SILVA IAPONICARUM 日林

FASC. XXXVII

第三十七号

AUTUMN 秋

2013

Posnaniae, Cracoviae, Varsoviae, Kuki MMXIII

ISSN 1734-4328

Drodzy Czytelnicy.

Niniejszy zeszyt *Silva Iaponicarum* 日林 to regularne, kwartalne wydanie naszego czasopisma. Zamieszczamy w nim dwa artykuły z dziedziny literaturoznawstwa i filmoznawstwa.

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Kolegium Redakcyjne

E-mail: silvajp@amu.edu.pl

Kraków – Poznań –Toruń – Warszawa – Kuki
wrzesień 2013

Dear Readers,

This issue of *Silva Iaponicarum 日林* is a regular quarterly fascicle of our periodical. It includes two papers on Japanese literature and film studies.

The next fascicle of the quarterly is planned to be published as a special Winter 2013/Spring 2014 issue.

The Editorial Board E-mail: silvajp@amu.edu.pl

Cracow – Poznań –Toruń – Warsaw – Kuki
September 2013

読者のみなさまへ

季刊誌「Silva Iaponicarum 日林」の定期号をお届けします。本誌は、日本文学と日本映画研究の２本の論文が載せてあります。

次回の冊子は２０１３年冬号と２０１４年春号の合冊特別号として、本年末または来年初めの刊行を予定しています。

編集委員会　　E-mail: silvajp@amu.edu.pl

2013 年 9 月　クラクフ・ポズナニ・トルン・ワルシャワ・久喜

Silva Iaponicarum *日林*

Kwartalnik japonistyczny / Quarterly on Japanology / 日本学季刊誌

ISSN 1734-4328

Liczba kopii: 100 / Hard copies: 100 / 部数: 100 部

THE ELECTRONIC VERSION IS THE PRIMARY VERSION OF THIS PERIODICAL

Silva Iaponicarum
Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza
Katedra Orientalistyki, Zakład Japonistyki
ul. 28 Czerwca 1956 nr 198
61-485 Poznań, Poland
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Małgorzata Karolina Citko

Reconsidering ‘Izumi Shikibu’

ABSTRACT

The paper is devoted to the legendary figure of a mid-Heian poet named Izumi Shikibu, based on the analysis of pieces of poetry attributed to her and on its reception. The author concentrates on the analysis of conventionality and uniqueness in the Izumi Shikibu poetry, as well as on Buddhist traces in her works, giving an account on different representations of the poet figure in the *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*. On the basis of presented analysis of facts and their interpretations, the figure ‘Izumi Shikibu’ is viewed as an important subject for the study of the medievalisation and legendarisation processes.

KEYWORDS: Izumi Shikibu, mid-Heian poetry, legendarisation, medievalisation.

Introduction

A mid-Heian 平安 Period (8-12th c.) woman poet named ‘Izumi Shikibu’[1] 和泉式部 remains, to date, one of the most legendary figures of classical Japanese literature. She is in fact one of the Japanese poets whose fame extended beyond their own lifetime, cf. Ono no Komachi 小野小町 (early Heian Period)[2], Ariwara Narihira 在原業平 (825-880)[3], Semimaru 蝉丸

[1] ‘Izumi Shikibu’ is the pen-name of a mid-Heian Period woman poet whose real name remains unknown. There are various theories and explanations for the existence of the name ‘Izumi Shikibu’, although most scholars agree that while Shikibu comes from her father’s (Ōe Masamune 大江雅致 [dates unknown]) position held in the *Shikibushō* 式部省 (Ministry of Ceremony), Izumi was added later, since her first husband, Tachibana Michisada 橘道貞 (?-1016), was a governor in the province of Izumi 和泉. Specifically regarding the name of Izumi Shikibu, Yoshida Kōichi 吉田幸一 argues that ‘Izumi Shikibu’ was coined by another woman poet contemporary to Izumi Shikibu – Akazome Emon 赤染衛門 (956?-after 1041) (Yoshida 1977: 20-31). Ōhashi Kiyohide 大橋清秀, indicates that Izumi Shikibu was first named with her pen-name in the diary *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki* (the diary of Murasaki Shikibu, 1008-1010) by another contemporary woman poet named Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 (987? – ca. 1016) (Ōhashi 1994: 20-21).

[2] Ono no Komachi (early Heian Period) is one of the most famous Japanese poets. She is counted as one of the *rokkasen* 六歌仙 (six poetic immortals). There are ca. 100 poems attributed to her, most of which are about unhappy or unrequited love, separation, or the infidelity of men. She is the subject of many romantic legends (*Nipponica* 2012).

[3] Ariwara Narihira (825-880) was a poet of the early Heian Period, counted as one of the *rokkasen*. Due to apocryphal attributions, it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of his poems in imperial anthologies. The fictionalised “Ariwara Narihira” is considered to be the hero of the *Ise*

(early Heian Period)[4] etc. She is a legendary figure that we know under the name of Izumi Shikibu, whose dates of birth and death are unknown[5]. She became known in numerous literary works of many eras, not only as an excellent female poet and *femme fatale* – as in her own poetry and alleged diary *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* 和泉式部日記 (diary of Izumi Shikibu, unknown)[6] - but also as a courtesan and bodhisattva[7] – as in the medieval secular tale *otogizōshi* 御伽草子 entitled *Izumi Shikibu* 和泉式部 (Izumi Shikibu, Muromachi 室町 [1336-1573] Period), and *nō* 能 play *Seiganji* 誓願寺 (Seigan Temple, 1464).

Likely due to the ambiguity of her biography and abundance of legends about her, Izumi Shikibu has been very extensively researched in Japan and the West. There are, in fact, numerous works dealing with her legendarised representations. Thus, Futamura Fumito 二村文人 explained similarities and differences between the reception of Izumi Shikibu and the *rokkasen* 六歌仙 (six poetic immortals)[8] during the Edo 江戸 Period (1600-1868) (Futamura 1979: 13-23). Ishikawa Jun'ichirō 石川純一郎 dealt with the development of secular tales about Izumi Shikibu (Ishikawa 1980: 29-45), whilst Matsubara Kazuyoshi 松原一義 examined the transformation of Izumi Shikibu's figure and legendarisation process based on her poetry included in imperial and private collections (Matsubara 1992: 22-36). Saijō Shizuo 西条静夫 traced the geographical locations of Izumi Shikibu's legends in his three-volume study (Saijō 1992) in a very similar manner to

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Monogatari 伊勢物語 (tales of Ise, mid-10th c.) (*Nipponica* 2012).

[4] Semimaru (early Heian Period) was a legendary blind lute player and poet, the subject of several pre-modern works of poetry, fiction, and drama (*Nipponica* 2012).

[5] Her lifespan is usually estimated as ca. 970-ca. 1030 (Carter 1993: 119, Marra 1993b: 96).

[6] The authorship of the diary, sometimes entitled *Izumi Shikibu Monogatari* 和泉式部物語 (the tale of Izumi Shikibu) has been questioned many times by numerous scholars, including Kawase Kazuma 川瀬一馬 (1906-1999) (Kawase 1953: 21-52), Imai Takuji 今井卓爾 (Imai 1975: 11-18), Yamagishi Tokuhei 山岸徳平 (1893-1987) (Yamagishi 1975: 31-38) and many others. Despite this, it has been frequently acknowledged that a legendary figure named Izumi Shikibu is the author of *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*.

[7] In the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition, which prevails in Japan, bodhisattva is a being of great spiritual attainment destined for Buddhahood but has vowed not to become a Buddha until all other beings have been helped to attain this state. The bodhisattva is ranked just below the Buddha and is a pivotal concept in the Mahāyāna tradition, which emphasizes the possibility of all beings attaining Buddhahood. In popular belief, bodhisattvas are viewed as divine beings with boundless compassion that intercedes on behalf of living creatures in distress (*Nipponica* 2012).

[8] *Rokkasen* (six poetic immortals) were named in the preface to *Kokin Wakashū* 古今和歌集 KKS (collection of ancient and modern times, ca. 920): Ariwara Narihira, Fun'ya Yasuhide 文屋康秀 (d. 885?), the monk Kisen 喜撰 (early Heian Period), the monk Henjō 遍昭 (816-890), Ono no Komachi and Ōtomo Kuronushi 大友黒主 (Nara 奈良 [710-794] Period). (Ariyoshi 1982: 704).

Yoshida Kōichi 吉田幸一 as presented in a series of his scholarly papers published in 1965-1987[9]. Subsequent studies were carried out by Aoki Machiko 青木真知子, who dealt with legends about Izumi Shikibu (Aoki 1999: 234-223) and Tōda Akiyoshi 遠田晤良, who traced the transformation of Izumi Shikibu's images in secular tales (Tōda 2003: 119-140). Finally, scholars like Kikuchi Hitoshi 菊地仁 have located Izumi Shikibu as an object of the legendarisation process as seen within the whole realm of Japanese literature (Kikuchi 2006: 59-77)[10].

The legendarised image of Izumi Shikibu has also been received and appropriated by Western scholars. Some of them have claimed, e.g. Edwin Cranston, that 'Izumi Shikibu's life was one long scandal or so it must have seemed to her contemporaries'[11], which is itself quite a biased statement emphasizing her *femme fatale* image which had allegedly already been created during her lifetime. Cranston's early work from 1969 failed to acknowledge that extremely diverse and frequently mutually contradictive representations of Izumi Shikibu in Japanese literature may have been a result of the notion of 'the historicity of texts', coined by the American New Historicist Louis Montrose, which informs us that the reception of any literary work in the following centuries is affected by the social, political and cultural processes of those eras[12]. Even though Cranston did not deconstruct Izumi Shikibu in his work, he admitted that her image is often vulgarised in medieval literary works (Cranston 1969: 20).

[9] Yoshida deals with legends related to Izumi Shikibu's alleged places of death and possible graves (Yoshida 1965: 35-45), legends about Izumi Shikibu in the San'in 山陰 region of Honshū 本州 (Yoshida 1976: 2-16), along the Nakasendō 中山道 route connecting Kyōto 京都 and Tōkyō 東京 (Yoshida 1978: 2-14), in the town of Tsuwano 津和野 in the Shimane 島根 prefecture (Yoshida 1979b: 126-134), in the province of Hizen 肥前 in Kyūshū 九州 (Yoshida 1979a: 165-172), along the Kumano 熊野 pilgrimage route (Yoshida 1980b: 153-160), on the Utajima 歌島 Island in the province of Bingo 備後 on southern Honshū (Yoshida 1980a: 85-93), in the province of Mutsu 陸奥 on northern Honshū (Yoshida 1985: 147-154), and in Iwaki-Ishikawa 磐城石川 on central Honshū (Yoshida 1986a: 120-129, Yoshida 1986b: 47-58, Yoshida 1987: 76-58). In addition, Nakajima Miyoko 中島美代子 also researched legends about Izumi Shikibu on Kyūshū (Nakajima 2003: 13-20).

[10] Kikuchi wrote about Izumi Shikibu's poetry and legends about her. There are also numerous studies indicating at similarities between *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* and other fictional works of classical Japanese literature, e.g. *Genji Monogatari* 源氏物語 (the tale of Genji, ca. 1008), by Chiba Chizuko 千葉千鶴子 (Chiba 1984: 1-15) and Sawada Masako 沢田正子 (Sawada 1997: 533-559).

[11] Cf. Cranston 1969: 3.

[12] Louis Montrose is a specialist in Renaissance poetics, English Renaissance theatre and Elizabeth I (1533-1603). See Barry (2002:172-191) on New Historicism and the notion of 'historicity of texts'.

In addition to Cranston, there have been numerous other studies conducted about Izumi Shikibu in the West. Some of them have already partially deconstructed Izumi Shikibu's created representations. For instance, Randle Keller Kimbrough traced the fictional and pseudo-biographical images of Izumi Shikibu in the literature and arts of the Kamakura 鎌倉 (1185-1336) and Muromachi Periods (Kimbrough 1999); Lea Millay researched subjectivity in Izumi Shikibu's poetry (Millay 2000). Additionally, Janet A. Walker wrote about the poetic ideal and fictional reality in *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* (Walker 1977: 135-182), and John R. Wallace – about the rhetoric of seduction in the same literary work (Wallace 1998: 481-512). The figure of Izumi Shikibu also became an object of interest in the area of gender studies. For example, Kimbrough analysed the influence of some stories about Izumi Shikibu disseminated during the Kamakura and Muromachi Periods on the position of Buddhism in the medieval era (Kimbrough 2001: 59-78). Also, Bernard Faure attempted to locate the significance of sexuality in Buddhism by studying, among other things, numerous representations of Izumi Shikibu in Japanese literature (Faure 2003: 1-20). Michele Marra, on the other hand, explained the significance of Buddhist mythmaking on Izumi Shikibu's transformation from a courtesan into a religious guide (Marra 1993a: 49-65). Rajyashree Pandey emphasised that by reconsidering Izumi Shikibu and other women poets as *yūjo* 遊女 (medieval female entertainers who practiced both prostitution and storytelling), medieval texts were able to salvage them and their poetry (Pandey 2004: 61-79). Finally, Randle Keller Kimbrough explored how and why Izumi Shikibu became a prevalent character in stories used by Buddhist fundraisers, the influence of these Buddhist tales on her appearance in later, secular tales *otogizōshi*, and the role of gender in the writing and telling of stories about her (Kimbrough: 2008). Despite their undeniable academic value, the majority of the publications mentioned above overestimate the role of Buddhism in the process of Izumi Shikibu's legendarisation and simultaneously underestimate the role of significant changes that Japanese literature underwent during the eras following Izumi Shikibu's lifespan. In fact, none of them explain possible reasons, even tentatively, as to why this mid-Heian Period woman poet might have become an object of the legendarisation process in the first place.

Thus, I do not intend to question or criticize representations of Izumi Shikibu in Japanese literature as well as its supporters and opponents in Japan and the West. I also do not intend to find out the 'truth' about Izumi Shikibu, since, as emphasised by Joshua Mostow, due to the reception phenomenon, no scholar can be objective and able to find the 'truth' about

authors' intent and texts[13]. However, I would like to deconstruct numerous representations of Izumi Shikibu created over the centuries, by asking what determines the creation of such legends and why Izumi Shikibu became the object of so many of them. Was it her poetic talent, alleged beauty and charm, Buddhist devotion, or some other personal qualities and features attributed to her that had determined Izumi Shikibu's fame and numerous distorted representations? Or were there any other significant factors completely detached from her and characteristic for the history of Japanese literature, e.g. the reception and appropriation phenomena that became crucial factors for the process of her legendarisation? The results of this study hopefully clarify possible reasons why Izumi Shikibu became an object of legendarisation and mythmaking, as well as those processes' universality in the whole realm of Japanese literature.

Methodology

Perhaps the most important fact that should be kept in mind while analyzing Izumi Shikibu or any other figure of classical Japanese literature who has undergone a similar process of reconfiguration and legendarisation is that the historical Izumi Shikibu[14] and the constructed Izumi Shikibu are two completely different figures. The historical Izumi Shikibu is the one who really lived in the mid-Heian Period and about whom we, in fact, do not know that much, whilst the constructed Izumi Shikibu is the one that never really existed but about whom we know much more. In order to demonstrate this difference, I apply the deconstruction analysis derived mainly from the work of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). Deconstruction is a form of semiotic analysis that overturns all binary oppositions[15], which allows us to demonstrate the incoherence of numerous representations of Izumi Shikibu Japanese literature.

Besides deconstruction analysis and the notion of 'the historicity of texts' represented by New Historicism, another crucial concept for this study is

[13] Mostow also implies that reception influences translation and that the text is not 'the self-same over time' (Mostow 1996: 1-10).

[14] The historical Izumi Shikibu is also the subject the subject of extensive research. Ōhashi Kiyohide 大橋清秀 made an attempt to establish her biography based on all available historical and literary sources, paying special attention to *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* (Ōhashi 1994). His scholarly approach is reminiscent of Shioya Satoko's 塩谷佐登子 series of articles published in 1984-1988. Shioya dealt with certain issues of Izumi Shikibu's life, e.g. the identity of her mother (Shioya 1984: 147-153). Itō Hiroshi 伊藤博 researched her poetry and life whilst paying special attention to Izumi Shikibu's poetic style and her relationships with other historical figures (Itō 2010).

[15] On deconstruction and deconstructive criticism, see Culler 2007: 85-279.

intertextuality developed first by Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) and then by Julia Kristeva. Kristeva claims that 'a text cannot exist as a hermetic or self-sufficient whole, and so does not function as a closed system' (Worton and Still 1990: 1), since writers are first of all readers of other texts that influence them during their activity of writing. Both Kristeva and Mikhail Bakhtin argue that even discursive practices themselves are intertextual, since they also influence the texts. Based on such a definition of intertextuality we may conclude that authors and readers ought to accept and recognize the inevitable intertextuality of their activities of writing, reading and participating in the discourse.

Moreover, there are studies on Japanese literature, e.g. Mostow's reception theory mentioned in the introduction, that I rely on and revise in this study and that explain in detail the phenomena of legendarisation and mythmaking as characteristic of Japanese medieval literature. Thus, based on Susan Matisoff's research on Semimaru's legend, we observe that in the medieval era people learned about 'high' aristocratic culture, that is court life and literature, through 'low' literature and drama, that is *setsuwa* 説話 (didactic tales), *otogizōshi* and *nō* (Matisoff 2006: XI-XIX). This closely corresponds to Barbara Ruch's work, which emphasizes the significance of blind *biwa* 琵琶 players (*biwa hōshi* 琵琶法師) in the popularisation of court culture and literature in the medieval period. Ruch claims that a new type of literature developed around *biwa hōshi* – the one that was created by people of various social classes; the one that was popular and thus not exclusive to any particular social class; the one that was audience-oriented and not practitioner-oriented, as well as the one that was actually 'national' for the first time in its history, since it combined themes and heroes that are unique to a nation and were not a product of one particular class or literary group (Ruch 1977: 279-310). Based on works of Matisoff and Ruch, we observe that legends about poets from earlier historical periods developed with time, and while some facts about them are historical, much information is added to attract the attention of the medieval and later audiences. Ruch's work is particularly significant as it raised the issue of nuns affiliated with the Kumano religious complex – *Kumano Bikuni* 熊野比丘尼, who were entertainers travelling across the country and raising money at various Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples by telling stories and also offering sexual services. Ruch emphasised that they significantly contributed to the inclusion of love themes in tales from the medieval period, which was taken up as a separate subject by many Western scholars later on. Also, Ruch explained why courtesans and harlots became significant for the popularisation of Buddhist teachings in the medieval era.

Thus, taking into consideration previous scholarship on Izumi Shikibu and her representations in Japanese literature, as well as the theoretical framework outlined above, in this study I analyze representations of Izumi Shikibu in her poetry included in *chokusen wakashū* 勅撰和歌集 (imperial collections of Japanese poetry) and private collections – *Izumi Shikibushū* 和泉式部集 (collection of poems of Izumi Shikibu, before 1200's) and *Izumi Shikibuzokushū* 和泉式部続集 (continued collection of poems of Izumi Shikibu, before 1200's), both created after Izumi Shikibu's death by (an) unknown compiler(s) – and her alleged diary *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*, as well as works in which Izumi Shikibu appears as a heroine, e.g. the secular tale *otogizōshi* entitled *Izumi Shikibu*, and the *nō* play *Seiganji*. The analysis aims to deconstruct numerous created representations of Izumi Shikibu and determine possible reasons why Izumi Shikibu became a subject of legendarisation.

I. Excellent Poet and Buddhist Devotee: Construction of 'Izumi Shikibu' Based on Her Poetry and Its Reception

In this article I argue that Izumi Shikibu became the object of a legendarisation process, above all because of poetry attributed to her, often interpreted and described as very personal and autobiographical[16]. However, there is no ultimate evidence that Izumi Shikibu's poems have any basis in her biography, even though we know from historical sources that she was involved in relationships with quite a few men during her life, the most significant of whom were Tachibana Michisada 橘道貞 (d. 1016)[17], Prince Tametaka 為尊 (977–1002)[18], Prince Atsumichi 敦道 (981–1007)[19] and Fujiwara Yasumasa 藤原保昌 (c. 958-1036)[20]. There are only two ways to approach the notion of alleged autobiographism of poetry attributed to her – either we assume that Izumi Shikibu did in fact compose poetry based on her personal experiences, or that her poems were created

[16] For example, Richard Bowring describes *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* and other similar works of the mid-Heian Period as 'some of the earliest examples of the attempt by women living in a male dominated society to define the self in textual terms' (Bowring 1982: 11). I believe it is a misinterpretation that does not take into consideration that the 'self' created in any society, dominated by males or not, may have been still constructed due to a number of reasons unknown to us and may not represent reality.

[17] Tachibana Michisada (d. 1016) was a governor of Izumi and Mutsu provinces and a close friend of Izumi Shikibu's father.

[18] Prince Tametaka (977-1002) was the third son of Emperor Reizei 冷泉 (949-1011).

[19] Prince Atsumichi (981-1007) was the fourth son of Emperor Reizei.

[20] Fujiwara Yasumasa (c. 958-1036) was a retainer of Fujiwara Michinaga 藤原道長 (966-1028) and the governor of Hizen, Yamashiro 山城, Tango 丹後, and Settsu 摂津 provinces.

according to already established poetic conventions. If we ask what would cause anybody to conclude that Izumi Shikibu might have composed autobiographical poems, it must have been the story of her unfortunate love affair with Prince Atsumichi, which is the main subject of *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*, along with the reception of poetry attributed to her – a process that had already started during her lifetime. By 'reception' – brought up as a significant issue for the case of Japanese literature by Joshua Mostow (Mostow 1996: 2) – I mean an activity of perception of a literary figure or work characteristic for a given historical period, society or group, which 'receives' (perceives or sees) various literary figures and works and processes them in a manner that best suits their worldly views, religious and political ideals and needs. Thus, the objects of the 'reception' activity are subject to change, transformation, reconfiguration, reconsideration etc., according to the standards of a given society that receives them. I understand 'reception', which usually occurs in the form of literary criticism, as a comparatively passive activity in comparison to 'appropriation', which I define as the process of an aware and active engagement or usage of given literary figures and works in newly created literature. This distinction is significant for my research, even though it is still underestimated even among proponents of reception theory. Thus, let us examine a few poems attributed to Izumi Shikibu and attempt to determine some basic features of her poetic style, and then have a closer look at her poetry's reception.

1.1. Some Remarks on Poetry Attributed to Izumi Shikibu

The extant poetic corpus attributed to Izumi Shikibu constitutes around 1,500 poems, the main sources of which are two private collections - *Izumi Shikibushū* and *Izumi Shikibuzokushū* - compiled within the two centuries following her death by various compilers[21], her alleged diary *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* and poems in various imperial collections[22]. The titles of her two private collections do not necessarily correspond to the time they were compiled. Many poems appear in both collections, and the authorship of some of them is questionable. Around 150 poems from *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* appear in the *Izumi Shikibu Shū* but very few appear in *Izumi Shikibu Zokushū*. The second collection is usually considered to be less

[21] The first part surely already existed in the thirteenth century, as some of its manuscripts are marked with colophons by Fujiwara Teika 藤原定家 (1162-1241) and his daughter Go-Horikawa-in Minbukyo no Suke 後堀河院民部卿典侍 (1195-?), who copied many literary works from earlier eras (Cranston 1969: 53).

[22] Among all women poets in the history of Japanese court poetry, Izumi Shikibu authored the largest number of poems included in imperial collections.

distinguished poetically, but it may also be a result of the reception phenomenon.

1.1.1 Nature and Love Poetry: Conventionality and Uniqueness

By Izumi Shikibu's lifetime, certain conventions in Japanese court poetry (*waka* 和歌) had already been established. The codification process of Japanese poetics had begun with the compilation of the first imperial collection, entitled *Kokin Wakashū* 古今和歌集 KKS (collection of Japanese poems from ancient and modern times, ca. 920), and two subsequent *chokusenshū* - *Gosen Wakashū* 後撰和歌集 GSS (later collection of Japanese poetry, 951) and *Shūi Wakashū* 拾遺和歌集 SIS (collection of gleanings, 1005-1007), commonly known as *sandaishū* 三代集 (collections of three generations). KKS very quickly became a paragon of poetic excellence, followed and emulated by generations of Japanese poets, and, as pointed out by Lisa Nelson (Nelson 2010: 46), Izumi Shikibu was one of the followers of the KKS style. Thus, composing in the so-called *sandaishū* style had become one of the requirements for court poetry to be considered excellent. The *sandaishū* style may be briefly defined by the following criteria: set themes, e.g. four seasons, love, felicitations, travel, etc., and vocabulary codified in KKS; the utilisation of rhetorical questions; the progressive rather than associative character of poems (Konishi, Brower and Miner 1958: 67-127); the application of the *mitate* 見立て technique, in which two things are visually conflated and which implies course of reason vs. speculation; the utilisation of *kakarimusubi* 係り結び, which is a discontinuous correlation between particles and endings; and the application of the following poetic tropes: 1) *makurakotoba* 枕詞 (pillow word) – most frequently a five-syllable figure modifying the following word, i.e. *fisakata no* 久方の (eternal and strong) that precedes and modifies words like *tuki* 月 (moon), *sora* 空 (sky), *ame* 雨 (rain), etc.; 2) *kakekotoba* 掛詞 (pivot word) – a pun that allows reading, and possibly translating, a homonym included in a poem, e.g. *matu* 松 (to wait, pine tree); 3) *engo* 縁語 (associated word) – an expression that helps to unify certain images in a poem through connotations that are obvious for Japanese poetic conventions, e.g. *fusimi* 伏見 (lying down and seeing) is associated with *yume* 夢 (dream); 4) *utamakura* 歌枕 (a poetic place name) – a word that involves a specific place name in a poem, e.g. Tatsutagawa 竜田川 (Tatsuta River) is associated with crimson leaves, as in waka colourful leaves float on it in autumn; 5) *jo* 序 (introductory phrase)

usually consisting of twelve or more syllables, introduces a word or a certain idea to a poem, e.g. the preface *yura no to o wataru funabito kaji o tae* 由良の門を渡る舟人梶を絶え (a fisherman crossing the Yura sea barrier loses his oar) introducing *yukue mo shiranu* 行方も知らぬ (not knowing the destination).

I argue that the skilful application of the rules of the *sandaishū* style in poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu, not autobiographism, was in fact the reason why Izumi Shikibu began to be regarded as an excellent poet. As much as her seasonal poems are conventional, her love poems are believable. In order to confirm this, let us have a look at a few seasonal poems from various imperial and private collections:

1) Spring

はるがすみ
たつやおそきと
山がはの
いはまをくぐる
おときこゆなり

Subject unknown

farugasumi	'The spring haze
tatu ya osoki to	Ascends belatedly' -
yamagafa no	Unveiling the sound of
ifama wo kuguru	The mountain stream
oto kikoyu nari[23]	Passing through the rocks.

SIS: 13

[23] The poems and prose are presented in their original form in Classical Japanese, transliterated and translated into English. I decided not to transcribe but to transliterate the poems based on a system of Heian Japanese codified by Prof. John R. Bentley. Transliteration, which is mapping from one system of writing into another, word by word, or ideally letter by letter with an attempt to enable the reader to reconstruct the original spelling of unknown transliterated words, as opposed to the transcription – mapping the sounds of one language to the best matching script of another language – reveals consonant repetitions that the Hepburn system obscures and puts us closer to the phonological qualities of Classical Japanese. I do not apply this system to Japanese names and titles of poetry collections, as their transcriptions in the Hepburn system are widely acknowledged in academia. Translations are mine unless indicated otherwise. Regarding the original versions of the poems, I consulted *Shinpen Kokka Taikan* 新編国歌大観 (a new compendium of Japanese poems, 2003), which is a standard authority and among the most widely cited and readily available editions. In regard to the original versions of other works, I consulted their various subsequently cited annotations.

2) Summer

四月ついたちの日よめる
さくらいろに
そめしころもを
ぬぎかへて
山ほととぎす
今日よりぞまつ

Composed on the first day of the fourth month

sakura iro ni	From today
somesi koromo wo	I remove a garment
nugikafete	Dyed in the colour of cherry blossoms
yamahototogisu	And await
kefu yori zo matu	The mountain cuckoo.

Goshūi Wakashū[24]: 165

3) Autumn

人もがな
みせもきかせも
萩の花
さく夕かげの
ひぐらしのこゑ

fito mogana	If only there was someone
mise mo kikase mo	Whom I could show and have listen to
fagi no fana	The flowers of bush clover,
saku yufukage no	Blooming in the evening light
figurasi no kowe	Among the sounds of the cicadas…

Senzai Wakashū[25]: 247

[24] *Goshūi Wakashū* 後拾遺和歌集 GSIS (a later collection of gleanings, 1086) is the fourth imperial anthology of Japanese poetry. It was ordered by Emperor Shirakawa **白河** (1053-1129) and compiled by Fujiwara Michitoshi 藤原通俊 (1047-1099). It contains 1,220 poems and it is known for containing a large number of poems composed by women (Ariyoshi 1982: 217-218).

[25] *Senzai Wakashū* 千載和歌集 SZS (collection of a thousand years, 1183) is the seventh imperial anthology of Japanese poetry compiled by Fujiwara Shunzei 藤原俊成 (1114-1204) at the order of Emperor Go-Shirakawa 後白河 (1127-1192). It has been emphasised that many private poetry collections were sources for this imperial collection, and that the poetry of contemporary poets was given special attention (Ariyoshi 1982: 377-378).

4) Winter

一日、つとめてみれば、いとこきもみぢに、霜のいとし
ろうおきたれば、それにつけてもまづ
もみぢ葉も
ましろに霜の
おける朝は
こしのしらねぞ
思ひやらるる

One day when I looked out early in the morning, about the white frost on strongly colored leaves

momidiba mo	On the morning when
masiro ni simo no	Even the coloured leaves
okeru asa fa	Are covered with white frost,
kosi no sirane zo	I am longing for
omofiyararuru	The white peak of Koshi[26].

Izumi Shikibuzokushū: 620

All four poems are clearly reminiscent of the KKS style. Images and vocabulary like *farugasumi tatu* (the spring haze rises), which is also a *makurakotoba*, *yamagafa* (mountain stream) and *ifama wo kuguru* (passing through a gap between the rocks), found in the spring poem cited above are traditionally characteristic for early spring poems starting with KKS. Even the fact that the spring arrives later than expected is very typical for KKS, where the spring conventionally does not arrive on time[27]. The summer poem contains a *kigo* 季語 (seasonal word) – *yamahototogisu* (mountain cuckoo) symbolizing summer, which, even though it had already occurred in *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 MYS (collection of ten thousand leaves, 759-785)[28], it became codified only in KKS. The autumn poem contains the following vocabulary: *fagi no fana* (flowers of bush clover) and *figurasi* (cicada), which are seasonal words for autumn and even though they also appear in MYS, they were codified as seasonal words in KKS. Finally, the winter

[26] *Kosi no sirane* (white peak of Koshi) is another name for Mt. Hakusan 白山. Koshi, which was divided into the provinces of Echizen 越前, Etchū 越中 and Echigo 越後 corresponds to modern Fukui 福井, Ishikawa 石川 and Gifu 岐阜 prefectures (*Utakotoba Utamakura Daijiten* 2001).

[27] The four seasons in Japanese court poetry are set according to the lunar calendar, used in Japan up till the Meiji 明治 Restoration in 1868. It is based solely on the lunar cycle.

[28] *Man'yōshū* (collection of ten thousand leaves, 759-785) is the earliest extant collection of Japanese poetry. It contains many different types and forms of Japanese poems, compiled probably by Ōtomo Yakamochi 大伴家持 (717?-785) (Ariyoshi 1982: 598-600).

poem contains vocabulary typical for its season: *masiro ni* (white), *simo* (frost) and *sirane* (white peak), emphasizing features of winter that are also found in KKS. Moreover, even though during Izumi Shikibu's lifetime the practice of *honkadori* 本歌取 (allusive variation) – referring to or quoting lines from earlier poems – was not yet codified as a poetic trope and it is rather difficult to point out a direct reference in the case of the spring poem, three other pieces clearly play off earlier poems from KKS. Thus, the summer poem alludes to *tanka* 短歌 (a short poem) by Ki no Aritomo 紀有朋 (?-880)[29] included in KKS as no. 66[30], the autumn poem contains a reference to KKS: 244[31] by the monk Sosei 素性 (844?-910?)[32], and the winter poem is an allusion to a piece by Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之 (872-945)[33] included in KKS as no. 980[34]. Perhaps it is difficult to make a definitive conclusion based on only a few examples of poems but it may be assumed that, at least in the seasonal poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu, we see a lot of inspiration from the KKS style. Let us examine if her love poems confirm this tendency.

1) 百首歌の中に
つれづれと

[29] Ki no Aritomo (?-880) was an uncle to Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之 (872-945), one of the KKS compilers.

[30] さくらいろに衣はふかくそめてきむ花のちりなむのちのかたみに

sakura iro ni	I will wear the garment
koromo *fa fukaku*	Dyed in the deep shade
somete kimu	Of cherry blossoms.
fana no tirinamu	It will become a token
noti no katami ni	Of the fallen flower.

[31] 我のみやあはれとおもはむきりぎりすなくゆふかげのやまとなでしこ

ware nomi ya	Is it only I,
afare to omofamu	Who considers touching them?
kirigirisu	- Pink carnations
*na**ku yufukage no***	Blooming in the evening light
***yama**tonadesiko*	Of singing crickets.

[32] Sosei (844?-910?) was a monk and poet, whose father was Henjō – one of the *rokkasen* 六歌仙 'six poetic immortals' (Ariyoshi 1982: 386-387).

[33] Ki no Tsurayuki (872-945) was a poet and literary critic of the Heian Period. He is known as a compiler of the first imperial anthology, KKS, and the author of the first diary in the history of Japanese literature, *Tosa Nikki* 土佐日記 (Tosa diary, 935-936) (Ariyoshi 1982: 456-458).

[34] 思ひやるこしの白山しらねどもひと夜も夢にこえぬよぞなき

omofiyaru	I am not familiar with
kosi no sirayama	The white mountain of Koshi
siranedomo	That dwells in my thoughts.
fitoyo mo yume ni	But there has not been a night
koenu yo zo naki	I would not cross it in my dreams.

空ぞみらるる
おもふ人
あまくだりこむ
ものならなくに

In a hundred poem sequence
turedure to I am gazing idly
sora zo miraruru At the sky.
omofu fito Even though the man
ama kudarikomu I long for
mono naranaku ni Will not descend from the heavens.
Gyokuyō Wakashū[35]: 1467

2) 恋
いたづらに
身をぞ捨てつる
人をおもふ
心やふかき
谷と成るらん

Love
itadura ni In vain I have
mi wo zo suteturu Cast my body away.
fito wo omofu Will my heart
kokoro ya fukaki That longs for my beloved
tani to naruramu Become a deep valley?
Izumi Shikibushū: 80

3) あめのいたくふるひなみだのあめのそでになどいひたるひとに
みしひとに
わすられてふる
そでにこそ

[35] *Gyokuyō Wakashū* 玉葉和歌集 GYS (collection of jeweled leaves, 1313) is the fourteenth imperial collection of Japanese poetry. It was ordered by Retired Emperor Fushimi 伏見 (1265-1317) and compiled by Kyōgoku Tamekane 京極為兼 (1254-1332), who descended from Fujiwara Teika. It contains 2,796 poems and is one of the two imperial anthologies compiled by the liberal Kyōgoku 京極 school (Ariyoshi 1982: 148-149).

身をしるあめは
いつもをやまね

To the one who on a day of heavy rain composed a poem about the 'rainy sleeves of tears'

misi fito ni	Onto my aged sleeves
wasurarete furu	Forgotten by the one I knew
sode ni koso	Falls the rain
mi wo siru ame fa	That knows my fate,
itumo wo yamane	And never abandons me.

GSIS: 703

4) 題しらず
まくらだに
しらねばいはじ
見しままに
君かたるなよ
はるのよのゆめ

Subject unknown

makura dani	Since not even my pillow
siraneba ifazi	Knows, do not reveal
misi mama ni	What you saw.
kimi kataru na yo	Do not speak
faru no yo no yume	Of our dream on a spring night.

Shinkokin Wakashū[36]: 1160

5) くろかみの
みだれもしらず
うちふせば
まづかきやりし
人ぞこひしき

[36] *Shinkokin Wakashū* 新古今和歌集 SKKS (new collection of Japanese poems from ancient and modern times, 1205) is the eighth imperial anthology of classical Japanese poetry. It was ordered in 1201 by Retired Emperor Go-Toba 後鳥羽 (1180-1239) and completed in 1205 but underwent numerous revisions. It was compiled by Fujiwara Teika, Fujiwara Ari'ie 藤原有家 (1155－1216), Fujiwara Ietaka 藤原家隆 (1158-1237), the priest Jakuren 寂蓮 (?-1202), Minamoto Michitomo 源通具 (1171-1237), and Asukai Masatsune 飛鳥井雅経 (1170-1221). It consists of 20 books and contains 1,981 poems (Ariyoshi 1982: 346-348).

kurokami no	When I lie down
midare mo sirazu	Unaware of the disorder
utifuseba	Of my black hair,
madu kakiyarisi	Above all I long for the one
fito zo kofisiki	Who brushed it gently.

GSIS: 755

All five poems are clearly reminiscent of the KKS style. Thus, even though we do not find any poetic devices in the first poem, its setting is typical for love poetry. *Turedure* (idleness, boredom) emphasizes the loneliness of the speaker, who is the 'waiting woman'[37] - awaiting her beloved's return, a fixed concept in Heian Period love poetry. Moreover, the poem likely refers to two KKS poems – no. 484[38] by an anonymous author and no. 743[39] – the only poem in KKS by Sakai no Hitozane 酒井人真 (?-917), governor of Tosa 土佐 province (?-917). The second poem is composed in the form of a rhetorical question, which very vividly portrays the depth of the speaker's feelings by metaphorically comparing it to a valley and thus visually creating a space. We find similar vocabulary and images in KKS: 1061[40] by an anonymous author. In the third poem we see a pun (*kakekotoba*) on *furu*, which in this case means 'to rain' and 'to grow old'.

[37] The 'waiting woman' is a fixed poetic motif symbolizing a wife or female lover who stays at home while her husband or male lover leaves for a trip or on business. It is probably derived from mainland Asian ancient culture and poetry, since examples of the 'waiting woman' are found already in *Shi Jing* 詩經 (the book of songs, before 6th c. BC) - the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry.

[38] **夕**ぐれは雲のはたてに**物**ぞ**思ふあま**つ**そら**なる**人**をこふとて

yufugure fa	At twilight
kumo no fatate ni	I am deep in thoughts
mono** zo **omofu	About the clouds' boundaries.
***ama**tu **sora** naru*	I believe I long for a man
***fito** wo kofu to te*	From far above the clouds.

[39] おほ**ぞら**はこひしき**人**のかたみかは**物思ふ**ごとに**ながめ**らるらむ

*ofo**zora** fa*	Is the vast sky
*kofisiki **fito** no*	Truly a symbol of a man
katami ka fa	That I long for?
***mono omofu** goto ni*	No. Then, what makes me gaze off into the sky
***nagame**raruramu*	Whenever I think of you?

[40] 世中のうきたびごとに**身をなげばふかき谷**こそあさくなりなめ

yo no naka no	If one threw oneself
ukitabi goto ni	Whenever one suffers
mi wo nageba	In this world,
***fukaki tani** koso*	Even a deep valley
asaku nariname	Would become shallow.

The speaker, likely a woman, skilfully expresses grief after separation with her beloved who does not pay her visits any more. The rain is personified and is a symbol of tears that have become a faithful companion of the speaker. This poem contains a line from KKS: 705[41] by the famous poet Ariwara Narihira, who in Japanese literature is a symbol of the perfect lover. The fourth poem, written in a woman's voice, requests the speaker's beloved not to reveal the content of their dreams to other people. Such a promise creates intimacy between the lovers, which even the personified pillow 'may not know'. The poem contains allusions to two *tanka* – KKS: 504[42] by an anonymous author and KKS: 676[43] by Lady Ise 伊勢 (ca. 877-ca. 938)[44]. At the beginning of the fifth poem we find a *makurakotoba* in *kurokami no* (black hair), which, as an expression, appears already in MYS: 2610[45] by an anonymous author but is utilised also in KKS: 460[46]

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[41] **かずかず**におもひおもはずとひがたみ**身をしる雨は**ふりぞまされる

kazukazu ni	Painful it is
omofi omofazu	To ask whether
tofigatami	You love me or not.
mi wo siru ame fa	The showers that know my fate
furi zo masareru	Are gaining on their rainfall.

[42] わがこひを人**しるらめ**や敷妙の**枕**のみこそ**しらばしるらめ**

wa ga kofi wo	How may my beloved
fito ***sirurame*** *ya*	Know of my love?
sikitae no	If anyone does,
makura *nomi koso*	Only the pillow in my bed
siraba sirurame	May know.

[43] **しる**といへば**枕だに**せでねしものをちりならぬなのそらにたつらむ

siru *to ifeba*	Since they say
makura dani *sede*	That the pillow knows,
nesi mono wo	I slept on none.
tiri naranu na no	Yet, my name, as if it were dust,
sora ni taturamu	Rises to the heavens.

[44] Lady Ise (ca. 877 - ca. 938) was a female poet, whose real name is unknown. Ise was the name of a province of which her father, Fujiwara Tsugikage 藤原継蔭 (dates unknown), was governor. Her poetry was widely appropriated in later periods (Ariyoshi 1982: 32-33).

[45] 夜干玉之吾黒髪乎引奴良思乱而反戀度鴨
ぬばたまのわが**くろかみ**をひきぬらし**みだれて**なほも**こひ**わたるかも

nubatama no	I keep tugging my hair,
wa ga ***kurokami*** *wo*	Dark as pitch-black jade.
fikinurasi	The more it is in disorder,
midarete *nafo mo*	All the more my love
kofi*wataru kamo*	Strengthens.

[46] うばたまのわが**くろかみ**やかはるらむ鏡の影にふれるしらゆき

ubatama no	Will my hair,
wa ga ***kurokami*** *ya*	Dark as a pitch-black jade,
kafaruramu	Transform?
kagami no kage ni	In the reflection of a mirror
fureru sirayuki	I see white snow falling.

by Ki no Tsurayuki. In this case, the appropriation of MYS vocabulary by Izumi Shikibu is obvious because her *tanka*, as opposed to Tsurayuki's poem, contains explicit amorous implications. The fifth poem is filled with eroticism by Heian Period standards and is, thus, quite untypical. It is a direct confession of desire for physical contact with a man made by a woman. An image of *kurokami* (black hair) creates and symbolizes intimacy between the lovers that is unheard of in poetry by other poets contemporary to Izumi Shikibu.

Summing up the nature and love poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu, we may conclude that it does in fact follow and is largely derived from the KKS poetic style, containing numerous poetic devices and composed within the frames of established *waka* themes and vocabulary, especially in the case of seasonal poetry. There are, however, a few intriguing and unconventional features notable in the love poems. First of all, the speakers in love *tanka* quoted above usually appear to be lonely and abandoned waiting women, who suffer from a lack of love and attention. In fact, the ideal of love and relationships is embodied in the fixed figure of the constantly lonely and crying 'waiting woman', which by the Heian Period became the ideal of a woman[47]. However, idealised love is not always platonic in poems attributed to Izumi Shikibu, since we see that the female speakers sometimes appear to be lustful. Sharing the same pillow and brushing a woman's hair by a beloved man are situations very intimate by the standards of Heian culture and were rarely utilised in Japanese court poetry. Even though poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu occasionally refers to poetry by Ariwara Narihira and Ono no Komachi, I do not think that those allusions were made in order to emulate their poetic style, which is an issue unnecessarily brought up by almost every scholar writing about Izumi Shikibu's poetry. I argue that Izumi Shikibu's poetic style is derived from the KKS tradition, and that she, herself, was, in fact, a contributor to the *sandaishū* style. However, love poems attributed to her are perhaps not as faithful to poetic conventions as her seasonal poems. I believe that this feature distinguished her poetic style and became the basis for the reception of the amorous nature of her poetry and life, which in the medieval period was appropriated and perpetuated in numerous tales, legends and a few *nō* plays. Such a step away from the conventions of love poetry, so firmly established by Ki no Tsurayuki in the *kana* preface

[47] The creation of such an ideal was, among other things, caused by the fact that women aristocrats did not perform any kind of professional work and spent their time at home, where they waited for their husbands and lovers, composing poetry and sending letters. The activity of waiting thus became part of 'being a woman'. However, we should remember that a lonely woman constantly awaiting her husband is an archetype appropriated originally from Chinese poetry.

(*kanajo* 仮名序)[48] of the KKS, is exactly where scholars find individualism in poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu, often mistakenly interpreted as autobiographical. Tsurayuki writes as follows:

> 今の世の中、色につき、人の心、花になりにけるより、あだなる歌、はかなき言のみいでくれば、色好みの家に埋れ木の、人知れぬこととなりて、まめなる所には、花薄穂に出すべきことにもあずなりにたり(…)[49]
>
> Because people nowadays value outward show and turn their minds toward frivolity, poems are mere empty verses and trivial words. The art of composition has become the province of the amorous, as unnoticed by others as a log buried in the earth; no longer can it be put forward in public as freely as the miscanthus flaunts its tassels (McCullough 1985: 5).

The *kana* preface clearly makes a statement about the nature and value of love poetry composed in Tsurayuki's own era. Love poetry had originally been composed in the form of letters exchanged between lovers. It is thus not unusual that it was based on personal experiences, its primary nature was rather intimate and its audience limited to a small group of people. This is exactly what is described by *irogonomi no ie* 色好みの家 (secluded home-site of lovers) and what is criticised. The earlier love poetry of the MYS era is not criticised for its passionate nature or real-life inspirations. However, love poetry is criticised for the lack of progress in its own evolution, since in the *kana* preface it is pointed out that it cannot get over the stage of its evolution that requires direct and real intimacy between two people. The *kana* preface is thus an attempt to establish *waka* as a form of art that is not created based only on personal experiences or as a form of communication. Love was supposed to become a conventional theme, and poems should have, above all, an artistic value. It is perhaps not the attitude towards the notion of love or the love practices that have changed from the MYS era, but the approach towards the composition of poetry motivated by literary criticism. Thus, even though poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu seems to return to the MYS ideal of *makoto* 誠 (sincerity)[50]

[48] The *kanajo* is a preface to the KKS written by Ki no Tsurayuki in Japanese as opposed to the *manajo* 真名序, the KKS afterword/preface in Chinese written by Ki no Yoshimochi 紀淑望 (?-919).

[49] Cf. *Kokin Wakashū* 1983: 22.

[50] Since the pre-modern era in Japan, the MYS has been frequently brought up as an example of the *makoto* ideal that was allegedly lost and replaced by the ideal of *miyabi* 雅 (courtly elegance)

and opposes *kanajo*'s critique of love poetry, it is not the main feature of love poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu. Moreover, it is true that poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu refers to KKS and sometimes to Ono no Komachi and Ariwara Narihira's work. However, I do not believe that emulating the so-called 'passionate style' of those poets was the intention of Izumi Shikibu or whoever composed those poems, since the so-called 'passionate style' is likely a construct of later periods. I argue that poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu approaches, in a unique and daring manner, the conventional theme of love, as amorous intimate scenes are portrayed a little bit more visually and erotically than in poems attributed to any of Izumi Shikibu's contemporaries. One may have the impression that those poems were really composed 'in bed' and that is why they appear passionate and real. However, we cannot simply assume that the 'passionate style' of some of the love poems attributed to Izumi Shikibu was motivated simply by her personal experiences, since that would be a naïve oversimplification that ignores centuries of reception, appropriation, legendarisation, transfiguration and other processes that the figure of Izumi Shikibu underwent in the long history of Japanese literature. The only conclusion that we may make is that love poems attributed to Izumi Shikibu have, for generations, been perceived as extremely believable.

1.1.2 Buddhist Poetry: *shakkyōka* or Not?

Japanese Buddhist poetry, named with the term *shakkyōka* 釈教歌, has always had its place in the *waka* tradition. The term *shakkyōka* appears already in the fourth imperial collection, the GSIS, but Buddhist poetry became an indispensable part of Japanese poetic tradition only at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when we observe a significant change in the composition of *waka*. At the end of the twelfth century, Buddhism received significantly more poetic attention, which is notable especially in the seventh imperial collection, the *Senzai Wakashū* 千載和歌集 (SZS, *collection of thousand years*, 1183). Compiled by Fujiwara Shunzei 藤原俊成 (1114-1204)[51], it devoted a separate volume to this religion (as it also did to Shintoism). Thus, since SZS all subsequent

in later eras. Those ideals are, however, merely creations of the *kokugaku* 国学 (national learning) school of thought that were picked up by scholars in the Meiji Period (1868-1912) and were not used as established criteria for evaluating poetry in the Nara and Heian Periods.

[51] Fujiwara Shunzei (1114-1204) was a poet, critic, and arbiter of *waka*. He compiled the SZS and established the most powerful family of poets and scholars of *waka*, the Mikohidari 御子左 school (Ariyoshi 1982: 312-313).

imperial collections contain two religious volumes: one devoted to Buddhism and one to Shintoism.

This change in the aesthetics of poetry did not concern only Buddhism, since there is a definite shift from the courtly to reclusive poetics, frequently explained to be motivated by the desire to renew the poetic tradition by returning, among other things, to ancient Japanese poetics and Chinese classics (Bundy 2006: 147). Reclusive poets, who were either exiled or reclusive by choice, attempted to find their path in life. They had been an established motif in Chinese literature for a long time (Smits 1995: 1-9), and we observe their revival in the Japanese medieval era. However, some scholars, e.g. Ishihara Kiyoshi 石原清志, argue that *shakkyōka* can already be found in the MYS (Ishihara 1980: 16).

Interestingly, Izumi Shikibu is believed to have composed numerous poems on Buddhist themes or containing philosophical statements remnant of the Buddhist teachings, which is frequently brought up as another unusual feature of her poetry. Let us examine a few examples of her *shakkyōka* and determine if she in fact intentionally incorporated Buddhism into her work, or if the Buddhist interpretation of some of her poems are only a construct of later periods' reception.

1) 性空上人のもとに、よみてつかはしける
暗きより
暗き道にぞ
入りぬべき
遥かに照らせ
山のはの月

Composed for and sent to Shōkū Shōnin[52]

kuraki yori	From darkness
kuraki miti ni zo	Onto the path of darkness
irinubeki	I am bound to enter.
faruka ni terase	Shine upon me from afar
yama no fa no tuki	The moon above the mountain edge.

SIS: 1342

2) ふねよせん
きしのしるべも

[52] Shōkū Shōnin (910-1007) was a distant relative of Izumi's first husband, Tachibana Michisada, and a well-known Buddhist monk of the Heian Period.

しらずして
えもこぎよらぬ
はりまがたかな

fune yosen	I would steer my boat
kisi no sirube mo	Having no guidance
sirazu site	On these shorelines,
e mo kogiyoranu	And never row into
farimagata kana	The Land of Harima.

Izumi Shikibushū: 835

3) 山寺にまうでて侍りけるにいとたふとく経よむをききて
物をのみ
思ひの家を
出でてこそ
のどかに法の
声も聞ゆれ

Hearing the holy recitation of sutras upon a visit to a mountain temple

mono wo nomi	Only on account
omofi no ife wo	Of a temple, I left
idete koso	The burning house of desires[53].
nodoka ni nori no	Now, I even hear
kowe mo kikoyure	The voice of a priest.

Shokugoshūi Wakashū[54]: 1275

[53] The parable about the burning house tells a story about how a fire breaks out in the house of a wealthy man who had many children. The wealthy man shouted at his children inside the burning house to flee but they were so absorbed in their games that they did not hear his warning. The wealthy man then devised a practical way to lure the children out of the burning house. He knew that they were fond of interesting toys so he called out to them saying that there were three carts outside the gate. The first one was pulled by a goat, the second one was pulled by a deer and the last cart was pulled by an ox. The children, eager to play with new toys, rushed out of the house and were thus saved from the danger of the fire. In this parable, the father represents the Buddha and the children represent sentient beings trapped in a world of danger. The Burning House represents the world burning with the fires of sickness, old age and death. The teachings of the Buddha are like a father getting his children, who are unaware of danger, to leave a burning house (Hazen 2003: 25).

[54] *Shokugoshūi Wakashū* 続後拾遺和歌集 ShokuGSIS (continued later collection of gleanings, ca 1325) is the sixteenth imperial collection of Japanese poetry. It was ordered by Retired Emperor Go-Daigo 後醍醐 (1288-1339) and compiled first by Nijō Tamefuji 二条為藤 (1275-1324) and then by Nijō Tamesada 二条為定 (1293-1360). It contains 1,347 poems and is considered to be

4) 家の前を法師のをみなへしをもちてとほりけるをいづくへゆくぞととはせければ、ひえの山の念仏のたて花になむもてまかるといひければむすびつけける
名にしおはば
五のさはり
あるものを
うら山しくも
のぼる花かな

When I asked: 'Where are you going?' to a priest passing by the front of my house and carrying a maiden flower, he replied: 'I am taking this flower as an offering for the Buddha on Mt. Hie[55]*'*

na ni si ofaba	Although by its name
itutu no safari	It suffers from
aru mono wo	The Five Hindrances[56],
urayamasiku mo	It is a flower that enviously
noboru fana kana	Ascends the mountain.

Shinsenzai Wakashū[57]: 894

5) くらまにまゐりたりけるに、かたはらのつぼねよりあふぎにくだ物をいれておこせたりければ
いかばり

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poetically mediocre (Ariyoshi 1982: 333-334).

[55] Hiei 比叡 is a mountain to the northeast of Kyoto. A Tendai sect temple named Enryakuji 延暦寺 is located on the top of it.

[56] In some Buddhist traditions (among other things Mahāyāna) there is the idea that women are defiled. It is called the doctrine of the Five Hindrances. According to this teaching, women are excluded from five forms of rebirth, namely rebirth as the king Brahmā, the god Śakra, the king Māra, a sage king or a Buddha, unless they first transform into men. The Five Hindrances are as follows: 1) women's impure and evil nature, 2) their unbridled indulgence in lust, 3) their arrogance regarding the true Dharma (the Law that 'upholds, supports or maintains the regulatory order of the universe'), 4) they are endowed with eighty-four latent bad qualities, 5) their hatred, ignorance and attachment to the mundane world (Sunim 1999: 129).

[57] *Shinsenzai Wakashū* 新千載和歌集 SSZS (new collection of thousand years, 1359) is the eighteenth imperial collection of Japanese poetry. It was officially ordered by Emperor Go-Kōgon 御光厳 (1338-1374) but was in fact initiated by the founder of the Muromachi shogunate, Ashikaga Takauji 足利尊氏 (1305-1358). It was compiled by Nijō Tamesada, it contains 2,364 poems and, as opposed to the innovative collections of the Kyōgoku school, it is believed to be more conservative and to return to the early traditions of Japanese poetics (Ariyoshi 1982: 353-354).

つとむることも
なきものを
こはたがために
ひろふこのみぞ

When, upon a visit to Kurama Temple[58]*, I received a fruit presented on a fan from a maiden servant*

ikabakari	Although I am not
tutomuru koto mo	At your service,
naki mono wo	For whom do you collect
kofa ta ga tame ni	This noble fruit?
firofu konomi zo	– For my unworthy body.

Shinshūi Wakashū[59]: 1526

It is undeniable that all five poems contain Buddhist themes, imagery and vocabulary. There are, in fact, many more poems attributed to Izumi Shikibu that could be and frequently are interpreted from the point of view of Buddhist teachings. With regards to the five poems cited above, the first *tanka*, which is one of the most widely known poems attributed to Izumi Shikibu that affected generations of later Japanese poets, is clearly an allusion to a passage from *Myōhō Rengekyō* 妙法蓮華経 (*lotus sutra*, 100 BC)[60], translatable as 'Out of darkness we enter into darkness' (従冥入於冥). In this poem we also find the word *miti* 道 (path), which clearly refers to the Buddhist term *dō* 道 symbolizing the 'path of Buddha', that is Buddhist teachings, and it is remnant of the Daoist[61] term *dao* 道, which also means 'path'. Moreover, the imagery in the poem is remnant of Buddhism. Thus, *yama no fa no tuki* 山の端の月 (moon above the

[58] Kurama 鞍馬 Temple is located in the far north of Kyoto. It used to be a Tendai 天台 school temple but the object of worship is currently esoteric and unique to the temple.

[59] *Shinshūi Wakashū* 新拾遺和歌集 SSIS (new collection of gleanings, 1364) is the nineteenth imperial collection of Japanese poetry. It was officially commissioned by Emperor Go-Kōgon but the initiative came from the second shogun of the Ashikaga shogunate, Ashikaga Yoshiakira 足利義詮 (1330-1357). It was compiled first by Nijō Tameaki 二条為明 (1295-1364) and then by the monk Ton'a 頓阿 (1289-1372). It contains 1,920 poems and is considered to be poetically mediocre (Ariyoshi 1982: 350-351).

[60] The *Lotus sutra* is one of the most popular Mahāyāna sutras, which, along with other texts, forms the basis of the Nichiren 日蓮 schools of Buddhism (Sugarō and Montgomery 1998: 5-16).

[61] Daoism or Taoism is an indigenous religio-philosophical tradition which originated on the Asian mainland and emphasizes living in harmony with the Dao 道. The term Dao means 'way', 'path' or 'principle' and indicates something that is both the source and the driving force behind all existence.

mountains) is a symbol of Buddhist teachings and enlightenment. In this particular poem, addressed to Shōkū Shōnin, the moon signifies Izumi Shikibu's religious guide, and, since the moon is also a symbol of a male lover in *waka*, it probably became a reason why she was believed to have an affair with Shōkū Shōnin and why she is presented as a courtesan and harlot in later medieval literature. The second poem also contains obvious Buddhist imagery. *Kisi* 岸 (shore) is related to another word *higan* 彼岸 (the shore at the opposite side), which is a symbol of Buddhist enlightenment, and to Harima 播磨, where Shōkū Shōnin's temple – Engyōji 圓教寺, was located. Thus, this poem also creates a link between Izumi Shikibu and her religious guide. The third poem contains an allusion to a famous Buddhist parable about a burning house from the *Lotus Sutra*, which symbolizes a negative attachment to life, and is hidden in a pun on *omofi no ife* 思ひの家 (the house of desires) and *fi no ife* 火の家 (house of fire). In this poem, thanks to a visit to a Buddhist temple, the speaker achieves the goal of leaving the burning house and freeing himself from the world of earthly desires. The voice of a priest is thus a symbol of Buddhist teachings, which the speaker is finally able to hear. The fourth poem contains a reference to the Buddhist idea of the Five Hindrances. Even though this poem, clearly imitating a famous poem by Ariwara Narihira from the ninth episode of the *Ise Monogatari* 伊勢物語 (tales of Ise, mid-tenth c.)[62], is believed to be composed by Izumi Shikibu, its actual authorship is doubtful. It is not included in any other poetic collections before the ShinSZS (compiled in 1359), even the *Izumi Shikibushū* and the *Izumi Shikibuzokushū*. It also appears in a commentary to the *Lotus Sutra* entitled *Ichijō Shūgyokushō* 一乗拾玉抄 (selection of gathered jewels of the single vehicle, 1488), where it is accompanied by a story similar to the preface of the poem in the ShinSZS. In fact, thanks to this preface we know that *ominafesi* 女郎花 (maiden flower), symbolizing a woman, climbed the mountain only thanks to a monk, who collected it on his way to a Buddhist temple, and was thus able to reach enlightenment. The poem thus emphasizes the idea of Five Hindrances by demonstrating that women cannot reach enlightenment without men's help[63]. It is thus probable that this poem is apocryphal (Kimbrough 2001: 64-65) but it proves that

[62] *Ise Monogatari* (tales of Ise, mid-10th c.) is a collection of poems and their associated narratives dating from the Heian Period. Its most popular version contains 125 episodes. Poetry from this collection was subject to wide appropriation in the later periods (Ariyoshi 1982: 34).

[63] Edward Kamens suggests that the poem may also be 'a parody of the custom of sending poems along with and attached to gifts, particularly flowers - an exchange that most commonly took place between friends or lovers' (Kamens 1993: 426).

medieval Buddhist propaganda utilised the figure of Izumi Shikibu. The fifth poem is another *tanka* considered to be a *shakkyōka* and it emphasizes that even though some people do not enter the path of Buddha, the Buddhist teachings symbolised by a fruit are always available to them. The poem aims to present the Buddha as the one who welcomes new followers and does not exclude anybody.

There is no doubt that some poems attributed to Izumi Shikibu did, in fact, contain intentional allusions to Buddhist themes and symbols. However, there is a question of how to interpret and locate those Buddhist poems within the whole realm of Japanese Buddhist poetry. The fact is that at least in the late Heian and early Kamakura Period, poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu was apparently not perceived as 'Buddhist', which we observe based on the fact that none of her Buddhist poems are included as *shakkyōka* in imperial anthologies until the fourteenth century. The first *chokusenshū* to contain a *shakkyōka* by Izumi Shikibu was ShokuGSIS compiled in 1325. By that time, the figure of Izumi Shikibu might have been already reconfigured by and utilised in medieval secular and Buddhist tales, which subsequently may have caused the inclusion of poems attributed to her in the *shakkyōka* volumes of late medieval imperial collections. Buddhism, as a theme, is another feature still considered to be unique to the poetry of Izumi Shikibu's era. This is despite the fact that there were other woman poets who composed Buddhist poems, e.g. Akazome Emon 赤染衛門 (956?-after 1041) or Princess (naishinnō) Senshi 選子内親王 (964-1035)[64]. I argue that the appearance of Buddhist themes in some poems attributed to Izumi Shikibu was another reason why she became a heroine of many medieval Buddhist tales and the object of the legendarisation process, even though she does not seem to have been perceived as a Buddhist poet during her lifetime. The reception phenomenon is thus also significant in the case of her Buddhist poetry. There is of course the question about how these poems were interpreted if they were not defined as 'Buddhist' during Izumi Shikibu's lifetime and up until the fourteenth century. We can only speculate about that, but one of the possibilities is that Buddhist poems attributed to her were perhaps perceived more as philosophical than religious.

[64] Princess Senshi (964-1035) was a *sai'in* 斎院 (high priestess) in the Kamo Shrines 賀茂神社 in Kyoto for 57 years. She was a *waka* poet who had her own poetic salon consisting of professional female poets. She is particularly known for her Buddhist poems (Ariyoshi 1982: 378).

1.2. Reception of Poetry Attributed to Izumi Shikibu

Poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu has been the frequent subject of literary criticism, academic publications and literary translations for hundreds of years. Works evaluating her poetic abilities reach back as far as her own lifetime, no matter if the evaluation is positive or negative. There is, however, one trend notable in such literary criticism – for some reason poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu has become more and more appreciated with time. I would like to argue that Izumi Shikibu was at first perceived as just another court woman poet of her era and only with time did she start to be received as an excellent poet. The explanation for such a change in her reception may vary, starting with simple reasons such as the significant number of Izumi Shikibu's poems included in imperial anthologies, and ending at her already existing and often mutually contradicting representations of a waiting but amorous and unfaithful woman, courtesan and bodhisattva. Literary critics, writers and scholars of many centuries seemed to have returned to the poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu not only to evaluate it, but frequently also to find confirmation for her constructed representations. Let us examine a few examples of literary criticism that contain evaluations of Izumi Shikibu's poetry.

1) *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki* 紫式部日記 (the diary of Murasaki Shikibu, 1008-1010)[65] by Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 (ca. 970-ca. 1014)[66]:

> 和泉式部といふ人こそ、おもしろう書きかはしける。されど、和泉はけしからぬかたこそあれ。うちとけて文はしり書きたるに、そのかたの才ある人、はかない言葉の、にほひも見えはべるめり。歌はいとをかしきこと、ものおぼえ、歌のことわり、まことのうたよみざまにこそ侍らざめれ。口にまかせたることどもに、かならずをかしき一ふしの、目とまる詠み添へ侍り。それだに人の詠みたらん歌なん、ことわりゐたらんは、いでやさまで

[65] *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki* (diary of Murasaki Shikibu, 1008-1010) is a record of the daily life of Murasaki Shikibu, the author of the *Genji Monogatari*. It covers the period from autumn of 1008 to the New Year's festivities of 1010. It sheds light on the courtly way of life and everyday activities that are not mentioned in historical chronicles. In her diary Murasaki Shikibu critiques the poetic abilities of many of her contemporaries (*Nipponica* 2012).

[66] Murasaki Shikibu (ca. 970-ca. 1014) was a novelist, poet and lady-in-waiting at the court of Empress Shōshi 彰子 (988–1074). She is best known as the author of the *Genji Monogatari* (Ariyoshi 1982: 632).

心は得じ。口にいと歌の詠まるゝなめりとぞ、見えたるすぢに侍るかし。恥づかしげの歌よみやとは覺え侍らず。[67]

Now someone who did carry on a fascinating correspondence was Izumi Shikibu. She does have a rather unsavory side to her character but has a talent for tossing off letters with ease and seems to make the most banal statement sound special. Her poems are most interesting. Although her knowledge of the canon and her judgments of other people's poetry leave something to be desired, she can produce poems at will and always manages to include some clever phrase that catches attention. Yet when it comes to criticizing or judging the work of others, well, she never really comes up to scratch – the sort of person who relies on a talent for extemporization, one feels. I cannot think of her as a poet of the highest rank. (Bowring 1996: 53-54).

2) *Toshiyori Zuinō* 俊頼髄脳 (Toshiyori's poetic essentials, 1113)[68] by Minamoto Toshiyori 源俊頼 (1055-1129)[69]:

四条大納言に、子の中納言の、「式部と赤染と、いづれかまされるぞ」と、尋ね申されければ、「一口にいふべき歌よみにあらず。式部は、ひまこそなけれあしの八重ぶきと、詠めるものなり。いと、やんごとなき歌よみなり」とありければ、中納言は、あやしげに思ひて、「式部が歌をば、はるかに照らせ山の端の月と申す歌をこそ、よき歌とは、世の人申すめれ」と申されければ、「それぞ、人のえ知らぬ事をいふよ。くらきよりくらき

[67] Cf. *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*. *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki. Sarashina Nikki. Sanuki no Suke Nikki* 1994: 201.

[68] *Toshiyori Zuinō* (Toshiyori's poetic essentials, 1113) is a poetic treatise by Minamoto Toshiyori written for Fujiwara Tadazane's 藤原忠実 (1078-1162) daughter named Yasuko or Taishi 泰子 (later consort to Emperor Toba 鳥羽 [1103-1156]). It contains basic information about the art of *waka* composition and often presents knowledge about Japanese poetry in the form of anecdotes. This treatise was widely read and studied by many generations of later *waka* poets and scholars (Ariyoshi 1982: 485).

[69] Minamoto Toshiyori (1055-1129) was a poet and critic who compiled the GSS and whose teachings were widely appropriated in later periods by generations of Japanese poets and *waka* scholars (Ariyoshi 1982: 484-485).

> 道にぞ、といへる句は、法華経の文にはあらずや。されば、いかに思ひよりけむとも覚えず。末の、はるかに照らせといへる句は本ひかされて、やすく詠まれにけむ。こやとも人をといひて、ひまこそなけれといへる詞は、凡夫の思ひよるべきにあらず。いみじき事なり」とぞ申されける。[70]
>
> When the Great Chancellor Shijō[71] was asked by his son, the Middle Chancellor[72]: 'which one do you think is superior, Shikibu or Akazome?', the Great Chancellor replied: 'It is not a matter that can be easily determined. Shikibu is a lady who composed an excellent poem: Reeds in eight layers, so closely woven. She was a very special poet'. Because he replied like this, the Middle Chancellor thought it odd and said: 'People say that among Shikibu's poems the best one is: Shine on me clearly, moon of the mountain crest'. The Great Chancellor said: 'This just shows those people's lack of knowledge. The phrase 'out of the dark into the path of darkness' may not be found in the *Lotus Sutra*, and even if it was to be found there, it is hard to believe Shikibu came up with such an idea. The phrase: shine on me clearly, suits the previous lines of the poem well and allows it to develop smoothly. To compose the poem: 'come to the hut, my love, so closely woven…', would be impossible for ordinary people. This is an extraordinary poem.

3) *Mumyōzōshi* 無名草子 (nameless book, 1196-1202)[73] probably by Fujiwara Shunzei's Daughter (musume) 藤原俊成女 (1171?-1252?)[74]:

[70] Cf.: *Karonshū* 2002: 237-238.

[71] Great Chancellor Shijō refers to Fujiwara Kintō 藤原公任 (966-1041), who was a significant poet of the mid-Heian Period.

[72] The Middle Chancellor refers to Kintō's son, Fujiwara Sadayori 藤原定頼 (995-1045).

[73] *Mumyōzōshi* (nameless book, 1196-1202) it is the oldest extant work of criticism of Japanese prose. It is an extended fictional dialogue among several unnamed women, narrated by an elderly Buddhist nun who spends a night in their company. Fujiwara Shunzei's Daughter 藤原俊成女 (1171?-1252?) is considered to be its most probable author (*Nipponica* 2012).

[74] Fujiwara Shunzei's Daughter (1171?-1252?) was the granddaughter of Fujiwara Shunzei (1114-1204), by whom she was raised and adopted. She is considered to be one of the best women poets of her own era. By the early 1200's she participated in most of the poetry contests organised by the court (Ariyoshi 1982: 314).

和泉式部、歌数など詠みたることは、まことに女のかばかりなる歌ども、詠み出づべしともおぼえ侍らぬに、しかべ　き前世のことにこそあめれ。この世一つのこととはおぼえず(…)[75]

It's hard to believe that, though a woman, Izumi Shikibu composed so many excellent poems. It may be due to some karma she acquired from a previous life, for I can't imagine such talent springing from the present world (Marra 1982: 425).

4) *Mumyōshō* 無名抄 (nameless treatise, 1211)[76], by Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明 (1155?–1216)[77]

(…) 其時は人ざまにもち消たれて、歌の方にも思ふほど用ゐられねど、真には上手なれば、秀歌も多く、ことに触れつつよみ置く程に、撰集どもにもあまた入れるにこそ。[78]

(…) Izumi Shikibu suffered neglect during her lifetime because of her character; her poetry was not held in the esteem it deserved, but as she was really talented and produced a number of fine poems, composing when occasions arose and keeping them on store, many of her poems were after all selected for anthologies (Katō 1968: 403).

Thus, *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki* contains a rather harsh critique of Izumi Shikibu's poetry that accuses her of not knowing basic rules of poetic composition. Izumi Shikibu's poems are called shallow and generally mediocre. The first extant evaluation of poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu was thus not very positive. A hundred years later Izumi Shikibu is given a

[75] Cf. *Matsura no Miya Monogatari. Mumyōzōshi* 1999: 270.

[76] *Mumyōshō* (nameless treatise, 1211) is a poetic treatise by Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明（1155?–1216). It includes information on ancient *waka* practices, poetic anecdotes and sayings, as well as knowledge about chanting and poetic composition (Ariyoshi 1982: 630-631).

[77] Kamo no Chōmei (1155?–1216) was a *waka* poet and essayist, who lived in the troubled transitional years between the Heian and Kamakura Periods. He has come to typify the literary recluse who abandons the world for a life of refined tranquillity in a small mountain hut (*Nipponica* 2012).

[78] Cf. Takahashi 1987: 194.

little bit more credit in *Toshiyori Zuinō*, which provided a comparison of Izumi Shikibu to another renowned mid-Heian woman poet, Akazome Emon, and recognised her poetic abilities. *Toshiyori Zuinō* also raised the issue of the most famous Buddhist poem by Izumi Shikibu, containing a passage from the *Lotus Sutra*, which is quoted above, but denied the sutra as a source of inspiration. Yet another hundred years later, the *Mumyōzōshi* provided a Buddhist explanation for the poetic excellence of Izumi Shikibu by concluding that her poetic abilities must have been caused by her karma. Moreover, it is emphasised in *Mumyōzōshi* that while in her own era Izumi Shikibu was not perceived as an excellent poet due to her character[79], later generations recognised her poetic talent, which proves that the reception phenomenon definitely applies to the figure of Izumi Shikibu and poetry attributed to her. Moreover, we see that this reception phenomenon had been transforming over the ages. It is, however, intriguing that none of the above works mentioned her alleged amorous nature and numerous love affairs. None of those literary critiques clearly treated poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu as autobiographical, which is the evidence that its alleged autobiographism must have been a construct of later periods.

There were, of course, other examples of literary criticism that mentioned and evaluated poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu. However, whilst Fujiwara Kiyosuke 六条清輔 (1104-1177)[80] in his poetic treatise *Fukurozōshi* 袋草紙 (ordinary book, 1157)[81] quoted the same anecdote about Izumi Shikibu that we find in *Toshiyori Zuinō*, and included a number of her poems in the *yūshūka* 優秀歌 (excellent poems) section, Fujiwara Shunzei included a few of the poems attributed to her in his *Koraifūteishō* 古来風体抄 (poetic styles of past and present, 1197)[82] but he did not really evaluate her poetry. Shunzei's lack of attention to Izumi Shikibu's work may seem surprising, since he was the founder of the Mikohidari 御子左 house that specialised in the Heian Period classics, e.g.

[79] Kamo no Chōmei might have meant her numerous love affairs and amorous nature, which are features widely attributed to Izumi Shikibu.

[80] Fujiwara Kiyosuke (1104-1177) was a late Heian *waka* poet, scholar and leader of the Rokujō 六条 poetic school. He is most known for his poetic treatises and handbooks, which were extensively used by later generations of Japanese poets (Ariyoshi 1982: 149-150)

[81] *Fukurozōshi* (ordinary book, 1157) is a poetic treatise by Fujiwara Kiyosuke in two volumes containing 851 poems from the MYS and imperial anthologies. The second volume deals specifically with issues related to poetry contests. This long treatise contains many stories and anecdotes about Japanese poetry (Ariyoshi 1982: 550-551).

[82] *Koraifūteishō* (poetic styles of past and present, 1197) is a poetic treatise created by Fujiwara Shunzei allegedly for Princess Shikishi 式子内親王 (ca. 1149-1201). It consists of two volumes, out of which the first one is entirely devoted to the MYS. The second volume contains poetic examples from imperial collections from the KKS up till the SZS (Ariyoshi 1982: 235).

Genji Monogatari 源氏物語 (tale of Genji, ca. 1008)[83], *Makura no Sōshi* 枕草子 (pillow book, after 1000)[84], etc. There is, however, a possibility that more attention was paid to Izumi Shikibu's poetic abilities by Shunzei's descendants – his granddaughter and Fujiwara Teika 藤原定家 (1162-1241)[85], who copied Izumi Shikibu's private poetic collections. Moreover, Teika included a poem attributed to Izumi Shikibu in his *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu* 小倉百人一首 (one hundred poems by one hundred poets from Ogura, after 1235) [86], which was undeniably a sign of acknowledgment of her poetic talent and became one of the bases for the canonisation of her poetry.

After *Mumyōshō*, Izumi Shikibu disappeared from works of poetic criticism and appeared more and more frequently in various kinds of tales. The reception of Izumi Shikibu and poetry attributed to her was thus taken over by other literary genres and by the modern era her work was widely interpreted as autobiographical. Edwin Cranston pointed out that the renowned Japanese literature scholar Ikeda Kikan 池田亀鑑 (1896-1956) had described Izumi Shikibu in the following way: 'Izumi's nature was unbridled and unrestrained; she acted as her passions directed her' (Cranston 1970: 1). Such a legendarised representation of Izumi Shikibu was naturally received by Western scholars. Even though Cranston himself evidently attempted not to judge Izumi Shikibu and her poetry through the lens of medieval tales, he did not reconsider or deconstruct any of her created images. Another American scholar, Steven Carter, described Izumi Shikibu as follows: '(…) Notorious for her many love affairs even in her own lifetime, Lady Izumi is another in the long line of legendary lovers that began with Ono no Komachi, whose stylistic influence she reflects in

[83] *Genji Monogatari* (*tale of Genji*, ca. 1008) is a tale that has been called the first great novel in world literature. It has an essentially simple plot, describing the life and loves of an erstwhile prince known, from his family name, as "the shining Genji" (*Nipponica* 2012).

[84] *Makura no Sōshi* (pillow book, after 1000) is an essay by Sei Shōnagon 清少納言 (c. 966-1017). It consists of short eyewitness narratives, casual essays, impressions, reflections, lists, and imagined scenes. It gives a detailed account of events and customs at the Heian court. Matters of love and the beauty of nature are predominant themes, but issues of taste and the foibles of the uncouth are delineated with sharp wit (*Nipponica* 2012).

[85] Fujiwara Teika (1162-1241) was a *waka* poet, critic, editor, and scholar. He was one of six compilers of the eighth imperial collection, the SKKS and sole compiler of the ninth, *Shinchokusen Wakashū* 新勅撰和歌集 SCSS (*new imperial collection*, 1235) (Ariyoshi 1982: 459-461).

[86] *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu* (one hundred poems by one hundred poets from Ogura, after 1235) is a poetic collection compiled by Fujiwara Teika. It contains a hundred *waka* each by a different poet, organised in roughly chronological order. It is one of the most known Japanese poetic collections ever (Ariyoshi 1982: 81-83).

poems that are at times passionate and intense, at times brooding and melancholy' (Carter 1993: 119). Carter followed a typical legendarised representation of Izumi Shikibu, according to which she is compared to Ono no Komachi, and the autobiographical interpretation of her poems is focused on their amorous character.

Thus, based on the poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu and its reception, we may conclude that two features usually ascribed to this mid-Heian woman poet, excellence in poetry and devotion to Buddhism, must have been creations of later periods. Poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu took time to acquire wide respect in the world of poetry, and Buddhist themes in some of her *tanka* were, for a long time, not perceived as 'Buddhist enough' to be included in the *shakkyōka* of imperial collections until the fourteenth century.

II. From a Perfect Woman to a Figure of Rejection and Suffering: Representations of 'Izumi Shikibu' in *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*

Izumi Shikibu Nikki is a diary or tale that presents its heroine in many different ways. Similarly to poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu and its reception, all of her mutually contradicting representations in *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* later became the basis for numerous tales about Izumi Shikibu and are another reason for her legendarisation. Thus, at the beginning of the diary Izumi Shikibu appears as quite a lonesome waiting woman. Her previous lover passed away and she seems to be suffering while pondering on the significance of life and death. When her affair with Prince Atsumichi starts, Izumi Shikibu at first turns out to be a very inaccessible but quite seductive woman, skilfully arousing jealousy in her new lover. Moreover, she also possesses a few features of the perfect woman, e.g. devotion to Buddhism and excellence in poetry. However, the heroine's alleged excessive seductiveness causes rumours and she starts to be considered as unfaithful. Despite that, she finally makes her way to the Prince's palace, only to soon become the object of laughter and jealousy of the Prince's main consort, and to feel out of place due to her provinciality. Thus, in the diary the figure of Izumi Shikibu undergoes a transformation from the perfect lady to a woman rejected by court society and a pitiful victim of love and another relationship. Let us have a look at a few excerpts from the *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* that demonstrate changes in the representation of its heroine, starting from the waiting woman through the inaccessible and seductive Buddhist devotee, excellent poet, the unfaithful, and finally rejected and suffering lady.

1) The Waiting Woman

夢よりもはかなき世の中を、嘆きわびつつ明かし暮らすほどに、四月余日にもなりぬれば、木の下くらがりもてゆく。築土の上の草あをやかなるも、人はことに目もとどめぬを、あはれとながむるほどに、近き透垣のもとに人のけはひすれば、たれならむと思ふほどに、故宮にさぶらひし小舎人童なりけり。[87]

Frailer than a dream had been those mortal ties[88] for which she mourned, passing her days and nights with sighs of melancholy. And now the tenth day of the fourth month[89] had come and gone, and the shade beneath the trees grew even deeper. The fresh green of the grass on the embankment – though most people would hardly have given it a glance – somehow aroused an emotional awareness within her, and, as she sat gazing out at it, she noticed a movement at the nearby openwork fence (Cranston 1970: 121).

(…) 晦日がたに、風いたく吹きて、野分だちて雨など降るに、つねよりももの心細くてながむるに、御ふみあり。例の折知り顔にのたまはせたるに、日ごろの罪もゆるしきこえぬべし。

嘆きつつ
秋のみ空を
ながむれば
雲うちさわぎ
風ぞはげきし
御返し、
秋風は
気色吹くだに
悲しきに
かき雲る日は
いふかたぞなき

[87] Cf. *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*. *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki. Sarashina Nikki*. *Sanuki no Suke Nikki* 1994: 17.

[88] Those 'mortal ties' refer to Izumi Shikibu's relationship with her previous lover, the late Prince Tametaka.

[89] The tenth of the fourth month is the first day of summer in the lunar calendar, which roughly corresponds to May in the solar calendar.

げにさぞあらむかしとおぼせど、例のほどへぬ。[90]

(…) Toward the end of the month the wind blew fiercely. One day while she sat gazing, more than usually depressed by the autumnal tempest and the rain, a poem came from the Prince. It was written with his customary air of knowing just what sentiments were appropriate to the season, so that in the end she had to forgive him for his long neglect:

Nagekitsutsu	"While I was gazing,
Aki no misora o	Lost in melancholy sighs,
Nagamureba	Upon the autumn sky,
Kumo uchisawagi	The clouds churned wildly,
Kaze zo hageshiki	Blown by the violent wind."

She replied:

Akikaze wa	"The merest stirring
Keshiki fuku dani	Of the autumn wind
Kanashiki ni	Is sad enough,
Kakikumoru hi wa	But a day of leaden clouds
Iu kata zo naki	Beggars description."

Her days must indeed be sad, he thought; nevertheless time drifted by as before without his visiting her (Cranston 1970: 156).

2) The Inaccessible and the Seductive

(…) 二三日ありて、忍びてわたらせたまへり。
女は、ものへ参らむとて精進したるうちに、いと間遠なるもこころざしなきなめりと思へば、ことにものなども聞こえで、仏にことづけたてまつりて明かしつ。[91]

(…) Two or three days later he stole out to see her again. But as it happened, the lady had decided to go on a retreat to a certain temple, and was in the midst of her preparatory purification.[92] And besides, his neglect showed how little interest he had in her anyway. She therefore made scant effort to talk to him,

[90] Cf. *Izumi Shikibu Nikki. Murasaki Shikibu Nikki. Sarashina Nikki. Sanuki no Suke Nikki* 1994: 46-47.
[91] Cf. *Izumi Shikibu Nikki. Murasaki Shikibu Nikki. Sarashina Nikki. Sanuki no Suke Nikki* 1994: 24-25.
[92] Those included, among other things, the avoidance of relations with the opposite sex.

using her religious observances as an excuse for ignoring him all night (Cranston 1970: 137).

宮、例の忍びておはしまいたり。女、さしもやはと思ふうちに、日ごろのおこなひに困じて、うちまどろみたるほどに、 門をたたくに聞きつくる人もなし。聞こしめすことどもあれば、人のあるにやとおぼしめして、やをら帰らせたまひて。つとめて、
あけざりし
まきの戸口に
立ちながら
つらき心の
ためしとぞ見し[93]

(…) The prince came in his usual secretive fashion. But as the lady had discounted any such possibility and was moreover fatigued by her devotions of the past several days, she had drowsed off to sleep, and no one heard the knocking at the gate. Since he had been listening to various rumors, the Prince thought she must be entertaining another lover, and softly stole away, returning home. The next morning she received the following note:

Akezarishi	As I stood waiting
Maki no toguchi ni	At the pine-wood gate
Tachinagara	You would not open for me,
Tsuraki kokoro no	The proof of your cold heart
Tameshi to zo mishi	Was there for me to see (Cranston 1970: 139).

3) Buddhist Devotee

かかるほどに八月にもなりぬれば、つれづれなぐさめむとて、石山に詣でて七日ばかりもあらむとて詣でぬ。宮、久しうもなりぬるかなとおぼして、御文つかはすに、童、「一日まかりてさぶらひしかば、石山になむこのごろおはしますなる」と申さすれば、「さは、今日は暮れぬ、つとめてまかれ」とて御文書かせたまひて、賜はせ

[93] Cf. *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*. *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki. Sarashina Nikki*. *Sanuki no Suke Nikki* 1994: 26-27.

て、石山に行きたれば、仏の御前にはあらで、ふるさとのみ恋しくて、かかる歩きも引きかへたる身の有様と思ふに、いとものの悲しうて、まめやかに仏を念じたてまつるほどに、高欄の下の方に人のけはひすれば、あやしくて見下したれば、この童なり。

あはれに思ひがけぬところに来たれば、「なにぞ」と問はすれば、御文さし出でたるも、つねよりもふと引き開けて見れば、「いと心深う入りたまひにけるをなむ、などかくなむとものたまはせざりけむ。**ほだしまでこそおぼさざらめ**[94]

(…) In the meantime the eighth month had begun. The lady decided she must do something to relieve the tedium of her existence, and set off on a pilgrimage to Ishiyama, leaving word that she would be gone about seven days. Just at this time the Prince was struck by what a long time had gone by without their seeing each other, and summoned his page to carry a message. The latter, however, informed his master that on a recent visit to the lady's house he had heard that she had gone to Ishiyama on retreat.

"Well then," replied the Prince, "since today it is already dark you shall go there the first thing tomorrow morning." And he wrote a message and gave it to the boy.

The latter proceeded to Ishiyama as directed. The lady, however, was not before the Buddha. On the contrary, her mind was filled with thoughts of home, and she reflected ruefully that such pilgrimages showed how greatly she had changed. The world was a very sad place indeed. Just as she was turning inwardly to the Buddha in earnest prayer, a movement below the railing attracted her attention. Curious, she looked down and saw that it was the Prince's page. It was a happy surprise.

"What brings you here?" she asked, and for reply the page handed over the Prince's message. Opening it more hurriedly than was her wont, she read:

"I am impressed with the fervent faith which you have displayed in going off on this pilgrimage, but why did you not apprise me of your plans? You certainly do not seem to consider *me* any impediment in *your* search for salvation (Cranston 1970: 153).

[94] Cf. *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*. *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki. Sarashina Nikki. Sanuki no Suke Nikki* 1994: 43-44.

4) Excellent Poet

(…) 日ごろのおぼつかなさなど言ひて、「あやしきことなれど、日ごろもの言ひつる人なむ遠く行くなるを、あはれと言ひつべからむことひとつ言はむと思ふに、それよりのたまふことのみなむさはおぼゆるを、ひとつのたまへ」とあり。[95]

(…) Toward the end of the month a message came. After apologizing for his long silence the Prince went on, "You may think it a bit odd, but I have a request to make of you. It seems that a certain person whom I have been seeing for quite a long time is going off to a distant place, and I would like to say something to her that she would consider touching. The poems you send me are more touching than any others I have known. Please write one for me now" (Cranston 1970: 161).

5) The Adulterous Woman

(…) いかで、あやしきものに聞こしめしたるを、聞こしめしなほされにしがな」と思ふ。

宮も、言ふかひなからず、つれづれの慰めにとはおぼすに、ある人々聞こゆるやう、「このごろは、源少将なむいますなる。昼もいますなり」と言へば、また、「治部卿もおはすなるは」など、口々に聞こゆれば、いとあはあはしうおぼされて、久しう御文もなし。[96]

(…) If only she could somehow correct the quite grotesque impression of her he had picked up from current gossip.

The Prince too felt that the situation was by no means hopeless: she would serve to lighten the tedium of his days. But soon fresh rumors came: "They say that a certain Minamoto captain[97] has been paying court to her lately. I hear he goes to her even during the day." Or again: "Did you know that the Civil Affairs Minister[98] has been favoring her, too?" Such stories

[95] Cf. *Izumi Shikibu Nikki. Murasaki Shikibu Nikki. Sarashina Nikki. Sanuki no Suke Nikki* 1994: 52.
[96] Cf. *Izumi Shikibu Nikki. Murasaki Shikibu Nikki. Sarashina Nikki. Sanuki no Suke Nikki* 1994: 39.
[97] It is not clear to whom exactly this reference is made but Minamoto Masamichi 源雅道 (d. 1017) has been suggested as a possibility (Cranston 1970: 257).
[98] At that time the Civil Affairs Minister was Minamoto Toshikata 源俊賢 (979-1044).

were on everyone's lips. He could only conclude that she was inordinately fickle, and for a long time there were no messages from him (Cranston 1970: 149).

6) A Figure of Rejection and Suffering

年かへりて正月一日、院の拝礼に、殿ばら数をつくして参りたまへり。宮もおはしますを見まゐらすれば、いと若ううつくしげにて、多くの人にすぐれたまへり。これにつけてもわが身恥づかしうおぼゆ。上の御方の女房立出でゐてもの見るに、まづそれをば見で、「この人を見む」と穴をあけ騒ぐぞ、いとさまあしきや。

暮ぬれば、ことはてて宮入らせたまひぬ。御送に上達部数をつくしてゐたまひて、御遊びあり。いとをかしきにも、つれづれなりしふる里まづ思ひ出でらる。

かくてさぶらふほどに、下衆などのなかにもむつかしきこと言ふを聞こしめして、「かく人のおぼしのたまふべきにもあらず。うたてもあるかな」と心づきなければ、内にも入らせたまふことと間遠なり。かかるもいとかたはらいたくおぼゆれば、いかがはせむ、ただともかくもしなさせたまはむままにしたがひて、さぶらふ。[99]

(…) The New Year came round again,[100] and on the first day the men of the court went in full force to take part in the ceremonies of obeisance to the Retired Sovereign.[101] The Prince made one of their number, and as the lady watched him take his departure she was struck by how young and handsome he looked, so far superior to the others. She felt quite ashamed of her own appearance. The ladies-in-waiting to the Princess came out to the view the proceedings, but instead of watching the spectacle outside, they fell over themselves in their eagerness to see the newcomer, poking holes in the paper panels to peer at her. It was disgraceful. With evening the ceremonies drew to a close, and the Prince returned. He came back escorted by a huge assemblage of the highest court ranks, and the whole company made merry to the sound of flutes and strings. The very gaiety of the

[99] Cf. *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*. *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki*. *Sarashina Nikki*. *Sanuki no Suke Nikki* 1994: 85.
[100] It refers to the year 1004 (Cranston 1970: 294).
[101] It refers to Retired Emperor Reizei, Prince Atsumichi's father (Cranston 1970: 294).

> occasion immediately brought back memories to the lady of the lonely, empty life she had lived in her old home.
> While she thus continued in the Prince's service she was constantly exposed to the unpleasant talk of the underlings, which came to the Prince's ears as well. He was thoroughly offended. After all, there was no necessity for his consort to think or speak so meanly of someone else. It was really too much; his visits to her were few and far between. The new lady, too, felt quite uncomfortable about the situation, but what was she to do? She simply followed the desires of the Prince (Cranston 1970: 189).

It is clear that along with the progression of time in the *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*, the image of its heroine undergoes significant changes. At first Izumi Shikibu appears to be the waiting woman, who in the seclusion of her home faces the monotony of everyday life. Then, when her relationship with Prince Atsumichi begins, she often turns out to be avoiding her new lover, causing his anger and jealousy and thus arousing his desire, which is believed by some scholars to be a part of the so-called 'rhetoric of seduction' (Wallace 1998: 481-482, 511-512). Moreover, even though those features are not predominant in the diary, the heroine of the *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* undeniably receives some recognition for her poetic abilities and devotion to Buddhism. In fact, the theme of Buddhism, even if not explicit, is somehow present in the whole diary, e.g. in the scenes of love and suffering, where we find Izumi Shikibu pondering on the transience of life and escaping to various Buddhist temples. Thus, we see positive representations of Izumi Shikibu in the *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* but we are also exposed to her negative features, e.g. excessive amorousness and unfaithfulness, which in the following centuries became some of the most emphasised characteristics of Izumi Shikibu. Interestingly, it is exactly when the heroine of the *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* turns out to be unfaithful that her image starts to undergo a significant change. This change probably affected the perception of her by readers of this diary in the following centuries. Izumi Shikibu ceases to be a positive character and perfect woman. Her alleged unfaithfulness eventually causes a scandal in the Prince's residence and in court society, which makes her suffer, even though she appears to be the Prince's favourite. The heroine of the *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* transforms into quite a negative character, which is likely the basis for her medieval representations as a fallen lady or courtesan.

Thus, even though Izumi Shikibu is not presented in the *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* as dramatically as she is portrayed in secular tales and *nō* plays, the

diary definitely represents early stages of her legendarisation process. Some features of the created Izumi Shikibu overlap with the reception phenomenon of poetry attributed to her, e.g. poetry is understood as autobiographical and excellent; the heroine is, among other things, presented as a Buddhist devotee. One may argue that the heroine of the *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* fits into a stereotypical image of a court lady from the Heian Period, who is always lonely, waiting and suffering from love. Yet, how does a perfect woman fit the image of being seductive, amorous, rejected and unfaithful? The conclusion is that those features do not fit any positive representations of women in the Heian Period, and they signify the very beginning of the medieval reception of 'Izumi Shikibu'.

It may also be concluded that Izumi Shikibu's representations in the diary were consciously manipulated and controlled by its author, whoever s/he was. Of course I cannot provide readers with any specific evidence that would explain why the diary would have been written in a manner presenting Izumi Shikibu negatively. However, there might have been some personal, or even political reasons, why Izumi Shikibu – if she herself was the author of the *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* – or someone else, presented her as a waiting but seductive and unfaithful woman, who is simultaneously devoted to Buddhism and composes excellent poems[102]. Thus, even though early stages of Izumi Shikibu's legendarisation process are notable in the diary, I believe that it is not the diary itself but the further reception of Izumi Shikibu's representations in it that constructed an image of Izumi Shikibu as being, above all, seductive, amorous and unfaithful.

III. From Courtesan to Bodhisattva: the Medieval Reception of 'Izumi Shikibu' as Represented in *Otogizōshi* and *Nō* Drama

Besides the *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*, Izumi Shikibu became a heroine of numerous medieval tales and a few *nō* plays. However, as opposed to the diary that appears to be based on Izumi Shikibu's biography and constructs representations of her that are believable, the majority of medieval literary works portrayed Izumi Shikibu in a vulgarised and oversimplified manner that completely distorted her biography. Buddhism and Buddhist propaganda obviously played a significant part in those medieval tales and *nō* plays, since Izumi Shikibu is frequently presented as an extremely amorous woman or a harlot who simultaneously longs for religious absolution. Thus, she becomes an example of a fallen lady, who, thanks to

[102] On the political and literary implications of another Heian Period diary entitled *Kagerō Nikki* 蜻蛉日記 (gossamer years, ca. 974), see Mostow 1992: 305-315.

Buddhist teachings, is able to enter the path of Buddha. Her distorted representations are, thus, vehicles for advertising possible ways of reaching enlightenment. However, even though from the contemporary point of view it seems that Buddhism played a main role and that it was the motivator for the perpetuation of Izumi Shikibu's transfigured representations in the medieval era, taking into consideration works of scholars like Susan Matisoff and Barbara Ruch, we should keep in mind that the reason why Izumi Shikibu might have been utilised by Buddhist propaganda was that she was already known to the medieval audience as an example of an extremely amorous court lady and excellent woman poet[103]. Such reception of her image is notable in a secular tale (*otogizōshi*) entitled *Izumi Shikibu*, in which Izumi Shikibu is appropriated as a courtesan, whose passionate nature causes her pain and despair. As summarised by Edwin Cranston, the plot of the tale is as follows:

> "In the days of the Emperor Ichijō[104] there was a courtesan named Izumi Shikibu who plighted troth with Tachibana no Yasumasa and conceived a child by him. When the baby, a boy, was born, Izumi abandoned it on the Gojō Bridge, placing a scabbardless dagger by its side. The boy was rescued and brought up by a townsman, and sent to become a monk on Mt. Hiei. In course of time he became famous far and wide as Dōmei[105] Azari. One day the young Dōmei was summoned to recite sutras in the Palace. There he saw a beautiful court lady, for whom he conceived a passion. Later he returned to the Palace in the guise of a tangerine-seller and sought her out. The lady of course was none other than Izumi Shikibu. She returned his love and yielded herself to him. Then, as they were about to part, she noticed his dagger. A few questions brought out the truth, and with a shock she realized he was her son. She was so appalled at the blindness of human passion that she forsook the worldly life and entered the temple of Shōkū Shōnin on Shoshazan[106]. There, at the age of

[103] Susan Matisoff emphasised that in the medieval era people learned about 'high' aristocratic culture and literature through 'low' literature and drama, that is *setsuwa, otogizōshi* and *nō* (Matisoff 2006: XI-XIX).

[104] Emperor Ichijō 一条 (980-1011), who reigned from 986 to 1011, was the 66th emperor of Japan according to the traditional order of succession.

[105] Dōmei is a variation of Dōmyō. Dōmyō Azari 道命阿闍梨 (974-1020) was a monk and poet of the mid-Heian Period. He frequently appears in medieval tales as one of Izumi Shikibu's lovers.

[106] Shoshazan 書寫山 refers to Shoshazan Engyōji 書寫山圓教寺, which is a Tendai temple that

sixty-one, she wrote the famous "Kuraki yori" poem, which in this version runs:

Kuraki yori	From out the dark
Kuraki yamiji ni	Into the Path of Darkness
Umarekite	Was I born;
Sayaka ni terase	Shine on me clearly,
Yama no ha no tsuki	Moon of the mountain crest

(Cranston 1970: 21)[107].

The image of Izumi Shikibu presented in this tale obviously goes far away from any commonly known facts about the historical Izumi Shikibu. First of all, there are no historical records confirming that Izumi Shikibu ever had a son, not to mention that she had a love affair with him. Second of all, the authors of the tale merged the names of two husbands of Izumi Shikibu – Tachibana Michisada and Fujiwara Yasumasa – into one fictional figure – Tachibana Yasumasa. Also, by appropriating Izumi Shikibu as a courtesan, the tale made a false presumption about her extremely amorous nature and profession. Izumi Shikibu's connection to Shōkū Shōnin and her Buddhist devotion are perhaps two of the most believable features that she could have possessed. Despite that, the only reason why Izumi Shikibu awakened to Buddhism in this tale is because of her sins, so the tale is, thus, above all didactic. The story was subsequently utilised by Buddhist propaganda in order to demonstrate the power of Buddhist teachings by the example of a court lady already known to the target audience, which were the lower classes of society – peasants, artisans, the unemployed, etc. Thus, we see that the reception of Izumi Shikibu strongly affected her appropriation in the medieval era and that her figure was thus subject to transfiguration and legendarisation processes. Moreover, it is undeniable, as emphasised by Barbara Ruch, that the nature of the majority of the medieval literature genres is audience-oriented (Ruch 1977: 308). We should not, however, overestimate the significance of Buddhism in a secular tale entitled *Izumi Shikibu*, in which Izumi Shikibu does not transform into a bodhisattva and only becomes a Buddhist devotee. Her figure reaches another level of legendarisation, which I would like to call 'buddhisation', in a *nō* play attributed to Zeami 世阿弥 (1363?-1443?)[108], entitled *Seiganji*, where Izumi Shikibu undergoes a transformation into a holy creature.

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was founded in Himeji 姫路, Hyōgo 兵庫 prefecture, by Shōkū Shōnin in 966.

[107] For the original version of the tale, see *Izumi Shikibu* 2002: 226-242.

[108] Zeami (1363?-1443?), also known as Seami or Kanze Motokiyo 観世元清, was an actor, playwright, and critic who established *nō* (or *sarugaku* 猿楽) as a classic theatrical art. Zeami's

Thus, the play *Seiganji* features Izumi Shikibu and a medieval Buddhist preacher named Ippen Shōnin 一遍上人 (1234-1289)[109] as the main characters and tells the story of a miracle and of the origin of Seiganji. A nameless woman, who appears as the *maejite* 前仕手 (lead in the first half of the play), later becomes Izumi Shikibu and appears as the *nochijite* 後仕手 (lead in the second half of the play). Ippen Shōnin appears as a *waki* 脇 (supporting actor). The play takes place in the third month of the lunar calendar, and it starts when Ippen Shōnin goes to the Kumano Shrine. There, he has a dream that inspires him to distribute talismans of the *Kejjō Ōjō Rokujū Man'nin* 決定往生六十万人 (Established Rebirth of 600,000 People). He travels to the capital and he stops by Seiganji and is approached by a woman with whom he has a conversation about the power of chanting the line 'Namu Amida Butsu' 南無阿弥陀仏 (Homage to Buddha Amida). The woman convinces Ippen Shōnin to go to the main pavilion of the Seiganji and replace the name board of the temple with six characters of 'Namu Amida Butsu' written in his own hand. Shortly after that she vanishes into thin air nearby Izumi Shikibu's grave at Seiganji. In the second part of the play, Ippen Shōnin goes to Seiganji's main hall and does what the woman requested him to do. Soon, he smells the scent of flowers and hears music, whilst the woman reveals herself as Izumi Shikibu in the form of the *Kabu Bosatsu* 歌舞菩薩 (Bodhisattva of Singing and Dancing) – a member of Buddha Amida's retinue and is accompanied by twenty-five other divine beings. Then she tells the story of how Seiganji was established on Emperor Tenji's 天智 (626-672)[110] order and performs a dance that symbolizes Buddha Amida's arrival from the Western Paradise[111]. The play ends with all bodhisattvas and divine beings dancing and playing music together[112].

The play, which is filled with Pure Land Buddhism (*jōdō bukkyō* 浄土仏教) terminology and symbolism[113], shows the miraculous powers of 'Namu

father, Kan'ami 観阿弥 (1333-1384), headed a *sarugaku* troupe in the province of Yamato 大和 (now Nara 奈良 prefecture). In 1374 the young shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義満 (1358-1408) made Zeami his protégé. After Kan'ami's death, Zeami took over the troupe (*Nipponica* 2012).

[109] Ippen Shōnin (1234-1289) was a Japanese Buddhist itinerant preacher (*hijiri* 聖), who founded the *jishū* 時宗 (*time sect*) branch of Pure Land Buddhism.

[110] Emperor Tenji (626-672) was the 38th emperor according to the traditional order of succession.

[111] In Pure Land Buddhism (*jōdō bukkyō* **浄土仏教**) the Western Paradise represents the place of attained rebirth after death.

[112] For the original version of the play, see *Yōkyoku Taikan* 1991: 1549-1566.

[113] For more about Buddhist doctrines notable in *Seiganji*, see Foard 1980: 437-456.

Amida Butsu' chanting that ensures salvation for everybody by utilizing the figure of Izumi Shikibu, who is presented as a woman defiled by the Five Hindrances (see footnote 56). Thanks to the chant, the difference between Buddha and humans disappears and anyone may be reborn in the Western Paradise. Thus, when Izumi Shikibu receives a talisman from Ippen Shōnin and when he chants for her the line 'Namu Amida Butsu', she transforms into a bodhisattva. James Foard explains that the appearance of Izumi Shikibu at Seiganji is understandable, since her grave was believed to be located at this temple (Foard 1980: 440). Moreover, it is known already from the research of Yanagita Kunio 柳田國男 (1875-1962) that the tales about Izumi Shikibu and poems attributed to her were used by *Kumano Bikuni* in their preaching (Foard 1980: 440). The play thus utilised both the reception of Izumi Shikibu's representations and local legends about her, and enabled the 'buddhisation' of her image. In fact, as emphasised by Marra, the presence and significance of the courtesan becomes crucial for the assimilation of the lower class masses with Buddha's teachings. Since the courtesan paradoxically started to play a role of spokesman for the Buddha (Marra 1993a: 55), it enabled women, who traditionally would have to be reborn as a man first, to reach enlightenment (Kimbrough 2001: 70-73). Such a progressive approach created a precedent for how Buddhism confronted the topic of defilements, since Izumi Shikibu became a bodhisattva *despite*, or even *because* of her sins. Kimbrough even called it proto-feminism of medieval Japan (Kimbrough 2001: 73).

Conclusions

Izumi Shikibu is undeniably a figure who was subjected to the legendarisation process and underwent numerous transfigurations in the history of Japanese literature. Thus, although I did not find the 'truth' about the historical Izumi Shikibu in this paper, I attempted to deconstruct multiple representations of 'Izumi Shikibu' created by the reception and appropriation phenomena. According to the analysis of Izumi Shikibu's representations based on poetry attributed to her, the diary *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*, a secular medieval tale *Izumi Shikibu* and *nō* play *Seiganji*, I demonstrated that it was not the historical Izumi Shikibu's personal qualities that became the bases for her constructed images, but features that kept being attributed to her, e.g. poetic excellence, amorousness and unfaithfulness, devotion to Buddhism, etc. Izumi Shikibu's constructed representations subsequently underwent a process of reconfiguration from the image of a typical court lady of the Heian Period, through a courtesan

and bodhisattva. Thus, it may be concluded that a figure known to date as Izumi Shikibu was not only a subject of legendarisation but also the buddhisation process, and was 'reincarnated' and represented differently in various genres of Japanese literature.

I believe that the crucial and very first reason for the legendarisation process of Izumi Shikibu was the poetry attributed to her and its reception, which allowed the perception of Izumi Shikibu as an excellent poet, who was passionate and devoted to Buddhism based her work on her personal experiences. This constructed image of Izumi Shikibu became much more attractive to later generations than a more probable representation of a poet, who followed the *sandaishū* style and whose poetry, for a long time, was not perceived as 'Buddhist' but was simply at times extremely believable (especially love poems). Thus, even though the reception of poetry attributed to Izumi Shikibu created the initial basis for her legendarisation, Izumi Shikibu was already partially legendarised in the *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*, where she is presented above all as seductive, amorous and unfaithful. Such an image, combined with devotion to Buddhism also notable in the diary, opened up a whole new spectrum of possibilities for her reinterpretation and got widely perpetuated in medieval popular literature, which further appropriated Izumi Shikibu first as a courtesan and then a bodhisattva. Various layers of Izumi Shikibu's representations caused her to be an attractive subject for demonstrating the power of Pure Land Buddhism in the medieval era. Paradoxically, her alleged numerous love affairs also became the reason why she was so eagerly chosen as a heroine of many secular and Buddhist stories, since she not only demonstrated that one could attain Buddhahood *despite* numerous sins and defilements but also that women could attain the same state without being first reborn as men. That is perhaps why the figure of Izumi Shikibu became so powerful in Buddhist tales in the medieval period[114].

One could argue whether the legendarisation of Izumi Shikibu ended in the medieval era together with the buddhisation of her figure. I am certain that research on her representations in the Edo and modern Periods literature would bring very interesting results. The literature of those eras is, however, beyond the scope of this article. Yet, it should be noted and emphasised that Izumi Shikibu's distorted representations have survived to date and are still perpetuated in both Japan and the West. Thus, while Western scholars usually perceive Izumi Shikibu as a passionate woman

[114] Another reason for such a powerful impact of medieval Buddhist tales, containing the figure of Izumi Shikibu, might have been the fact that in some of them she attains Buddhahood through her poetry.

poet or *femme fatale* from the mid-Heian Period, in a short story entitled *Mō Hitori Izumi Shikibu ga umareta Hi* もう一人和泉式部が生まれた日 (the day another Izumi Shikibu was born, 1984) by Ōe Kenzaburō 大江健三郎[115], Izumi Shikibu is an object of a spiritual cult in a manner similar to the practices of the *Kumano Bikuni*. We may, thus, at least partially conclude that the medieval representations and interpretations of Izumi Shikibu as an excellent passionate poet and bodhisattva are still being validated in the contemporary era.

Izumi Shikibu remains an important subject for the study of medievalisation and legendarisation processes, since the reception and appropriation of her various representations demonstrates the universality of those phenomena. Thus, this article will hopefully encourage further studies on other classical Japanese poets that underwent similar processes of reconsideration and transfigurations, e.g. Kakinomoto Hitomaro 柿本人麻呂 (Asuka 飛鳥 [ca. 538-ca. 710] Period)[116], Ono no Komachi, Ariwara Narihira and many others.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Prof. Robert N. Huey for introducing me to the idea of the reception phenomenon of various "historical" figures', which became an incentive to analyse Izumi Shikibu's representations from this perspective. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to the Japan Foundation Japanese Studies Fellowship program and the National Institute of Japanese Literature in Tokyo for sponsorship and access to resources during the writing of this article in 2012. Finally, special thanks are directed to my friend, Mr. Thomas Daugherty, for his comments and suggestions that have greatly improved this article.

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[115] Ōe Kenzaburō is a Japanese author and a major figure in contemporary Japanese literature. His works deal with political, social and philosophical issues. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1994 (*Nipponica* 2012).

[116] Kakinomoto Hitomaro (Asuka Period [ca. 538-ca. 710]) was one of the most important MYS poets. Though poems attributed to him in later anthologies are suspect on various grounds, he is generally considered to have been one of the greatest Japanese poets ever (*Nipponica* 2012).

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Dawid Głownia

Socio-Political Aspects of *Kaijū Eiga* Genre: A Case Study of the Original *Godzilla*

ABSTRACT

Kaijū eiga – literally "monster movie" – is one of the most easily recognizable genres of Japanese cinema, as well as one of its biggest export products. Yet, despite its tremendous popularity in North America and Europe, for decades this genre was ignored by Western film scholars. The main goal of the present article is to discuss the *kaijū eiga* phenomenon as an area of intersection between escapist entertainment and socio-political commentary. As *kaijū eiga* productions are numerous, detailed analysis of even the most important representatives of the genre is beyond the scope of a single paper. Therefore, I have decided to focus on the first instalment of the Godzilla series. In the first section of the article I present a brief history of the Western reception of *kaijū eiga*, from its disregard by mainstream film criticism to its recognition as an important cultural phenomenon by the academic community. The second section serves as a brief review of the canonical and unorthodox interpretations of the original Godzilla that appeared in the subject literature during the course of the last three decades. In the next part of the article I discuss Honda Ishirō's influence on the Godzilla form and purport within the context of his world-view and the traumatic events of his past. The last section of the article is devoted to the changes introduced to the film by its American distributors that led to the distortion of its original purport.

KEYWORDS: *kaijū eiga*, monster movie, *Gojilla*, socio-political aspects.

Gojira, Godzilla, King of the Monsters, The Big G., The Kaijū – he is a beast of many names as well as many faces. Born as a menace, he becomes an anti-hero, then turns into a super-hero, then returns to his roots, only to once again become a creature with an ambivalent nature. Yet, despite these changes in his character, there are two things constant about him – he always brings about spectacular destruction… and a message.

The main goal of this article is to present Japanese film genre called *kaijū eiga* (怪獣映画, literally "films about mysterious creatures") as an area of constant interactions between escapist entertainment and socio-political commentary. As *kaijū eiga* productions are numerous – three Godzilla subseries alone consist of 28 films[1] – comprehensive discussion and

[1] Godzilla films are divided into three subseries, which are referred to as eras: Shōwa (1954-1975), Heisei (1984-1995), and Millenium (1999-2004). The same nomenclature is applied to *kaijū eiga*

evaluation of the formula is beyond the scope of a single paper. Therefore, instead of providing analyses of a large number of films – that would be at best sketchy, and as such of no particular value – I have decided to focus on the first instalment of the *Godzilla* series. Nevertheless, I present basic notions concerning properties and evolution of the genre, as well as a few examples of possible interpretations of *tokusatsu* films (特撮, literally "special filming") other than the original *Godzilla*. This approach was dictated by the fact that I have envisioned this paper as the first of a series of articles dedicated to the historical transformations of the *kaijū eiga* formula which I hope to write in the near future.

In the first section of the article I present a brief history of the Western reception of *kaijū eiga*, from its disregard by mainstream film criticism to its recognition as an important cultural phenomenon by the academic community. The second section serves as a brief review of the canonical and unorthodox interpretations of the original *Godzilla* that appeared in the subject literature over the course of the last three decades. In the next part of the article I discuss Honda Ishirō's influence on *Godzilla's* form and purport within the context of his world-view and the traumatic events of his past. The last section of the article is devoted to the changes introduced to the film by its American distributors that led to the distortion of its original purpose and design.

From Negation to Affirmation: The Western Reception of *kaijū eiga*

Honda Ishirō's *Godzilla* (*Gojira*, 1954) not only initiated one of the most successful media franchises in the history of Japanese popular culture, but also served as a model for the development of the purely Japanese film genre called *kaijū eiga*[2]. Although inspired by Western monster movies and science-fiction films, the genre was to develop its own distinctive features in terms of both form and content. The most characteristic formal trait of *kaijū eiga* is the utilisation of the technique of suitmation (stuntmen in latex monster suits operating in an artificial environment comprised of miniature models of landscapes, building, vehicles etc.) instead of stop-motion animation, extensive animatronics, or CGI rendering. *Kaijū eiga* plots are highly standardized and can be divided into three categories: a) people defend themselves against the monster, b) the monster, intentionally

in general with slight differences in the dates: Shōwa (1954-1979), Heisei (1984-1999), and Millenium (1999-2006).

[2] Some authors (McRoy 2008: 6; Debus 2010: 220) prefer to use the term *daikaijū eiga* (大怪獣映画, "films abou"films about huge monsters"). However, as *kaijū* is by definition a creature of immense size, applying this term is rather artificial.

or not, saves people from another monster, c) the monster, intentionally or not, saves humanity from an alien invasion. Despite being rather simple and made of interchangeable components, *kaijū eiga* plots often offer something extra – a commentary on the public moods and important political and social issues current at the time of the film's release. To a lesser extent the same can be said about a broader category of films called *tokusatsu*, encompassing science-fiction, fantasy, and horror films with a significant amount of special effects. Yet, the "critical" aspect of these films was recognized – especially by Western scholars and journalists – relatively late.

On May 2, 2004 *The New York Times* published Terrence Rafferty's article "The Monster That Morphed Into a Metaphor", written on the occasion of 50th anniversary screenings of the original *Godzilla* at Manhattan's Film Forum movie theatre. It is a first-rate testament to the fundamental change that had occurred during the last few decades within the Western perception of both The Big G and the *kaijū eiga* genre. Although Godzilla had previously appeared on the pages of various journals, mostly in the reviews sections, this particular event should not be overlooked, nor the notion of its symbolic significance perceived as an exaggeration. The editors of this influential newspaper had decided to publish an article devoted to a movie about a giant radioactive monster wreaking havoc in Tokyo, which did not place it within the area of interest of cult aficionados – fans of celluloid curiosities, for whom the weirdness or campiness of a picture constitutes its very value – nor treated it as escapist entertainment with an oriental flavour, but identified it as a cultural phenomenon worthy of serious analysis. Back to back with the brief history of the film's import to the United States, Rafferty presented its dominant interpretation, according to which Godzilla was conveyed as a metaphor for the atomic bomb. An interpretation, that for nearly three decades struggled to enter into Western mainstream film criticism.

Rafferty was by no means the first one to analyse *Godzilla* in such a way. What is important about his article is that it clearly shows that by 2004 the anti-nuclear agenda of the film was well known, Godzilla was perceived as an important cultural phenomenon, and there was no shame in writing about it.

Paradoxically, despite the tremendous popularity of Japanese monster movies in North America and Europe, it took quite a lot of time for Godzilla and his kinsmen to break their way into "serious" discourse, both publicistic and academic. For decades *kaijū eiga* films were perceived as "campy kiddie spectacles, devoid of particular artistic, intellectual, or

ideological content" (Tsutsui 2006: 3), and thus deemed unworthy of in-depth analysis. It is important to note that this approach was but a part of a broader attitude toward Japanese popular culture in general (perhaps with a few exceptions, such as samurai cinema). As late as the mid-1990s, Mark Schelling was commenting on many writers for the English-language media in Japan, that:

> "Assuming that pop-culture phenomena appealing to the mass audience are beneath contempt and can therefore be safely ignored, they prefer to discover and promote artists on the commercial fringe, be they traditionalists, avant-gardists, or simple self-publishers. Their readers, consequently, learn a great deal about [*butō*] dancers and *taiko* drummers whose audiences number in the hundreds, and virtually nothing about pop singers and groups who fill stadiums". (Schilling 1997: 12)

In the dominant discourse that tended to equate "culture" with "highbrow culture", there was literally no place for any kind of serious discussion of the *kaijū eiga* phenomenon, the internal diversification and evolution of the formula, and the differences in its reception in Japan and abroad. Thus, when historians of Japanese cinema, both scholars and journalists, engaged in creating the narrative of its expansion into foreign markets, they often tended to forget that this expansion had proceeded along two lines. In parallel to the works of renown directors – such as *Rashōmon* (1950) by Kurosawa Akira, *Gate of Hell* (*Jigokumon*, 1953) by Kinugasa Teinosuke, and *47 Samurai* (*Chūshingura: Hana no maki, yuki no maki*, 1962) by Inagaki Hiroshi – which usually had a limited distribution and were screened in art-house theatres, Western film companies massively imported Japanese monster movies, which were subsequently re-edited and re-dubbed in order to attract a broader audience. The truth is that in the 1950s and 1960s an American had a statistically greater chance to become acquainted with Godzilla than to see one of Kurosawa's samurai dramas.
Stuart Galbraith IV argues that due to the fact that *kaijū eiga* has been the most consistently exportable Japanese film genre, it came to symbolize Japanese cinema for the rest of the world, and in the process made Godzilla the biggest "star" ever to come out of Japan (Galbraith 2009: 89). The most telling example of the huge popularity and awareness of The Big G outside of its native country are the results of a poll conducted in 1985 by "The New York Times" and CBS News on 1,500 Americans who were asked to

name a famous Japanese person. The top three answers were Emperor Hirohito, Bruce Lee, and Godzilla (Tsutsui 2004: 7).

For years, scholars had tended to look at *kaijū eiga* with nothing but contempt – at least officially, as Tsutsui's "coming out of the closet" book *Godzilla on My Mind: Fifty Years of the King of the Monsters* proves that privately some of them were rather fond of this genre. The fact that Japanese monsters were finally able to penetrate academia – which had previously been defended more eagerly than the metropolises they easily stomped on – corresponds with the broader trend of a gradual opening up on the part of the academic world to the subject of popular culture, identified – especially on the level of its reception – as an important social practice.

Although the idea of a serious analysis of Japanese monster movies dates back to the 1960s, most notably to Susan Sontag's essay "The Imagination of Disaster", the real breakthrough came in 1987 with the publication of Chon Noriega's article "Godzilla and the Japanese Nightmare: When "Them!" Is U.S." which appeared in *Cinema Journal*, the renowned academic quarterly devoted to film and media studies. During the 1990s the number of academics interested in the socio-political aspects of *kaijū eiga* movies gradually increased. The publication of the anthology *In Godzilla's Footsteps: Japanese Pop Culture Icons on the Global Stage*, collecting the speeches given at the conference of the same name organized in 2004 at the University of Kansas, can be seen as the culmination of these processes.

Changes in the perception of *kaijū eiga* occurred even in the writings of Donald Richie, one of the initiators of Western studies on Japanese cinema and a foremost expert on the subject. For years his negative attitude toward popular cinema – contrasted with *auteur* film and independent cinema – tended to legitimize both its ruthless criticism and total disregard. Still in 1990 he rendered the image of Japanese popular cinema as a "plethora of nudity, teenage heroes, science-fiction monsters, animated cartoons, and pictures about cute animals" (Richie 1990: 80). Although it is hard to speak about a radical shift or a total revaluation in Richie's views on popular cinema, in recent years he has adopted a more liberal attitude toward it, recognizing the fact that it can convey deeper meanings. Fifteen years after he had ironically commented on *kaijū eiga* monsters, he admitted that the genre was able to express the *Zeitgeist* of different decades, stating that:

> "Godzilla became a kind of barometer of the political mood. From punishment-figure-from-the-past he turned friendly and

> finally took to defending his country (right or wrong) from not only foreign monsters but also the machinations of both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.". (Richie 2005: 178)

It is necessary to underline that academic interest on the subject of *kaijū eiga* is not only a relatively new trend, but also one rather limited in scope. Generally, scholars tend to focus on the first instalment of the Godzilla series, and rarely write extensively about its follow-ups or movies with other monsters. Thus, there are a substantial number of in-depth analyses of the original *Godzilla*, yet few of, for instance, *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (*Kingu Kongu tai Gojira*, 1962) or *Mothra* (*Mosura*, 1961), notable of their anti-consumerism. What is more, most of these analyses were actually conducted by members of the Godzilla fan community. The decisive factor for this "unequal distribution of analyses" within the academia is the evolution – or rather 'degradation' of the series, which gradually departed from its roots and morphed into light-hearted spectacles for younger audiences. Due to this radical shift in the series production policy, Godzilla is remembered, especially outside of his native country, primarily "as the bug-eyed slapstick superhero for kids of the 1960s films, not as the sombre and politically engaged monster-with-a-message that began the series in the 1950s" (Tsutsui 2006: 3-4). The reorientation of the Godzilla series under the pressure of changes within the demographics of Japanese cinema audiences is a fact. However, it is hard to agree with Rafferty's opinion, according to which:

> "The metaphor had slipped its moorings and headed far out to sea, refitted as a tacky cruise ship. [...] [E]ven the Japanese hadn't believed in their metaphor for ages, and had long since turned their home-grown monsters into lovable entertainers". (Rafferty 2004)

In comparison to the original movie, subsequent instalments of the Godzilla series are indeed scantier in meaning and lacking in an explicitly articulated ideological message. Yet they still remain a valuable source of knowledge about public moods, anxieties, and the hot social and political topics of the time of their release. As Tsutsui notes:

> "Even in later decades, as the series targeted a much younger and less politically aware demographic, the Godzilla films continued to address some of the weighty issues confronting

> Japanese society: corporate corruption, pollution, school bullying, remilitarization, and rising Japanese nationalism, just to name a few". (Tsutsui 2010: 208)

Although some of the socio-political interpretations of the Godzilla movies seem to be too far-fetched, they clearly demonstrate the critical potential of the *kaijū eiga* formula. Steve Ryfle's impressive book *Japan's Favorite Mon-Star: The Unauthorized Biography of "The Big G"* contains a vast number of such interpretations. Among them are notions that *Mothra vs. Godzilla* (*Mosura tai Gojira*, 1964) served as a critique of commercialism, *Godzilla vs. Hedorah* (*Gojira tai Hedora*, 1971) warned against increasing pollution, and *Godzilla vs. Destroyah* (*Gojira tai Desutoroia*, 1995) expressed Japanese fears of losing their dominant economic position in the region on the eve of the Chinese takeover of Hong Kong (Ryfle 1998: 14).

Even though the idea of Godzilla serving as a metaphor for nuclear threat wore off relatively quickly, and was thus abandoned, nuclear themes tended to resurface in the series, most notably in its 1984 reboot. What is more, nuclear themes constituted an important ingredient of many *tokusatsu* films produced within a few years after the premiere of the original *Godzilla*, especially those directed by Honda Ishirō.

It would be tempting to perceive Godzilla's revaluation within mainstream film criticism solely as a by-product of the same processes that lead to popcultural reorientation within the academic community. However, there was another factor at play. For 26 years Western film critics were unable to see the original version of the movie. Their reviews and the unjust opinions that followed were based on the drastically altered American(ized) version of the film, entitled *Godzilla, King of the Monsters!*.

In September 1955, Edmund Goldman approached the American branch of the Tōhō Company and purchased the theatrical and TV distribution rights for *Godzilla* on the territory of the United States and Canada. In order to obtain funds and the know-how necessary to successfully embark on this project, he established a business partnership with Harold Ross and Richard Kay, the owners of Jewel Enterprises, and Joseph E. Levin of Transworld Pictures. Since the contract allowed the license holders to alter the original movie, they re-dubbed and re-edited it to suit the tastes and expectations of North American audiences. A more detailed list of the changes introduced to the movie by Terry O. Morse on behalf of its American distributors will be discussed in more detail in the last section of the article. At this point it is sufficient to say that he added about twenty minutes of new material with Raymond Burr playing an American

correspondent in Japan, and deleted over thirty minutes of the original footage, which led to the elimination of many references to the atomic bomb and a distortion of the film's purport.

Godzilla, King of the Monsters! premiered on April 27, 1956 and was met with negative critical reception. While some of the reviewers praised the film for its special effects, most expressed opinions similar to that of Bosley Crowther of *The New York Times*, who described it as "an incredibly awful film [...] in the category of cheap cinematic horror-stuff" (Crowther 1956: 11). Negative reviews did not stop the film from becoming a box office success, earning two million dollars on its initial U.S. release, and thus paving the way for more Japanese monster movies to be imported. On the other hand, the popularity of *kaijū eiga* among American audiences did not change the critics' attitude toward the formula. Only after the American premiere of the original version of *Godzilla* in 1982, did they recognize it as something more than lowbrow entertainment. This time, reviews were mostly favourable and focused on the ideological aspects of the movie, which had previously been cut out of the film by its American distributors. Fox example, Carrie Rickey of the *Village Voice* wrote that though Godzilla is only a rubberized miniature, the issues he addresses are global (Galbraith 1994: 13), while Howard Reich of the *Chicago Tribune* described the film as an eerie metaphor for nuclear war and a parable on life-and-death issues with striking visual messages, definitely not sophisticated, but whose sledgehammer means of communication actually work and powerfully underscore the message (Reich 1982).

Long before the artistic and intellectual quality of at least some *tokusatsu* films were recognized by academics and professional journalists, this outlook had consistently been articulated among fans. On the pages of fanzines such as *Japanese Fantasy Film Journal* (published in 1968-1983) or *G-FAN* (established in 1992 and published to date) one can find plenty of articles with titles such as "Godzilla and Postwar Japan", "Godzilla Symbolism", "Godzilla and the Second World War" or "Japan, Godzilla and the Atomic Bomb". It would be hard to argue against the fact that the contributors of such magazines and Internet fanpages tended to over-interpret certain movies. I believe that one of the best examples of such a case is Tom Miller's and Sean Ledden's discussion of the symbolic meanings of two antagonistic monsters from *Frankenstein Conquers the World* (*Furankenshutain tai chitei kaijū Baragon*, 1966). While Miller argued that Baragon represented the United States of America defeated by a Japanese-German alliance symbolized by the Frankenstein monster,

according to Ledden Frankenstein actually served as a symbol of the capitalist economies of Germany and Japan growing under the protection of America's nuclear umbrella, yet threatened by the International Communism represented by Baragon (Ledden 2002). Despite their occasional ventures into the realm of over-interpretation, fan writers deserve recognition and credit as pioneers of critical reflection on the socio-political purport of Japanese science-fiction cinema.

Interpreting *Godzilla*: From Canonical Reading to a (Re)Production of Meanings

Godzilla's plot is not complex, as it follows the well-established pattern of a monster movie. Nuclear tests conducted in the Pacific Ocean irradiate a prehistoric beast that had survived for millions of years in an ecological niche in the deep sea near Odo Island. After a series of furious attacks committed by the enraged monster on a few ships and a fishing village, the authorities decide to organize an investigation team led by the palaeontologist Dr. Yamane (Shimura Takashi). On Odo Island researchers first discover giant radioactive footprints, and then are confronted by the monster himself. Soon the government decides to annihilate Gojira, as the beast is called by the islanders. Yamane objects, as he believes that the monster should be examined in order to discover how he was able to survive such a strong dose of radiation. Two subsequent attacks by the monster on Tokyo prove that the Japanese Self-Defense Forces are no match for him. Japan's only hope for survival is a device called the Oxygen Destroyer, developed by Dr. Serizawa (Hirata Akihiko). However, Serizawa is not willing to publicize his invention, fearing that it would be later used by politicians as a weapon of mass destruction. Although he is finally convinced to kill the monster, he destroys all of his notes and commits suicide, so his invention cannot be used in the future.

The simplicity of the plot combined with the viewer's strong impression that there is something more than meets the eye (and ear, for that matter) in this film, makes it open to a number of interpretations, which both complement and contradict each other. Although radioactive mutation was a popular leitmotif of 1950s science-fiction cinema – to name just *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953), *Monster from the Ocean Floor* (1954), *Them!* (1954) *It Came from Beneath the Sea* (1955), and *Attack of the Crab Monsters* (1957) – *Godzilla* considerably differs from its American counterparts. While in most of these productions radiation served solely as MacGuffin initiating the film's narrative, in *Godzilla* the atomic theme was a central aspect of the film and the basis for broader reflection on nuclear

warfare. What is more, the purport of Honda's movie was drastically different from that of *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* or *It Came from Beneath the Sea*. In these movies the remedy for atomic threat, symbolized by the monster, was to use a stronger weapon. In the first one Rhedosaurus is killed by a bullet containing a radioactive isotope, while in the second, the giant octopus is killed by a torpedo with a nuclear warhead. In contrast, Godzilla does not legitimize the nuclear arms race, but strongly opposes it.
The dominant interpretation of *Godzilla* states that the monster symbolizes the atomic bomb, and the whole movie serves as an allegorical warning against potential nuclear conflict. However, the vagueness of meaning of certain aspects of the film, and the ambiguous character of Godzilla, who can be perceived both as a demonic oppressor and as an innocent victim of a weapon of mass destruction, tend to support less canonical readings of the movie. The analysis of the literature devoted to the King of the Monster's debut, allows one to distinguish two interpretative practices. The first aims to universalize the meaning of the movie, while the second tends to specify it, that is – ascribe specific meaning to whole film, Godzilla's symbolism or particular scenes. Steve Ryfle's opinion is the prime example of the first trend:

> Producer Tanaka [Tomoyuki] and director Honda [Ishirō] clearly created the monster in the image of the Bomb, but the metaphor is universal. Godzilla's hell-born wrath represents more than one specific anxiety in the modern age — it is the embodiment of the destruction, disaster, anarchy, and death that man unleashes when he foolishly unlocks the forbidden secrets of nature, probes the frightening reaches of technology and science, and […] allows his greed and thirst for power to erupt in war. (Ryfle 1998: 37)

Although this interpretation detaches *Godzilla* from its atomic context, it does not diverge significantly from the intentions of the film's creators. However, this cannot be said about some of the interpretations that aim to specify film's meaning. Scenes depicting the inefficiency of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces in their struggles with Godzilla are often interpreted as a symbolic representation of the dread of not being able to repel potential foreign invasion, especially from the Communist Bloc (Palmer 2000: 468). On the other hand, some argue that, as Godzilla is depicted as a creature from the Odo islanders' folklore, it is more reasonable to perceive the movie as a metaphor for Japan's former imperialistic policy, which led

to American retaliation that literally levelled Japanese cities (Rafferty 2004). The most unorthodox interpretations of this kind are articulated by Japanese commentators. According to Kobayashi Tomayasu, the fact that in the world of *kaijū eiga* the United States never assists Japan in its struggle against the monsters sends a clear message that the Japanese can only count on themselves to defend their country. Akasaka Norio perceives Godzilla as a representation of the spirits of those Japanese soldiers who fell in World War II, while Nagayama Yosuo compares the monster to Takamori Saigō, arguing that both were not enemies of the people, but enemies of the state's harmful policy (Kalat 1997: 22-23).

The most interesting analyses of the original *Godzilla* derive their origins from post-war Japanese society's traumas related to the wartime experiences of the Japanese populace, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and more general fears of a potential global nuclear conflict. In psychoanalytic terminology "trauma" is most commonly defined as a state of shock, terror, and constant insecurity conditioned by a certain severely distressing event or a series of events that took place in the subject's past. As Krzysztof Loska notes, according to this view the subject is often unable to rework and overcome the angst related to the traumatic event because it is hard for him or her to describe and express it in a form that may lead to alleviation or solace (Loska 2009: 349-350). As R. Barton Palmer notes:

> "*Godzilla* is a significant construction of Japanese popular culture that resonates with themes specific to that country's post-war experience. In fact, it seems to confirm what sociologists such as Siegfried Kracauer have said of mainstream cinema, that, especially in times of profound social crisis, its offerings often screen the fears of disaster and hopes for deliverance that are deep in the unconsciousness of its eager spectators". (Palmer 2000: 368)

In applying psychoanalytic terminology various authors tend to perceive *Godzilla* as both an embodiment of the fears of Japanese society and a means for defining, reworking and taming its traumas. Although the first intuition of the therapeutic functions of *tokusatsu* films was articulated in 1965 by Susan Sontag, who wrote that most of these movies "bear witness to [nuclear] trauma, and in a way, attempt to exorcise it" (Sontag 1965: 46), the idea was not pursued – at least not in an extensive manner – by other scholars for over twenty years. Thus, it is more appropriate to say that the

trend of traumatic analyses of Godzilla was initiated by Chon Noriega, who linked the monster with Japanese post-war traumas, Cold War tensions, and the uncertainty of Japanese-American relations (Noriega 1987). Following this lead Susan Napier argues that *Godzilla* – especially its scenes depicting panic and destruction – may be read "as a form of cultural therapy, allowing the defeated Japanese to work through the trauma of wartime bombings" (Napier 2006: 10).

Another representative of the psychoanalytic approach to *Godzilla* worth mentioning is Mark Anderson. The basis for his analysis is a Freudian distinction between mourning and melancholy, according to which, while mourning is a reaction to the loss of either a loved person or an important abstraction that takes the form of the grieving process, melancholy is a symptom of a hostility originally felt for an Other but internalized and redirected at oneself. Thus, people who are melancholic have an ambivalent feeling of love and hate for the other as well as for themselves. According to Anderson it is difficult not to read *Godzilla* – at least partially – as a symptom of national Japanese melancholia. He asks:

> "After destruction and defeat at the hands of the United States, after a would-be war of liberation was redefined as a crime against humanity, after the Japanese troops that had been held up as paragons of virtue were accused of war crimes, is there any doubt that Japanese feelings toward the United States and their own war dead must have involved ambivalent feelings of both love and hate?". (Anderson 2006: 26-27)

The issue of the ambiguous feelings of Japanese society towards the role of Japan in World War II, the soldiers of the Imperial Army, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in short – toward the country's recent history, is another important aspect of *Godzilla* analyses. As Ōshima Nagisa once said: "Before the war we had been taught that Japan was the leading nation in the world. After the war we had to be reborn and revise our way of thinking" (Sadoul 1969: 34). Urayama Kirirō adds: "For me the central issue was the way of thinking I was implanted with during my childhood, and the collapse of this worldview after the shock of Japanese defeat in the last war" (Ibidem: 30). The feeling of dissonance between the image of Japan circulating within its borders before and during the war, and the antithetical image imported there after the Japanese surrender, were common. Thus *Godzilla* could have served – the question is: whether by design or not – as a basis for the reinterpretation of Japan's twentieth

century history. Tatsumi Takayuki argues that the monster "helped the post-war Japanese to reconstruct national identity by making themselves into victims of and resistors against an outside threat" (Tatsumi 2000: 228)".

The brief review of *Godzilla* interpretations presented above – which are by no means comprehensive and definite – clearly illustrates that they often tend to contradict each other. This diversity of both meanings and readings should be embraced by everyone interested in studying Godzilla as a social and cultural phenomenon. Critics and scholars who aim to reveal the hidden meaning of the film's smallest details, as well as those trying to discover its "proper" (that is: precise and undisputed, the one and only) interpretation tend to commit a fundamental error. Namely, they overlook the fact, that *Godzilla* is not an *auteur* film, not even a fully coherent one, thus the application of art-house film criteria in its analysis is unjustified. *Godzilla* was developed relatively quickly. Its initial idea was born in March 1954 and the project was green-lighted by studio executives in mid-April. Work on the film's story was initiated on May 12 and finished by the end of the month. The subsequent transformation of the story into a screenplay took barely three weeks and the film's production was officially announced on July 5. Shooting began in early August and the finished film was presented at a private screening for the crew on October 23, eleven days before its official premiere. As a result of this – as well as the fact that *Godzilla* was after all a genre film – not all of the details in its layer of meaning were précised, not to mention that – in spite of commentators' attempts at decoding them – some aspects of the movie have no meaning other than a purely referential one. What is more, on various occasions the creators of *Godzilla* presented slightly different interpretations of their film – although the atomic bomb was still the common denominator, there were some differences in the details (Godzilla as a bomb, Godzilla as nature taking revenge on mankind for creating the bomb, etc.).

The King of the Monsters is a truly polysemic beast, and as such it can symbolize the atomic bomb, nature taking revenge on humanity, the threat of nuclear conflict, the spirit of Japan punishing its citizens for embarking on an imperialistic path, as well as many other things (and all of this at the same time). This, however, is not a shortcoming of the movie. On the contrary – herein lies its greatest strength. As a cultural phenomenon *Godzilla* belongs not to the order of reason, but to the order of intuition, both on the level of its creation, and the level of its reception. It allowed for the symbolic expression of ambivalent feelings that could have not

been articulated openly and conceptually, and to intuitively approach what could have not been rationally comprehended and described.

When Individual and Collective Traumas Meet: The Case of Honda Ishirō

The majority of the authors of analyses of *Godzilla* tend to apply a perspective that could be called "collective", "universal", perhaps even "impersonal", as they write about Japan, the Japanese, nation, society and so on. The problem with that approach is that while Godzilla is indeed a monster sensitive to public moods, he was neither conceived by all of the Japanese, nor by the nation, society, or any other abstract entity. Although he has many creators, all of them can be pointed out by name. They ae: the film producer Tanaka Tomoyuki, the novelist Kayama Shigeru, the screenwriter Murata Takeo, the special effects specialist Tsuburaya Eiji, the composer Ifukube Akira, and the director Honda Ishirō. I believe it is worth breaking – at least to some extent – with the dominant collective approach towards *Godzilla*, and to apply a more individual perspective that would focus on the issue of how the film reflected the personal experiences, anxieties and beliefs of its director. The choice of Honda as a central figure in this section of the article is neither arbitrary nor random. Although he was attached to the project after its preliminary outline was formulated, he played a decisive role in moulding its final form and meaning. Thus, I argue that the first instalment of the Godzilla series should be perceived mainly in terms of Honda's (and only secondarily – the nation's or the society's) cleansing reaction to the traumatic events of the past, and a (not entirely) symbolic articulation of his ideological beliefs and political postulates for the future.

The discussion of Honda's personal influence on the final shape of the original *Godzilla* is all the more important because in the literature one can find two erroneous opinions on the subject. The first one is more or less an explicit assumption that *Godzilla* was Honda's auteur project. For example, Samara Lea Allsop states that "[i]n order for *Godzilla* to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, [...] Honda sought out the best special effects artist in Japan, who would share his vision for the film" (Allsop 2004: 63). Honda, however, did not "seek out" anyone, as both he and Tsuburaya Eiji – mentioned in the quote above – were attached to the already existing project by the producer. What is more, Honda was not even Tanaka's first choice for a director. Originally *Godzilla* was to be directed by Taniguchi Senkichi, but by the time the project was green-lighted, he was already working on a different film (Ryfle 1998: 37). The diametrically opposed

view, yet one no less erroneous than the former, is a complete depreciation of Honda's personal contribution to the significative layer of the *Godzilla* and *tokusatsu* films he subsequently directed. Alexander Jacoby suggests that though there are some sociological concerns in these movies, they were expressed in the scripts rather than through any directorial subtleties. He adds that Honda is remembered rather because of the films he was attached to than because of any personal distinction (Jacoby 2008: 49). Honda's lack of personal distinction may be true in terms of the films' style – though this is debatable – but definitely not in terms of his thematic inclinations. It is true that he was a contract director, a skilled craftsman rather than a film *auteur* (at least in the meaning applied to this term by classic auteur theory). However, the fact that radiation is a recurring theme in 18 of his *tokusatsu* films (Brothers 2009: 11) is no coincidence. Honda was known for exerting substantial influence on the scripts he worked with and infusing them with themes he was particularly interested in. The reason why information about this aspect of his work was usually not included in the credits is that he did not want to take recognition away from the official screenwriters (Ibidem: 9).

At this point it is important to note that the analytical approach focusing on the influence of Honda's biography and beliefs on the final shape of *Godzilla* faces a fundamental problem, namely the inevitable blurring of the demarcation line between individual and collective perspective. After all, Honda's traumas and war-time experiences were shared by a large part of Japanese society. Nevertheless, an analysis of Honda's films, his public statements, and the recollections of his relatives and co-workers makes it possible to determine which events affected him most and were to have a substantial influence on his work.

In 1945 within a short period of time Japanese society experienced two traumatic events – the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August, and the act of the unconditional surrender of Japan, announced in the unprecedented radio broadcast of the emperor's proclamation to the nation on August 15, and officially signed aboard the USS Missouri on September 2. For many Japanese citizens the most traumatic experience had been the war itself. This was true for the soldiers fighting on the front lines, the repressed dissidents, as well as for the civilians living in fear of bombing raids. Hani Sasumu, a Japanese film director, once said: "I have never perceived this war as a holy one, among other things because of the repressions on my family […], so I wanted it to end as soon as possible (Sadoul 1969: 34). Even though some Japanese

welcomed the news about capitulation with joy and relief, the war left its mark on every one of them.

In the first quarter of 1954 an incident occurred that reopened the unhealed wounds of Japanese society and triggered large-scale anti-nuclear protests. On March 1 an American thermonuclear hydrogen bomb was detonated at Bikini Atoll near the Marshall Islands as part of nuclear tests code-named Operation Castle and conducted in the region by the Atomic Energy Commission and the Department of Defense. The expected explosive yield of the Castle Bravo test was estimated at 4 to 6 megatons of TNT. However, the actual blast yielded 15 megatons, being nearly 1,000 times stronger than that of Little Boy dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. The unexpected strength of the explosion combined with the sudden change of weather resulted in heavy contamination of over 7,000 square miles of the Pacific Ocean, including Rongerik, Utirik, Rongelap, Aillinginae Atolls (Titus 2001: 47). Within the range of the radioactive cloud was also a Japanese tuna fishing vessel, Lucky Dragon 5 (*Dago Fukuryū Maru*). A few hours after the explosion the ship was covered with radioactive ash. For the next two weeks the crew members suffered from severe headaches and nausea, boils and scabs, painful swelling of the hands, hair loss, and the oozing of a yellow secretion from the eyes and ears (Barton 1994: 148; Wilkening 2004: 275). After reaching Yaizu port on March 14 they were hospitalized and diagnosed with acute radiation syndrome. However, by the time fishermen's condition was diagnosed, their cargo had already entered the market. The ship's chief radio operator Kuboyama Aikichi died of liver failure on September 23, and was identified as the first fatal victim of the incident, although the American side claimed that the main reason for his death was not irradiation, but a hepatitis infection introduced through one of his blood transfusions. The first press article devoted to the incident appeared in the *Yomiuri Shinbun* newspaper on March 16. A wave of social unrest followed. A boycott of tuna fish was organized, as well as a nation-wide action of collecting signatures on a ban-the-bomb petition, which by August 1955 had been signed by over 30 million people.

Godzilla is a child of economic calculation, the love for cinema, and the fear of nuclear warfare. After he was forced to abandon plans for a Japanese-Indonesian war film, Tanaka Tomoyuki found himself under strong pressure from Tōhō executives to quickly come up with an idea for another potential blockbuster. As he remembered the box office success of the 1952 re-release of *King Kong* (1933) and the subsequent theatrical run of *The Beast of 20,000 Fathoms*, Tanaka thought that the making of an indigenous monster movie might be a lucrative undertaking. Tsuburaya Eiji,

being a great fan of *King Kong*, which he had seen for the first time in the 1930s, was delighted by this idea, as he had long dreamed about participating in the making of a similar movie. Although it was Tanaka who imagined Godzilla as an allegory for the atomic bomb (it is said that the crucial arguments that allowed him to convince Tōhō executives to invest in such a risky venture were Japanese box office numbers for *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* and *King Kong*, and a pile of articles on the Lucky Dragon 5 incident), it was Honda who snatched the monster from the grip of clichés, and did not allow the science-fiction idiom to overwhelm the film's message.

Honda Ishirō was born on May 7, 1911. He fell in love with cinema in his youth and eventually decided to pursue a career in the film industry. After graduating from Kōgyokusha Middle School, where he majored in Arts, he enrolled in the newly established Film Department at Nihon University. In August 1933 he joined P.C.L. Studios, one of the companies that were later to merge into the Tōhō film company. His most valuable professional experience came from working under Yamamoto Kajirō on *Horse* (*Uma*, 1941), *Katō's Fighting Falcons* (*Katō hayabusa sentō-tai*, 1944), and comedies starring Enoken (Enomoto Ken'ichi). Although Yamamoto was forced during World War II to direct propagandistic war films such as *The War at Sea from Hawaii to Malaya* (*Hawai Marei oki kaisan*, 1942), he was well known as a liberal, whose beliefs had a significant influence on young Honda's world-view. In 1937 Honda met Kurosawa Akira, who was to remain his close friend until his death. Although Kurosawa had soon embarked on the path of *auteur* film, while Hondas was to work with genre films for the rest of his directorial career, they shared similar beliefs and anxieties. It is significant that almost at the same time they both directed symbolic cautionary tales on the subject of nuclear warfare – Honda's *Godzilla* and Kurosawa's *I Live in Fear* (*Ikimono no kiroku*, 1955).

Unlike Kurosawa, Honda had experienced at first-hand the horrors of war. He had been drafted into the Japanese Imperial Army in January 1935 and sent to Manchuria 16 month later, yet he was relieved before the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War. He was mobilized again at the end of 1939 and served until December 1941. He was once again sent to the front line in March 1944. Shortly after the formal capitulation of Japan he surrendered to American soldiers and was sent to a Chinese prisoner-of-war camp, where he spent about half a year. After his return to Japan in March of 1946 he went to Hiroshima to witness the scale of the destruction and pay his respects to the dead.

From the recollections of Honda's relatives and co-workers there emerges the image of a man agitated by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and severely disturbed by his experience of war. This mind-set was reflected in his most famous work. As Nakajima Haruo, the stuntman and suit actor who played Godzilla and various other monsters from 1954 to 1972, once said: "*Godzilla* is a monster movie. But the director, Mr. Honda, added many layers to the story about the horror of war" (Roberto 1999). This opinion was confirmed by Honda himself, who said: "Most of the visual images I got [in *Godzilla*] were from my war experience" (Ryfle 1998: 43). However, a few years had to pass before he was ready to talk about his wartime experiences, and to express them on film. As his wife recalls:

> "[Shortly after the premiere of *The Blue Pearl* (*Aoi shinju*, 1951) he] received an offer to work on a project about the suicide squad. Upon reading volumes of reference material, including wills written by lost soldiers and thinking about a variety of things while cooped up in his study, he came to the conclusion that he was just not capable of writing about this topic yet, and he declined the offer. I believe the mental scarring from eight years of being in the war must have been deeper than one can ever imagine". (Honda).

According to Samara Lea Allsop the reason for using a science-fiction formula as a platform for the articulation of anti-nuclear sentiments was the need to uphold the delicate *status quo* achieved at the end of World War II. She argues that though global public opinion favoured the Japanese, who were perceived as victims of American aggression, it was still unacceptable for them to be openly critical of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Allsop 2004: 63). However, it is difficult to agree with that opinion for two reasons. Firstly, *Godzilla's* creators did not try to veil the anti-nuclear purport of their work – there is even a direct reference to Nagasaki in the movie. Secondly, before the idea of *Godzilla* was born, several films that directly addressed the American atomic bombings had already been produced and screened in Japan – among them being Ōba Hideo's *The Bells of Nagasaki* (*Nagasaki no kane*, 1950), Shindō Kaneto's *Children of Hiroshima* (*Genbaku no ko*, 1952) Tasaka Tomotaka's *Never Forget the Song of Nagasaki* (*Nagasaki no uta wa wasureji*, 1952), and Sekigawa Hideo's *Hiroshima* (1953). Allsop's opinion can be considered valid only in relation to the period of the American occupation of Japan.

Although at that time there was no official ban on the subject of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, filmmakers were not only not allowed to show the full extent of the destruction and the suffering of civilians, but were also obliged to present the bombing in a broader context and as a necessary step toward ending the war (Loska 2009: 352). In 1954, however, an indirect treatment of the bombings was not necessary. The reason why Honda decided to communicate his experiences and beliefs through allegory is probably because previous "rational" films had failed to enable audiences to rework their traumas and to tame their nuclear fears. A symbolic monster from the domain of the irrationality was more suited to express the unspeakable and to present the unpresentable.

Although Honda utilised monster movie aesthetics, he put great effort into making the movie as realistic as possible while working within genre conventions. As Steve Ryfle observed – Honda approached the project with a documentary-like straightforwardness, more like it was a war drama than a science-fiction film (Ryfle 1998: 43). During their work on the screenplay Murata Takeo and Honda introduced significant changes to the initial story written by Kayama Shigeru, then a popular author of mystery/horror novels. Kayama envisioned Dr. Yamane as an eccentric in the style of Edogawa Rampo characters – wearing a black cape and dark shades, living in an old European-style house, and coming out only at night. Murata and Honda decided that for the sake of greater realism Yamane should be an ordinary person, as the titular monster itself would be weird enough. Godzilla's character also underwent serious transformation. In Kayama's original story Godzilla is definitely campier. Yet at the same time it is a creature that behaves more naturally than his film counterpart, as it comes to land mainly to hunt for food and develops an interest in human females. Honda and Murata transformed Godzilla into an allegorical creature, an indefinite menace destroying everything in its path without any clear preferences.

The quasi-documentary character of the film is visible especially in the scenes depicting preparations for the defence and monster's rampage through the streets of Tokyo. Although the main carriers of the film's meaning are the main characters – most notably Dr. Yamane and Dr. Serizawa – an important role in this respect is also played by the collective hero – Japanese society facing an external threat. Honda recreated on film the same reactions and moods of the civilians that he had encountered in real life during the war. What is more, the monster's *modus operandi* evokes wartime American night air rides. As Yomota Inuhiko notes:

> "The abrupt emergence from the south of this monstrous, unspeakable threat reminded Japanese audiences of the US military bombers that had reduced their cities to flaming ruins only a few years earlier". (Yomota 2007: 105).

Godzilla contains a number of scenes reminiscent of the real events from the recent past. After the first of the monster's attacks on Tokyo, the authorities decide to move the inhabitants of the city's costal area to the countryside. The evacuation operation conducted by the Japanese Self-Defense Forces is similar to the action the Imperial Japanese Army used to regularly engage in a decade earlier. The realities of the Pacific War are also evoked by scenes depicting the utilisation of the mass media in the psychological mobilization of citizens and the organization of mass evacuations. In *Godzilla* an important role in these processes is played not only by television – introduced to Japan in 1953 – but also by radio and the press, which had been widely used by the authorities during the war.
The nuclear fears of Japanese society, nurtured by the fresh memory of American atomic bombings and intensified by the escalation of the Cold War, manifested themselves with a new force after the Lucky Dragon 5 incident had been publicized. Although Tanaka had used the incident as an argument for producing *Godzilla*, and Honda had been deeply shocked by the tragedy, they dealt with the topic delicately. The finished film contains only a few – more or less obvious – references to the real events, such as a flash of blinding white light during Godzilla's first attack on a ship (a reference to what the crew of Lucky Dragon 5 actually saw on March 1, 1954), the death of the ship's radio operator (reference to Kuboyama Aikichi), or the depiction of the empty fishing nets of the Odo islanders (reference to the tuna fish boycott). Initially Honda thought about making a more explicit connection between the plight of Lucky Dragon 5 and *Godzilla*, especially with the film's intended opening scene depicting an irradiated and completely uninhabited vessel floating back to its port (Kalat 1997: 33). However, he later reconsidered the idea, and reached the conclusion that the issue was too delicate to address it directly, especially within a genre film. Honda himself said: "[W]e felt that putting a real-life accident into a fictional story with a monster appearing in the midst of it wouldn't sit well in the world of a film entitled *Gojira*" (Galbraith 1998: 23). The tragic story of Lucky Dragon 5 and its crew made its way to the big screen five years after the premiere of *Godzilla* in Shindō Kaneto's film entitled simply *Lucky Dragon No. 5* (*Daigo Fukuryū Maru*, 1959).

In the final version of the script certain aspects of the original characteristics of Dr. Yamane were transferred onto Dr. Serizawa. While in Kayama's draft of the story he was merely a supporting character, Murata and Honda gave him a more prominent role in the movie. It is not difficult to recognize in this character the representation of Honda and many of his contemporaries, who came back from the great "Holy War" not only disillusioned, but also with severe wounds to the body and soul. In one of the scenes Dr. Yamane's daughter Emiko (Kōchi Momoko) says: "I can't help feeling uneasy when I think about Serizawa. If it was not for the war, he would have not been left with such a terrible scar". Serizawa is representative of the generation that lost both the war and their faith in their leaders who had pushed the nation into a disastrous total conflict. The reasons why Serizawa is reluctant to use the Oxygen Destroyer on Godzilla is not out of some unspecified whim – "I won't because I won't" attitude so common in pulp fiction. His standpoint is based on sound foundations and rational – he is afraid that by publicizing his invention he will initiate the next stage of the global arms race. Serizawa argues that even now atomic bombs are placed against atomic bombs and hydrogen bombs against hydrogen bombs, so if politicians from all over the world were to see what the Oxygen Destroyer was capable of, they would want to make it into a weapon.

Serizawa is unable to find a common ground with the younger Ogata (Takarada Akira), who urges him to use his invention to kill the monster. Ogata represents the generation that have only a distant and faded memory of the horrors of war. Honda partially made *Godzilla* with exactly that kind of audience in mind. He said: "Many young viewers didn't have any first-hand knowledge, or [had] only dim memories, of the war" (Ryfle 1998: 38). *Godzilla* is – in a certain sense – a popcultural treatise on memory and the necessity to nurture it. The horrors of war, crimes against humanity, the physical and mental scars of combatants, the suffering of civilians – this should all be remembered so similar things do not happened in the future. Particularly meaningful in that context is the scene that takes place on Odo Island, in which an old man puts the blame on the mythical Godzilla for the recent attacks on ships. A young woman mocks him, saying that both he and Godzilla are relics of the past. He replies: "What can you know about the old days? If you all keep thinking like that, you will all become prey for Godzilla".

The most important aspect of Honda's personal influence on the final shape of *Godzilla* lies not in the cinematic manifestations of the director's memories of the war or the traumatic events that had left a lasting imprint

on his psyche, but in his anti-nuclear and pacifist world-view that is present in nearly every frame of his greatest film. As Honda said: "Believe it or not, [but] we naively hoped that the end of Godzilla was going to coincide with the end of nuclear testing" (Tsutsui 2010: 2008). He managed to infuse the rest of the crew with his enthusiasm. Takarada Akira recalls a series of discussions carried out on the set during lunch breaks by Honda Ishirō, Tanaka Tomoyuki, Shimura Takashi, Kōchi Momoko, Hirata Akihiko and himself:

> "In this harmonious and happy atmosphere, our conversations naturally gravitated towards the current events and [their] backgrounds, especially about the damage caused by atom and hydrogen bomb testing and the tragic reality of the Daigo Fukuryū Maru incident. The conversations further went into how, Japan being the first country to have an atomic bomb dropped on its lands, we should especially vocalize a warning to the world through film, [to] try to precede the fast-progressing field of science". (Takarada)

Godzilla's anti-nuclear purport is explicitly verbalized in Dr. Yamane's words at the end of the film: "I cannot believe that Godzilla was the only surviving member of its species. If we keep on conducting nuclear tests, it is possible that another Godzilla will appear". Honda was an idealist – perhaps naïve, but sincere – honestly believing that his film would be recognized as an important voice in the debate on the nuclear arms race. Near the end of his life, Honda recalled being deeply hurt by the reviews that called his film a grotesque piece of junk and a crass attempt to capitalize on Japan's nuclear nightmares (Ryfle 1998: 37). He never lost hope that the world would free itself of the spectre of nuclear war:

> "It is said that the number of atomic bombs hasn't been reduced even by one since 1954. [...] We'd really like to demand abolition of nuclear weapons to both America and Russia. That is where Godzilla's origin is. No matter how many Godzilla movies are produced, it is never enough to explain the theme of Godzilla". (Ibidem: 44).

As mentioned earlier, most of the Honda's later *tokusatsu* productions contained – more or less expanded – atomic themes. However, only once did he manage to achieve the level of ideological commitment and artistry

comparable to *Godzilla*. *Matango* (1963), an intimate science-fiction drama loosely based on William Hope Hodgson's short story *The Voice in the Night*, was not only another warning against the dangers of the Atomic Age, but also an allegorical reflection on the fate of *hibakusha* (被爆者, literally "people exposed to the bomb" or "people exposed to radiation"), people who had survived an atomic explosion and later suffered from radiation-related illnesses and social ostracism. While in the original *Godzilla* the plot was somewhat subordinated to the film's anti-nuclear purport, in most of Honda's later science-fiction films the atomic themes either served mainly as a pretext to initiate a fantastic story, or functioned solely as a surplus to the plot. In some of these films, especially the early ones, the presence of the atomic themes had a significantly meaningful potential – for example, in *The Mysterians* (*Chikyū bōeigun*, 1957) the Earth is threatened by the last surviving members of a once powerful extra-terrestrial civilization destroyed by a nuclear war, who suffer from genetic disorders caused by radiation. However, it is difficult to perceive the inclusion of atomic bomb themes in films such as *Frankenstein Conquers the World* in categories other than the director's fixation on the subject.

The Beast Becomes Depoliticized: The Americanization of Godzilla

Honda had put a lot of effort into creating a movie that would go beyond the standard monster movie formula. It seems that the American distributors of his film did everything they could to reverse this process. It is difficult – if at all possible – to agree with Jerome Franklin Shapiro's opinion that:

> "Although significantly altered, the 1956 film remains faithful to the spirit of the original 1954 release; if anything, for American audiences, it makes certain issues even more obvious". (Shapiro 2002: 112)

The fact is that *Godzilla, King of the Monsters!* was a defective product, deprived of most of the references to the atomic bomb and war that had made the original movie so powerful and politically engaged. Among the elements of the original film deleted in the process of its Americanization are Emiko's notion about Serizawa's "scars", the furious debate in the Japanese National Diet, and the train scene in which many of *Godzilla's* extra-filmic associations with real events – the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, irradiated tuna, and war-time evacuations – are expressed explicitly. Terry O. Morse also altered the reasons for Serizawa's

reluctance to use the Oxygen Destroyer. In the American version he is not afraid that if publicized his invention would initiate a new arms race, rather that it could fall into the wrong hands. Thus *Godzilla, King of the Monsters!* tends to legitimize the possession of weapons of mass destruction by the "good guys", and at the same time deny this right to the "bad guys". The biggest of the changes introduced to the film by its American distributors is the alteration of the film's closing comment. While in the original *Godzilla* Dr. Yamane expresses great concern about the future of mankind if nuclear experiments were to be continued, in the American version Steve Martin (sic!) – the reporter played by Raymond Burr – says: "The menace was gone. So was the great man. But the whole world could wake up and live again". Because of this change, the explicit anti-nuclear message conveyed by the original *Godzilla* is missing from the American version of the film.

As for the reasons for the introduction of such drastic changes in the process of *Godzilla's* Americanization, the dominant opinion of *kaijū eiga* historians is that the film's thinly-veiled anti-American sentiments disturbed the American distributors, so they decided to delete the most politically-charged footage (Tsutsui 2010: 208). Some even go a step further and argue that Levine was actually aware that *Godzilla* was, in fact, a political film based on real events, and as such could have not been presented to American audiences in its original form (Allsop 2004: 64). The American distributors, however, defended themselves against such accusations. As Richard Kay once said:

> "No. We weren't interested in politics, believe me. We only wanted to make a movie we could sell. At that time, the American public wouldn't have gone for a movie with an all-Japanese cast. That's why we did what we did. We didn't really change the story. We just gave it an American point of view". (Ryfle 1998: 57-58)

Contrary to Shapiro's and Kay's opinions, the change in the film's purport did occur in the process of its Americanization. The open question is to what extent it was deliberate on the part of its distributors. Some of the minor cuts introduced to the film seem to corroborate Kay's statement, as apart from the references to the atomic bombings, nuclear tests, and the war, Morse also deleted portions of the original footage that served to present the personality traits of the main characters and the relations between them (most notable the early scene establishing Emiko and Ogata

as a couple). However, whatever the distributors' intensions were, the fact is that – unlike Honda's original – *Godzilla, King of the Monsters!* is not a celluloid treatise on nuclear warfare. Apart from its Japanese setting and cast, the film falls into line with other representatives of the 1950s atomic science-fiction cinema, in which the way to overcome the nuclear threat was to have a stronger weapon, whether it was a nuclear-warhead torpedo, radioactive isotope bullet, or Oxygen Destroyer. Although in the decades following the film's premiere Godzilla and his kinsmen regularly roared in American cinemas, Honda Ishirō's voice was not to be heard there until 1982.

Post Scriptum

In the article I presented *kaijū eiga* genre as an area of interactions between entertainment and socio-political commentary. I summarized a gradual change in the perception of Godzilla film series by Western journalists and academics, that culminated in the recognition of these films as a cultural artifacts. In the later parts of the article I focused on the first instalment of the series. After brief discussion of various interpretation of the original *Godzilla*, I presented it as a celluloid manifesto of political views of its director – Honda Ishirō. I argued that due to Honda's pacifistic world-view, war-time experiences and trauma caused by atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki he played a crucial role in filling the film with anti-nuclear themes. I also argued that subsequent changes introduced to the film prior to its American release distorted its original purport.

As in the case of Western science-fiction cinema, most of the *tokusatsu* films were designed solely to entertain audiences. Although Japanese screens had often hosted ideologically committed monsters, such as pro-ecological Mothra, education or agitation was rarely a primary goal in Japanese fantasy films. And yet, the *kaijū eiga* formula proved to be highly susceptible to an ideological surplus. Even in its most *light-hearted* variety it reflected public moods, anxieties, and important socio-political issues of Japanese post-war history. Back in 1965, Sontag wrote:

> "The interest of the [science-fiction] films, aside from their considerable amount of cinematic charm, consists in this intersection between a naïvely and largely debased commercial art product and the most profound dilemmas of the contemporary situation". (Sontag 1965: 48)

Popular cinema can exist only if it maintains a close relationship with society. It has to reflect the world of the audience, to relate to the experiences and problems of its members, even if it does that indirectly, by filtering them through the filmmakers' imagination and genre conventions. Even if the atomic bomb is represented by Godzilla, pollution by Hedorah, communism by invaders from outer space and so on.

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