

Queer Affections in Exile

Textual Mediation and Exposure at Suma Shore

RESITUATING EXILE

Moving from “Suetsumuhana” to “Suma,” the spatial and affective dimensions of queer intimacy gain new proportions. Exile emplaces Genji in a patently masculine space considerably farther away from the Capital’s governing center than he was while at Yūgao’s or Suetsumuhana’s houses. While the asymmetry of homosocial power configurations—such as what we saw in the intense interactions between Suetsumuhana and her gentlewomen—persists, “Suma” shifts these dynamics by displacing such relations outside the circumscribed environment of the court.

Despite Oborozukiyo having been designated by the Kokiden faction as belonging to Emperor Suzaku, Genji is nonetheless caught cavorting with her—by her father, the powerful Minister of the Right, no less.¹ This treasonous affair results in Genji’s exile, marked by disgrace, dispossession, and a disorienting dislocation from the locus of imperial authority. As Jonathan Stockdale notes, “Every narrative of exile imagines a certain constellation of power. . . . Yet the trope of exile was also harnessed by those more marginal, in narratives that sought to reimagine the hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion upon which Heian society rested.”² I take up the “Suma” chapter as a textual venue in which these social hierarchies—and indeed the very concept of social relation itself—might be resituated and reimagined along queer lines.

Even for an aristocrat, exile can prove torturous, and as Charo D’Ecthverry notes, “That journey is far from linear, even at the level of exposition.”³ Against the sweeping oceanic backdrop of the landscape he enters, Genji must learn to orient himself differently than he did in the shadow-drenched residences we encountered him in before. He gains copious room to move but lacks physical access to the Capital’s array of courtly women. This distance presses him to seek comfort among men as he tests methods of alleviating his despair. Forced

to transfer possession of his belongings, Genji must establish a new home and learn to inhabit a space in which he lacks the authority he wielded back at his Nijō estate. Dispossessed and exposed to natural elements, Genji seeks refuge in practices of homosocial textual mediation as a way to mourn his loss of home and status. Deprivation and dislocation heighten his sensitivity to the new setting and to other men. Consequently, exile manifests a spatial and material dispossession that urges amplified affections that are less palpable in other settings.

According to Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou, “Dispossession is a condition painfully imposed by the normative and normalizing violence that determines the terms of subjectivity, survival, and livability. . . . Dispossession involves the subject’s relation to norms, its mode of becoming by means of assuming and resignifying injurious interpellations and impossible passions.”⁴ As punishment for sexual indiscretion, exile reads as a normalizing violence Genji suffers. However, to conduct a resignifying work as a mode of becoming aligns with Genji’s creative textual practices and extemporized interactions as he tries to move past a designation as disgraceful. In this light we might ask, How does exile transform textuality, subjectivity, and sociality? How might we read these transformations as queer? And how might the resignifications performed in exile generate ways to imagine more livable alternatives?

Genji’s banishment to Suma highlights the ways in which exile obliges alternative styles of mediation at textual and interpersonal levels.⁵ I contend that these styles embody queer tendencies. These tendencies neighbor but are not delimited by male homosociality, and they are distinguished by visceral disorientation and receptivity. I analyze the portrayal of Genji’s exile in “Suma” to argue three points. First, exile magnifies homosocial exposure and exchange. Second, exile compels practices of textual citation, production, and mediation that generate intimacies unachievable elsewhere. And third, exilic exposure intensifies affections that foster a queer critical reconsideration of dominant norms. I highlight exile’s capacity to amplify queer tendencies, styles of attachment, and modes of becoming.

Haruo Shirane contends that Genji’s exile makes him heroic: “Instead of portraying a defeated man plotting or preparing to return to power, Murasaki Shikibu presents a hero . . . who ultimately emerges, through a delicate weave of allusions and poetic language, as a victor even in defeat.”⁶ However, this emphasis on victory might presume embodiments and trajectories “Suma” in fact unravels, especially considering how broken Genji is by the experience. Rather than cast him as a hero, I prefer to theorize the Genji we encounter in “Suma” as a failed figure. This is to short-circuit certain anachronistic and culturalist assumptions about heroic masculinity unsuited to Heian fictional depictions. But it’s also to cite a strain of queer theory invested in recuperating failure. Judith Halberstam writes that “under certain circumstances failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world” and allow “us to escape the punishing norms that

discipline behavior and manage human development.”⁷ While Genji’s exile is certainly a punishment, it might also be read as a space of escape where punishing norms don’t reign. What would *not* succeeding at a heroic ideal of aristocratic manhood look like? What unanticipated possibilities for intimacy might emerge in the proximate remove from success? A queer reading of exile as a space of failed aristocratic masculinity helps us address these questions.

Terry Kawashima’s analysis of how textual practices enact a gendered marginalization proves useful here. Rejecting the notions of “center” and “margin,” Kawashima asserts that these static categories “do not exist as such. . . . Only the process, marginalization, exists. . . . In this paradigm, then, there is no single center surrounded by a single margin; instead, different and fleeting instances of marginalizer/marginalized relationships appear and reappear in a dynamic fashion.”⁸ I build on Kawashima’s work to suggest that these “fleeting instances” of marginalization provide moments at which to perform queer readings. Although marginalization attempts to inscribe a putative center against a textually constructed periphery, the process cannot eradicate the contingency pervading such an aim. Therefore, Kawashima’s arguments seem especially valuable for theorizing less rigid, more diffuse forms of relation where clear-cut desires to dominate are absent or insufficient for analyzing the multiple affects, social forces, and mediations of literal and metaphorical distance transpiring.

Jonathan Stockdale stresses the dual axis of distance/proximity upended by exile, arguing that “the particular sanction of exile thus represented a kind of double inversion, both of the distancing from the world and of the proximity to the emperor that the Heian court society normally strived to achieve.”⁹ This inversion evokes the figure of a proximate remove: a removal from the center that kindles unfixed potentials for proximity elsewhere. Newly imposed proximity to the periphery constitutes political punishment for heterosexual indiscretions. However, this banishment also spurs male homosocial intimacies in a singular fashion. Hence Genji’s expulsion provides opportunities to reimagine one’s habituated investments in hierarchy, protocols of social intercourse, and modes of interaction with the phenomenal world. In other words, exile catalyzes the narrative emergence of unaccustomed sensations, textual mediations, and relations ripe for queer reading.

The theme of exile resonates across premodern Chinese and Japanese literature, and “Suma” exploits this intertextual legacy to play up the trope’s pathos and political undertones. However, we might also read such citational recourse as a bid for stability in historical and literary precedent, an effort that cannot fully resolve the destabilizing contingency faced in exile. Specifically, Genji supplements his invocation and evocation of famous exiles with a painted diary recording his personal affective experience—as tied to precedent but also singularly his own. Such a gesture highlights a desire and capacity to engage the nonhuman and elemental world through creative channels not totalized by courtly discourses of propriety, legitimacy, or community.

At a broader level, scholars such as Susan Mann and Gustav Heldt have discussed the theme of male fellowship in Chinese and Japanese culture, partly as a means of showing how homosocial practices sustain aristocratic privilege or male social dominance.¹⁰ The theme of male aesthetic fellowship appears prominently in “Suma,” but the experience of exile narrated there leads us away from those categories. As H. Richard Okada explains, “Far from being preoccupied with matters of aesthetic taste—‘love’—or ‘romance,’ as the dominant *Genji* readings would have it, the narrative situates many of its most important scenes at intersections involving displacements produced by exile (or other forms of exclusion and transgression).”¹¹ And, as Jonathan Stockdale demonstrates, Heian prose fiction can register a “somewhat radical discontent” in casting “the world surrounding the Japanese court as a polluted place” or obliquely criticizing social realities such as “the Fujiwara use of exile to eliminate competing families and rival clan lines.”¹² Similarly, Gustav Heldt’s attention to “the essential ambiguity of Heian poetic expressions of desire” in court poetry helps us posit alternate readings of such expressions and alternative implications for forms of male homosociality occurring once *Genji* is displaced beyond the Heian capital.¹³

As my queer readings of exilic intimacy will demonstrate, “Suma” encourages us to reappraise political disgrace as productive for other modes of relation that courtly politics fail to encompass. This chapter examines two related arcs germane to my arguments about homosociality’s place in literature: “The feminizing disgrace of exile intertwined with the masculinizing fraternity found once [one is] removed from court.”¹⁴ Although this removal magnifies *Genji*’s homoerotic allure, I argue that such allure pales in comparison to the intensification of aesthetic production and embodied susceptibility to the natural environment he experiences. Transpiring outside the purview of courtship or competition, both of these experiences suggest alternate modes of dwelling in the phenomenal world that I interpret as queer. Hence my analysis considers the portrayal of a surge of homosocial desire in exile as significant not because it reveals some sexual secret but rather because it fuels the text’s critical divestment from romantic and political ideals endorsed at court.

A PROTRACTED PASSAGE INTO EXILE

As the *Suma* chapter opens, the threat of exile hangs heavy, disorienting *Genji*:

The world around him was so troublesome, filled with nothing save mounting enmity, that he determined that to just pay no heed and ride things out might only make them worse. As for that *Suma*, he had heard things like it had been someone’s home in ages past and that now it was quite cutoff and lonely, with even a fisherman’s hut making a rare sight, though it was no doubt still not his heart’s desire to live jumbled up in some place bustling with people. That said, distancing himself from the Capital would surely make him restless for home. He ruminated in an unbecoming muddle.¹⁵

Suma represents an escape from hostility that also promises affiliation with another male exile, Ariwara no Yukihira, whose former presence there frames it as a resonant topos. The connection Genji might establish with this famous forebear is offset by disdain for the commoners he must encounter in leaving home. Even as Genji imagines redeeming ties to another aristocrat, exile confronts him with the risk of low-class contagion. These competing possibilities imply two types of sociality available to the exiled courtier: a singular empathy with a long-dead male peer, whose aura might anchor the newly dispossessed Genji; and proximity to the masses, whose very thought incites his “unbecoming muddle.”

Genji and Murasaki agonized that he could be away for years on end, as this was not some voyage whose span was fixed, and despite wanting their separation to end so they might meet again, it seemed that this fickle world had ultimately made this his last farewell. Hence there were times when he wondered, *What if the two of us secretly made off together?* But it would be too cruel of him to drag someone this tender to such a miserable coast, where she'd likely have no companions to join her save the waves and wind.¹⁶

By not taking his favorite wife into exile with him, Genji severs his fondest heterosexual connection and marks his exile as an exclusively male preserve.¹⁷ As he departs Murasaki, the narrator comments that “the people who endured a hidden heartbreak despite his only having casually known them in his flittings here and there were many indeed.”¹⁸ This phrase delivers a swansong for Genji's romantic affairs with women, foreshadowing entrance into queerer environs. This aspect of Genji's self-imposed punishment fits the crime, which was his incestuous liaison with Fujitsubo. Being relegated to an exclusively male homosocial space thus symbolically counteracts the tumult his heterosexual transgression caused.

When Genji sets off, “He made no one aware of what hour he'd depart, setting out quite inconspicuously [*ito kasuka ni*] with merely seven or eight of the retainers who had grown closest to him.”¹⁹ “*Ito kasuka ni*” could refer to the unassuming way Genji departs, but it also means “shabbily,” “feebly,” or “in a lonely fashion,” which all connote his shameful descent into powerlessness. The secrecy he practices helps avoid more public disgrace. Genji leaves his women while selecting a cohort of men to accompany and serve him, emphasizing the gendered nature of exile and the status hierarchy that persists despite his downfall. The secrecy continues when he “call[s] at His Excellency's under cover of darkness. His furtive entrance [*uchi yatsuretaru nite*] in a common basketwork carriage that looked like a woman's [*onnaguruma no yau nite*] was sad and might have been a dream.”²⁰ Hidden and feminized, Genji's affection toward and reliance on male servants builds. This status and gender disguise anticipates the voyage to Suma's shore and reads like a closeting process.

Genji is “stripped . . . of rank and office” for his offense. Rather than be disgraced further by a forcible ousting by the Kokiden faction, Genji “resolved to

remove [him]self from the world [*yo wo nogarenamu*] before [he] face[d] still greater dishonor [*kore yori ookinaru haji*].”²¹ Shame fuels Genji’s desire to absent himself and becomes the affective force infusing Genji’s growing bond to lower-status men. The romantic jaunts with higher-status women he enjoyed previously are now impossible, so through the trope of exile, lowlier men procure more space within the scope of Genji’s affections.

This self-imposed exile deprives Genji of the prerogatives germane to his city existence, but it also creates distance between him and the factional enemies that fuel what the Emperor calls “the evil temper of the times.”²² The Emperor cries about Genji’s predicament even as his own “poor health . . . has obliged [him] to resign his office.”²³ For his part, “Genji, too, could not carry himself with courage [*e kokoroduyoku motenashi tamahazu*]. Seeing his son the little lord toddling innocently back and forth, nestling close to this person and that [*korekare ni narekikoetamahu*], pained Genji’s heart. . . . ‘I am comforted knowing that the shortness of Aoi’s life was a good thing, for her not to have seen such an inconceivable fate befall you,’ said the Emperor.”²⁴ The narrative juxtaposes the resignation of imperial office with the wavering motion of Genji’s son, Yūgiri, to underscore the fraternal political stakes of exile. Both above and below Genji’s station, the known order buckles. As the child flits between adults, without his father’s anchoring presence, Genji feels paternal disquiet over his fate. The toddler’s unsteadiness only magnifies Genji’s concerns about the instability of patrilineal succession that exile causes.

For Genji, the boy’s movements amplify affects of foreboding and shame. We interpret the following with these affects in mind: “Genji wept silently, and without really offering a reply murmured, *Now, I leave to see shores where sea folk broil brine raw, meanly mulling if yon smoke mirrors what charred clouds pyre black at Mount Toribe*. ‘Can such heartache as this be anything save the parting at dawn?’”²⁵ Brine fires stain skies with Genji’s guilt. Furthermore, the smoke’s association with seafolk taints it with the low-status contagion introduced in the chapter’s opening (e.g., “milling crowds”). Smoke also recalls a cremation pyre, suggesting the social death Genji suffers in banishment. The question of “parting at dawn” cites the motif of ending a night’s erotic tryst; its emergence here implies that Genji approximates a feminine position on entering exile. The uncertainty implied by his question signals a queerness linking dispossession to refashioned gender roles. The trope is repurposed here to stress an ominous lack of eroticism in Genji’s potentially leaving forever. As we’ll see later, when Tō no Chūjō visits, Genji experiences another daybreak departure in exile that accentuates the trope’s queer resonance.

ACQUIESCING TO A DWINDLED AURA

As Genji continues his incremental passage into exile, he attains an alluring vulnerability: “People peeped at him as he departed. In the keen brightness of the sinking

moon, he struck a mournful figure of such immeasurably graceful beauty that even a tiger or wolf would have surely wept. All the more aghast, then, did those people who had observed from the start of his tender youth feel upon witnessing such an unprecedented shift in his air [*tatoshihenaki onarisama wo imiji to omohu*].²⁶ Such observations suggest a loosening of the predominant male-to-female vector of *kai-mami* seen earlier in the narrative and Heian prose fiction more broadly. While the shocking change mentioned refers to Genji's reduced station, it also evokes Genji's efforts to conceal himself by using a carriage that looked like a woman's. These details accent a feminization occurring as he enters exile, characterized by a slackening of normative patterns of viewing, feeling, and communing:

At home again he found his own gentlewomen, who seemed not to have slept, clustered here and there in acute distress. There was no one in his household office, the men in his intimate service were no doubt busy with their own farewells, in preparation for accompanying him. It amounted to grave misconduct for anyone to visit him, and to do so more and more to risk reprisal, so that where once horses and carriages had crowded to him, a barren silence now reigned, and he felt the treachery of life. Dust had gathered here and there on the serving tables, some of the mats had been rolled up, and he was not even gone yet. He could imagine the coming desolation.²⁷

The integrity of Genji's household starts to deteriorate. The loose cluster of distressed gentlewomen signals that exile has upset spatial relations in the Capital. This feminine assemblage heralds an implosion of an androcentric household structure. The women's presence only adds insult to injury as Genji surveys the gathering dust and absence of swooning crowds, the vacated space of his own residence expanding in "barren silence." As his residence empties, his body withers:

The Viceroy Prince and the Captain came. Genji put on a dress cloak to receive them: an unpatterned one, since he had no rank, but which by its very plainness showed him off to still better advantage. Approaching the mirror stand to comb his sidelocks, he noted despite himself the noble beauty of the wasted face he saw. "I am so much thinner now!" he said. "Just look at my reflection! It really is too hard!"²⁸

Exile reduces Genji outside and in. He trades his courtier's outfit for something base and remarks on his depleted appearance. Exile estranges Genji from his worldly possessions, his family, and even his own physical form, forcing him to redefine his place in the world. The mirror-stage of exile demands Genji relinquish formative identifications, habits, and markers of value. His reflection confirms his collapse while also opening space to fashion new connections and a revised persona. The arrival of two male intimates prompts his alienating trip to the mirror, framing the moment at which Genji's embodied awareness of exile's severity sinks in. The homosocial system of male rank and affiliation, an inescapable condition of courtly life, necessitates constant awareness of his relational identity. Where his physical location relative to the Capital defines exile's geographic character, the

affective experience of Genji's exile materializes in wearing shame on his sleeves. In receiving his younger brother and his closest comrade in garments marking his demotion, Genji confronts a shocking disgrace.

Genji grows worried about the blow exile will deal to his legacy. For example, he says to Murasaki, "How lamentable it is that our time together has been so uneventful, these years having totally passed us by. My fate, thus far and going forward, will become a lesson for all."²⁹ The uneventfulness to which Genji alludes here is a child that Murasaki, his favorite wife, has yet to bear. Severing ties to the privileges of the Capital, Genji laments the fate of his progeny and property. His worry involves the loss of legal entitlements but also gossip that might overshadow whatever legacy he's built thus far. However, this is not to say he doesn't care about material possessions:

He put his affairs in order. Among the close retainers who resisted the trend of the times, he established degrees of responsibility for looking after his residence. He also chose those who would follow him. The things for his house in the mountain village, items he could not do without, he kept purposely simple and plain, and he added to his baggage a box of suitable books, including the *Collected Poems* [of the poet Bai Juyi], as well as a *kin* [lute]. He took no imposing furnishings with him and no brilliant robes, for he would be living as a mountain rustic. To the mistress of his west wing, he entrusted his staff of gentlewomen and everything else as well, and he also gave her the deeds to all his significant properties—estates, pastures, and so forth. As for his storehouses and repositories, Shōnagon struck him as reliable, and he therefore instructed her on their care, assigning her for the purpose a staff of close retainers.³⁰

Genji needs objects like Bai Juyi's poems and the lute to smooth his transition to Suma. These symbols compensate for the human contact—with women, especially—now foreclosed. Moreover, they help Genji mediate the experience of exile, forging an illustrious textual pedigree of male exiles to mitigate his contemptible exilic status.

Genji's transfer of property and certain administrative responsibilities to women stands out here as a corollary to the feminization he experienced earlier. As his claim to titles weakens, Genji must rely on trusted women like Murasaki, especially since he has no suitable male relative or heir to whom to entrust these duties. This massive transfer of wealth symbolically completes the gendered transformation prefigured by details like Genji's womanly carriage and exposure to peeping women "shocked to see him so changed."

Part of this change entails a diminished ardor when it comes to pursuing female lovers: "[Genji] renounced any heroic attempt to correspond with [Oborozukiyo] further."³¹ Exile chastens Genji; this reluctance to push his romantic luck comes just lines after ceding control of his estate. This feminizing relinquishment seems to have diluted his earlier urges to court indiscriminately, as Genji learns his limitations and finds it hard to swagger like he used to.

FINDING FELLOW FEELING IN EXILE

The men recognize each other's comparable disgrace, building an empathy that we may see as part of the feminizing arc traced across the opening of "Suma":

He left once the moon had risen, with a mere half dozen companions and only the closest servants. He rode. Needless to say, everything was so different from his excursions in happier days that those beside him were very downcast.

One of them, a Chamberlain Aide of the Right Palace Guards, had been assigned to his escort that Purification Day; he had been denied due promotion, barred from the privy chamber, and stripped of his functions, and that was why he was with Genji now. The sight of the Lower Kamo Shrine in the distance brought that moment back to him. He dismounted, took the bridle of his lord's mount, and said,

"I recall the days when we all in procession sported heart-to-heart, and the Kamo palisade calls forth a great bitterness."

Genji could imagine the young man's feelings, and he grieved for him, since he had once shone brighter than the rest. He, too, dismounted and turned to salute the shrine. Then he said in valediction,

"Now I bid farewell to the world and its sorrows, may that most wise god of Tadasu judge the truth in the name I leave behind."

Watching him, these young men so enamored of beauty were filled with the wonder of his stirring grace.³²

Bathed in moonlight, Genji rides exposed, unsheltered by his customary aristocratic carriage. These details accentuate the masculine vulnerability exile kindles. Demotion engenders emotion that brings these men together, having all been stripped of titles and rights they had enjoyed. Although residual hierarchy still deters the aide from reaching out to Genji directly, he nevertheless "took the bridle of his lord's mount," making physical contact with the carrier of Genji's physical burden before sharing his own tale of woe. That Genji "could imagine the young man's feelings" and "grieved for him" suggests an empathetic identification that becomes possible only at the Capital's outskirts and only now that both men must reckon with their respective disposessions. Genji's mirroring gestures of dismounting, saluting the shrine, and reciting a doleful poem all speak to a conscious or unconscious willingness to develop new homosocial ties with lower-class comrades toward whom he was oblivious prior to exile. "Being young men so prone to affection, they watched his intoning figure, awestruck by a poignant wonder that pervaded their bodies" (*monomedesuru wakahito nite, mi ni shimite ahare ni medetashi to mitatematsuru*).³³

The awe these young men feel toward Genji's "poignant wonder" pierces them as an attraction sparked by a mixture of shame and desire for consolatory recognition that he solicits by baring himself to the night air, dismounting to place himself literally on their level and confess a hardship akin to theirs. Paul Schalow stresses that "Suma is not a destination at all, but a yearlong journey through a year's worth of sexual and emotional deprivation, mitigated only by the companionship

of sympathetic men.”³⁴ These deprivations infuse the narration with erotic tension between Genji and his companions, though Genji seems too busy moping to notice their absorption with him.

Besides forming deeper ties with his retinue, Genji also seeks a renewed link to his recently perished father by visiting his imperial tomb:

He reached the grave, whereupon rose to mind, as though before his very eyes, the figure of his father as he had been in life. Despite being of limitless imminence, even this Emperor had become someone now gone from the world, which produced unspeakable regret. Crying and crying, Genji told him all the myriad things that had happened to him, but his father’s verdict was not clearly offered [*sonokotowari wo araha ni uketamahari tamahaneba*]. Hence, Genji felt hopeless thinking, *Wherever could all those various dying instructions father thought to bequeath have vanished to?*³⁵

Genji is left emotionally adrift without a firm, clear judgment from his father. Genji lacks the paternal bastion that would center him in this alien landscape and quash the disorientation that gradually opens him to previously unfelt sensations.

While the tomb visit prompts Genji to ponder all he leaves behind in descending into exile, his concern about legacy becomes especially salient on reaching this site at which he must honor his father’s memory. Visiting the tomb furnishes him with an occasion to solicit judgment from a patriarch “of limitless eminence.” Although Genji sobs his story, seeking counsel, “his father’s verdict was not clearly offered.” Genji’s desire to be judged in this dark hour—at a gravesite, no less—stands out. He has shirked judgment until now, worrying about being lambasted in the court of public opinion. Why does he crave it here and now?

Considering the intersection of homosocial desire and exile’s dispossession lends answers. Genji’s demotion literally lowers him—removing him from his high horse—to bring him closer to his new recruits. Part of what makes Genji so awe-inspiring (*ahare ni medetashi*) is the vulnerability caused by his dislocation. The anxiety Genji expresses regarding his imperiled legacy also heightens the male onlookers’ sense of wonder, and Genji becomes more viscerally subject to exile’s immediacy. This feeling of subjection manifests as a wish to be judged by “wise god[s]” but also as a newfound willingness to be potentially admired in reduced circumstances.

The tomb disorients less than the mansions of “Yūgao” and “Suetsumuhana” because it localizes foreboding at a single confined spot. Situated as a waypoint between the Capital and exile, the tomb marks a threshold Genji crosses from a space of rampant gossip to one of self-reflection. Hence even as he struggles to “find his way back again,” he still escapes the omnipresent prying of the Heian court.³⁶ Genji’s more focused scrutiny leads him to solicit the verdict he so avoided before.

Genji prays that his father’s judgment might drop anchor as he drifts out to sea. Being acknowledged by the paternal ghost would grant some semblance of stability. Even if the spirit’s judgment didn’t expiate or vindicate, the mere force of such

a gesture could amend Genji's fractured subjectivity. Even to be found guilty in his father's eyes would give Genji something to hold on to as his world crumbles.

Genji "shivered to behold a vision of his father as he had seen him in life. 'What is it his shade beholds when he looks on me—I, before whose eyes / the moon on high, his dear face, hides from sight behind the clouds?'"³⁷ Anguished and disoriented, Genji tries to imagine himself from his father's vantage. The gesture allows him to indulge momentarily the fantasy of residing on high, peering down at his fallen form from a celestial perch. This vision lets Genji sample the destiny his father wanted for him, even as the shrouded moon connotes the phantom patriarch's disappointment.

The tenor of shameful concealment carries over into Genji's final day at home:

Genji also wrote a letter to Reizei, the heir apparent. It said, "to that gentlewoman" on it, since Genji had assigned her the task of managing affairs in his stead. "Today is the day I leave the Capital behind. What strikes me as foremost among my many woes is that it has become such that I won't be visiting His Highness again. Gauge all the issues at hand and relay my sentiments."

Whenever again in the Capital's ripe spring might I view blossoms, since now made a mountain dreg, all of whose time has run dry?

He attached the letter to a cherry branch whose blooms had all scattered off.³⁸

The imperial ban placed on Genji bars his entrance to the palace. Therefore, he must have a trusted gentlewoman assume his responsibilities. That this woman is to visit Genji's secret son, the Crown Prince—guarantor of Genji's glorious legacy—sharpens the penalty's sting. Ōmyōbu's new status as executor for Genji also undercuts the integrity of a patrilineal ideal extending from Genji's deceased emperor father, through the commoner Genji, and on to his soon-to-be emperor son. The bare cherry branch reads as a phallic bequeathal, figuring the abortive fate of Genji's paternal line. The servant plays conduit for this transmission of homosocial sentimentality, her role as go-between fortified in direct proportion to Genji's withered authority.

The narrator further underscores the scene's pathos by describing the sadness of the lowest classes: "No one who had laid eyes on Genji could see his affliction without grieving for him, and of course those in his personal daily service, even maids and latrine cleaners he would never know but who had been touched by his kindness, particularly lamented every moment of his absence."³⁹ This sole mention in the narrative of latrine cleaners testifies to the far-ranging toll Genji's expulsion takes. These nameless figures surface now to stress Genji's appeal among even the dregs of court society. If their judgment suddenly matters, it proves how far he's plummeted. Moreover, their vocation indexes the depths of exile's affective repercussions.

Genji's expulsion draws reactions from both menials and aristocratic peers:

Who could have remained indifferent to him, even in the world at large? [Genji] had waited day and night on His Majesty since he was seven, he had told him no wish that

remained unfulfilled, and all had therefore come under his protection and enjoyed his generosity. Many great senior nobles or court officials were among them, and lesser examples were beyond counting, and although they did not fail to acknowledge their debt, they did not call on him, for they were cowed by the evil temper of the times. People everywhere lamented his fate and privately deplored the court's ways, but apparently they saw no point in risking their own careers to express their sympathy, for many of them disappointed or angered him, and all things reminded him how cruel the world can be.⁴⁰

The nobles' sense of risk stems from fears that proximity to Genji will contaminate them. Self-preservative instincts eclipse whatever affinity these courtiers held toward him. The space of the Capital stratifies subjects to the extent that it inhibits public display of sympathy toward the accused, highlighting the spatial constraints of affect's expression within Heian society. As we'll see, departure from the Capital's "cruel world" unlocks broader possibilities for tenderness to travel between subjects less hindered by expectations of reprisal.

THE TEXTURE OF EXILE'S LANDSCAPE

"Having never taken this route before, [Genji] felt unaccustomed to this kind of trip, experiencing a remarkable mix of dejection and joyful fascination [*kokorobosa mo wokashisa mo medurakanari*]."⁴¹ Genji's mixed emotions attest to new leeway as he exits the Capital's confines. But the first site Genji's party encounters drains any delight: "The place called Ôe Hall was deplorably ruined, with only pine trees marking where it once stood."⁴² To lay eyes on the decayed structure—the pine trees' position outlining the negative space the hall's absence has left—is to envision dispossession's concrete manifestation, hammering the stark reality of homelessness into Genji's skull. Importantly, this evacuated site initiates the chapter's inscription of exilic intertexts. The ruined building recalls a poem by the Chinese exiled poet Qu Yuan (340–278 BCE.), forming the first link in a lengthening chain of citations that helps Genji orient himself within an exilic topos.⁴³ Each allusion makes the landscape more legible—and livable. Acting as a stage for the gradual introduction of references to other exiles and foreign men, the ruins mark where a new home might be erected.

This poetry touches Genji's retina: "Watching the waves wash the shore, then recede in turn, Genji murmured [*uchi zujitamaheru sama*], 'How I envy them'; although it was an old poem from a bygone age, he made it sound so fresh that seeing this the men accompanying him felt nothing but sadness."⁴⁴ "*Sama*" marks Genji's appearance as he murmurs, connoting visuality alongside the scene's emphasized aural qualities. By quoting the renowned lover Ariwara no Narihira's *Ise monogatari* poem, Genji aligns his forebear's homesickness with that of his new comrades. But by citing this poem, Genji also invokes its speaker's envy (*urayamashiku mo*) toward the retiring waves. The subvocalized citation indicates an identification with those waves, suggesting a more fluid subjectivity brewing as Genji

settles into exile, enabling male bonding at two levels. First, these spaces tie Genji to his exiled forefathers; citing their poems announces self-conscious participation in their lineage. Second, we witness the affecting confluence of the evocative shore and Genji's partial elision of the poem. Genji connects the residents of the landscape to poetic canon, uniting his all-male convoy in sorrow.

As Genji fortifies these affective ties to the men serving him, the allusions accrue. He "truly felt 'three thousand miles from home,'" referencing a Bai Juyi poem, and "the place he was supposed to live was said to be in close vicinity to the shabby 'draped seaweed dripping salt' dwelling where Counselor Yukihiro had lived."⁴⁵ These tandem allusions intertextually scaffold Genji's residence. Yukihiro's former presence, particularly, stamps Genji's exile with the imprimatur of poetic authority.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, we revise this exilic paramour's precedent as Genji refurbishes his quarters:

The place stood a little back from the sea, among lonely hills. Everything about it, even the surrounding fence, aroused his wonder. . . . He summoned officials from his nearby estates, and it was sad to see Lord Yoshikiyo, now his closest retainer, issuing orders for all there was to be done. In no time the work was handsomely finished. The streambed had been deepened, trees had been planted, and Genji felt to his surprise that he could actually live there.⁴⁷

Genji basks in the shadow of Yukihiro's abode, feeling awe and chagrin as he realizes how far he has fallen. This explains his sadness at seeing Yoshikiyo talking to underlings; it reminds Genji that he must also interact more closely than ever with lesser vassals.

After Genji settles at Suma, he corresponds with his women in the Capital. However, maintaining ties over such distance makes for developments that undermine the communication's heterosexual character:

The Rokujō Haven had successively joined four or five sheets of white Chinese paper into a scroll, on which she had written with fitful starts and pauses as she mournfully mulled things over; her brushstrokes bore a handsome mien. When he thought about how, despite her having been someone he cherished, his heart had veered callous upon pondering Aoi's death and his ardor had waned to make him quit the Rokujō Haven, Genji felt at this moment thoroughly grateful that something so desired had occurred. Because he found the perfectly timely letter so moving, Genji kept the messenger with him for two or three days, making him do things like recount stories of her life at Ise to him. This person in the Rokujō Haven's employ was young and of some sophistication. Since Genji now dwelled in such pitiable conditions, he did not keep even this kind of person at much distance from himself; catching glimpses of Genji's face and figure [*onsamakatachi*], the footman found him terribly wondrous and shed tears.⁴⁸

By joining sheets of Chinese paper to form her sorrowful letter, the Haven attempts to extend a more substantive tether to the far-off Genji through the text's physical form. Exile alters the material composition of texts that mediate the gap between

center and periphery. Furthermore, the lovely, fitfully written brushstrokes, Chinese papers designed in scroll format, and the sheer distance the missive must overcome to reach the exile all provoke Genji to indulge not just the female hand that wrote the text but also the male hands that ferried it to him.

Genji “welcomes even the servant” (*ontsukae sae mutsumashiute*), his reduced circumstances (*kaku aharenaru onsumahi nareba*) making him more solicitous of company. That Genji unexpectedly craves proximity to “this kind of person” (*kayau no hito mo onodukara mono tohokarade*), a menial, implies a paradigm shift whereby affections in exile nullify the status gulf that formerly prevailed. And we notice that this extraordinary closeness precipitates a weeping at male beauty we can safely assume to be unprecedented (*imijiu medetashi*), even taking the young man’s relative sophistication (*keshiki aru*) into account.

The care Rokujō lavished on the text’s construction moves Genji, but possibly not like she intended. For even as he peppers her messenger with questions about Rokujō’s life, by detaining him Genji suggests that the experience of exile allows for affection to skirt its intended course. Distance from the Capital increases the value of a messenger who can move freely, where Genji cannot. Furthermore, the young man’s sophisticated tinge sets him favorably apart from the Suma rubes surrounding Genji.

Collectively, these elements frame the queer potential of correspondence in exile—not in terms of male-male eroticism, but rather in terms of transcending status rifts to reshape affinity. Both mediums—scroll and messenger—resonate with motion easing Genji’s rapport with the courier. Whatever the scroll conveys semantically or affectively, it also serves as a pretext for Genji’s newfound interest in the youngster, who weeps on spying his beauty. Although the narrative doesn’t say more about this character, that Genji replies to Rokujō’s moving message only because he feels “bored and lonely” bodes better for the messenger than for Genji’s lady pining at court.⁴⁹

As Genji struggles through exile, he attempts to maintain connections with loved ones in the Capital. Elaborate letters like Rokujō’s offer one mechanism to do so, even as the transmission introduces a queer potential into his Suma stay. These letters let Genji feel like a man. Insofar as “in this way, wherever they were, he still steadfastly exchanged missives with [his women],” he earns reassurance of their lasting attraction to him.⁵⁰ Unable to dress, move, or seduce like he used to, such letters become a privileged means of preserving a courtly masculine identity:

On and on I gaze at the ferns fringing the eaves of my dreary home / while the dew in ceaseless drops moistens my forsaken sleeves, [Hanachirusato] had written, and Genji understood that in truth [the ladies of the village of fallen flowers] had no protection but their garden weeds. Upon learning that their earthen wall had collapsed in several places during the long rains [nagaame ni tsuiji tokorodokoro kudurete namu], he had his retainers in the city bring men from his nearby provincial estates to repair the damage.⁵¹

Given his limited mobility and shrunken sphere of influence, Genji longs to extend his reach. To be sure, the poem's references to the "fringing ferns" growing in the thatch of a woman's neglected roof and the water moistening her sleeves signal sadness. However, these images also highlight an architectural disrepair caused by Genji's absence as caretaker. Genji realizes that the women lack protection from the elements and springs to action, marshaling the troops to plug the holes and rebuild the fallen wall. This gesture of organizing men from two locales—the city and the provinces—to fix the structure from afar lets Genji assert what little authority he retains to consolidate manpower across vast distances. Consequently, he can feel like a man despite his dispossession, snug in his role as Mr. Fix-it.⁵²

The nature of the repairs also matters. The long rains, connoting endless weeping, have made the residence problematically porous. Redressing this porosity becomes symbolically important to Genji to counter his emasculating withdrawal from the Capital. This porosity signifies masculine neglect on Genji's part, and the potential encroachment of more able-bodied men while he languishes elsewhere. The "ferns" (*shinobu*) echo homophonically as "remember fondly" but also denote "sneaking in." Genji's masculinity is tied to his ability to reinscribe the boundaries of his outpost in the city, thus ensuring his women and property stay secure.

AESTHETIC MEDIATION AND CONSOLATORY TEXTS

Genji's issuance of work orders lightens his worries, but it is ultimately a poor substitute for inhabiting the Capital and an insufficient remedy for his eroding personal and residential ties to it. As these ties wane, Genji's link to Suma deepens:

At Suma the sea was some way off under the increasingly mournful autumn wind, but night after night the waves on the shore, sung by Counselor Yukihiro in his poem about the wind blowing over the pass, sounded very close indeed, until autumn in such a place yielded the sum of melancholy. Everyone was asleep now, and Genji had hardly anybody with him; he lay awake all alone, listening with raised pillow to the wind that raged abroad, and the waves seemed to be washing right up to him [*nami tada koko moto ni tachikuru kokochi shite*]. Hardly even knowing that he did so [*warenagara ito sugou kikoyureba*], he wept until his pillow might well have floated away. The brief music he plucked from his *kin* dampened his spirits until he gave up playing and sang, *Waves break on the shore, and their voices rise to join my sighs of yearning* [*kohiwabite naku ne ni magahu uranami ha*]: *can the wind be blowing then from all those who long for me?*

His voice awoke his companions, who sat up unthinkingly here and there, overcome by its beauty, and quietly blew their noses. What indeed could their feelings be, now that for his sake alone they had left the parents, the brothers and sisters, the families that they cherished and surely often missed, to lose themselves this way in the wilderness [*ge ni ika ni omohuramu, wagami hitotu ni yori, oyahara kara katatachi hanaregataku, hodo ni tsuketsutsu omohuramu ie wo wakarete, kaku madohiaheru*]? The thought pained him, and once he had seen how dispiriting they must find his

own gloom, he purposely diverted them with banter during the day and enlivened the hours by joining pieces of colored paper to write poems on, or immersed himself in painting on fine Chinese silk, which yielded very handsome panels for screens. He had once heard a description of this sea and these mountains and had imagined them from afar; and now that they were before him, he painted a set of incomparable views of an exceptionally lovely shore.

“How nice it would be to call in Chieda and Tsunenori, who they say are the best artists of our time, and have them make these up into finished paintings!” his impatient companions remarked. He was so kind and such a delight to the eye that the four or five of them forgot their cares and found his intimate service a pleasure.⁵³

As autumn arrives, the exilic topos emanates melancholy. The winds of Suma shore and Yukihira’s poetry weave against waves’ rhythm to produce a synesthetic tether to the landscape. Genji’s raised pillow makes him more susceptible to the hypnotic sounds of winds and waves that “seemed to be washing right up to him.”⁵⁴ The waves approaching the sleepless exile speak to his inability to maintain a boundary between interior and exterior. The sea’s water saturates his subjectivity, surging past the threshold of Genji’s residence and skin to pour from his eyes inadvertently.

Moving from instrumental to vocal music in his quest for consolation, Genji sings as “waves break on the shore, and their voices rise to join [his] sighs of yearning.”⁵⁵ Genji becomes one with the Suma shore as music dissolves the boundaries between him and his environment, and between Genji and his all-male retinue. Just as the sea sounds enter Genji’s song, so too does this plaintive strain of melody permeate his comrades’ hearts. Genji’s switch to other media soothes their pain, and the paintings ultimately reproduce “incomparable views” of the very shore whose rhythms prompted Genji’s crooning.⁵⁶

The poems on joined paper and the paintings on silk enable Genji to sublimate the anguish Suma’s exilic topos evokes. Remarks by Genji’s “impatient companions” about having his ink paintings finished up in color might reflect a desire to create distance between themselves and the pervading landscape. Inscribing paper or silk with ink transposes an overwhelming terrain into a more manageable, tangible medium.⁵⁷ These texts let Genji and his men feel less subject to the setting through artistic skill, rescaling and externalizing the sense of loss they feel.

Genji’s texts reformat and displace the immediacy of exilic experience, allowing for a homosocial rapport to develop. By deferring exile’s pain and interposing layers of silk and cellulose between alienated subjects and their all-too-invasive environment, these media deflect longing for home toward longing for Genji. In his role as artist, Genji consequently becomes a mediating presence whose ability to both produce and exude beauty within misery attracts gratitude shaded by admiration. Through Genji’s lens, the men are able to regard their poor fortune as finite. Furthermore, the text’s appearance right after the description of the losses suffered by the Chamberlain Aide accompanying Genji, who “had been denied

due promotion, barred from the privy chamber, and stripped of his functions,” suggests the textual mediation also aids in building an altered family to offset the ones these men left behind. In other words, these poems and paintings bind the men after an ethos of loyal servitude wears thin.

These companions in exile feel lost, having left behind parents and siblings “they found difficult to be apart from even momentarily” (*wagami hitotsu ni yori, oya harakara katatoki hanaregataku, hodo ni tsuketsutsu omohuramu ie wo wakarete*). To be lost like this (*kaku madohi aheru*) connotes a spatial dislocation, but it simultaneously signifies a removal from conventional familial structures that extends the customary range of affections of the men. Removal from a realm of ingrained relations, along with its concomitant expectations and responsibilities, reconfigures their responsiveness to Genji, producing a newly unmoored inclination swaying between loyalty and longing.

As the textual mediation tightens ties between the men and eases them into a state of relative comfort in exile, the distance of formality dissolves:

One lovely twilight, with the near garden in riotous bloom, Genji stepped onto a gallery that gave him a view of the sea, and such was the supernal grace of his motionless figure that he seemed in that setting not to be of this world at all. Over soft white silk twill and aster he wore a dress cloak of deep blue, its sash only very casually tied; and his voice slowly chanting “I, a disciple of the Buddha Shakyamuni . . .” was more beautiful than any they had ever heard before. From boats rowing by at sea came a chorus of singing voices. With a pang he watched them, dim in the offing, like little birds borne on the waters, and sank into a reverie as cries from lines of geese on high mingled with the creaking of oars, until tears welled forth, and he brushed them away with a hand so gracefully pale against the black of his rosary that the young gentlemen pining for their sweethearts at home were all consoled [*furusato no onna kohishiki hitobito, kokoro mina nagusami ni keru*].⁵⁸

That the “admiring men forget the matters of the world” (*natsukashiu medetaki onsama ni, yo no mono omohiwasurete*) augments their closeness with Genji, manifesting here as cheerful service to him (*chikau nare tsukaumatsuru wo ureshiki koto nite*).⁵⁹ Such intimacy intensifies in these environs, even gaining spiritual magnitude as the displaced Genji assumes the mantle of a makeshift Buddha. His superficial resemblance to Shakyamuni overlays the men’s devoted servitude with a capacity for spiritual succor. We can read their abandoned concern for the world as aroused by the ministrations of an exiled prince-cum-bodhisattva.

Having reconciled his connection to Suma’s landscape, Genji has become comfortable enough to lower his guard. Whereas he formerly lay awake listening to the unnerving sound of waves edging his pillow, Genji now greets the beckoning sea. Twilight blossoms contribute color to a drab tableau. Genji saunters to a porch to peer at the ocean as night sets in, and he lets his robe’s sash wilt. The composition of texts has relaxed Genji—toward his men and his environs—such that he is now willing to unfasten himself before them.

To produce the texts, Genji crossed a threshold of dispossession that exposes him to environmental phenomena in a more generative fashion. Exposed in this way, bathed in evening light at the veranda, with his sash loose, Genji surrenders to the state of exile and solicits men's attentions. In this charged environment where sights, sounds, and the scent of ocean air intensify sensitivity, Genji's sonorous prayer triggers a disproportionate response from singing seamen.

The topographic shift grounding this homosocial affinity revises the gendered schema of *Genji's* nearest literary forebear, *The Tales of Ise*. That Genji did not travel alone to Suma challenges the *Ise* archetype straightaway, since it plainly disables the trope of heterosexual erotic adventure (*irogonomi*). Yet this doesn't necessarily foreclose the possibility of erotic relationships; it merely transfers that option from a heterosexual vector toward affections shared between men. Gotō Yasufumi notes that aristocratic men's geographic consciousness determines how love or lust play out, allowing for *Ise's* literary depiction of these men's foul treatment of provincial women.⁶⁰ By invoking this topos, *Genji* encourages Heian readers intimately familiar with the *Ise* paramours' heterosexual exploits to judge them against Genji's newfound homosocial sensitivities in exile—likely to his benefit.

Genji's prayer sets off a chain reaction: its call provokes a choral response from the sailors, which precipitates cries from flying geese, that in turn "mingled with the creaking of oars" (*kaji no oto ni magaheru wo*) to provoke sobs.⁶¹ The geese seem gendered male, and their seasonal decampment symbolizes exile. The sonically rich scene also shines visually. The sudden multimodal effusion of timbre, color, and texture springs from the recent portrayal of artistic production. Not unlike the ink absorbed by paper and silk, these artistic pursuits by Genji soak into the adjoining scene to form a layered, transmedia portrait of male affection.

Oars creak with the boatmen's effort against the rolling tide; meanwhile, Genji's pale, graceful hand brushes teardrops from his face and black rosary beads. The contrast in sound, sight, and degree of physical exertion between the male subjects on land and those on water establishes a desirous asymmetry.⁶² Stuck at sea in their rowboats, these rougher men can't help but be seduced by Genji's charms. Genji's disarming lassitude encourages the fishermen, "pining for their sweethearts at home," to view him as a substitute for their absent female lovers. "Consoled" (*nagusami [ni keri]*) in fact has a wide semantic berth; the relief that comes from masturbation or sexual intercourse with a partner can fall within its scope.

The description of swelling voices, sinking reverie, spilling tears, and rough or smooth hands clutching wooden oars or caressing rosary beads builds an extraordinary erotic momentum. Although a more explicit account of the action will always remain "dim in the offing," tender moments like this pour forward with singular potency in exile. Genji's wind-pierced home and loose sash index a degree of exposure inconceivable in the city. To the extent that exile undoes the standard hierarchies operative in the Capital, status distinctions that might ordinarily separate an oarsman from a weeping noble melt at Suma.

Similarly, Suma's openness incites an overflow of affect that outstrips the boundaries of sexual orientation. Displacement from the Capital's aristocratic circuits of heterosexual courtship allows freer flow between classed and gendered subjects. As a result, sailors can harmonize with fallen courtiers, Rokujo's lowly messenger can be treated like a prince, and men separated from the confines of courtship and its social climate can unwind along the beach to savor Genji's image. Hence the dislocating dispossession suffered in exile also imbues a mobility along queer lines. In exile, freed from strict notions of propriety and pressed together into a porous space of reduced duty and incessant leisure, the men find each other's "intimate service a pleasure."⁶³

This pleasure echoes in sights and songs that rise as the chapter nears its end. Among these, a string of poems from men joining Genji at Suma rings out. Just after the mention of consoled sweethearts at home, Genji and three of his exiled associates solidify their ties to one another through poetry. The chain of responses carries an orgiastic tenor as each man piles his verse atop his comrade's. The motif of wild geese recurs to link the poems while phrases like "wild geese fellows" (*kari ha kohishiki hito*), "all in one line, one memory on the next streams" (*kakitsurane mukashi no koto zo omohoyuru*), "abandoning of their own will their eternal home" (*kokoro kara tokoyo wo sutete*), and "we find it comforting at least not to lag behind" (*tsura ni okurenu hodo zo nagusamu*) amass to underscore intimate fellowship's urgency.⁶⁴ I'm convinced the ink's seep into silk and the loosened sash are what set desire reeling. The all-male sequence spotlights exile's propensity to intensify homosocial ties. This exchange culminates in music, which becomes a privileged venue for mediating the exilic experience and for male bonding, as Genji's plaintive lute draws tears from his ensemble mates.

Owing to its porous roof, Genji's residence is coated in icy moonlight, exposing him even further and making him feel more vulnerable to scrutiny from on high. The spatial dimension heightens an oppressive feeling of subjection framed by the physical access lower-status men now have to Genji and by his fallen social position. Genji's interiority dovetails the space of his "poor refuge" as swarming with the disabling indignity that overexposure inflicts. In contrast to Genji's first steps into exile, when he visited his father's tomb to seek solace and judgment, here Genji meets a naked moon whose radically penetrating sight singles him out as irredeemably depleted. Unlike the shame that simmered throughout Suetsumuhana's residence, this shame strikes brutally. It pinpoints Genji, hitting right as he confronts the fact that "everything about Suma's look and feel was bizarre, and even the baffling impression of low rustics, who he was unused to seeing, struck his own sensibilities as glaringly offensive. Time and again smoke came drifting quite close by. . . . What they did on a ridge behind where he lived was something called 'burning brushwood.'"⁶⁵ Genji feels shame at his proximity to the mountain folk, a status bigotry that stems from backwoods poverty and clings like the soot of rustic fires.

For all the intimacy exile fosters between men, status barriers persist. Genji's annoyance displays a prejudice underpinning camaraderie, as fondness for formally titled servants does not necessarily extend to his new Suma neighbors. (Singing boatmen get a pass by being far enough removed to look and sound poetic.) Meanwhile, the mountain folk engaged in "what people called 'brush' burning on the slope behind his home" come too close for comfort, offending Genji with char's sight and smell.⁶⁶ Thus status conditions intimacy's spatial logic. Although Genji's initial desolation seems to disable his awareness of social distinction, his bias rebounds as he tries to resign himself to life in exile while holding out hope to reclaim his stature.

This reversion occurs as winter comes, along with bitterness at having to play music while rustics burn bushes behind his humble house. Genji's attempts to weather exile with his makeshift ensemble read not just as consolatory measures but also as small reassertions of courtly protocol outside the Capital. Genji's companions see him as "something so wondrous that they felt solely in awe of him and hence could not abandon his sight, being unable to allow themselves even brief trips home."⁶⁷ Such loyalty heartens Genji but clashes with the behavior of rustics, "who were a mystery to him" (*mitate shiranu . . . mitamahinarahanu onkokochi ni*) and who lack the manners to defer as swiftly as his fawning expatriates.⁶⁸

INTIMATES IN EXILE: TŌ NO CHŪJŌ'S SECRET VISIT

This gulf between the proximity Genji can comfortably tolerate with natives of Suma versus those loyal comrades who have accompanied him from court widens as time in exile passes. Fresh contempt enters the picture as "at Suma, the new year came, with longer, humdrum days, and the sapling cherry trees Genji had planted started to bloom faintly."⁶⁹ This malaise sets the stage for Tō no Chūjō to materialize:

While the awful tedium of Suma wore on and on for Genji, Tō no Chūjō made Consultant, laden with the society's formidable acclaim due to his excellent character. But without Genji, the world felt woefully lifeless, and [Tō no Chūjō] missed him every moment, until he made up his mind—*What does it matter if word gets out and they charge me with crimes?*—and sped to Suma without warning. Upon laying eyes on Genji, tears of both delight and sorrow spilled forth. Genji's residence had an unspeakably Chinese air. Besides its surroundings being of the sort one would wish to paint, the crudeness of the woven bamboo fence encircling the house, its stone stairs, and the pine pillars was enchantingly exotic. Resembling a mountain peasant, Genji wore gathered trousers, with a charcoal-green hunting cloak atop a robe not of forbidden crimson but licensed rose with yellow overtones; his unassuming fashion was deliberately rustic, and looking at him, one couldn't help but smile at Genji's stunning beauty. The furnishings he used were also bare-bones, and his exposed room let anyone peer right in.⁷⁰

The suddenness with which Tō no Chūjō appears at Genji's door after "miss[ing] him constantly" is striking given the excruciating slowness with which Genji made the same trip. Koike Seiji designates the chapter's opening slog as participating in a "reverse time" (*modoru jikan*).⁷¹ I see this as queer time: a temporal protraction laden with negative affect induced by abandoning the Capital's standard tempo. Similarly, with this brisk reunion, yearning's sheer intensity vaporizes spatiotemporal distance along with the gap between thought and action. As Tō no Chūjō throws caution to the wind, overwhelmed by a desire to see his exiled friend, the narrator syncopates his passionate impatience by relating the men's encounter with lingering detail.

For instance, the modesty of the "indescribably Chinese" house ratchets up exoticism and highlights a disparity in rank between the former peers that fuels their arousal on reuniting. For Schalow, this overwhelming Chineseness (*sumai tamaheru sama, iwamukatanaku kara mekitari*) serves to "emphasize the utter masculinity of the environment."⁷² But at another level, this Chineseness inscribes a desirable foreignness, amplifying possibilities for men's relationships to morph. The lavishness of the Chinese façade, with all its studied authenticity, overloads the very notion of masculine conventions. The poetic surplus marshaled to erect this guise betrays the crevices inescapable in citing precedents—masculine, Chinese, or otherwise. Thus, much like the exile himself, "utter masculinity" longs to be rescripted less strictly.

We note the overlapping textures—woven bamboo, stone, and pine—not to mention the delicate bleed of colors. It's as though the narrator forgoes charting distance only to transfer that descriptive energy to the meshed haptic and optic sensations in this erotic elaboration. The men's forlorn affection yields tears of joy and sorrow. As the narratorial gaze implicitly tracks Tō no Chūjō's passage from the outer fence, up the stairs, and to the pillar, it insinuates intercourse between men with its rising movement across the house's bamboo threshold, upward to the erect pillars, and then into the pleasure of melding hues.

And yet some boundaries persist, some even enhancing the men's rapport by inscribing disproportions that augment desire. For example, comporting himself "in the simple manner of a mountain peasant," Genji elicits sympathy from his friend "of great esteem."⁷³ The status rift invigorates this scene of desire by providing a top-to-bottom frame that obviates quarrels like those fought when the two men's ranks nearly matched. Simultaneously, Genji's low-class masquerade implies its own enticements: "purposely rustic" clothes and the unshielded room invite longer, closer perusal of Genji than usual.

Genji's porous house and rustic costume also recall the well-worn trope epitomized by his exilic forebears, Ariwara no Narihira and Yukihiro. These famous paramours' exploits with callow seashore girls—at Suma, no less—are the stuff of *Tales of Ise* legend.⁷⁴ Their visits from the Capital established a spatial vector of desire that Genji's exile inverts. Rather than acting as the studly city courtier come

down to pluck women from the provinces, Genji assumes a feminine position on the occasion of Tō no Chūjō's sudden visit. In his tidy unscreened home, he occupies a domestic space of waiting, akin to the ladies of romantic tales who, similarly exposed to view and unable to travel freely, sit pining for suitors to select them. Genji's lowered status, unhampered visibility, and exotic costume all contribute to an inviting occasion:

Tō no Chūjō sang a bit of "Asuka Well," and between laughing and crying, the men shared tales of the past months. Since they talked on without end, I couldn't possibly recount everything they discussed, or even fragments of it. They didn't sleep, and instead traded Chinese poems through the night until dawn came. Although he'd said he cared nothing of the scandal that might erupt should he visit Genji, Tō no Chūjō nevertheless grew anxious at the thought of rumors of his exploits spreading, and thus cut his trip short to hurry home, only heightening Genji's heartache. . . . Both the men shed tears. Each of them seemed to regret having to part so soon. In the dim glimmer of sunrise, a line of geese crossed the sky. . . . Saying, "Take this to remember me by," [Tō no Chūjō] gave Genji among other things an exceptional flute of some fame, though they made no keepsakes of anything that might elicit people's censure. Slowly but surely the sun rose, and with a restive heart beating, Tō no Chūjō glanced back again and again as he hastily set off [*hi yauyau sashiagarite, kokoro ahataatashireba, kaherimi nomi shi tsutsu idetamahu wo*]; watching him leave, Genji looked all the more bereft.⁷⁵

As these old friends converse, the initial topic is how the Emperor pities Genji's son, a concern reminiscent of what Sedgwick calls "men promoting the interests of other men."⁷⁶ In mentioning this homosocial compassion straightaway, Tō no Chūjō cites an imperial, intergenerational sympathy that validates Genji's own self-pity. This disclosure and the singing that precedes it soften Genji up for more tender exchange. The narrator herself conspires, preserving shreds of privacy by concealing everything they shared in lieu of sleeping.

Stimulated by Suma's ocean air and the unchecked view (and the narrator's collusion), Chinese poetry keeps Genji and Tō no Chūjō trading verses through the night. This transaction euphemizes intercourse, operating in a register reserved for learned men. Indeed, the text's admission right afterwards that Tō no Chūjō "grew anxious at the thought of rumors of his exploits spreading" suggests that even as his poetic exchange with Genji surrogates sexual contact, something about the length, depth, or force of his pleasure triggers self-censorship. Given the relative prevalence of male-male sex among courtiers of the time, one wonders what rumor's risk might be, if not sexual intimacy itself.

The trepidation might stem from Tō no Chūjō's cognizance of the duration of his visit and a fear that, if careless, he might ditch his courtly life for pure indulgence at Suma. Unlike Genji, whose exile exempts him from the temporal and political constraints of the Capital, Tō no Chūjō has a stature that demands this visit stay secret. Whereas the lower-ranking lackeys Genji conscripted to Suma

have little choice but to stick close, Tō no Chūjō's lofty rank means that prolonged exposure to the tainted exile would cost too much. Thus the fear of rumors that might stain his reputation should he linger at Genji's side makes him abridge his stay. Tō no Chūjō draws intimately toward Genji until dread reminds him that the threats of proximity demand a tactical remove.

Abruptly, the exchange's pleasure stops as stigma invades. Awareness of social prohibition can wane temporarily, but it does not disappear from aristocratic consciousness. Stealing to the periphery mutes imminent risk, but the conviction to overcome enduring misgivings can't be sustained. Consequently, we're left to wonder what more Genji and his caller could have shared had shame not encroached on their makeshift harbor.⁷⁷

The men indulge during their transient reunion in conversation, wine, songs, poems, and flutes. As they fraternize, each medium layers associations to assuage the pining that plagues them both. The cups of wine accompanying manly gifts of a black horse and a flute speak to a love the narrator claims "would be impossible" to relate (*tsukisubeku mo araneba, nakanaka katahashi mo e manebazu*).⁷⁸ The surfeit of exchanges, which culminate with the "fine flute of considerable renown" (*imijiki fue no na ari keru*), stoke and sublimate desire between the men.⁷⁹ Recalling how they piped away merrily on flutes in the shared carriage ride following their tiff in Suetsumuhana's yard, this recurrence of the motif appends a vestige of that bliss to this sad bestowal of keepsakes.

Dawn dissolves their night together; the men part as geese in flight remind them of the arrows leading home. Such strict lines chafe as this exilic interval lends reprieve from courtly protocol, allowing them to savor one another's presence beyond the Capital's purview. The efficient formation of flight paths countermands the unrushed, circuitous luxury Genji and Tō no Chūjō reveled in all night. We see the poetic motif of geese flying wing to wing revised in this environment—past its heterosexual provenance. Tō no Chūjō's reply, "*A lone crane, adrift, forsaken amidst the clouds, now echoes my cries: still yearning for that old friend I soared beside, our wings linked [tsubasa narabeshi tomo wo kohitsutsu]*," substitutes a male companion for the female lover usually eulogized with such an image.⁸⁰ Normally, the "aligned geese" motif resonates as the ultimate symbol of a lifelong partnership between a man and a woman. However, this tweaked notion of flying wing to wing deploys the image of the timelessly pure crane to evoke the agonizing duration of the men's separation, made more painful by Tō no Chūjō's lofty location "amidst the clouds" (*kumoi ni*; i.e., in the Capital), far from Genji's Suma dwelling. That Genji and Tō no Chūjō invoke these associations here, as they prepare to part ways, emphasizes their lasting affection for one another: "[Tō no Chūjō] answered, 'I now so often regret, after all, having enjoyed the undeserved privilege of your friendship!'"⁸¹ We soon learn that "Tō no Chūjō's departure did not go at all smoothly, and the lingering grief of his returning home left Genji gazing off more and more sorrowfully until the day finished."⁸²

Whereas Genji's earlier interactions with Tō no Chūjō in the Capital displayed a rivalrous edge, that subsides here in exile. The men neglect games like *go* and backgammon to spend the night not competing but affectionately talking, drinking, and sharing poetry. This altered temperament intersects with Tsukahara Tetsuo's assertion regarding *The Tales of Ise* that "the Heian nobility, bound by a bureaucratic system and forced to forfeit its humanity, was able to realize its humanity outside the bounds of the logic of a political system. If erotic adventure represented the recuperation of humanity between the sexes, then friendship represented the recuperation of humanity between members of the same sex."⁸³ Tsukahara's observation highlights the desirability an exilic space like Suma might possess, despite its being tied to dispossession, that is, the prospect of indulging "humanity" to an extent inaccessible in the Capital. But while we should avoid a paranoid anticipation that all same-sex friendships harbor erotic aspirations, we should also not unduly partition homosocial desire's ample continuum of possibilities—platonic, erotic, and otherwise. Displaced from his seat of masculine privilege within the Capital, Genji has been reoriented so that his gendered habits slacken to allow for other styles of contact, as his strength and rapport with his men attests. But Tō no Chūjō's visit marks a turning point. We can read Genji's incremental openness with and physical exposure to his lesser, nearer-to-hand comrades as having paved the way for this most intimate encounter of his exile.

The reverberations of this metaphorical turning point physically reorient male bodies. Specifically, we see "Genji's friend set out in haste, with many a backward glance." The repeated act of twisting to look back at the beloved object—throughout the process of its abandonment—stands out. At one level, this turning signifies an ambivalence about staying with Genji or leaving him, even as Tō no Chūjō's sensitivity to rumor ultimately wins out. However, at another level, the iterative intermittency of the turns discloses an instability in the normative mores that call him home. To return straight and steady, like the regimented geese, would signal a certain faith in the validity of these conventions. But desire interrupts that route. Transpiring in the interval between home and exile, the turns highlight suppressed contingencies. The turns are insistent and, importantly, seem to emerge spontaneously. Along Suma's shoreline, they accrue like granules to raise doubts about the spatial and sexual configurations installed by the legislating center. Consequently, Tō no Chūjō's tentative gesture foregrounds the contrapuntal impulse homosocial yearning emits against mandates to quarantine deviance and enforce cruel distances.

A heart-rending visit from his favorite male companion leaves Genji "gazing off more and more sorrowfully." Yet it is the reunion with this loving man that makes Genji ponder all he has lost and, as the chapter ends, stiffens his resolve to escape exile:

Seated there in the brilliance of the day, he displayed a beauty beyond words. The ocean stretched unruffled into the distance [*umi no omote uraura to nagiwatarite*],

and his thoughts wandered over what had been and what might be. . . . When Genji, too, briefly dropped off to sleep, a being he did not recognize came to him, saying, “You have been summoned to the palace. Why do you not come?” He woke up and understood that the Dragon King of the sea, a great lover of beauty, must have his eye on him [*miiretaru*]. So eerie a menace made the place where he was now living intolerable.⁸⁴

Genji’s sorrow at losing Tō no Chūjō leads his mind to wander, his ruminations conferred a wide berth by “the ocean stretch[ing] unruffled into the distance.” The expanse of such a placid space summons contrary thoughts of livelier, tighter quarters, such as the Chinese house in which they traded verses or the rollicking carriage they shared leaving Suetsumuhana’s estate. While the textural juxtaposition of the Suma residence’s architecture and elements of Genji’s outfit suggests an escalating desire, this fresh calm implies desire’s abatement. In its capacious smoothness, the sea invites thoughts to unfurl across its surface while reminding Genji of unceasing absence.

Still dumbstruck by Tō no Chūjō’s departure, Genji confronts a moment of unfettered possibility, an interval lacking any clear or imposed telos. The charged, ephemeral intimacy shared during his reunion with Tō no Chūjō has left Genji a blank slate of sorts, stripped of routine aspirations, unable or unwilling to move forward, and stranded “at a crossroads of unknowing” (*yukuhe mo shiranu ni*). The ambiguity narrated here lets us wonder about the erotic potential of “what might be” (*yukusaki*, literally “[future] destination”) as a fierce storm hits and “the sea gleamed like a silken quilt beneath the play of lightning. . . . [Genji and his men] barely managed to struggle back, feeling as though a bolt might strike them at any moment. . . . and the rain drove down hard enough to pierce what it struck [*harameki otsu*].”⁸⁵ This explosion of violent weather manifests an eruption of sexual tension that had been building since Genji first reached Suma. With the texture of crashing waves, electric fear of being pierced at any moment, and the undulation of the sea’s silken quilt, the landscape itself seems to convulse vicariously to simulate the liberating rupture anticipated as Genji’s thoughts wander.

The storm underscores homosocial bonds and homoerotic subtext with unprecedented potency. It unites the men—regardless of status—in shared purpose to redirect their energies toward home. Genji’s dream extends the storm’s erotic outpouring by introducing the penetrating gaze (*miiretaru*) of the Dragon King’s desirous eye. This final convergence of Tō no Chūjō’s visit, the storm, and the dream consummates the multifaceted homosociality that has infused Suma since day one. While the Dragon King’s lustful scrutiny of the overexposed Genji precipitates his decision to leave Suma, we can’t ignore the languorous interval savored between Genji and Tō no Chūjō just prior to this upheaval. Genji’s reluctance to see his companion leave is what triggers his own epiphany to quit Suma. In this regard, male-male intimacy both thrives in exile and amplifies the desire to exit exile and foster such relations in less precarious settings. Hence the stormy

climax reads as queer not for its homoerotic tenor but rather for how it literalizes embodied contingency: the brutal layering of dislocations protagonists suffer as intimacies are broken and rebuilt.

CONCLUSION: EXTENDING THE QUEER TURN IN EXILE'S EXPANSE

Genji's exile at Suma demonstrates how homosocial intimacy plays out at two levels. First, this intimacy emerges as a practice of intertextual homosociality in which exile induces a desire for closeness that requires the citation of masculine textual precedents. As Genji attempts to come to terms with being cast out of the Capital and abandoned at Suma, he looks desperately to the infamous men who have preceded him in exile. The exilic topos of Suma evokes an archive of poetic references that help orient Genji in this foreign place. Through a poetic tissue of citations, Genji is able to soften the edges of his alienation and establish a textual connection to the natural landscape to which he is subjected. Exile heightens Genji's sensitivity to the imbricated materiality of text and place. By composing poetry akin to that of his literary forebears and painting his heart out along the gorgeous shore, Genji tries both to root himself in these new environs and to assert mastery over them with his artistic prowess. These attempts at mediation offer a means of recuperating something of the privilege lost on banishment from the Capital.

Genji's exile at Suma also shows how dispossession and exposure within a marginal space reorient social relations. Thus the second way homosocial intimacy plays out involves an unprecedented degree of physical exposure to the natural elements, other men's gazes, and their desire for closeness. The disorientation of exile brings Genji physically and emotionally closer to lower-status men particularly. Stripped of rank and the formal costumes that go with it, Genji is tossed into a liminal space in which dear companions and passing seamen may lay eyes on him more or less unhindered. This exposure stirs homoerotic desire and lays the ground for Genji's heart-rending paintings. When his exile is over, these exceptional images convey every ounce of his suffering to politically vindicate him within the context of a life-altering competition on his tortuous return to the Capital:

The Left [Genji's daughter's team] had one more turn [in the picture contest's final round], and when the Suma scrolls appeared, [Tō no Chūjō's] heart beat fast [*on-gokoro sawagi ni keri*]. His side, too, had saved something special for last, but this, done at undisturbed leisure by a genius at the art, was beyond anything. Everyone wept, His Highness the first among them. Genji's paintings revealed with perfect immediacy, far more vividly than anything they had imagined during those years when they pitied and grieved for him, all that had passed through his mind, all that he had witnessed, and every detail of those shores that they themselves had never seen. He had added here and there lines in running script, in Chinese or Japanese,

and although these did not yet make it a true diary, there were such moving poems among them that one wanted very much to see more. No one thought of anything else. Emotion and delight prevailed, now that all interest in the other paintings had shifted to these . . . the Left had won.⁸⁶

In Jonathan Stockdale's reading of this scene, the audience's tears signify sympathy for Genji's plight: "He has heightened the affinity of those present for Genji and his faction" and, through his artistic command, perhaps made the audience feel "sentiments of affinity toward other paradigmatic figures of exile."⁸⁷ However, while the diary certainly transmits something of Genji's personal exilic experience, we also notice the trace of paranoia emerging in this venue where private, peripheral expressions are revealed publicly. For before delight prevails, we perceive the quickening pulse of the man who stole away from the Capital to visit Genji in exile. Tō no Chūjō's quiver of alarm at what will be divulged in this public space vibrates as a vestige of the anxiety aroused by his sleepless night at Genji's side when, despite his pleasure, "the Captain was sensitive to rumor after all, and he made haste to leave."⁸⁸ Even within a context in which male-male sexual relations weren't uncommon, this climbing pulse suggests fears of some secret excess being outed—not the content of the men's closeness in exile per se but rather the crime of breaching courtly protocols by visiting Genji.

This scene displays the potency of affective forces that circulate along homosocial routes. Long after Genji's exile has ended, the "perfect immediacy" of his artwork attests to how well the residual yearnings of that period have been preserved through aesthetic mediation. We should therefore read the audience's "want[ing] to see more" of the intensely personal record as symptomatic of the record's capacity to give vent to the desires vitalizing its sheets. As Genji prepares to unsheathe his Suma journal, his "looks were such that one would have gladly seen him as a woman."⁸⁹ The return of this desirous phrasing in the "Eawase" chapter refreshes tinges of the eroticism of "Suma."⁹⁰

The experience of exile impelled Genji to assemble his overpowering archive of pure feeling. Queer exposure he experienced in banishment redoubles the affective intensity of his compositions such that, when he is transported back into the heart of courtly life, they land with indisputable political impact even though "these did not yet make it a true diary." Qualities like the object's formal definition or veracity matter little when the content so overflows generic conventions. The off-line bearing of the efforts at aesthetic sublimation testifies to the profuse sensations experienced in exile. The Suma archive's unmatched value stems from an oblique style of aesthetic mediation that exudes powerfully moving queer traces while strategically withholding full disclosure of them. Thus the paintings, which exhibit "here and there lines in running script, in Chinese or Japanese," embed inscriptive traces whose variation and discontinuity register the ebb and flow of a mutable queerness elicited along Suma's fraught shore.⁹¹

It is here that Tō no Chūjō's backward glances toward Genji come to matter most. How should we dwell with those parting glimpses? As daybreak quickens pulses, those bittersweet pivots dilate our perception. They alert us not only to the gravitational pull of shame but also to shame's inability to fully circumscribe the movements of queer longing. This is a longing not for sexual intercourse between men but rather for a space and time not delimited by norms devoted to sustaining shame as a means of social reproduction and political control. The secrecy and urgency with which Genji and Tō no Chūjō rendezvous at Suma seems almost to imply that the political shame of exile is a pretext for a degree of male-male intimacy impossible to indulge otherwise and elsewhere. But this might allow us to reclaim shame for its generative, if not unequivocally positive, repercussions. For what blossoms outside the Capital are affections, yearnings, and a latent receptivity only made possible as a product of shame's propulsive, vitalizing energy.

Indeed, we might read the intermittent pivots as manifesting a queer impulse that worries the superficial stability of straight, unidirectional routines at moments in which the diminished subject transitions across a spatial boundary. We saw this happen at Suetsumuhana's house, in the suitors' friction at her frayed fence, and similar twists surfaced in the "Yūgao" chapter, when "Genji could only look back time and again, his breast brimming with anguish as he rode off. Along the dew-drenched route, he felt like he hadn't a clue where he was, set adrift within an abnormally dense morning fog. *Yūgao looks as she did when alive, lying there in that crimson robe of mine from when we traded ours.*"⁹² The matching phrasing in both instances of looking backward (*kaherimi nomi*) likens bereavement to the loss of having one's beloved companion return to the Capital, just as the exchange of robes before Genji's lover died recalls the gift giving he and Tō no Chūjō performed before parting at Suma.

This confluence shows how homosocial separation mimics mourning's gestures. The reappearance of backward turns at Suma begs comparison with death's aftermath. The turns accent continuity along a spectrum spanning heterosexual and male-male desires and connote congruence between homosocial and heterosocial losses. Moreover, this parallel movement suggests that when one experiences the metaphorical social death of exile, the added deprivation of a beloved's presence can send the subject reeling as though wracked by an actual demise.

And perhaps something does truly perish at Suma. The intense, noncompetitive interaction savored among men there suggests styles of homosociality far less hostile than at court. Here, my interpretation recalls Ellis Hanson's claim that "faced with the depressing realization that people are fragile and the world hostile, a reparative reading focuses not on the exposure of political outrages that we already know about but rather on the process of reconstructing a sustainable life in their wake."⁹³ When Tō no Chūjō looks back, we should apprehend this gesture as him unsuccessfully mourning the loss of a homosocial intimacy not

wed to the preservation of dominative paradigms or crippling asymmetries. For all its drawbacks, exile also hosts development of a reparative atmosphere. While in no way devoid of inequalities that trail the men outside the Capital, Suma's permissive expanse nevertheless obviates much of the violence germane to court life, making a fuller range of relations possible.⁹⁴ Returning to the notion of exile as a space of failed aristocratic masculinity, we watch vicious courtly habits wane. Alas, the patriarchal territorialism that awaits Genji back home will revive them. But the night shared with Tō no Chūjō marks a momentary lapse in those strictures that is unique to the exile of "Suma."

Looking toward the next chapter, I want to stress the backward turns as a hinge that connects queer mediation and melancholic mourning. I examine how the sons of Genji and Tō no Chūjo extend the trajectory of homosocial intimacies pioneered by their fathers. The pivot backward returns in this context of grieving, as aural and haptic mediations of loss sculpt mourning's queer contour.