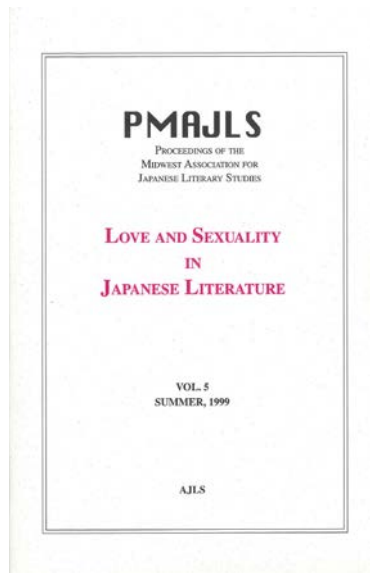"The Lover's Subject: Its Construction and Relativization in the Waka Poetry of the Heian Period"

Rein Raud

PMAJLS

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
MIDWEST ASSOCIATION FOR
JAPANESE LITERARY STUDIES

LOVE AND SEXUALITY
IN
JAPANESE LITERATURE

VOL. 5
SUMMER, 1999

AJLS

THE LOVER'S SUBJECT:
ITS CONSTRUCTION AND RELATIVIZATION IN THE WAKA POETRY OF THE HEIAN PERIOD

Rein Raud

University of Helsinki, Finland

In today's world, one has to be most cautious speaking about the simplest things: fifty or perhaps even fifteen years ago the words "love poetry" did not raise any eyebrows, but presently it seems prudent to begin any discussion of such by first explaining what is meant by "love" and by "poetry." As far as classical Japanese literature is concerned, we have little trouble with "poetry": evidently it is everything that fits into the waka pattern of 31 syllables divided according to the 5/7/5/7/7 scheme, with a syllable lacking or in excess here and there, but "love" is quite another thing. In our context, the issue has first been raised by Japanese authors such as Sakaguchi Ango,[1] who have opposed *ai* 愛 as the equivalent of romantic, classical Western-type love to *koi* 恋, the "love" of the autochtonous tradition. The difference has by now been articulated firmly enough to prevent an immediate analytical identification of the two notions. On the other hand, well-known Western analyses of sexuality and its cultural implications[2] have made it possible to distinguish between various traditions of "love" beside the classical romantic one within the Western tradition, such as *agape, ars erotica, ishq-al-muruwwa, fin amors*, as well as the mechanistic love of the enlightenment materialists and others.

At this point it seems once again reasonable to revert to the use of the term "love" as a general category for any variety of conceptualized sexual desire, at the same time remaining conscious of the cultural dependency of any particular variety of "love." After all, one can detect at least some family resemblance between all these phenomena, and it is not just limited to biological desire. Accordingly one could and should translate both *koi* and *ai* in my opinion as "love," while maintaining the differences between their specific frames of cultural reference, and, for our present purposes, "love poetry" is *koi no uta* 恋の歌 and vice versa. Just as we can understand "love" to be conceptualized desire, "love poetry" is, for most literate cultures, a most important form of textualized desire.

---

[1] See his "Ren'ai ron" 恋愛論, in: *Darakuron* 堕落論, Kadokawa shoten, Tokyo 1957/1991, 161–169.
[2] See e.g. Alan Soble, *The Structure of Love*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1990.

The differences between the various notions, or cultural encodings, of love may thus also be analyzed through the models of their textual representation. A quick comparison between the Heian *koi* and the "love" of a remotely similar cultural system, the world of the French court in the high Middle Ages, might illustrate the point.

The French courtly lover is most certainly a man. Not so much the master of a house, though, but rather a wandering young man of leisure, the descendant of the errant knight, and similarly is the object of his passions a transformation of the damsel in distress. Typically, the protagonist of a love narrative embarks on a quest through a phantasmagoric world on which he has to prove his worthiness in order to reach his goal. Love is thus the spiritual equivalent of the archetypal quest, a journey that might take a lifetime, as it did in Jauffre Rudel's case, who died, according to the legend, in the hands of his beloved Libyan princess whom he had never seen before.[3]

The lover is also the source and shell of any textual representation of love. Everything we hear of love is spoken by the lover, even if it were the words of the beloved. The woman may be elevated to heights unheard of, but she is definitely also locked up in the tower of love.[4] And she has no voice, no discursive apparatus within which she might express her own feelings herself, thus the line *Seulete sui et seulete vueil estre* (roughly translated as "Alone I am and alone I wish to be left")[5] remains a solitary cry apart from an otherwise unified chorus.

The European situation thus presents us with a clear correlation between the lover and the beloved, the seeker and the sought, the signifier and the signified. The lover is the seeker and the signifier, the beloved is the sought and also the signified. Without the woman there is nothing to signify, without the man nothing/nobody signifies.

Even at a cursory glance it is clear the situation in Heian Japan is clearly different. For the sake of simplicity, we shall assume that the referent of the word *koi* (a bundle of emotions, conventions, obligations and representations) remained the same during the entire Heian period.

---

[3]For a thorough discussion of Jauffre Rudel's legend and poetry, see L.T.Topsfield, *Troubadours and Love*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge-London, New York, Melbourne 1975, 42–69.

[4]And quite directly so in an anonymous ballad called "La dame en la tor," in: *Anthologie poétique française*, Moyen Âge 1, ed. André Mary, Garnier-Flammarion, Paris 1967, 246–252.

[5]From a poem by Christine de Pisan (1364–1431?), *Anthologie poétique française,* Moyen Âge 2, ed. André Mary, Garnier-Flammarion, Paris 1967, 177–178

Actually it was not quite exactly so, because subsequent representations always influenced the earlier layers and social processes must also have had at least a minimal bearing on the notion.

Under Heian conventions, both parties of a love affair have voice, and the position of the woman is even privileged because of Chinese influence,[6] although in the Chinese situation the topical "lonely lady" was the object of aesthetic contemplation rather than a self-expressing subject in its own right, and did not have much more real voice than in Europe. Kang-i Sun Chang has described the relation of the poetry dedicated to women to the "description of objects" style (*yongwu* 詠物) and gives us the striking example of a poet observing a beauty who looks at a painting of another beauty. Predictably, the conclusion of the poet is that the painting is superior to the real lady, since the beauty of the latter is ephemereal.[7]

In Heian *koi*, both parties are referred to with the same terms—*hito* 人 in the third person, *kimi* 君 in the second. Although the man is also here the seeker (or the visitor, to be exact), and the woman is the visited, both of them are lovers and signifiers. As a result, there are two variants of the lover's subject, one for each gender, and both approach typical love imagery in their own way. The following examples show how the recurring image of "dreams" is treated from both points of view:

Woman:
KKS XII 552 Ono no Komachi 小野小町
思ひつつ寝ればや人の見えつらむ夢と知りせば覚めざらましを

omoitsutsu	deep in thoughts of love
nureba ya hito no	I dozed off, and my love
mietsu ramu	appeared to me
yume to shiriseba	had I known it was a dream
samezaramashi wo	never would I have opened my eyes

KKS XIII 656 Ono no Komachi
うつつにはさもこそあらめ夢にさへ人目をよくと見るがわびしき

utsutsu ni wa	I wish it were so
sa mo koso arame	in reality—

---

[6]The influence of Six Dynasties Chinese poetry, particularly the Palace Style of the Liang, on 8th century Japanese waka has been explicitly proved by Konishi Jin'ichi in his "The Genesis of the Kokinshū Style," Trans. Helen C. McCullough, *HJAS* 38:1 (1978), 61–170

[7]Kang-i Sun Chang. *Six Dynasties Poetry*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey 1986, 151 and 155–156.

yume ni sae	it is so sad
hitome wo yoku to	to see his eyes
miru ga wabishiki	only in my dreams

Man:

KKS XII 558 Fujiwara no Toshiyuki　藤原敏行

恋ひわびてうち寝るなかにゆきかよふ夢の直路はうつつならなむ

koiwabite	in grief of love
uchinuru naka ni	I fall asleep and
yukikayou	walk the way
yume no tadaji wa	of dreams—oh if it were
utsutsu naranamu	as direct in reality

KKS XII 574 Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之

夢路にも露や置くらむ夜もすがら通える袖のひちてかはかぬ

yumedzi ni mo	on the roads of dreams
tsuyu ya oku ramu	dew must fall as well
yomosugara	throughout the night
kayoeru sode no	I walked there, and my sleeve
hichite kawakanu	is drenched and will not dry

Quite clearly the woman's role is to wait for the visit, and the man's role is to visit the lady, even if the meetings only take place in dreams. But sometimes the sex of the actual speaker is even irrelevant for the choice of the constructed gender of his/her texts. The examples of cross-gender poetic persona are numerous—for instance, Robert Brower and Earl Miner have shown Fujiwara no Teika "at the age of seventy expressing the feelings of a young woman passionately in love."[8]

But even though this situation remained constant throughout the Heian period, the textualizing mechanisms of early and late Heian poetry were remarkably different.

The appearance of a number of major poets coincides with the introduction of Japanese poetry matches as accepted public cultural practices in the latter half of the 9th century, and culminates in the compilation of the *Kokinwakashū* 古今和歌集 or *Kokinshū* 古今集 in the beginning of the 10th century. And this anthology is not simply a collection of poems, but also a work of skilful editorial art. The rules of association and pro-

---

[8] *Japanese Court Poetry*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1961, 271. The poem in question is *Shūi gusō* 拾遺愚草 XI 452, but there are others to be found in most collections starting with the *Kokinshū.*

gression that govern imperial waka anthologies have been noted since the ground-breaking article of Konishi Jin'ichi,[9] and recently Joshua Mostow has given the argument an additional twist, suggesting that in principle, sequences compiled by poets could be treated as independent literary works that consist entirely of quotations, that is, that they quote in full all the poems they include.[10]

Indeed, the compilation of the *Kokinshū* sanctions certain conventions of Japanese poetry and even manages to establish new ones, for instance, the carefully planned symmetry between the external cycle of seasons, and the inner cycle of emotions connected with love stories seems to derive as much from the organization of the poems in the anthology as from the possibilities offered by the Japanese language itself. Among the latter, we might note the use 9th–10th century poets make of well-known homonymies like *iro* 色 "love/color" or *aki* 秋 "autumn/boredom," as well as the less evident pun on *tokonatsu* とこ夏 "carnation" containing *toko* "bed" and *natsu* "summer."

As a result, the imagery related to seasons became strongly associated with phases of an imaginary love story, starting in spring, consummated in summer and melancholically over in autumn, as can be seen from the following examples:

KKS XI 479 Ki no Tsurayuki
山ざくら霞の間よりほのかにも見てし人こそ恋しかりけれ

yamazakura	mountain cherry blossoms
kasumi no ma yori	through the slits in the haze
honoka ni mo	a fleeting glance
miteshi hito koso	just like the one at her, with whom
koishikarikere	I have fallen in love

KKS XI 542 Anonymous
春立てば消ゆる氷の残りなく君の心はわれに解けなむ

haru tateba	when spring has come
kiyuru koori no	and the ice melts
nokori naku	without trace
kimi no kokoro wa	your heart will surely
ware ni tokenamu	melt like this for me

---

[9]"Association and Progression: Principles of Integration in Anthologies and Sequences of Japanese Court Poetry, A.D. 900–1350." *HJAS* 21, December 1958, 67–127.

[10]Joshua Mostow, *Pictures of the Heart*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu 1996, 54–55.

KKS III 167 Ōshikōchi no Mitsune 凡河内躬恒
塵をだにすゑじとぞ思ふ咲きしより妹とわが寝るとこなつの花

chiri wo dani	no dust will set
suweji to zo omou	on this flower, I thought
sakishi yori	the carnation that bloomed
imo to waga nuru	in the summer of the bed
toko-natsu no hana	I shared with my love

KKS XI 543 Anonymous
明けたてば蝉のをりはえ鳴きくらし夜は蛍の燃えこそわたれ

aketateba	when dawn comes
semi no wori hae	I turn into a cicada
nakikurashi	and weep until the evening
yoru wa hotaru no	the night, like the firely
moe koso watare	I pass in burning glow

KKS XIV 714 Sosei hōshi 素性法師
秋風に山の木の葉の移ろへば人の心もいかがとぞ思ふ

akikaze ni	in the winds of autumn
yama no ko no ha no	the leaves on the mountains trees
utsuroeba	pass away
hito no kokoro mo	what will become of the heart
ikaga to zo omou	of my beloved, I wonder

KKS XV 788 Minamoto no Muneyuki 源宗于
つれもなくなりゆく人の言の葉ぞ秋よりさきの紅葉なりける

tsure mo naku	the leaves of the words
nariyuku hito no	of the one who is growing
koto no ha zo	so cruel to me—
aki yori saki no	the tinted leaves of autumn
momidzi narikeru	that is not yet there

Other poetic devices, notably the "song-pillow" or *utamakura*, have contributed to form a certain mental space which I would like to call a chronotope, to use the Bakhtinian term, but stretching it to signify *a mental map of the space and time of the real world organized through and according to the rules of its textual representation*. The chronotope interlocks time and space in such a way that certain moments of the calendaric cycle only take place in a certain place, and conversely, certain places only exist (culturally, of course), at certain moments or periods. Obvi-

ously, the calendaric moment of the Kamo Festival in the fourth month (as well as the winter festival in the eleventh month) takes place only at the Kamo shrines. But the chronotope had far more significant implications for the poetic language. As an example, we shall have a look at the behaviour of the toponymic Yoshino 吉野 and imagery related to it in the first three imperial anthologies.[11] Table 1 shows the distribution of the poems according to thematic scrolls or declared topics in miscellaneous sections:

	春	夏	秋	冬	恋	other
Kokinshū (22)	3	0	0	6	8	5
Gosenshū (10)	3	0	0	2	2	3
Shūishū (15)	6	0	0	5	1	3

TABLE 1

The table shows a strong correlation between Yoshino and spring or winter poems, and a definite negative association between Yoshino and summer and autumn, whereas the role of the image in love poetry is declining.

Table 2 shows the occurrence of images that are repeated together with the toponymic in any of the three anthologies (the first figure shows the number of appearances, the second the percentage of Yoshino poems in the anthology that contains it (rounded to full numbers):

	山	岩	河,水,滝	雪	花	故郷	霞
Kokinshū (22)	13/59	3/14	8/36	8/36	3/14	3/14	1/5
Gosenshū (10)	9/90	0/0	2/20	4/40	2/20	0/0	0/0
Shūishū (15)	12/80	0/0	2/13	8/53	4/26	1/7	4/26

TABLE 2

Although Yoshino continued to have both mountains and a river throughout the period, the poetic significance of the river is declining and the association with mountains is strengthened. The same is true of the association with flowers and snow, thus the images which pertain to the seasons with which the toponymic correlates increase their frequency of appearance. Another distinctly "spring" image, *kasumi* 霞 "haze," which appears only once in the first two anthologies, figures prominently in the

---

[11]The calculations have been based on *Shimpen kokka taikan*, CD-Rom ban, Kadokawa shoten 新編国歌大観CD-ROM版.

Shūishū 拾遺集. It is also interesting to note that the number of poems in which two or three of these recurring images appear increases from anthology to anthology: in the *Kokinshū* it is 12 out of 22 (54%), in the *Gosenshū* 後撰集 it is 6 out of 10 (60%), and in the *Shūishū* it is 11 out of 15 (73%).

Table 3 shows the joint appearances of images in the anthologies (actual appearances out of possible ones), the bold numbers indicate that the images occur together in all possible places:

	山+花	山+雪	花+雪	河+山	河+岩	河+花
Kokinshū	3/3	7/8	2/3	2/8	2/3	0/3
Gosenshū	2/2	4/4	1/2	2/2	0/0	1/2
Shūishū	4/4	8/8	3/4	0/2	0/0	0/2

TABLE 3

It seems significant that in all anthologies the images of "blossoms" and "mountains" always appear together in conjunction with Yoshino, and the correlation between "snow" and "mountains" is almost as strong. The association is by no means general: "mountains" appears in 232 poems of the *Kokinshū*, and blossoms in 246 poems, but they only make 42 joint appearances (18% of the "mountain" poems and 17% of the "blossom" poems respectively). The same figures for all the collections, poetry matches etc. of Heian period included in the *Kokka taikan* are 15% of "mountain" poems and 16% of the "blossom" poems.[12] For "snow" the figures in the *Kokinshū* are a bit higher (26 joint appearances with "mountains" out of 66 ones altogether, i.e. 39%), but still not quite as high as in this context.

We may also note a symbiosis between "blossoms" and "snow" (no doubt derived from the "elegant confusion" of white blossoms on the trees and snow). What seems decisive, however, is the lack of correlation, in spite of one full match in the *Gosenshū*, between the "river" and the imagery the frequency of which is ascending, while it has a stronger association with the "cliff" that disappears after the *Kokinshū*. Strong association did also not develop between the images of "river" and "blossoms" that have 2 joint appearances in the *Kokinshū* (3% of the "river" and less than 1% of the "blossom" poems) and 307 throughout the Heian period (2% of "blossom" and 9% of the "river" poems).

---

[12]The figures may be a bit distorted because the *Shimpen kokka taikan* includes the *Man'yōshū* in the collections of the Heian period.

It thus seems that Yoshino had traditionally been associated quite strongly with both the "mountains" and the "river," but the former managed to organize associated images into a poetic cluster (which we might call, using Riffaterre's term, a "descriptive system"),[13] while the latter lost out in that particular geographical and seasonal context of (late) winter and (early) spring, which finally shaped the chronotopical appearance of Yoshino. Other examples of the kind are numerous and permeate the entire poetic language of the Heian period.

Once set forth in the *Kokinshū*, the chronotope starts to develop and the associations that make it up become more precise and rigorous. The *Makura no sōshi* 枕草子, for one, has significantly contributed to the establishment of such links, starting with the famous opening section that pins certain moments of the day to seasons. And although some poets deliberately start to break this pattern at the turn of the 13th century (which they could not do if the expectations' horizon would not have been strongly there), we see a fully developed exposition of the chronotope in Fujiwara no Shunzei's 藤原俊成 *Sadaijin no ie hyakushu* 左大臣家百首 from Jishō-2 (1178). In this sequence Shunzei has abandoned the usual pattern of starting with seasons and moving on to love and miscellaneous, and has mixed them from the start. The sequence has 5 poems to each topic in the following order:

立春 The beginning of spring
初恋 The beginning of love
鶯 The warbler
忍恋 Hidden love
花 Blossoms
初遇恋 Love of the first meeting
郭公 The cuckoo
後朝恋 The love of the next morning
五月雨 The rains of the fifth month
遇不遇恋 Love in happiness and sorrow
月 The moon
祝 Congratulations
草花 Grasses and flowers
旅 Travel
紅葉 Tinted leaves of autumn
述懐 Longing for the past

---

[13]See Michael Riffaterre, *Semiotics of Poetry*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and London 1978, 39–42. I stretch his definition a bit.

雪 Snow
神祇 Deities of heaven and earth
歳暮 End of the year
釈教 Buddhist teachings

In this order we see the two halves of a typical hundred-poem se-
quence (and the underlying symmetry of an imperial anthology) inter-
twined, showing the connection of appropriate representations of mental
states and corresponding moments of the calendaric cycle, ingeniously
extrapolating from this order to find correspondences also between the
"miscellaneous" topics that correspond to scrolls VII–X and XVI–XX of a
typical anthology.

The result we get is a meticulously constructed living-world where
all things only represent their initial essences, or *hon'i* 本意, which are
loaded emotionally rather than metaphysically, and which are real only
inasmuch as they are textual—even if experienced in solitude, without
anyone knowing,[14] they are still textual, because the experience only ma-
terializes through and in its textual representation. In a sense, this rela-
tionship between thought and reality governed almost all aspects of Heian
court life, and most certainly applies to all the individual manifestations
of the archetypal love affair.

This brings us to the delicate question of whether Heian love poetry
was poetry of love, or about love. The usual accusation says the same
thing about all Heian poetry that Tsurayuki says about the work of Sōjō
Henjō 僧正遍照 in the kana preface: *uta no sama wa etaredomo, makoto
sukunashi* 歌のさまは得たれども、まことすくなし —the poetic form has
been mastered, but there is little sincerity in it.[15] But this criticism loses
its point as soon as we accept that the entire life of non-divergent Heian
courtiers ideally consisted in following pre-established patterns, moving
along a set of trajectories, and emulating true-to-essence preconceived
experiences that nobody had actually had. The situation is similar to that
of the romantic girl, a heroine of a European novel who lives in the
world of (other) novels, as well as her modern descendants, who project
imaginary relationships with rock or movie stars onto real relationships
with young men who simultaneously indulge in similar fantasies.

Of course it does not mean that the textual world would have replaced
the real one entirely, but we can easily picture it to be a standard that

---

[14]Sei Shōnagon describes herself enjoying such solitary elegance in MS epi-
sode 29, *NKBT* vol. 19, 72.
[15]*NKBZ* vol 7, 57.

started to emerge with the poetical chronotope and was enthusiastically developed both by writers such as Sei Shōnagon and the court poets who performed in public. We see frequent indications of this standard also in the work of less enthusiastic chronics of the age, especially in the case history of Sugawara no Takasue's daughter 菅原孝標女, whose *Sarashina nikki* 更科日記 documents her infatuation with the textual world as well as her subsequent disappointment with it—whereas the only love story she describes of her life was more probably than not an imaginary one.[16]

In those circumstances the development of *daiei* 題詠 (fixed topic) poetry was as logical internally as it was in terms of actual practice. While this practice enabled to formalize the structure of poetry matches, and contributed to the shift from the composition of single poems that catch the mood of the moment to larger, usually hundred-poem sequences that followed topic patterns, it also conformed to the understanding that a "true" emotion is true (and a unique experience) precisely because it follows a pre-established pattern of initial essences. The term *daiei* does not denote a sequence of fixed topics or subtopics that were always the same, but that the topic was fixed for the poet before the poem was composed and it was either given to him/her from the outside (the situation of poetry matches) or had to be chosen from within an acceptable variety, or constructed according to the rules of the chronotope.

For instance, the *Roppyakuban utaawase* 六百番歌合 (Kenkyū–4, 1193) offers to the contestants in the love rounds a choice of traditional subtopics along with predetermined metaphors such as love compared to wind, fire, sea, river, grass, insects, prostitute, fisherman, merchant and so on.[17] The *Minase koi jūgoshu utaawase* 水無瀬恋十五首歌合 (Kennin–2, 1202) offers 15 subtopics, among them love associated with each of the four seasons, as well as times of day, topical locations (home village, hut in the mountains, travelers' lodgings) and love compared to rain and wind.[18]

Under the circumstances, quite a lot of love poetry acquired a purely conceptual nature, since *daiei* poetry could not be expected to express immediate personal feelings. The speaker could, for instance, freely alter-

---

[16]*Sarashina nikki*, in *NKBT* vol. 20, 516–520. The person the author is imaginarily in love with is Minamoto no Sukemichi. The text contains no allusion to the development of the relations between the author and her husband, Toshimichi, which can only signify that it was not a noteworthy romance. See my *The Role of Poetry in Classical Japanese Literature*, Eesti Humanitaarinstituut, Tallinn 1994, 247–259 for a more detailed analysis.
[17]*Roppyakuban utaawase*, ed. Konishi Jin'ichi, Yūseidō, Tokyo 1976, 4.
[18]*Shimpen kokka taikan* CD-ROM ban, vol. 5.

nate between the gender-related lover-personae and choose whichever suited best the assigned topic. Thus, for instance, Nijōin no Sanuki 二條院讃岐 assumes the guise of the man, composing on "Love of long past":

SKKS XIV 1286
あとたえて浅茅が末になりにけりたのめし宿の庭の白露

ato taete	no trace remains
asaji ga sue ni	of the house where I promised to go
narinikeri	only these tops of
tanomeshi yado no	the thickets, the garden
niwa no shiratsuyu	full of them, and white dew

Similarly, the monk Jakuren 寂蓮 poses as the waiting lady:

SKKS XIV 1321
こぬ人を秋のけしきやふけぬらんうらみによわる松むしのこゑ

konu hito wo	my love did not come
aki no keshiki ya	the boredom of deep autumn
fukenu ran	has set in
urami ni yowaru	in bitterness, fades the voice
matsumushi no koe	of the cricket who pines in the pines

Another characteristic feature of the poetry of the late 12th century that has frequently been pointed out is a tendency towards narrativity, or what Taniyama Shigeru has called "narrative lyricism" as opposed to the lyricism of the *Kokinshū* and the *Man'yōshū* 万葉集.[19]

Such a poem presented itself as if it would be a part of, or refer to, a story, whether real (of real life), fictional (a *monogatari* 物語, for instance), or imaginary, like the ideal love story that might run along the lines of subtopics. This effect could be achieved through a variety of means, first and foremost intertextuality (alluding to stories and poems), as well as quasi-allusions (constructions that look like allusions without actually being them).

By the way, in love poetry, this narrativity has already a long tradition, beginning with the artificial contextualizations of the *Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語 (sometimes based on no more than the chance juxtaposition

---

[19]Taniyama Shigeru. "Shinkokin no kajin," *Taniyama Shigeru chosakushū* V. *Shinkokinshū to sono kajin.* 谷山茂著作集.新古今集とその歌人 Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1983, 113

of two absolutely unrelated poems in the *Kokinshū*, like the imaginary exchange of episode 25 that consists of poems KKS XIII 622 and 623).

In Taniyama's opinion, this narrativity served to build up another kind of reality that one could oppose to the violently disappointing world in which the poets actually lived.[20] For our present purposes, the background narrative enabled the poet to detach oneself even further from the emotions expressed in a poem: these could and should be attributed to a person who is part of the narrative and not telling it.

For instance, we can distinctly sense a story behind the following poem:

SKKS XV 1389 Fujiwara no Teika
かきやりし其のくろかみのすぢごとに打ふす程は面影ぞ立つ

kakiyarishi	her black hair
sono kurokami wo	that I used to comb
suji goto ni	one by one
uchifusu hodo wa	they emerge in my mind
omokage zo tatsu	when I lie down to sleep

The longing in the poem is almost painfully direct, and yet, a competent reader of the time would not have failed to recognize the following in the background:

GSIS XIII 755 Izumi Shikibu
黒髪のみだれてしらずうちふせばまづかきやりし人ぞ恋しき

kurokami no	unaware of
midarete shirazu	the mess of my black hair
uchifuseba	I lie down
madzu kakiyarishi	still in love with him who
hito zo koishiki	used to comb them for me

The recognition of the *honka* (quoted poem) inevitably relativizes the speaker of Teika's poem: it could as well be the lover of Izumi's poem from the time of long ago. In a sense, the narrative in which Izumi's and Teika's poem meet, takes place in a world that is more real than the one in which Teika lived, although the poem as the expression of this narrative belongs to the latter one.

The techniques and devices typical of the *Shinkokinshū* 新古今集 have carried to its logical extreme the development that started with the *Kokin-*

---

[20]Ibid. 126.

shū and the construction of its chronotope: the world has been saturated with possible stories and story lines, and each moment and place is not only chronotopically conditioned but also already caught in the web of multiple representations that are in constant dialogue with each other. This is not a space in which the poet's subject can assert or perpetuate itself—but it is a system that generates a subject for a speaker at any time, in any situation, provided s/he is able to listen to the multitude of converging voices and to join them into his or her own.