper-ranking nobles being absent. The Emperor furthermore ordered that the Secretary be instructed to upbraid the various officials, and that upper-ranking nobles be sent a second summons to accompany [the Empress].

Accordingly, summoned the Secretary [Yoshishige no] Tamemasa [慶滋]為政 and explained the situation, and told a page to summon upper-ranking nobles to accompany [the Empress]. Subsequently an officer of the Right

> Military Guards, Agata no Tominaga 県富永—as messenger of the Fujiwara Middle Counselor [Fuijwara no Tokimitsu 藤原時光]—reached the Minister of the Treasury and explained the situation. Apparently [the latter] said: "If there is another summons today, I will come even if it means breaking taboo restrictions." I wrote [him] a letter immediately. Sent [him] a request to come to court in haste. Also went to the Office of the Empress' Chamber and explained about the move taking place in the evening.

Leaving aside the content of this entry, here I focus solely on the details of its narrative style, in particular the issue of grammatical person. (This in turn touches on the larger issue of a so-called 'Japanese-accented' style of Sinographic writing.) Above in passage (a) I have underlined, both in the original and in English translation, all the actions taken by Yukinari himself. Out of a full eleven actions in total, on only one occasion does Yukinari, the author of the diary, use language referring to himself directly: the word *yo* 余, here set off in a box. This *yo*, if explained with reference to the standard terminology, would be considered a pronoun, one expressing the first person.

It would seem that, in recording his own actions, except in cases where it would lead to serious confusion, the author does not use words referring to himself. While this might indeed be understood as a form of abbreviation, a feature characteristic of the text's 'diary' genre, the principle that sentences expressing one's own actions can do without explicit subject-reference is one shared not only by diary(-like) writing but by other types of discourse in modern Japanese as well, including conversation. Furthermore, this omission of 'pronouns' seems to be less common in texts that were written in China.

Having seen in this example how Heian-period male aristocrats who kept diaries in Sino-Japanese did not, as a rule, use words to reference themselves explicitly, now let us move on and at last look at the case of (*kana*-script) writing in Japanese.

3. Narration in the Openings of the 'Ise Stories,' the 'Tale of the Bamboo Cutter,' and Others

From here on I will compare examples from only a very small number of works of *monogatari* and diary literature, but to approximate something like a method of fixed-point observation, I will look at each work's opening sentence. For while not usually the case in works of the later Heian period, one does find among works of the early and middle Heian period—i.e. in *monogatari* literature up to the 'Tale of Genji' and other related works—a particular shared pattern, wherein the opening will introduce either the story's main character or other characters closely connected to him. Through comparison of these various works' opening sentences, in other words, one is able to discern a certain method of character introduction they have in common.

First I will look at the narrative style of works of (fictional) *monogatari* literature that arose in the early Heian period, prior to the 'Tale of Genji.' Of fictional tales (*tsukuri-monogatari* つくり物語) in the traditional sense of that word only three examples remain to us:

(b) Early *Monogatari* Literature, Examples of Chapter Openings:

(i) 'The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter' ('Taketori monogatari' 竹取物語, early 10th c.)

いまはむかし、竹取の翁といふものありけり。野山にまじりて竹を取りつつ、よろづのことに使ひけり。

Ima wa mukashi, taketori no okina to iu mono arikeri. Noyama ni majirite take o toritsutsu, yorozu no koto ni tsukaikeri.

Once upon a time, there was an old bamboo cutter who went into the mountains and fields, cut bamboo, and put the stalks to all kinds of uses. (Trans. McCullough, p. 28)

(ii) 'The Tale of Ochikubo' ('Ochikubo monogatari' 落窪物語, late 10th c.), Vol. 1

いまはむかし、中納言なる人の、女あまた持給へる、おはしき。

Ima wa mukashi, chūnagon naru hito no, musume amata mo-tamaeru, owashiki.

> Once upon a time, there was a man who was Middle Counselor, and had many daughters.

(iii) 'The Tale of the Hollow Tree' ('Utsuho monogatari' うつほ物語, late 10th c.), 'The Fuijwara Prince' 藤原の君

> むかし、藤原の君と聞こゆる、一世の源氏おはしましけり。
>
> *Mukashi, Fujiwara no kimi to kikoyuru, isse no Genji owashimashikeri.*
>
> Once, there was a first-generation Genji, who was known as the 'Fujiwara Prince.'

In the opening of the 'Tale of the Bamboo Cutter' (b)(i) we can see how clearly the sentence's subject, which I have underlined above, is introduced to us: as "an old bamboo cutter" (*taketori no okina to iu mono*). In the sentence following, however, which I have also quoted ("who went into the mountains and fields [...]," *noyama ni...*), the subject is no more to be seen. Undoubtedly it was obvious that the subject specified (and here underlined) in the first sentence was continuing to function as such in the second. Omission of the subject in this manner, touched on in discussing the previous example (a), is also a characteristic of modern Japanese writing. Indeed, repeated explicit reference across sentences to a persistent subject is by far the exception, tending even to strike the reader as unnatural. As a feature of writing in Japanese this would seem to be permanent. Looking further at the opening to volume 1 of the 'Tale of Ochikubo' (b)(ii), while here the appositional use of the particle *no* might give it a somewhat irregular cast, the 'man who was Middle Counselor' (*chūnagon naru hito*) is nonetheless just as clearly specified. Likewise with the example from the 'Tale of the Hollow Tree' (b)(iii), which I took not from the work's initial chapter 'Toshikage' 俊蔭, but from the opening of 'The Fujiwara Prince' ('Fujiwara no kimi' 藤原の君), the subsequent chapter that signals the beginning of a new story: in the phrase here underlined, we again find the sentence's subject. The opening sentence of 'Toshikage' is similarly clear—that I did not quote it is simply because the figure referred to is not the protagonist.

What about the case then of the 'Ise Stories' ('Ise monogatari' 伊勢物語, 10th c.), a work usually distinguished from (fictional) *monogatari* literature under the name of *uta-monogatari* 歌物語, or 'poem-tale'? (Here I will not delve into the problems with 'poem-tale' as a genre designation.) Given its structure as a collection of many relatively short episodes, I will give three examples:

(c) 'The Ise Stories,' Examples of Episode Openings:

(i) むかし、男ありけり。(Ep. 2 and many others)

Mukashi, otoko arikeri.

Back then there was this man.

(ii) むかし、男、武蔵の国までまどひありきけり。(Ep. 10)

Mukashi, otoko, Musashi no kuni made madoi-arikikeri.

Back then this man wandered on to the province of Musashi, [...]

(iii) むかし、紀有常といふ人ありけり。(Ep. 16)

Mukashi, Ki no Aritsune to iu hito arikeri.

Back then there was a man named Ki no Aritsune. (Trans. Mostow/Tyler, pp. 17, 40, 50)

Among these three, (c)(i) is both the most commonly found opening in the 'Ise Stories,' and also the simplest. The subject is some 'man' (*otoko*), who seems to be modelled on someone who seems to have been Ariwara no Narihira 在原業平 (825–880). There are also openings like (c)(ii) that instead of such a 'there was' (*arikeri*) recount rather the actions of the 'man,' as well as cases like (c)(iii) that begin by introducing someone else besides this Narihira-type 'man.' Yet whether the subject is the 'man' or "a man named Ki no Aritsune," in either case the figure in focus is made perfectly clear.

Though for both fictional *monogatari* as well as for 'poem-tales,' the number of works extant from the time before the 'Tale of Genji' is extremely limited, their openings—as seen above in examples (b) and (c)—

share this pattern of introducing a single figure in sharp relief. The words here underlined that reference these various figures are explicitly provided by the narrator. At the same time, however, in the texts of these works one finds no words to reference the figure of the narrator himself. As such, the majority of scholars seem to have understood the narration of these works as being conducted in the third person.

Yet can works like those exampled in (b) or in (c) truly be called 'stories in the third person'? In the history of Japanese writing, was not the third person, after all, rather a 'discovery' (Noguchi 1994), and one made in an age far later than the Heian period? I cannot shake the impression that the use to date of terms like 'first person' and 'third person' in scholarship on Heian-period literature has been far too simplistic.

4. Narration in the Opening of the 'Gossamer Journal,' Vol. 1

When considering the problem of grammatical person in Japanophone writing, a valuable source of hints is surely to be found in works of diary literature such as the 'Gossamer Journal' ('Kagerō no nikki' かげろふの日記, ca. 974) or the 'Sarashina Diary' ('Sarashina nikki' 更級日記, ca. 1060). The majority of Japanese scholars seem to view such diary works as 'literature of the first person,' yet there are in fact reasons to doubt this. Though it is a problem I have discussed elsewhere (Jinno 2016b), here below I take up the example of the opening to the first volume of the 'Gossamer Journal,' reviewing previous debates and stating my own conclusions. If we take this work, (seemingly) the record of the life of its author, Fujiwara no Michitsuna's Mother 藤原道綱母 (936?–995), to be 'literature of the first person,' how do we explain the expression *hito* 人, or 'person' (per McCullough: "woman"), as underlined in the example (d) below?

(d) 'The Gossamer Journal,' Vol. 1: Opening

> かくありし時すぎて、世の中にいとものはかなく、とにもかくにもつかで世にふる人ありけり。
>
> *Kaku arishi toki sugite, yo no naka ni ito mono-hakanaku, to ni mo kaku ni mo tsukade yo ni furu hito arikeri.*
>
> There was once a woman [*hito*, lit. 'person'] who led a forlorn, uncertain life, the old days gone forever and her present status neither one thing nor the other. (Trans. McCullough, p. 102)

Most modern commentaries give roughly the same explanation. In the 'Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei' edition, for example, Inukai argues that: '*hito* here is in the third person. A *monogatari*-like way to express how she seeks to trace in this diary the life of an individual woman' (Inukai 1982, p. 9, headnote 3). Hijikata agrees; in the course of a careful consideration of how the narrative style of the 'Gossamer Journal' took shape—a style he characterizes as a success of 'severe self-objectification and self-restraint'—his appraisal of this opening finds that: 'despite the *monogatari*-like concept at its foundation,' 'it takes off in the direction of a first-person narrative quite different in character from that of a *monogatari*' (Hijikata 2007, p. 145). And in the case of Fujii, author himself of a unique theory of grammatical person, though he offers the qualification that he 'honestly remains unsure whether [diary literature is] in the key of first or third person' (Fujii 2001, p. 581), he nonetheless argues that the *hito* here in question 'allows us to glimpse, in a single word, the *monogatari* grammatical person (*monogatari-ninshō* 物語人称) inherent in diary literature' (ibid., p. 575).

Amidst this general recognition by many commentaries and articles alike of a certain *monogatari*-like quality, Imanishi has argued that this *hito* in the opening of the first volume (a passage often seen as a prologue to the 'Gossamer Journal') is in fact an expression intended to convey humility, and 'not in third person, but first' (Imanishi 2007, p. 30)—thereby denying the influence of *monogatari*-like narration. If such a view

is accurate, one might indeed say that the 'Gossamer Diary' is throughout consistently in the first person, yet Hijikata has disputed Imanishi, arguing 'One cannot deny that, as a model for how to begin early-period prose works, she has the pattern of *monogatari*-like openings in mind' (Hijikata 2007, p. 170).

On the issue of such 'opening patterns,' as touched upon briefly above, given that the 'Gossamer Diary' does share the pattern of starting with an introduction of the main character (or people closely connected with him), precisely as pointed out by Hijikata's article, a connection with *monogatari* narrative style is difficult to deny. All the same, the refusal of Imanishi's article to take *hito* as third-person narration seems to me an important one. As stated above, we must, I believe, preserve an awareness of the fact that for the longest time, in Japanophone writing there did not exist any such third person.

In fact, as Takagi (2002) has made clear through a broad survey of usage examples from earliest times onward, it seems that the sense of the word *hito* cannot be adequately captured by the concept of grammatical person. While it might seem obvious that the *hito* underlined above in (d) refers to Michitsuna's Mother, in light of Takagi's article, at the very least one can no longer simply assert that the word refers to the figure of Michitsuna's Mother exclusively.

All in all, one seems bound to conclude that the opening of volume one of the *Gossamer Diary* is neither in the first nor in the third person. This sort of vagueness, this sort of imprecision is endemic to the Japanese language, and thus also to (*kana*-script) Japanese writing. Yet in the simple, concise narrative style observed above, in the 'Tale of the Bamboo Cutter' or in the 'Ise Stories,' of such vagueness or imprecision there had been no sign. Was it perhaps the case then that, as the narrative style of *kana*-medium prose continued to develop, this inherent characteristic of Japanese words, and Japanese writing, simply surfaced to ever greater prominence?

5. *Waka* and *Monogatari* Narration: The Absence of Grammatical Person

Let us pause now, and shift our gaze to consider the genre of *waka*. For the vagueness and imprecision we have mentioned here are a problem not only with prose, but a quality that *waka* poetry seems to share as well.

I long assumed that *waka* was essentially a literature of the first person. But in light of proposals such as Hijikata's (2000) on what he calls 'painting inscription-like (*gasan-teki* 画賛的) *waka*,' referring to poems which seem to be uttered neither by an intradiegetic character nor by the extradiegetic narrator, or Watanabe's (2014) on *waka* that he shows capable of 'assuming a second person-like hue,' assertions of such confidence about *waka* as a literature of the first person are no longer tenable. Here I will briefly summarize Watanabe's argument.

(e) 'Shinkokinshū' 新古今集 ('New Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern,' 1201–1205), Autumn I, Poem 362 by Saigyō 西行 (1118–1190)

心なき身にもあはれは知られけり鴫たつ沢の秋の夕暮れ

kokoro naki mi ni mo aware wa shirarekeri shigi tatsu sawa no aki no yūgure

even a body
which has rejected matters
of the heart feels pangs
of melancholy snipe rise from
the marsh evening in autumn
(Trans. Rodd, p. 157)

Regarding the phase underlined, *kokoro naki mi* ("a body / which has rejected matters / of the heart"), having noted its reference to an earlier poem by Nōin 能因 (988–?), *kokoro aran hito ni misebaya Tsu no kuni no Naniwa atari no haru no keshiki o* ('How I would like / to show someone who understands / matters of the heart! / Naniwa in the land of Tsu /

and its scenery in spring'; 'Goshūishū' 後拾遺集 ['Later Collection of Gleanings,' 1075–1086], Spring I, Poem 43), Watanabe goes on to read in such an expression more than mere modesty, finding there "action' aimed at communication,' even 'a force of appeal' that 'seeks connection with others.' As he states:

> If *kokoro naki mi* is a performance on the part of the author, then the *mi* (body) that seemed so solidly in the first person begins to waver. The reader watching this performance—we, in other words—feel pressured to reject our own hearts, to assume the body of the poet and feel his 'pangs' ourselves. This *mi* in other words begins to take on the character of a second person. Come to think of it, *mi* in the honorific form *ōn-mi* was in fact once used for second-person reference. (Watanabe 2014, p. 233)

Yet this kind of 'waver[ing],' rather than a problem localized to *waka*, most likely points beyond it to a characteristic of the Japanese language itself.

Turning back now again to prose, in particular to the narrative style of the *monogatari*, there is in fact a study by Fujii that makes mention of a latently present second person. Opining 'Is not the act of reading itself tantamount to accepting the role of the second person?' (Fujii 2012, p. 329), and working from the premise that 'without a grammatical second person as listener—at least at the initial stage—the phenomenon of narration itself would not have come into existence,' Fujii goes on to argue that 'the narrator is something like a symbiotic mechanism to voice the thoughts and feelings of the reader' (ibid., p. 332).

The problem of a listener as complement to the narrator has also been the subject of debate in the field of modern Japanese literature, as in Komori (2012). Yet surely such perception of the listener is an especially acute issue in a literature that, particularly in the 'Tale of Genji,' proactively highlights the facts of its own narration and oral transmission within the very *monogatari* text itself, in passages of authorial intrusion known as *sōshiji* 草子地 (I discuss this issue in Jinno 2018b).

Notwithstanding, when we do detect the presence—even the latent presence—of a listener, is it appropriate to call such passages of narrative 'literature of the second person'? Fujii (2012) does not take his argument so far. Instead, on the issue of grammatical person in Heian-period Japanese prose, in Fujii 1997 he offered the original concept of a 'narrating person' (*katarite ninshō* 語り手人称), arguing for it frequently over the years (e.g. in Fujii 2001; 2004; 2012). His basic approach follows from the fundamental premise that 'In the Japanese language, except for personal pronouns, or when honorific expressions function to reference it, there is no explicit grammatical person.' This leads him to a stance he expresses thus: 'To put it another way, there is no need to stay so stuffily shut up in the first, second, and third persons' (Fujii 2012, p. 337). And indeed, he has sought to establish, in addition to 'first, second, and third persons,' a 'null person' (*muninshō* 無人称), a 'zeroth person' (*zeroninshō* ゼロ人称), a 'fourth person' (*yoninshō* 四人称), and beyond those even a "personified" (*gijinshō* 擬人称) and "nature" (*shizenshō* 自然称) (the English terms "personified" and "nature" are quoted from Fujii 2012, p. 340).

Watching how in this series of articles Fujii on the one hand grapples at a fundamental level with Noam Chomsky's psycholinguistics, or the Japanese linguistics of Tokieda Motoki 時枝誠記, while at the same time trying to work out theories and principles not only for the *monogatari*, but even for the language of Heian-period Japanese writing itself, I feel a deep sympathy. All the same, there is something fundamentally difficult to accept in the way Fujii, for all his declaration that 'there is no explicit grammatical person' (Fujii 2012, p. 337), nonetheless devotes such effort to establishing a concept of grammatical person in his writings. A good example of this is his 'fourth person.' Fujii, working from the standpoint of a 'narrating I,' speaks of his attempt to apply as a concept what in the Ainu language is a clearly-existing grammatical fourth person:

> This is my proposal: what in the case of the Ainu language exists as an explicit phenomenon, where narrative literature is recounted in the fourth person,

> cannot this be found—as a latent feature—within literature in Japanese and Korean as well? If so, then in the 'Tosa Diary,' in the 'Gossamer Journal,' in the 'Sarashina Diary,' perhaps even in *monogatari* literature like the 'Tale of Genji,' we might begin to perceive the existence of a grammatical person beyond the third, a grammatical person which I would call, if only provisionally, the fourth. (Fujii 2001, p. 584)

Yet the recognition of a fourth person in the case of Ainu depends entirely on it being 'an explicit phenomenon'—to term something non-explicit a kind of grammatical person is simply not feasible.

Indeed, how feasible is it to recognize 'person' (*ninshō* 人称) as a grammatical category in Japanese to begin with? In his 'Monogatari kōzōron' 物語構造論 ('Theory of *Monogatari* Structure') published in 1995, Nakayama, in a path-breaking study where he compared the text of 'Genji monogatari' with the French of René Sieffert's modern translation 'Le Dit du Genji,' made a strong argument that a 'slippage' had occurred between the two 'owing to the linguistic (grammatical) structures of Japanese and French' (Nakayama 1995, p. 11). Already at that date Nakayama cautioned that the importation of the concept of 'grammatical person' into Japanese 'risked inviting needless confusion' (ibid., p. 25). This is how he explained the concept of 'person':

> [...] the concept of 'grammatical person' is a word from Western European languages, and a concept, moreover, modeled on the way Western European languages work, whose method of describing subjectivity requires objectification of that subjectivity. (Nakayama 1995, p. 25)

The way the Japanese prose of the Heian period 'worked' was most certainly not by any 'method of describing subjectivity [that] require[d] objectification of that subjectivity.' It was precisely for this reason, as Hijikata (2007) carefully traced, that it was difficult even for a first person-like narrative style to arise in prose—let alone something we might call third-person narrative.

To put it plainly, in the world of Japanese prose as developed during the early half the Heian period, there was no 'grammatical person.' That

being the case, what we most need now is a framework completely opposite from the theories of grammatical person elaborated in Fujii's writings. In other words, rather than seeing 'latent' grammatical person where it is not made explicit, we should instead take as our starting point the reality we faced in our earlier discussion of example (d) from the 'Gossamer Journal': that even words which might seem to show person are not, in fact, such a simple matter.

To state it more succinctly, what I call for is a new awareness of the fact that the characters referenced in *monogatari* and other narrative styles are not, as characters, ever brought into clear and objective focus. Indeed, a view along these lines was actually alluded to by Nakayama. He said, to summarize, that in Japanese prose, a character becoming the object of focus does not in itself imply that it has also become a character in the third person (Nakayama 1995, p. 30). With such an awareness in mind, I will now look at characteristic passages from the narrative of the 'Tale of Genji.'

6. The Narration in the 'Tale of Genji' and Intersubjectivity

Let us begin, just as with the 'Tale of the Bamboo Cutter,' the 'Ise Stories,' and the 'Gossamer Journal' above, by looking at the opening of this massive work—the first sentence of the 'Paulownia Pavilion' ('Kiritsubo' 桐壺) chapter:

(f) 'The Paulownia Pavilion' ('Kiritsubo' 桐壺): Chapter Opening

いづれの御時にか、女御、更衣あまたさぶらひ給ひける中に、いとやむごとなききはにはあらぬがすぐれてときめき給ふ、ありけり。(p. 5)

Izure no ōn-toki ni ka, nyōgo, kōi amata saburai-tamaikeru naka ni, ito yangoto-naki kiwa ni wa aranu ga sugurete tokimeki-tamau, arikeri.

In a certain reign (whose can it have been?) someone of no very great rank, among all His Majesty's Consorts and Intimates, enjoyed exceptional favor. (Trans. Tyler, p. 3)

Despite the widespread fame of this opening, it remains a passage difficult to understand. There are several reasons for this. One point often thought difficult, for example, is that *ga* in the phrase *ito yangoto-naki kiwa ni wa aranu ga* ("someone of no very great rank") is not to be understood as a conjunction, but rather as a case particle. Yet perhaps more than anything else, the difficulty of understanding this passage lies in the fact that the character ostensibly being here introduced, namely the Kiritsubo Intimate (Kiritsubo no Kōi 桐壺更衣), mother of Hikaru Genji 光源氏, is not actually referred to by any individual word. In the English translation provided under (f), for example, the best that could be done was to supply the word 'someone.'

Accordingly, my rendition of the original text above places a comma between *sugurete tokimeki-tamau* ("enjoyed exceptional favor") and *arikeri* ('there was'). The majority of commentaries now in circulation do not in fact insert a comma here, but I feel that after *tokimeki-tamau* there really should be one, for it is behind this *tamau* that the crucial Kiritsubo Intimate herself is to be found hiding, a fact I think must be firmly kept in mind.

With the examples looked at previously, both in (b) the openings of the 'Tale of the Bamboo Cutter,' the 'Tale of Ochikubo,' and the 'Tale of the Hollow Tree,' as well as in (c) the openings from various chapters in the 'Ise Stories,' there was always some word or name provided to indicate the character being introduced. This word also served as the subject of that opening's first sentence. Setting aside for the moment the problem of grammatical person, for the purposes of an introduction, simple sentences like these are indeed most appropriate. Yet the opening of 'The Paulownia Pavilion' contains no word to express the given character all the same. Nor will such a word be found by proceeding on to the passages that follow. Why is this? Is it just bad writing? This seems unlikely.

In fact, while throughout the 'Tale of Genji' there are many sentences introducing characters, not all of them resemble the opening of the 'The Paulownia Pavilion':

from 'The Bluebell' ('Asagao' 朝顔):

> 斎院は、御服にておりゐ給ひにきかし。(p. 639)
>
> *Saiin wa, ōn-buku nite ori-i-tamainiki kashi.*
>
> The Kamo Priestess had resigned, because she was in mourning. (Trans. Tyler, p. 365)

from 'The Maiden of the Bridge' ('Hashihime' 橋姫):

> そのころ、世に数まへられたまはぬふる宮おはしけり。(p. 1507)
>
> *Sono koro, yo ni kazumaerare-tamawanu furumiya owashikeri.*
>
> There was in those days an aged Prince who no longer mattered to the world. (Trans. Tyler, p. 829)

These are the first sentences, respectively, from the chapters 'The Bluebell' ('Asagao') and 'The Maiden of the Bridge' ('Hashihime'), both of which begin by introducing one of the work's main characters. In either of these openings, there is an explicit reference to the said character, which functions also as the sentence's subject, and the style in both cases is quite straightforward. By contrast, in the opening of the work's initial chapter, 'The Paulownia Pavilion,' rather than making the given character the center of focus, the narrative method employed seems almost to leave her silhouette deliberately indistinct.

Yet why was such a manner of narration deliberately adopted? After analyzing the examples to which we now turn our attention, I will take up this problem once again at the end.

Next let us review just two examples where characters in the story and the narrator seem to be overlapping as the narrative's object of focus. Throughout the text of the 'Tale of Genji,' there are literally countless examples where this is the case. First I will take up one such passage from

the chapter 'At the Pass' ('Sekiya' 関屋), as a scene where the expression *mono-aware nari* ものあはれなり ('how moving') is used. It recounts the point at which one travelling party including Utsusemi 空蝉, heading for the capital on its way home from her husband's post in Hitachi 常陸, and another travelling party including Hikaru Genji, heading out for a pilgrimage to Ishiyama 石山, cross each other's paths at the Ōsaka 逢坂 barrier:

(g) 'At the Pass' ('Sekiya' 関屋): Panoramic (*fukanteki* 俯瞰的) Narrative

九月つごもりなれば、紅葉の色々こきまぜ、霜枯れの草、むらむらをかしう [1] 見えわたるに、関屋よりさとくづれ出でたる〔源氏一行ノ〕旅姿どもの、色々の襖のつきづきしきぬひ物、括り染めのさまも、さる方にをかしう [2] 見ゆ。御車は簾おろし給ひて、かの [3] 昔の小君、いま右衛門の佐なるを召し寄せて、「今日の御関迎へは、え思ひ捨て給はじ」などのたまふ。[4] 御心のうち、いとあはれに思し出づること多かれど、おほぞうにてかひなし。女〔＝空蝉〕も、人知れず [5] 昔のこと忘れねば、とり返して [6] ものあはれなり。

〔空蝉〕行くと来とせきとめがたき涙をや絶えぬ清水と [7] 人は見るらむ

え知り給はじかし、と思ふに、いとかひなし。(p. 548)

Nagatsuki tsugomori nareba, momiji no iroiro kokimaze, shimogare no kusa, muramura okashū [1] miewataru ni, sekiya yori sato kuzure idetaru [Genji and his party's] tabisugata-domo no, iroiro no ao no tsukizukishiki nuimono, kukurizome no sama mo, saru kata ni okashū [2] miyu. Ōn-kuruma wa sudare oroshi-tamaite, kano [3] mukashi no Kogimi, ima Uemon no suke naru o meshiyosete, "kyō no ōn-sekimukae wa, e-omoisute-tamawaji" nado notamau. [4] Ōn-kokoro no uchi, ito aware ni oboshiizuru koto ōkaredo, ōzō nite kai nashi. Onna [i.e. Utsusemi] mo, hito shirezu [5] mukashi no koto wasureneba, torikaeshite [6] mono-aware nari.

[Utsusemi's poem] Yuku to ku to sekitomegataki namida o ya taenu shimizu to [7] hito wa miru ran

E-shiri-tamawaji kashi, to omou ni, ito kai nashi.

It was the last day of the ninth month. Autumn leaves glowed in many colors, and expanses of frost-withered grasses [1] drew the eye, while a brilliant procession in hunting cloaks embroidered or tie-dyed [2] to splendid advantage strode on past the barrier lodge. Genji lowered his carriage blind and sum-

> moned [3] the little brother of long ago; he was now the Second of the Right Gate Watch. "I am sure you will not soon forget how I came to the barrier to meet you," he said in words meant for the young man's sister. [4] Touching memories of all kinds swept through his mind, but he was obliged to keep his remarks innocuous.
>
> She, too, had kept [5] old memories in her heart, and now [6] their sadness rose in her again.
>
> > *"Coming and going, I found here no barrier to these tears of mine—*
> > *perhaps they may seem to [7] you the slope's ever-welling spring."*
>
> He would never understand, she knew, and she was overcome by helpless sorrow. (Trans. Tyler, p. 316)

Here the scenery at the "last day of the ninth month," as well as the travel dress of Hikaru Genji's party, is narrated panoramically, with the words [1] *miewataru* and [2] *miyu* ('to appear/come into view,' with *-wataru* emphasizing the range of what is seen) as numbered and underlined above (translated optically yet not obviously by Tyler here in conjunction with *okashū* as [1] "drew the eye" and [2] "to splendid advantage"). Similarly in the designated national treasure (*kokuhō* 国宝) of the 'Tale of Genji Picture Scrolls' ('Genji monogatari emaki' 源氏物語絵巻, first half 12th c.), the way this scene is drawn can fairly be described as panoramic.

Directly after the sentence ending in *saru kata ni okashū miyu*, however (in the above translation the sentence ending "strode on past the barrier lodge"), the focus is narrowed down to Hikaru Genji in his car with the "carriage blind" (*sudare*) "lowered" (*oroshi-tamaite*). Beyond this, in response to the feelings in turn of Hikaru Genji and Utsusemi both, there now sets to work a will for revisiting the 'past' (*mukashi*) they share together, as seen in the underlined [3] *mukashi no Kogimi* ("the little brother of long ago") and [5] *mukashi no koto* ("old memories"). The chapter is also one that makes the reader feel the vast scale of time, as it stretches out from the distant past to the present moment.

Yet whose precisely is this point of focus, capable somehow of perceiving both this breadth of space at the Ōsaka barrier as well as this stretch of time out from the past?

Here I want to focus on the underlined phrase [6] *mono-aware nari* (rendered by Tyler as "their sadness rose in her"). In the previous sentence's underlined phrase that begins with [4] *Ōn-kokoro no uchi* (lit. 'In his heart'), Hikaru Genji was narrated as being *ito aware* (lit. 'extremely touched') (rendered by Tyler as "Touching [memories… swept] through his mind"). In contrast, the sentence focusing on Utsusemi, here referred to as *onna* (lit. 'woman'), reads *torikaeshite mono-aware nari* ("now their sadness rose in her again"). This *mono-aware nari* is a word whose emotional content, as I reviewed in a previous article (Jinno 2014), seems to be connected with an expanse of either space or time, and to moreover be shareable among several people at once.

This underlined expression [6], while indeed resonating with Hikaru Genji's feeling of *ito aware* in the sentence previous, can safely be identified as the feeling of Utsusemi, here recalling her relationship with Genji in 'the past' (*mukashi*). Yet rather than this being limited to Utsusemi alone, judging from the presence of *mo* in *onna mo* ("She, *too*, […]"; emphasis added) there would also seem to be some sharing of this feeling between Hikaru Genji—whom she fails to meet—and herself, all of it overlayered, moreover, by either's feelings about events in the past. At this point, it is difficult to say that Utsusemi's 'person' maintains any longer any clear boundaries.

Furthermore, directly after this underlined phrase [6], we note Utsusemi's poem of soliloquy, *yuku to ku to…* ("*Coming and going* […]"). The various rhetorical devices it contains—pivot words (*kakekotoba* 掛詞), poem pillows (*utamakura* 歌枕), etc.—are important, but here I want to focus on the underlined word [7] *hito* (lit. 'person,' though by Tyler rendered as 'you'). To draw on the same article by Takagi (2002) touched on above, it is not wrong to take this *hito* in Utsusemi's poem as a reference

to Hikaru Genji. Yet rather than something meant to indicate Genji exclusively, we should probably understand the word *hito* here as additionally encompassing the people to be found in Utsusemi's party, as well as the people in Hikaru Genji's party, and indeed even those bystanders unconnected to either party.

There are not in the 'Tale of Genji' many scenes like this one in 'At the Pass' ('Sekiya') where the breadth of outside space can be appreciated, but here in (g), simultaneous—probably deliberately—with a dilation in space and in time, both Hikaru Genji and Utsusemi, as well as either of the groups surrounding them, find themselves in the *monogatari* world become now things of contour without clarity.

Let us take one further example, this time a case where we find an overlap between one particular character in the story and the narrator. Among the 'Ten Uji Chapters' (*Uji jūjō* 宇治十帖) that fall in the period after Genji's death, this scene from the 'Maiden of the Bridge' ('Hashihime' 橋姫) chapter, where Kaoru 薫 catches his first glimpse of the daughters of the Eighth Prince (Hachi no Miya 八の宮) while at Uji, is singularly famous:

(h) 'The Maiden of the Bridge' ('Hashihime' 橋姫): Glimpsing (*kaimami* 垣間見) Narrative

あなたに通ふべかめる透垣の戸を、すこし押し開けて見たまへば、[...] いとあはれになつかしうをかし。[1] 昔物語などに語り伝へて、若き女房などの読むをも聞くに、かならずかやうのことを言ひたる、さしもあらざりけん、と憎く推しはからるるを、[2] げにあはれなるものの隈ありぬべき世なりけり、と心移りぬべし。霧の深ければ、さやかに見ゆべくもあらず、また月さし出でなん、と思すほどに、[...] (pp. 1522–23)

Anata ni kayou beka[n] meru suigai no to o, sukoshi oshiakete mi-tamaeba, [...] ito aware ni natsukashū okashi. [1] Mukashi-monogatari nado ni kataritsutaete, wakaki nyōbō nado no yomu o mo kiku ni, kanarazu kayō no koto o iitaru, sa shimo arazariken, to nikuku oshihakararuru o, [2] geni aware naru mono no kuma arinu beki yo narikeri, to kokoro utsurinu beshi.

> *Kiri no fukakereba, sayaka ni miyu beku mo arazu, mata tsuki sashiidenan, to obosu hodo ni, [...]*
>
> The Captain cracked open the door that seemed to lead through the fence and peered in [...] [the sisters] struck him as more engagingly attractive than anything he had imagined. When he heard young gentlewomen read [1] old tales with scenes like this, he always assumed disappointedly that nothing of the kind could actually happen, [2] but there were after all such corners in real life! He was already losing his heart to them.
>
> The mist was too thick for him to see them very well. If only the moon would come out again! [...] (Trans. Tyler, p. 837)

In this scene, just as depicted in the designated national treasure of the 'Tale of Genji Picture Scrolls,' Kaoru is spying on the two daughters, each of whom has an instrument to hand, respectively the *biwa* 琵琶 (a lute) and the *sō* 箏 (a kind of zither). The difficulty the scene presents in distinguishing which of these two is Ōigimi 大君 (the older sister), and which Nakanokimi 中の君 (the younger), is widely-known, but here I set that problem aside. Instead I will focus consideration on the phrase numbered and underlined above: [2] *geni aware naru mono no kuma arinu beki yo narikeri, to kokoro utsurinu beshi*, translated by Tyler as "but there were after all such corners in real life! He was already losing his heart to them." While Tyler uses free indirect speech followed by a statement of the narrator, I will argue below that the whole phrase should rather be translated as free direct speech.

The majority of modern commentaries, and most studies of the passage as well, analyze the underlined phrase [2] as being an evaluation from the narrator's point of view. Mitani, for example, noting the presence of the internal-monologue framing particle *...to*, argued that 'what amounts to nothing but the narrator's own baselessly speculative internal monologue (*naiwa* 内話), in other words, has here been written out as a case of authorial intrusion (*sōshiji*), thereby obliging the reader to make sense of the passage on multiple levels at once' (Mitani 2002, p. 339). Yoshii (2008), and even Kanda (2006), also interpret this part as *sōshiji*. Kanda's article,

incidentally, explains that 'though Kaoru himself may not have realized it, here at least the narrator has perceived him as *kokoro utsurinu beshi* ["already losing his heart"]' (Kanda 2006, p. 272). Yet could we not also interpret the strong inference of the *beshi* in *kokoro utsurinu beshi* as being the inference of Kaoru himself? Among the various commentaries, as early as the 'Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei' edition of 1982, Ishida and Shimizu offer that 'here Kaoru's private feelings are presented straightforwardly in the prose' (Ishida/Shimizu 1982, p. 276, headnote 7), an interpretation supported, for example, in an article by Mori (1994).

Also worth noting in this light is a linguistic feature that sets this passage apart: as the narration of an act of glimpsing, honorifics for Kaoru as he "peer[s] in" go lacking. Specifically, both in the verb *oshihakararuru* ("he always assumed"), as well as in the immediately succeeding underlined phrase [2] *kokoro utsurinu beshi* ("He was already losing his heart"), no honorific language is applied to Kaoru at all. Moreover, this narrative mode, with its seemingly direct vocalization of Kaoru's own perceptions, can probably be seen as continuing all the way up to the phrase *tsuki sashiidenan* ("If only the moon would come out again!") in the sentence that follows. One of the consequences of this line of interpretation, however, is that Kaoru's internal monologue in [2] *geni aware naru mono no kuma arinu beki yo narikeri…* ("[he always assumed disappointedly that…] but there were after all such corners in real life!") would have to be an instance of Kaoru thinking objectively about his own thoughts. Essentially, this would involve Kaoru being as if self-aware here, indeed in a sense almost predicting the 'narrative' he seemed likely to go on to experience.

On the other hand, it seems wrong to dismiss as completely unfounded the alternative interpretation offered by most studies and commentaries. This school of thought takes the above underlined phrase [2] to be the conjecture rather of the narrator, who would thereby be predicting that the *kokoro* (heart) of Kaoru, passionate devotee of the Buddhist path, will

inexorably, as a result of this opportunity to glimpse the daughters of the Eighth Prince, find itself drawn to them. Certainly there is no great difficulty here in taking the narrator to be the conjecturing agent. All things considered, for a text like the 'Genji' the most likely reading of the underlined phrase in question probably involves *beshi* serving both as a strong conjecture about his own future by the character Kaoru himself, and simultaneously as a similar conjecture by the narrator narrating him.

To date, in the case of such passages, interpretations along these lines, viewing characters like Kaoru here as somehow 'united' (*ittai-ka* 一体化) with the narrator, have not been uncommon. Yet while 'united' might seem easy-to-understand as a metaphor, in point of fact no 'unification' between the two actually occurs. If we consider the matter as a problem of grammatical person, we can probably say that Kaoru's 'person' here does not become the object of focus in the manner of a third-person novel. Yet the best word to express succinctly what has been characteristic of the examples taken up so far would probably be 'intersubjectivity' (in Japanese *kan-shukansei* 間主観性, though also *sōgo-shutaisei* 相互主体性 or *kyōdō-shukansei* 共同主観性)—a term no longer confined to the phenomenology of philosophers like Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, but one used widely today across many fields within the humanities and the social sciences (Jinno 2018a).

An early example of thinking along these lines was Sakabe, who studied the 'structural isomorphism' between 'metaphorical linguistic expressions' and those 'phenomena of a certain intersubjective (*sōgo-shutai-teki* 相互主体的) character' (Sakabe 1989, p. 150) that give rise to them. As manifest instances of such, he used, for example, the sort of relationship found among the members of a *renga* meeting, or between the chorus (*jiutai* 地謡) and characters of a noh drama, or even within the controlling functions of *ji* 辞 in the Japanese language, i.e. particles and verbal suffixes that convey the speakers's standpoint (Sakabe's 1990 book 'Katari' ['Narrative'] is also in this vein). Hyōdō (2017) too, while expressing 'intersub-

jectivity' in Japanese as *kyō-shukansei* 共主観性, argued for the uniqueness of the position of narrator in the *monogatari* tale, and the potential this harbored within the context of postmodernity.

For example, to return to the case of the 'At the Pass' chapter ('Sekiya') in (g) above, there is a certain ambiguity to the boundaries around Hikaru Genji and Utsusemi, also around the various male and female servants on either side, and even around the narrator—all of this accompanied moreover by the lyricism of *mono-aware nari* ("their sadness rose in her"). The 'central focus' in such a situation might be described as being held by all in common. Likewise in (d), the opening to the first volume of the 'Gossamer Diary,' it is difficult to claim that the centrality of the author, Michitsuna's Mother, is explicitly thus marked out as central by such a word as *hito* ('person'). And indeed—is this not precisely what is meant by 'intersubjectivity'? Investigation of the historical developments leading to this point is a task for the future, but here I will sketch out briefly the broad arc of things as I see it currently. My sense is that Japanese prose of the Heian period, despite its beginnings in plainer styles of narration, came gradually to refine its power of expression by drawing on resources inherent to the Japanese language, at length developing this quality that we moderns call by the name of 'intersubjectivity.' And there is an even more important point: the effect of this 'intersubjectivity,' by whose mechanism all the action, speech, and experience of the characters and narrator(s) within a text may be shared also by the reader regarding them from without.

I will conclude here with another look at the example above in (f)—the opening of 'The Paulownia Pavilion' chapter ('Kiritsubo'), and the starting point for the 'Tale of Genji':

> いづれの御時にか、女御、更衣あまたさぶらひ給ひける中に、いとやむごとなききはにはあらぬがすぐれてときめき給ふ、ありけり。(p. 5)
>
> *Izure no ōn-toki ni ka, nyōgo, kōi amata saburai-tamaikeru naka ni, ito yangoto-naki kiwa ni wa aranu ga sugurete tokimeki-tamau, arikeri.*

> In a certain reign (whose can it have been?) someone of no very great rank, among all His Majesty's Consorts and Intimates, enjoyed exceptional favor. (Trans. Tyler, p. 3)

Here the Kiritsubo Intimate, mother of the protagonist Hikaru Genji, is the referent of the phrase *ito yangoto-naki kiwa ni wa aranu ga sugurete tokimeki-tamau* ("someone of no very great rank [...] enjoyed exceptional favor"), yet nowhere in the Japanese does one find a word actually referring to this figure directly. Not even a pronoun is to be found, either here or reading on to the passages that follow. One could describe it as the protagonist's mother not being sufficiently brought into focus, but is it not rather the case that here, too, the woman introduced in this sentence is something prior to any distinctions of grammatical person? Someone not provided any specification? One with whom anyone in the world of the story might overlap? Indeed, one with whom even the readers might overlap? It is this, I think, that constitutes the true starting point of the 'Tale of Genji': the desire, strongly felt, for such an 'intersubjective' way of being.

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