Images from the Past: Intertextuality in Japanese Premodern Literature

edited by
Carolina Negri and Pier Carlo Tommasi

Venezia
Edizioni Ca' Foscari - Venice University Press
2022

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Edizioni Ca' Foscari
Fondazione Università Ca' Foscari | Dorsoduro 3246 | 30123 Venezia
https://edizionicafoscari.unive.it | ecf@unive.it

1st edition August 2022
ISBN 978-88-6969-608-4 [ebook]
ISBN 978-88-6969-609-1 [print]

The volume has been published with the financial support of The Japan Foundation.

Images from the Past: Intertextuality in Japanese Premodern Literature / edited by Carolina Negri and Pier Carlo Tommasi — 1. ed. — Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2022. — xiv + 188 p.; 23 cm. — (Ca' Foscari Japanese Studies; 19, 6). — ISBN 978-88-6969-609-1.

URL https://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/it/edizioni/libri/978-88-6969-609-1/
DOI http://doi.org/10.30687/978-88-6969-608-4

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Intertextual Intersections in Late Edo-Period Prose Literature

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Abstract This article aims to reconsider the intertextual relations surrounding *Tsubosumire* (The Violet in Pot), published in 1794 and reprinted at different times with different formats and titles. On the one hand, it seeks to stimulate a discussion on how intertextuality is to be intended when studying Edo texts, and to what extent *shukō* as a working tool for literary criticism is effective. On the other hand, while attempting an interpretive reading of *Tsubosumire*'s intertextual intersections, it traces the yet little explored links between *sharebon* narrative material and other literary manifestations of the late eighteenth century.

Keywords Intertextuality. Edo literature. Fantastic literature. Yomihon. Sharebon.

Summary 1 *Tsubosumire* as a Place of Intersections. – 2 *Tsubosumire* and 'Source Studies'. – 3 Intertextual Reading and 'Source Studies'. – 4 Reading *Tsubosumire*'s Intertextuality.

1 *Tsubosumire* as a Place of Intersections

The objective of this paper is to analyse *Tsubosumire* 壺菫 (The Violet in Pot, 1794), which is acknowledged as being one of the first attempts to write a fantastic long-story or novel in Edo 江戸, from the standpoint of so-called intertextuality. Nowadays *Tsubosumire* is a little known text despite having been published under different titles at least three times in the thirty years spanning 1794 and 1823 (Kigoshi 2008, 28). Therefore, we can assume that it attracted a fairly consistent readership in the late Tokugawa era (1603-1867) era before being relatively forgotten. The first edition was pub-

Edizioni Ca'Foscari

Ca' Foscari Japanese Studies 19 | Arts and Literature 6
e-ISSN 2610-9425 | ISSN 2610-8992
ISBN [ebook] 978-88-6969-608-4 | ISBN [print] 978-88-6969-609-1

Peer review | Open access

Submitted 2021-12-13 | Accepted 2022-03-21 | Published 2022-08-30
© 2022 Pallone | 4.0 International Public License
DOI 10.30687/978-88-6969-608-4/005

lished as a *hanshibon* 半紙本 (half-folio book) text in five volumes by Edo Bakurochō sanchōme 江戸馬喰町三丁目 publisher, Wakabayashi Seibei 若林清兵衛, and notwithstanding the colophon announcing a sequel, this would appear to never have been issued. In the following year, it was reprinted as a three-city edition (in the colophon, the names of Kyōto publisher Yamamoto Heizaemon 山本平左衛門 and Ōsaka publisher Shibukawa Yozaemon 渋川与左衛門 follow Wakabayashi's name, cf. Ōtaka, Kondō 2000, 690). In 1797, it was published as a *chūhon* 中本 (middle size book) text in five volumes under the new title of *Kaidan konogoro zōshi* 怪談[コノゴロ]草紙 (A Booklet of Ghost Stories of Recent Times) (Kurashima 1992, 470-2). Later, a new version of this text was released in the *hanshibon* format under the title of *Kidan nasake no futasujimichi* 奇談情之二筋道 (Fork in the Road of Love: A Strange Story, 1823), with specially carved illustrations, and although considered a rare book, the slight differences amongst the remaining copies allow us to infer that different impressions of this version existed (Kigoshi 2008, 29-30). No information remains of who the author is: some propose his identity lies in his pen name of Minamoto Atsumoto 源温故 (as per the signature at the end of the preface in literary Sinitic), others suggest he could be a certain Aritomi 蟻登美, whose signature is on the Japanese preface. Nor can we ascertain the identity of the original illustrator, Shōjusai Tsunekage 松樹斎常蔭.

Looking briefly at its content, the first four volumes of the 1794 version recount the story of a young samurai, Heijirō 平次郎, who is intimately involved with Katsuura 勝浦, a courtesan, whom he promised to ransom. However, later he is told that Ofune お舟, the daughter of his lord, has fallen in love with him and now being critically ill, the only way he can save her life is to marry her. In the last chapter of the novel the *kaidan* 怪談 (ghost story) element is finally exploited. Notwithstanding Heijirō's reluctance, his comrades go to the brothel to talk to the courtesan and ask her to forget her lover. She loses her mind and curses Ofune, later appearing to Heijirō's comrades as a flying sphere of fire. After the courtesan's suicide, Heijirō's young wife is possessed by the spirit of Katsuura and falls ill and dies. Heijirō then decides to take vows.

Tsubosumire stands at many crossroads in Tokugawa literature: it contributes to blurring the boundaries of the *chūhon* and *hanshibon* formats, as well as the so-called *ninjōbon-sharebon* 人情本・洒落本 (sentimental books-witty books) and *yomihon* 読本 (reading books) 'genres', and this can be demonstrated by the fact that this same text was republished in various formats under a variety of titles. The different titles present it respectively as a homage to classical Japanese culture (1794 edition), a true account of a ghostly story (1797 edition) and a summary of the strange developments of a fatal love liaison (1823 edition). These different editions certainly served the

publishing house agenda in matching the exterior characteristics of the books with the publishing trends of the moment irrespective of what the actual content was, whilst at the same time offering readers various clues as to what to expect and the elements in the text on which they should focus. Along with the title, other elements of the paratext also change accordingly: 1794's prefaces are not included in subsequent extant versions, completely obliterating the explicit classical reminiscences from the book; as Kigoshi (2008, 31) also highlights, the 1823 version presents the first two lines of a Chinese poetic sequence by Tang (618-907) female poet Liu Yuan 劉媛 (dates unknown), entitled "Lament at the Changmen Palace" (*Changmen yuan* 長門怨, included in the 801st *juan* 巻 of the *Complete Collection of Tang Poetry* [*Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩]). The poem intones the sorrow of a woman abandoned by her lover and its lexicon is highly reminiscent of classical Chinese *topoi* on love, resentment and sorrow, such as the flood of tears that never ends and the image of the rain on the parasol tree, which brings to mind a famous verse from Bai Juyi's 白居易 (772-846) *Changhenge* 長恨歌 (Song of Everlasting Sorrow). The substitution of the allusions to *Genji* 源氏 and his love affairs and the ruminations on ghosts, in favour of the Chinese discourse on female abandonment and sorrow may just enhance the effect of styling the text as a *hon'an* 翻案, a transposition of a Chinese love story into a Japanese environment or, as Kigoshi (2008, 31) suggests, it may strengthen the focus on the sentimental theme, harmonising the title with the requests of the book market.

2 *Tsubosumire* and 'Source Studies'

The various titles and presentations of *Tsubosumire* and its consequent adaptability to the book market hint that deciphering the variety of themes and tones the novel is clothed in has been a crucial endeavour to understand how it works as a literary text. *Tsubosumire* can be defined as a place of intertextual intersections and, in fact, researches conducted in Japan mainly focus on the relationship the novel bears to other works of literature. Scholars have identified a wide number of sources that could have been drawn on by the author. To make a long story short, Ōhashi (2018) recently identified a *kobon* 小本 (small size book), *Rinbeki yawa* 隣壁夜話 (Night Talk from the Next Chamber, 1780). The first of these five short tales precisely resembles the last part of the plot of *Tsubosumire*, thus demonstrating that the author may have borrowed or even copied the plot from this source. Previous studies, however, found other similarities with other possible sources: Yokoyama (1974, ch. 1, § 1.2) links it with a Buddhist-themed story published in Kyōto, *Kaidan kien* 怪談奇縁 (Strange Liaisons. A Ghost Story, 1785); Miura (2002) later problematizes this

link, focusing more on Chinese and classical sources, such as the *chuanqi* 傳奇 (transmission of the strange) *Huo Xiaoyu zhuan* 霍小玉傳 (Life of Huo Xiaoyu, ninth century) and *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The Tale of Genji, early eleventh century). After all, the preface of the text pays an explicit homage to "Murasaki's *monogatari*" (*Murasaki no monogatari* 紫のものかたり, Ōtaka, Kondō 2000, 338). A relation has also been found by Ōtaka (in Otaka, Kondo 2000) with *Ugetsu monogatari* 雨月物語 (Tales of Rain and Moonlight, 1776) – also Miura (2002) supports the idea that *Ugetsu monogatari*, the tale "Kibitsu no kama" 吉備津の釜 (The Cauldron of Kibitsu) in particular, may have influenced *Tsubosumire* in adopting narrative elements from *Huo Xiaoyu zhuan* –[1] and with another *kobon*, entitled *Geisha yobukodori* 妓者呼子鳥 (Geisha and the Lamenting Cuckoo, 1778).

To sum up, in the last fifty years several texts have been considered by Japanese scholars as *shutten* 出典, *tenkyo* 典拠, or *genkyo* 源拠 (source) or *shukō* 趣向 (inspiration) for *Tsubosumire*. In these analyses, intertextuality is intended as a verbal and narrow relation between historical artefacts, namely as a conscious loan of semantic or expressive content, often referred to as 'tapping into a source' in Edo studies, and the recognition of possible *genkyo*s and *shukō*s for any text seems to have been the most appreciated methodology when studying Edo fantastic literature. This paper aims to cast doubt on the internal coherence of this terminology and the methodology it entails and further endeavours to explore a more profound reconsideration of this relation between texts so as to assess whether these relations and borrowings are significant when scrutinising *Tsubosumire* or any other text in Edo literature.

It then becomes clear that rather than undergoing an intertextual reading, *Tsubosumire* has been analysed within the framework of so-called 'source studies', or better '*shukō* studies', which certainly have a traditional significance and are highly relevant in the Japanese tradition of literary criticism. As is well known, the term *shukō* as used by Edo authors, derives its meaning both from the *shukō*-polarity of the '*sekai* 世界 vs *shukō*' dyad of the theatrical lexicon and from the poetic terminology, where the term means the 'original idea' or 'gimmick' behind the poem. Accordingly, in Edo studies *shukō* came to mean two different and somehow quite opposite things: on the one hand, *shukō* is a new idea that enhances the perception of a literary text as being new within its 'genre' – incidentally, the term 'genre' and its usage within Edo studies is utterly prob-

1 Tokuda (1995a; 1995b) has already put into relation *Ugetsu monogatari*'s stories "Asaji ga yado" 浅茅が宿 (The House in the Reeds) and "Kibitsu no kama" 吉備津の釜 with *Huo Xiaoyu zhuan* 霍小玉傳: the Chinese text is defined as a possible *funpon* 粉本 (sketch) or source of *shukō* 趣向 for the two ghost stories.

lematic as already pointed out by Nagashima (1999) –; on the other hand it is the 'literary borrowing of a narrative mechanism', thus, indicating not the 'original element of a story but the 'inspiration' which triggered the 'characteristic elements' of the story.[2] The first meaning, for example, is easily found in the reviews of literary texts, *gesaku hyōbanki* 戯作評判記, where the authors highlighted which *shukō* (or original idea) was worthy of being noted in each category. This nuance of the term may obscure the hypertextual relations at stake in the creative process, but it is evident that here, a dyad of '*sekai* vs *shukō*' is still active: the *sekai* on which the *shukō* is applied is the web of conventions of the 'genre'. Therefore, the *shukō* is the novel element that makes a particular recurrent arrangement of narrative content evolve into something new. One could even say that literary forms such as *kaiwatai sharebon* 会話体洒落本 (dialogic *sharebon*), urban *kibyōshi* 黄表紙 (illustrated short stories with yellow covers), and in later years, conventional *ninjōbon* and *hizakurigemono* 膝栗毛物 (reprises of *Hizakurige* narratives) are a series of sequential rewritings, where every new work is an adaptation of the previous one and should be analysed as such. Reading the definition of *shukō* attributed to Chikamatsu Monzaemon 近松門左衛門 (1653-1724) in the preface of *Naniwa Miyage* 難波土産 (Souvenir from Naniwa, 1738), it leads us to believe that the dialogue between previous works and the new ones is the same:

> *Shukō* works this way too: while resembling the original, a new work should also have sections that only roughly follow the original. This is after all what art is and what people find enjoyable. (Saltzman-Li 2010, 131)

However, Edo authors often make use of the term *shukō* with the other meaning of 'inspiration from a previous work', and this meaning is prevalent in today's Edo literary studies. For example, in the manuscript version of *Kaidan oi no tsue* 怪談老の杖 (Ghost Stories: The Old Man's Staff), Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝 writes this record about a story of a resentful second wife who cursed the first wife's grave: "The inspiration of *Geisha yobukodori* is based on this work [*Geisha yobukodori no shukō wa kore ni motozukite* 妓者呼子、鳥の趣向は、是に本づきて]" (Kokusho kankōkai 1913, 240). Several years later, in the incipit of *Kuruwa zōdan* 廓雑談 (Various Stories from the Pleasure Quarter, 1826), Hanasanjin writes: "This story of olden times functioning as a seed | source of inspiration" (*ko no ikkai no monogatari o shukō no tane toshite* 此一回の物語りを趣向の種として) (*Kuruwa zōdan* I, f. 6*v*),

2 I agree with Moretti (2000, 59), who highlights the variety of nuances the different occurrences of the term *shukō* have in Edo materials.

which refers to some gossip about a love triangle that escalated into a vengeful ghost story. As these two examples show, the term is very often linked with others indicating a 'literary borrowing' (*motozuku* 本づく 'to be based on', *tane* 種 'seed') and its very meaning in some cases shifts from 'original mechanism' to 'mechanism inspired by something else' even when there are no other terms suggesting this idea of borrowing.

The main question here is that this concept of *shukō*, along with the other terms often used, such as *tenkyo* or *genkyo* or *shutten*, although inferring an idea of 'borrowing', do not imply a real intertextual effect for the text. In fact, being for the most part intended as a source of inspiration, the old text does not directly trigger a dialogue with the new text or plot and, furthermore, it is unclear as to whether the readers were aware of this. Hence, it pertains to the text as an historical artefact rather than as a literary piece.

3 Intertextual Reading and 'Source Studies'

All in all, it is expedient to think that previous studies on *Tsubosumire* analyse their object as an historical artefact, demanding it be a once forever determined unit of sense, which is historically included within a process of affiliation through semantic borrowings from one or more different sources. These analyses are not problematic *per se* except when one seeks to engage with a reading of *Tsubosumire* as a literary text. This opposition between historical artefact and literary text must not be interpreted as a difference in the quality of the texts or in their engagement with the plurality of sense – it does not equate the opposition between 'work' and 'text', or *texte lisible* and *texte scriptible* in Barthes;[3] nor does it necessarily adhere to the traditional opposition between artefact and aesthetic object styled by Mukařovský (cited in 2015, 300-3), a foundational one for modern reception theories, inasmuch as it ultimately entails a distinction between the idea of decoding the text *vis-à-vis* and that of interpreting the text, as Bottiroli (2006, 106) insightfully demonstrates. Ōhashi and the other scholars engaged with *Tsubosumire* do not seek to decode the stable meaning of the artefact but only to frame it in a process of affiliation, positing it in historically determined literary categories and relations with other texts, only described by criteria such as similarities between plots and other details. On the one hand, Yokoyama (1974) speaks about influence and similarities, and

3 See respectively Young 1981, 31-47, although page 43 interestingly styles how historical artefacts are commonly studied before the development of textual analysis; Marrone 2016, 181-6 for an analysis; and Barthes 2002, 2-15 in particular.

in doing so his analysis may explain why the work is as it is; however, he does not address what it is like. Very much like Yokoyama, Ōtaka (2003) deals with superficial similarities and does not touch on how to read or interpret the text.[4] And the same methodology is evident in Ōhashi's article, which eminently addresses surface similarities and discrepancies among portions of the plot of the different titles she brings into discussion. Miura seems to differentiate between sources (*genkyo*) and inspirations (*shukō*) for *Tsubosumire*, and he explicitly states that *Genji monogatari* is to be considered the source of the *shukō*, functioning also as a source of signification invoked by the author himself:

> it is made clear that, at least in the description of the mysterious phenomena caused by the vengeful ghost of Katsuura in the fifth volume, the word usage of *Genji monogatari*'s 'Yūgao' 夕顔 Chapter is applied, and the author himself demands his readers to read it as the *shukō*. (Miura 2002, 28-9)

In this way, although the relation between the text and *Genji monogatari* is credited by Miura with having the function of giving literary depth to the mysterious description and to complete the portrayal of Katsuura's sorrow and the inevitability of her vengeance (Miura 2002, 29), this is accepted by Miura only in light of the authorial words in the paratext where he explicitly alludes to the Heian (794-1185) masterpiece. What happens then to the other main editions of the text, where the peritextual apparatus is effaced and substituted with one summoning a different literary discourse? Should the 'presence' of *Genji monogatari* in the text be considered as diminished or of less significance when there is no authorial voice pointing it out? In his preliminary definition of the concept of genre-function, Bawarshi (2003, 26-9) builds on an example by Heather Dubrow proving that a change in the title of a book may affect the reader's attitude towards a text, because genres (whereof titles are often transparent tags) "function as sites of action that locate readers in positions of interpretation". Anyway, although titles and other peritextual elements may direct the reader's reception of a text, casting light on some aspects and overshadowing others, the presence of other texts in the text is still active: it may be overlooked when reading the text, but not when interpreting it, to use Bottiroli's (2006) difference between – virtually infinite – doxastic readings *versus* interpretations.

4 Reviewing a later collection of essays by Ōtaka, which include Ōtaka (2003), also Kigoshi (2011, 81) strongly disapproves of Ōtaka's superficial approach in comparing texts.

4 Reading *Tsubosumire*'s Intertextuality

By and large, previous critical literature concerning *Tsubosumire* may apparently be styled as pertaining to traditional source studies or influence studies but it is evident that these studies mainly address the alleged history of its affiliation without dealing with any literary aspect whatsoever. Therefore, if they undisputedly fail to comply with a so-called intertextual theory,[5] they also do not completely attain to the 'source studies' trend styled by Hutcheon (1986) and apologetically by Quirk (1993; 1995), amongst others.

As I previously mentioned, according to Ōhashi, the principal source for *Tsubosumire* is the first story of *Rinbeki yawa* and this intertextual relation lies in the striking resemblances between the narrative structure of the last part of the novel with the plot of the short story. However, it must be said that the preface of *Tsubosumire* quite openly states that the text is just a rewriting of a story once heard in the past (Ōtaka, Kondō 2000, 338). It is not rare to find this sort of framing in prefaces and paratexts connected with ghost stories and, in fact, the prefacer of *Rinbeki yawa* himself confesses that he is just reporting ghost stories he overheard one night being recounted to others in the room next to his (Mizuno et al. 1978-88, 9: 321-3). All in all, to preserve the analysis of the perspective of the historical production of *Tsubosumire* as an artefact, these vague revelations of the source may not be completely fictitious considering that stories like this are said to be based on rumours of actual incidents which occurred in the past, such as the flying sphere of the soul of the wife cursing her rival recounted in the abovementioned *Oi no tsue*, which, according to the author, is based on a true story that took place in 1722. *Kuruwa zōdan*, another example, recounts the story of a love triangle, which clearly resembles that of *Tsubosumire*, and is said to have happened in Yoshiwara 吉原 during the 1770s. Other similar stories are detectable even in diaries and collections of mysterious anecdotes recorded in the previous century. And this is without making mention of the classical repertoire of stories of female vengeance against deceitful men. In light of all this, the debate on the search for the one text that inspired the *shukō* of *Tsubosumire* appears to be rather fruitless. From the point of view of how *Tsubosumire* function as a literary text, regardless of whether it is or not the source of inspiration on which the author of *Tsubosumire* built the last part of its story, the narrative structure of *Rinbeki yawa* is not involved in a dialogue with other elements and an analysis of the intertextual links triggered by *Tsubosumire* do not bring us to *Rinbeki yawa*.

5 For a general overview of the critical stance of the principal spokespersons of intertextual reading toward source studies see Allen 2000, 36, 53, 69-74, 120-1, 135.

Considering the text from an historical or a contextual point of view, it must be noticed that the author, but even more the publisher, are orphans of the Kansei (1789-1801) censorships in search of a new field of fiction to explore. Wakabayashi Seibei and Kazusaya Ribei 上総屋利兵衛, as Ōtaka (Ōtaka, Kondō 2000, 679; on the latter also see Kigoshi 2002) precisely points out, were admonished for their activity of *sharebon* publishers in the nineties and therefore, they were struggling to find new products to sell to the same readership (see also Nakamura 1956; Tanahashi 2007; and Suzuki 2017, in particular 264-72). In this regard, *Tsubosumire* is not a work participating in a homogeneous trend but stands as a hybrid text with both conservative and innovative aspects when compared with other texts both from the *yomihon* corpus and *kaidan* literature. And the text, as *Ugetsu monogatari* before it, is enriched by several intertextual links that ennoble the characterisation of its protagonists and the love triangle they are involved in. Whether Miura's hypotheses that *The Tale of Genji* offered the *shukō* for the story is true or not, it is undeniable that the text builds on some famous scenes from *The Tale of Genji* to give depth to the story and strengthen the overall architecture of the narrative built on a new paradigm in the characterisation of the protagonists.

Ōtaka (in Ōtaka, Kondō 2000, 677) notices that, while *Ugetsu*'s and most of pre-1790s *kaidanshū*'s 怪談集 (collection of ghost stories) male protagonists are young men who are described as unworldly, or incapable of getting by in this society (*wataraigokoro no nai* 渡らひ心のない), their immaturity and propensity to follow their emotions without considering the consequences finally leads them to happen on a ghost vendetta and either die or redeem themselves by learning how to comply with the rules of society. On the contrary, an important aspect in *Tsubosumire* is the prudence of Heijirō and his propensity to comply with the rules instead of following his heart which eventually causes the ghostly phenomenon. This difference and the novelty are highlighted within the text precisely by intertextual comparisons of classical *exempla* of integrity and masculinity, such as those between Genji's restraint in famous scenes from the Heian novel to the behaviour of the young samurai Heijirō. Heijirō is, in fact, a samurai hero who, whilst being sometimes described as emotional and indecisive (Ōtaka, Kondō 2000, 344; see also Miura 2002, 28), complies with all the rules of the world and adheres to what society and his superiors ask of him and in so doing forgets his true feelings (*ninjō* 人情) and sets in motion his tragedy.

By characterising Heijirō's behaviours with references to Genji's words and actions and by positing him in modern tableaux inspired by famous chapters of the classical novel, the text suggests the reader to consider the protagonist in a rather positive way. This interpretation is also reinforced by the fact that prospective readers of the first version of the novel were probably *literati* or well-educated men, if we consider that titles published by Wakabayashi in those years

predominantly address a public who could read classical Japanese and literary Sinitic. One could go as far as to point out possible *kokugaku* 国学 (national studies) sympathies within the group of people which produced and read the text. This also links with another innovative aspect of the plot: *Tsubosumire* overturns another convention of ghost stories, such as the cause-effect (*inga* 因果) mechanism and, in fact, functions in quite the opposite way to *Kaidan kien*, the Buddhism-inspired text Yokoyama considers as a source. Heijirō performs many good deeds in the first three volumes, such as helping a stranger who we later learn be the father of the courtesan Katsuura or demonstrating his intention to save Katsuura from her fate or devoting himself to his duties and to calligraphy. Anyway, these good deeds are not beneficial to Heijirō's destiny but only bring sorrow.

All this considered, although it may be true that the author and the publishers used *Rinbeki yawa* as a source of inspiration, this does not teach us anything about how *Tsubosumire* works as a literary text. When addressing a meaningful reference, while the reader must choose whether to keep reading or to explore it,[6] it is evident that whoever seeks to interpret the text has no alternative other than choosing both ways: triggering a dialogue or even bringing out a conflict between this displacement and the text hosting it. The case of *Tsubosumire* is fascinating not only because its web of meaningful references is wide and covers many fields of the literary world, with both *verbatim* loans from the classical repertoire, reconstructions of sentimental and witty dialogues as in eighteenth century urban Edo literature, and vivid descriptions of mysterious events which remind of some contemporary grisly illustrations of obscure phenomena. *Tsubosumire* adds to this variety of tones the intersection of different ways of reading the text suggested by its paratext, which was changed through time. For instance, the appearance of the book in the *chūhon* format (1797 edition), or with a more *au courant* title (1823 edition) certainly had the effect of widening the readership of the text, including emergent groups of readers, such as women.[7] In comparison with the prototypical heroes of the sentimental novels shaped in the nineteenth century for a female readership, Heijirō's prudent attitude may be interpreted as lack of will or strength, determining an overall negative characterisation of the protagonist. The intersection with this interpreting attitude is justified especially since *Tsubo-*

6 I refer to these well-known lines notably written by Jenny (1982, 45): "each intertextual reference is the occasion for an alternative: either one continues reading, taking it only as a segment like any other, or else one turns to the source text, carrying out a sort of intellectual anamnesis where the intertextual reference appears like a paradigmatic element that has been displaced, deriving from a forgotten structure".

7 I wish to acknowledge the anonymous referee's insightful suggestions that helped sharpen my focus on this point.

sumire, at least the first half of the novel (for instance, see chapter 2 and the affair between Katsuura and Kendayū, a wealthy but unpleasant customer of the Yamamoto house) is rich in witty or sentimental dialogues which, although expressed in classical Japanese, convey the informal atmosphere of the newborn sentimental narrative.

In lieu of a conclusion, I have summed up some considerations on how *Tsubosumire*'s web of literary allusions actually works: the text makes wide usage of *sharebon*-like dialogues enhancing a sentimental overtone; it modernises the characterisation of the male protagonist by mirroring him with classical examples of masculinity; it challenges and breaks the convention of the *inga* mechanism, by collecting false clues which do not lead to the expected results. A rereading of the intertextual web embedded in *Tsubosumire* helps us to consider this text not as a narrative which copies and expands to the long-story form of a short-story plot already exploited in the past but as a hybrid text challenging the expectation of its readership by including new and destabilising elements.

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