

Hidden Temporalities Time and Intertextuality in the Medieval Court Diary *Utatane*

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Abstract This paper explores intertextual expressions of temporality by way of *Utatane* (Fitful Slumbers, ca. 1238), a medieval memoir describing the unhappy love affair between a young lady-in-waiting and a courtier of higher standing, and her vain efforts to get over her lover. Through a close reading of the work's beginning and end, it will be demonstrated how intertextual techniques are used in *Utatane* to inscribe the past into the present and to express the protagonist's temporal sensations. Hereby it will be argued that, while allusions underline the protagonist's dissatisfaction with the present and her longing for the past, they may also be read as encrypted expressions of nostalgia for the Heian period's court culture. At the same time, they demonstrate the author's sophistication, an important 'social capital' of court ladies at the time.

Keywords Intertextuality. Nun Abutsu. Utatane. Court Diary. Temporality.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Plot Structure and its Implications for Intertextual Techniques. – 3 Beginning: Protracted Time and Nostalgia. – 4 End: Insight into Life's Ephemerality and Hopes into the Arts. – 5 Conclusion.

1 Introduction

Japanese literature of the Kamakura period (1185-1333) deals intensively with time-specific issues of memory and nostalgia. This concern stems from the court's fall from power in the thirteenth century, spurring among the aristocratic elite a sense of deterioration and a nostalgic longing for the court's heydays in the preceding Heian period (794-1185).

Intertextual allusions are among the most effective devices to express this retrospective temporal sensation. References to previous texts allow for superimposing different temporal levels and referring to literary ancestors or bygone days. Intertextual techniques are omnipresent in the literary output of medieval Japan, spanning poetry, diaries, and fictitious tales.

In poetry, the technique of *honkadori* 本歌取 (allusive variations) (e.g., Nagafuji 1984, 51-65; Kamens 1997) plays a prominent role. The interweaving of the past by way of allusions to earlier poems conducts an intriguing temporal tension with the concomitant idealisations of the present fleeting moment, and its freezing into a picture of beauty against the backdrop of an ever-changing world, expressed by the aesthetic ideals of *yūgen* 幽玄 (mysterious depth) and *yōen* 妖艶 (ethereal beauty). Medieval court tales, so-called *ōchō monogatari* 王朝物語, show strong similarities to the diction and plot structures of novels from the Heian period, such that they even came to be called *giko monogatari* 擬古物語, 'tales that counterfeit the old style'. The literary ideal alluded to most prominently was the renowned *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The Tale of Genji) from the eleventh century. In war tales, intertextual techniques are skilfully used to produce a common identity in the audience, thus 'construing reality' (Erl, Roggendorf 2002, 80) by way of collective or cultural memory (Assmann [1992] 2013) that is closely connected to space (Assmann [1999] 2006). Collective memory is reinforced by *utamakura* 歌枕 (poetic places, lit. 'poem pillows') - famous sites that appear in classical literature and poetry - and the technique of *michiyuki* 道行 (the road of courtiers into exile or imprisonment) rhetorically underlining the collapse of courtly order (Büyükmavi 2009, 178-83) and the traveller's sadness (Kubukihara 2007, 52). War tales also enforce legitimacy by interweaving the present with various historical precedents from the past, an intertextual characteristic that Huisman (2013) categorises as "equative sequences" characteristic of the so-

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cio-temporally narrative form of European epic literature. In travel diaries (*kikō* 紀行), intertextual devices are used to express temporal feelings associated with memory alike, as the places visited during the journey consist of famous sites (*meisho* 名所) that appear in classical literature and poetry: they thus link the past with the present by way of reminiscence (Plutschow 1981; 1982).

Intertextuality also plays a vital role in female diaries – *joryū nikki* 女流日記 – of the medieval period. Imazeki (1984; 1990; 2004; 2005; 2016) argues that diaries of medieval court ladies such as *Tamakiwaru* たまきはる (Fleeting is Life, 1219) or *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* 建礼門院右京大夫集 (The Poetic Memoirs of Lady Daibu, ca. 1232) are characterised by a duality of a lost past and an unfulfilled present, a hallmark that also holds for other female diaries such as *Nakatsukasa no Naishi nikki* 中務内侍日記 (Nakatsukasa Naishi no Nikki, ca. 1292) (Laffin 2015, 275-6), or *Towazugatari* とはずがたり (Confessions of Lady Nijō, ca. 1307) (Brazell 1971, 223). Allusions to earlier poems and court tales are frequently used to stress these sensations of longing and loss.

In the following, temporal sensations generated through intertextual techniques by way of the medieval diary *Utatane* うたたね (Fitful Slumbers, ca. 1238) will be explored. In this work that has allegedly been written by Ankamon'in no Shijō 安嘉門院四条 (1226?-1283¹), better known under her later name Abutsu-ni 阿仏尼 (Nun Abutsu), intertextual techniques are notably abundant. It describes the unhappy love affair of a young lady-in-waiting and her futile endeavours to get her lover out of her mind. The piece is sometimes read as an early work of Abutsu-ni describing a juvenile liaison of the author (cf. Watanabe 1990, 168; Imazeki 1987, 163).² However, *Utatane* may well be a later work of fiction in the tradition of *ōchō monogatari* (Nagasaki 1986; Imazeki 1987; Tabuchi 2000, 83-112, 128-45; Imazeki 2002, 27; Tabuchi 2009, 43-4; see also Wallace 1988a, 397; Laffin 2013, 62; Negri 2021, 102-3).³ Imazeki Toshiko (1987, 164), for example, sees the work's literary worth particularly in its dramat-

1 These life data are suggested by Nagasaki Ken (1986, 4). For different theories about Abutsu-ni's life data, see Nagasaki 1986, 1-4.

2 Abutsu-ni is said to have served Ankamon'in 安嘉門院 in her residence near Kitayama between seventeen and eighteen years of age (Watanabe 1990, 168). During this time, she appears to have been involved with a man of higher standing that became the topic of the work.

3 Satō Shigeki (1991, 54; see also Laffin 2013, 65) as well argues that the love affair described in *Utatane* is fictional, deriving from Abutsu's imagination. As Laffin (2013, 60) remarks, it is, however, not possible to determine if the work represents the author's own experiences or if the described love affair is merely "a trope for depicting a romance".

ic features (*gekiteki yōso* 劇の要素).⁴ The work is one of the most sophisticated literary pieces that medieval Japan brought forth. It excels through its accomplished plot structure and not least also by the virtuosity with which the author uses intertextual devices to express the protagonist's emotionality and worldview.

The following analysis will focus on the narrative's beginning and end, where the protagonist's temporal sensations 'thicken' (Bakhtin 1981, 84). It will be argued that, while intertextual references underline the protagonist's dissatisfaction with the present and her longing for a past in which her emotional experientiality was still fulfilled, they also involve nostalgia for the Heian period's court culture. At the same time, they demonstrate the author's literary education and cultural refinement, or - in Laffin's words - "her command of both poetic and narrative convention" (2013, 67), a significant 'social capital' of court ladies at the time. Lastly, the work's beginning and end exhibit conventional characteristics of female diaries of the Heian and Kamakura periods which may be considered another form of intertextuality.

2 Plot Structure and its Implications for Intertextual Techniques

Utatane describes by way of seasons - beginning in spring and ending in winter⁵ - the ill-fated love of a young lady-in-waiting for a man of higher standing who, after a short love affair, loses interest in her. Interwoven into this basic structure are two storylines in which the heroine tries to overcome her longing for her lover and to make her life somewhat self-determined: her attempt to become a nun at a temple in Nishiyama, and her journey to her stepfather's country estate in Tōtōmi.⁶ Both actions end with the heroine returning to the capital. The story closes with the protagonist coming to terms with her situation and her anxious thoughts about her future.

Utatane thus has a clear narrative structure (Nagasaki 1990, 155-6) in the line of western theories of narrative sequences (Labov, Waletzky 1967; Labov 1972, 362-75; Adam [1991] 2005), consisting of

⁴ However, it is also criticised that the work lacks any dramatic feature (*doramasei* ドラマ性) (Watanabe 1990, 169-70).

⁵ By way of this seasonal structuring in analogy to the love poems of the *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern, ca. 905) and other narratives of the Heian period (cf. Walker 1977, 152; Laffin 2013, 63; Negri 2021 103), a 'poetic ideal' (Walker 1977, 182) in the existential sense of ephemerality is created, implying that, like the natural order of the passing seasons, love affairs are, by nature, destined to find an end.

⁶ The protagonist's spatial deprivation may also be read as a test of the lover's heart (Imazeki 2002, 25) in order to gain his attention (Laffin 2013, 83; Negri 2021, 105).

an 'initial situation' in which the liaison is thematised in the form of a prologue, a *mise en intrigue* in which the 'complicating situation' unfolds, namely the man's increasing reluctance to visits and indifference, with the central part describing the protagonist's 'actions' to resolve the problem by way of two journeys, a 'resolution' comprising the heroine's return to the capital and a 'final situation' in the form of an epilogue describing the protagonist's insight into the irrefutable transience of all worldly things (Müller 2020, 237). Watanabe (1990, 155-6), by pointing out parallels to conventional plot structures of medieval diaries (1990, 169), divides the work slightly differently into a first part bearing features of a court diary including the prologue, the complicating situation, and the protagonist's refuge to the nunnery, and a second part, showing characteristics of a travel account including her retreat to the residence of her stepfather, her return to the capital and the epilogue. Using this structure, she analyses the intertextual allusions of the work.

Utatane contains numerous classical expressions (*kotengo* 古典語) (Wallace 1988a, 393; Watanabe 1989, 139; Shimauchi 1994; Wakabayashi 1998) and extensive allusions to poems and tales of the Heian period (Watanabe 1989, 148-58; Murata 1994; Laffin 2013, 67-78). Watanabe (1989, 148-58) highlights 65 allusions to former works or poems, which most probably does not cover the whole range of intertextual references the work plays with. Also, as Abutsu-ni uses many familiar tropes of court poetry and narratives of the Heian and Kamakura periods (Laffin 2013, 62), it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between deliberate allusions and conventional diction.

Particularly in scenes where the protagonist describes trysts with her lover or her yearnings for him, as well as in the account of her journey to Tōtōmi in the second part of the work, allusions are abundant (Watanabe 1989, 140; Wallace 1988a, 394), while exhibiting quite varied characteristics. In reminiscences of rendezvous with her lover in the work's former part, references to *Genji monogatari* and *Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語 (The Tales of Ise, ca. 950) cumulate (Imazeki 1987, 170; Tabuchi 2000, 84-5). They are a means of presenting the protagonist's lover as a Genji-like figure: a passionate though light-hearted man with many liaisons, supplying the narrative with features of a court tale.⁷ When describing the heroine's loneliness and longing for the absent lover, allusions to poems predominate. In the narrative's second part, describing the protagonist's journey to the residence of her stepfather in the province, *utamakura* - poet-

⁷ It is even argued that *Utatane* is so closely fashioned on the *Genji monogatari* that she needed to have a copy of the tale beside her when writing her work (Tabuchi 2000, 84; see also Laffin 2013, 60; Negri 2021, 109). For an inquiry of *Utatane*'s absorption of the *Genji*, see, e.g., Tabuchi 2000, 81-128; Laffin 2013, 69-78; Negri 2021, 102-10.

ic places⁸ – as well as allusions to Genji’s exile to Suma (Watanabe 1990, 181-2) cumulate. It is noteworthy that intertextual techniques are sparse in the description of the first journey to the nunnery – although there are some references to the Ukifune chapters in *Genji* (Tabuchi 2000, 33; Negri 2021, 104-5) –, while they are numerous in the narration of the second journey to the province. This is related to differences in the protagonist’s temporal sensations during the two travels: while the first journey is accompanied by feelings of fear, hope, and expectation and is temporally directed into the future, the second journey is characterised by despair and a constant longing for a return to the capital, temporally directed into the past. The author’s deliberate interweaving of allusions in the description of this second journey thus underlines the protagonist’s longing for bygone days by intertextually paying reference to poetic epigones. The work as a whole therefore adeptly combines specific intertextual techniques of female memoirs, court tales and travel dairies.

3 Beginning: Protracted Time and Nostalgia

Utatane’s emotive chronography is prototypically expressed at the work’s very beginning, where we find the heroine in her boudoir during sleepless nights, melancholically pondering a seemingly ended love affair and with anxious thoughts about her future:

もの思ふことの慰む(1a)にはあらねども、寝ぬ夜(2a)の友と慣らひにける月(1b/2b)の光待ち出でぬれば、例の妻戸押し開けて、たゞ一人見出だしたる、荒れたる庭の秋の露、かこち顔なる虫の音(3)も、物ごとに心を痛ましむるつまととなりければ、心に乱れ落つる涙をおさへて、とばかり来し方行く先を思ひ続けるに、さもあさましく果無なかりける契り(4)の程を、など、かくしも思ひ入れけんと、我心のみぞ、返すか、恨めしかりける。(Fukuda 1990, 158-9; English trans. by Laffin 2013, 62; emphases added)

It was not as though pondering things (1a) was any comfort, but I spent many sleepless nights (2a) in which I became accustomed to pushing open my door and gazing up, alone, waiting for the light of the moon (1b/2b) to appear. The autumn dew in my overgrown garden and the plaintive cries of the insects (3) invited my sadness. Suppressing the tears that welled up in my heart, I would think for a while about the past and [what would become of me],⁹ of how

⁸ For an enlisting and discussion of the poetic places the protagonist visits, and her allusions to Genji’s exile to Suma, see Laffin 2013, 89-93.

⁹ Laffin translates *yuku saki* 行く先 with “where things had gone”, but as the expression rather refers to the future, I rephrased.

frail and fleeting those ties (4) to him where, and about why I had become so entranced. My heart was filled with countless regrets.

As the work's opening makes clear, the protagonist's emotionality is forcibly projected on the seasons. By beginning in autumn, the work emphasises the heroine's sense of sadness, ephemerality, and nostalgic state of mind. Seasonal experientiality is emphasised by the moon, the dew, and the insects that all figure in autumnal melancholia (Yamamoto 1989) and "the withering of relationships" (Laffin 2013, 62). The solemnity of the autumn scene is underlined – as Laffin (2013, 64, 208) points out – by the repetition of the consonances 'm' and 'n' in the first line (*mono omou* もの思ふ, *nagusamu* 慰む, *nenu* 寝ぬ, *narainikeru* 慣ひにける), which imitates the sound of the insects associated with sadness.

Conflicts between the protagonist's inner desires and reality as well as the longing for self-determination and liberation are further emphasised by the spatial setting in the socially confined 'chronotope'¹⁰ of the boudoir, and by the protagonist gazing yearningly into the garden (Würzbach 2004, 54), underlined by the moonlight, representing a longing for her lover and at the same time for Buddhist enlightenment. Time in the present is perceived as monotonous and repetitive, revealing gendered and closed notions of time (Müller 2020, 242). The protagonist's protracted perception of time is stressed by the use of iteratives such as *rei no* 例の (as usual), *nenu yo* 寝ぬ夜 (sleepless nights) or *kaesu-gaesu* 返す/\ (again and again), further underlined by the static verbs *matsu* 待つ (to wait) and *miru* 見る (to see), by attributive expressions such as *are-taru* 荒れたる (desolate) *kakochigao-naru* (doleful), as well as by the repetitive use of the verb *omou* (to think/to long for). The protagonist thus stages as a prototypical 'waiting woman' (*matsu onna* 待つ女), a popular theme in *waka* poetry that expresses the lonely state of mind of a court lady who waits in vain during the nights for a lover whose passion has faded out or who has died.

The protagonist's temporal sensations are further enhanced by a series of intertextual allusions to poems of the Heian and early Kamakura periods (underlined and numbered in the quotation), figuring a nostalgia for the past, when the love affair was still fulfilling.

Watanabe (1990, 171) quotes the following poem by Ōe no Tamemoto 大江為基 (?-?) as the first allusion in *Utatane*. The poem is included in *Shūi wakashū* 拾遺和歌集 (Collection of Gleanings, ca. 1005-07) and *Wakan rōeishū* 和漢朗詠集 (Collection of Japanese and Chinese Poems for Singing, 1013).

10 For a detailed temporal analysis of *Utatane* in terms of its chronotopes, see Müller 2020.

妻に遅れて侍りける頃、月を見侍りて
ながむるに物思事のなぐさむは月は憂き世の外よりや行く

When his wife passed away, he gazed at the moon:

<i>Nagamuru ni</i>	Gazing out
<i>mono omou koto no</i>	what comforts me
<i>nagusamu wa</i>	as I ponder
<i>tsuki wa ukiyo no</i>	is the moon that moves beyond
<i>hoka yori ya yuku</i>	this vale of tears.

(Komachiya 1990, 123, poem 434; English transl. by Laffin 2013, 64)

The foreword makes clear that the poem describes Ōe no Tamemoto's grief over the death of his wife and his striving for consolation through the gaze at the moon. The moon represents both the deceased wife and Buddhist enlightenment. It gives the lyrical I the impression of not belonging to this world and thus not being subject to the world's transience. The lyrical I's nostalgic and melancholic emotionality is stressed by the verbs *nagamu* 眺む (to gaze) – a 'pivot word' (*kakekotoba* 掛詞) that homophonically alludes to long rains (*naga-ame* 長雨) –, *mono omou* 物思 (to contemplate), and *ukiyo* 憂き世 (fleeting world). Abutsu-ni in her opening adopts the expressions *mono omou*, *tsuki* 月 (moon), and *nagusamu* なぐさむ (to console) from Ōe no Tamemoto's *waka* in order to stress the protagonist's loneliness. The temporal sensation alluded to in the text is thus nostalgia and an unfulfilled present.

Laffin (2013, 64) also quotes a similar poem by Saigyō 西行 (1118-1190) from his collection *Sankashū* 山家集 (Collection of a Mountain Hut, ca. 1185), pointing out that the phrases used in *Utatane's* opening were rather common tropes in the poetry and works of her time, associated with the fleeting nature of this world.

眺るに慰むことはなかれども月をともにて明かすころかな

<i>Nagamuru ni</i>	Gazing at it
<i>nagusamu koto wa</i>	may bring no comfort
<i>nakaredomo</i>	yet, the moon of late
<i>tsuki o tomo nite</i>	has become my companion
<i>akasu koro kana</i>	on sleepless nights.

(Kojima, Kazamaki 1967, 117, poem 648 [7640]; English transl. by the Author)

As Stoneman (2005, 315-16) points out, Saigyō showed a deep affection for the moon, seeing it as a means of enlightenment and even as a friend and support to break the loneliness of his mountain hut. However, as this poem falls under the category of love poems, it may have a double-layered meaning as a 'waiting-love poem' (*matsu koi no uta* 待つ恋の歌) in the tradition of Chinese boudoir poetry (*guiyuanshi* 閨怨詩). Even though the gaze out at the autumn moon on sleepless nights is a typical image in medieval poetry and stories, the similari-

ties between *Utatane*'s opening lines and Saigyō's poem are so striking, that a mere coincidence seems unlikely. Both describe a person spending sleepless nights seeking consolation from their loneliness by the sight of the moon, expressing unfulfilment with the present moment and implied longing for a fulfilled past. Therefore, it may also be the case that Saigyō alluded to Ōe no Tamemoto, and Abutsu-ni alluded to Saigyō, or both poems.

The second allusion in *Utatane*'s introduction is, according to Watanabe (1990, 171), a winter poem by Uemon no Suke Michitomo 右衛門督通具 (?-?) in *Shinkokin wakashū* 新古今和歌集 (New Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern, 1205).

霜むすぶ袖のかたしきうちとけて寝ぬ夜の月のかげぞさむけさ

<i>Kirimusubu</i>	A film of frost forms
<i>sode no katashiki</i>	on my single spread sleeve
<i>uchitokete</i>	unable to melt into sleep
<i>nenu yo no tsuki no</i>	on a night when
<i>kage zo samukesa</i>	the bright moonlight is so cold.

(Tanaka, Akase 1992, 183, poem 609; English transl. by Rodd 2015, 252)

This poem captures a person's solitary lying awake on a cold winter night. Again, the moon stands for an absent person, stressing the lyrical I's loneliness and longing. The author is male, but the poem may also be a waiting love poem, describing a lonely court lady that vainly waits for a visit from her lover. Abutsu-ni adopts the iterative expression *nenu yo no tsuki* 寝ぬ夜の月 (moon in sleepless nights) in order to highlight the protagonist's protracted awareness of time.

The third allusion in the prologue again refers to a poem by Saigyō from the anthology *Senzai wakashū* 千載和歌集 (Collection of a Thousand Years, 1187), which is also found in Saigyō's private collection *Sankashū* and in the famous *Ogura hyakunin issshu* 小倉百人一首 (One Hundred Poems by One Hundred People, thirteenth century).

なげとて月やはものを思はするかこち顔なる我涙かな

<i>Nageke tote</i>	"Lament!" does it say?
<i>tsuki ya wa mono wo</i>	Is it the moon that makes me
<i>omowasuru</i>	dwel on things?—No, and yet,
<i>kakochi-gao naru</i>	look at the tears flowing down
<i>waga namida kana</i>	my reproachful face!

(Katano, Matsuno 1993, 278, poem 929; English transl. by Mostow 1996, 395)

This poem grasps the grief of an unhappy lover who rhetorically delegates the cause of his pain to the moon. Abutsu-ni alludes to the expression *kakochigao nari* かこち顔なり (grieving face), emphasising the protagonist's unfulfilled present.

The last allusion in the work's opening is by the poetess Nijōin no Sanuki 二条院讃岐 (ca. 1141-1217) from *Shinchokusen wakashū* 新勅撰和歌集 (New Imperial Waka Collection, 1234).

あはれあはれはかなかりけるちぎりかなただうたたねのはるのよのゆめ

<i>Aware aware</i>	How sorrowful
<i>hakanakarikeru</i>	this fleeting
<i>chigiri kana</i>	ties
<i>tada utatane no</i>	no more than a slumber
<i>haru no yo no yume</i>	on a spring night.

(Shinpen Kokka Taikan Henshū linkai 1983, 278, poem 979; English transl. by the Author)

The poem portrays a court lady's lament over a love affair experienced as being ephemeral, like a fleeting dream during a slumber (*utatane*) in spring. Abutsu-ni adopts the expression *hakanakarikeru chigiri* はかなかりけるちぎり (ephemeral affair). This allusion is particularly complex, as it spans several temporal layers and alludes to the work's title, *Utatane*. It is also noteworthy that Sanuki's poem, in turn, is an allusive variation, alluding to the famous Chinese poem *Gaotangfu* 高唐賦 by Song Yu 宋玉 (fl. 298-63 BC), in which King Huai of Chū 楚懷王 (r. 328-299 BC) has an erotic dream of a goddess on the mountain Gaotang during a spring-night. This allusion points to the transience of love. More importantly, Sanuki's poem also alludes to the following famous *waka* by Ono no Komachi 野小町 (?-?) included in *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern, ca. 905):

うたゝねに恋しき人を見てしより夢てふ物は頼みそめてき

<i>Utatane ni</i>	Since encountering
<i>koishiki hito o</i>	my beloved as I dozed,
<i>miteshi yori</i>	I have come to feel
<i>yume chō mono wa</i>	that it is dreams, not real life,
<i>tanomi someteki</i>	on which I can pin my hopes.

(Kojima, Arai 1989, 174, poem 553; English transl. by McCullough 1985, 126)

Utatane means 'unconscious napping in the afternoon', but traditionally refers to dreaming of a lover (Konishi 1986, 206). The poem of Ono no Komachi expresses the lyrical I's hope for the power of dreams to fulfil her longing, and at the same time expresses love's ephemerality: the phrase *utatane no yume* うたたねの夢 (dreams in fitful slumbers) is a metaphor for the transience of life and love. However, it can also be seen as a metaphor for the difficulty of a person tormented by lovesickness to sleep well. The allusion to the poem by Sanuki creates a threefold temporal level in which the transience of the love relationship is emphasised by comparing it to a fleeting dream.

Moreover, the hidden intertextual references to Ono no Komachi, a poet who is said to have had an unhappy love for a man of high standing and to have therefore escaped into a dream world, suggests that *Utatane's* heroine is reconstructed as a Komachi-like figure. The poem articulates her inability to shape her life in a self-determined way. What remains is the feeling that the love relationship and life itself are nothing but an evanescent and sorrowful dream (Kubo 1989, 71-2).

With the exception of two allusions, all intertextual references in the opening scene come from Heian-period sources. They underline the protagonist's longing for a past in which the love relationship was still fulfilled, a present that is experienced as unfulfilled, and a general sense of transience.

The subjective semantisation of the chronotopical combination 'boudoir-garden' in the opening scene in order to express feelings of longing and *ennui* can typically be found in a number of female court diaries. For comparison, consider the opening of *Izumi Shikibu nikki* 泉式部日記 (The Diary of Izumi Shikibu, ca. 1007), where the protagonist sadly reflects on the recent death of her lover:

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、四月十余日にもなりぬれば、木の下くらがりもてゆく。築土の上の草あおやかなるも、人はことに目もとどめぬを、あはれとながむるほど、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、故宮にさぶらひし小舎人童なりけり。
(Fujioka 1994, 17; English transl. by Cranston 1969, 131)

Frailer than a dream had been those mortal ties for which she mourned, passing her days and nights with sighs of melancholy. And now the tenth of the fourth month had come and gone, and the shade beneath the trees grew ever deeper. The fresh green of the grass on the embankment – though most people would hardly give 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 open-work fence. Who could it be, she wondered, only to discover a moment later that it was the young page who used to wait on the late Prince.

Although the temporal setting is not the same – in *Izumi Shikibu nikki* the prologue is temporally set in spring, as it precedes a new love affair between the protagonist and Prince Atsumichi 敦道親王 (981-1007), the younger half-brother of her deceased lover Prince Tame-taka 為尊親王 (977-1002) for whom she longs in this scene –, the protagonist's gaze into the uncared-for garden during sleepless nights, and her pondering about a lost love and the ephemerality of life, bears striking similarities to the opening of *Utatane*. A similar scene is found in chapter 34 of *Murasaki Shikibu nikki* 紫式部日記 (The Diary of Murasaki Shikibu, ca. 1010), describing the protagonist's visit to her parents' home and her memories of her former life there:

見どころもなきふるさとの木立を見るにも、物むつかしう思みだれて、年ごろつれづれにながめ明かし暮らしつゝ、花鳥の色をも音をも、春秋に行かふ空のけしき、月の影、霜・雪を見て、その時来にけりとばかり思ひ分きつゝ、いかにやいかにとばかり、行く末の心ぼそさはやる方なき物から、[...]。
(Itō 1989, 285-6)

As I looked at the unattractive grove at home, I felt depressed and confused. [After my husband's death] I had spent the years by idly gazing out from morning to evening, watching the colours and sounds of the flowers and birds, the scenery of the sky that moved from spring to autumn, the moonlight, the frost and the snow, doing little more than registering that now their time had come, and I was unable to cast off worries about my future - what, yes what would become of me [...]?¹¹

Here, too, the melancholy gaze out into the garden awakens memories of the past, when the days idly followed one another, the protagonist's awareness of the passing of time, a feeling of *ennui*, as well as anxious thoughts about the future.

These analogies show that the gaze out into the garden is a conventional trope in female diaries implying a protracted awareness of time, feelings of longing, melancholy and anxiety. It can be concluded that the beginning of *Utatane* reproduces this specific trope intertextually to express the protagonist's sense of time by underlying it with allusions to earlier texts.

4 End: Insight into Life's Ephemerality and Hopes into the Arts

Utatane ends with the heroine returning to the capital and accepting her fate, but also - again - with anxious thoughts about her future. The spatial return to the starting point in the capital in the static chronotope of the boudoir stands for the protagonist's resignation and refers to 'closed' perceptions of time: time proves to be determined in the end (Morson 1994). At the same time, the heroine gains a deep insight into the transience of the world through her experiences and travels and shows a development or 'transformation' (Laffin 2013, 85) that bears characteristics of a coming-of-age novel:

¹¹ For the translations of this scene I drew on previous translations by Omori, Doi (1935, 110-11) and Bowring (1996, 95), but in order to render it more literal, I provided my own translation.

暮れ果つる程に行き着きたれば、思ひなしにや、こゝもかしこも猶荒れま
さりたる心地して所か漏り濡れたるさまなど、何に心留まるべくもあらぬ
を見やるも、いと離れま憂きあばら屋の軒ならんと、そぞろに見るもあわれ
なり。[...]

その後は、身を浮草にあくがれし心も、こり果てぬるにや、つくかとかゝる
蓬が袖に朽ち果つべき契りこそはと、身をも世をも思ひ鎮むれど、従はぬ心
地なれば、又なり行かん果ていかが。

われよりは久しかるべき跡なれどしのばぬ人はあはれとも見じ

We arrived home at sunset. It was probably my imagination but everything seemed even more run down; here and there the house was damp and leaky. There was nothing really appealing about the place, but still, I felt it would be difficult to part with this poor ramshackle house, and I was moved as I gazed upon it [...].

After this, perhaps because I was done hoping to be “beckoned” somewhere like duckweed, I utterly consoled myself and the world by the thought that it was probably my lot to rot away in this dilapidated, weed-ridden home. But my heart was not one to follow such things easily and I wondered what would come of me.

<i>Ware yori wa</i>	These jottings
<i>hisashikaru beki</i>	may outlast me,
<i>ato naredo</i>	but he who has forgotten
<i>shinobanu hito wa</i>	will not look upon them
<i>aware to mo miji</i>	with feeling.

(Fukuda 1990, 177; English transl. by Wallace 1988b, 415 and Laffin 2013, 94¹²)

The final poem, in which the heroine ‘entrusts her feelings’ (Terashima 1992, 117) to a quotation from the anthology *Shokugosen wakashū* 続後撰和歌集 (Anthology of New Pickings, 1251, poem 1140), expresses the protagonist’s fears for the future and implies her secret wish for her work to stand the test of time, thereby projecting her longing into art.¹³

The closing scene contains only one allusion, interestingly again to a poem by Ono no Komachi included in *Kokin wakashū*.

¹² In order to render the translation more literal, I slightly reformulated the translations of Wallace and Laffin.

¹³ In the final poem, *hito* 人 (person) refers to the unfaithful lover, but it can also be read as an appeal to future readers (cf. Imazeki 1977, 212 cited from Laffin 2013, 95).

わびぬれば身をうき草の根をたえて誘ふ水あらば去なむとぞ思ふ

<i>Wabinureba</i>	In this forlorn state
<i>mi o ukikusa no</i>	I find life dreary indeed:
<i>ne o taete</i>	if a stream beckoned,
<i>sasou mizu araba,</i>	I would gladly cut my roots
<i>inamu to zo omou</i>	and float away like duckweed.

(Kojima, Arai 1989, 282, poem 938; English transl. by McCullough 1985, 206)

Ono no Komachi composed this *waka* in response to a poem by Funya no Yasuhide 文屋康秀 (?-?), in which he invites her to accompany him on an inspection of Mikawa county. Ono no Komachi deliberately answers him by expressing her response through natural phenomena. Abutsu-ni picks up the expression *mi o ukikusa* 身を浮草 (body like duckweed) from Komachi's poem to emphasise the protagonist's instability in the world and uncertainty about her future life. In contrast to the beginning of the work, in which her thoughts are rather directed into the 'past', the ending is filled with thoughts about the 'future' and expresses the protagonist's weak economic situation and her desire to gain stability instead of floating like 'duckweed'.

Analogous to its beginning, the ending of *Utatane* also bears similarities to the end of other female diaries. Like many other court ladies, the protagonist reveals her writing intention by pondering "on whether her written words will serve as a record to others" (Laffin 2013, 94). For example *Towazugatari*, written by Gofukakusain Nijō 後深草院二条 (1258-1307?), a work that describes the author's life at the court of Emperor Go-Fukakusa 後深草天皇 (1243-1304, r. 1246-1260) and her later pilgrimages as a nun, closes with the following words:

深草の御かどは、御隠れの後、かこつべき御事どもも跡絶え果てたる心地して侍しに、[...]さても、宿願の行く末いかななりゆかんとおぼつかなく、年月の心の信も、さすがむなしかれあずやと思ひつゞけて、身のありさまを一人思ひみたるも飽かずおぼえ侍上、修行の心ざしも、西行が修行の式、うら山しくおぼえて社思ひ立ちしかば、その思ひをむなしくなさじばかりに、か様のいたづら事をつゞけ置き侍こそ。後の形見とまでは、おぼえ侍ぬ。(Misumi 1994, 248-9; English transl. by Brazell 1973, 264)

After Go-Fukakusa's death I had felt as though there was no one with whom I could share my feelings. [...] Now I am anxious about the outcome of my long-cherished desire, and I worry lest the faith I have kept these many years prove fruitless. When I attempted to live in lonely seclusion, I felt dissatisfied and set out on pilgrimages modeled after those of Saigyō, whom I have always admired and wanted to emulate. That all my dreams might not prove empty, I have been writing this useless account – though I doubt it will long survive me.

In this epilogue, very similarly to *Utatane*, the protagonist unconfidently expresses her wishes that her work will survive times, providing her life with some meaning. Here, too, the author thus concludes her work by revealing her writing intention and directing her thoughts into the ‘future’ (Misumi 1990, 58).¹⁴

A similar closing is found in *Takemukigaki* 竹むきが記 (From the Bamboo-View Pavilion, ca. 1349) by Hino Nako (Meishi) 日野名子 (?-1358), which is considered the last major work of female court diaries. The work covers the author’s life at the court of emperor Kōgon 光嚴天皇 (1313-1364, r. 1331-1333) during the turbulent times of the Northern and Southern Courts period (1336-1392), anxious thoughts about her future and her desire to renounce the world. The work closes with poems in which the protagonist, now having become a nun, reflects about the transitoriness of the ‘fleeting, agonising world’ (*ukiyo* 憂世) and whether her name and work will endure the ages, thus, in analogy to *Towazugatari* and *Utatane*, creating a contrast between the ephemerality of historical time and the timelessness of art.

なき跡にうき名やとめんかき捨つる浦の藻屑の散り残りなば	
<i>Naki seki ni</i>	Will I leave a name
<i>ukina ya tomen</i>	unworthy of a memory
<i>kaki sutsuru</i>	if these seawrack lines
<i>ura no mokuzu no</i>	cast away upon the shore
<i>chiri nokorinaba</i>	somehow, nonetheless, survive?
(Iwasa 1990, 344; English transl. by Tyler 2016, 168)	

A comparison of various diaries written by court ladies thus reveals conventionalised endings: in all the works presented here, the author’s endeavour to create a personal legacy in the form of a work of art for future generations is expressed. This raises the question of the purpose for this kind of closure: why was it so crucial for court ladies to create an artistic legacy? One explanation could be that cultural refinement was essential for ladies-in-waiting, securing their social and economic positions at court. The declaration of intention to have created an outstanding work of art that can outlast ‘time’ and be read in the ‘future’ therefore indicates – even if this intention is often rhetorically uncertain and modestly formulated – the mastery of literature by its authors and is intended to increase their social capital. Unlike Sinitic diaries (*kanbun nikki* 漢文日記), which aim to demonstrate their author’s competence in a particular court office and pass it on to their descendants in order to secure the family’s position at court (Matsuzono, Kondō 2017, 4), in the case of the court ladies, the cultural asset of art itself seems to have served as eco-

¹⁴ For a detailed investigation of the work’s writing intention, see Mismui 1990.

conomic means. The importance of literary education for a court lady's career and economic stability is shown by the fact that in her late twenties, Abutsu-ni was introduced to the poet Fujiwara no Tameie 藤原為家 (1198-1275) – the son of the famous poet Fujiwara no Teika 藤原定家 (1162-1241) – as a scholar and poet. She acted as Tameie's copyist and assistant and eventually became his first wife, which in turn influenced her own career as a professional poet and scholar (Laffin 2013, 96-7). On the side of scholars who argue that *Utatane* was written when Abutsu-ni was already acquainted with Fujiwara no Tameie, it is assumed that Abutsu-ni wrote *Utatane* to prove her literary sophistication to Tameie (Matsumoto 1983, 138, cited from Negri 2021, 103).

5 Conclusion

Abutsu-ni's use of conventional tropes of Heian and Kamakura-era poetry and narratives, as well as a wealth of intertextual allusions in her work *Utatane*, fulfil a complex function closely linked to temporality.

Intradiegetically, they underline the core messages of the work and the underlying temporal sensations. The core theme is the protagonist's conflict between her life design and social conventional and gender-specific life schemes at the time, illustrated by an unhappy love affair. The temporal sensations underlying this conflict are nostalgia (past), *ennui* (present), and fear (future). This gives the protagonist the feeling that life and love are nothing but a fleeting dream. The central chronotope of the work – the boudoir where the narrative begins and ends – represents the social confinement of the protagonist. It is therefore characterised by 'cyclical everyday time' (Bakhtin 1981, 247) and monotonous repetition and provides information about gender-specific and closed notions of time. *Utatane* thus prototypically expresses the female court's perception of time in the Kamakura period.

The core message of the work becomes evident in the prologue and epilogue, which, in addition to allusions to earlier poems, display conventional plot features of female court diaries, which usually begin with meditations on life and end with a kind of review of the protagonist's feelings. The heroine's view out at the garden from her boudoir at the work's very beginning – a typical scene in the literary output of court ladies – evokes memories of the past and produces a sense of protracted time. The protagonist's revelation of her fears concerning her future and the shift of her hopes into the arts in the epilogue discloses economic concerns regarding the 'future' and the importance of literary mastery – an essential social capital for a court ladies' career. This also holds true for the implementation of allusions as such, which are a means to demonstrate the author's lit-

erary education and sophistication: As Negri (2021, 109) points out, the work's numerous citations reveal Abutsu-ni's extraordinary poetic skill and thorough knowledge of literary epigones, both necessary prerequisites for becoming a full-fledged member of an illustrious family of poets such as that to which her husband Fujiwara no Tameie belonged.¹⁵ Cultural capital thus was an essential means to enhance a court lady's prestige and thus her social capital, which eventually became a way of economic capital, fostering a court lady's chance to make a career at court or get married to a man of high standing. The protagonist's secret wish that her lover – and readers in general – will read her work in the future encrypts the novel's pragmatic purpose.

On a third level, intertextual techniques inscribe the past into the present. As Nagafuji Yasushi (1984, 51-65) has pointed out, allusions are often used in medieval literature as a means to evoke nostalgia for the Heian period. *Utatane* can thus be read as a coded expression of nostalgia for the court culture of the Heian period in the tradition of 'counterfeit tales' (*giko mongatari* 擬古物語), endowing the work with a political message: Lost love that is compared to a short dream during a fitful slumber can be read as a political-erotic allegory for the court aristocracy's loss of power in medieval Japan.

This gives the narrative a threefold meaning: one that reveals a young lady's longing for a past in which her love was still fulfilled, one that reveals a medieval court lady's longing for a past in which the power of the court and its cultural sophistication was still in bloom, and one in which a court lady flaunts her literary sophistication to improve her economic situation. The work's multiple intertextual techniques serve a vital function on all three levels.

Since the technique of allusive variation is a common feature of classical Japanese literature, which flourished in the Middle Ages, *Utatane's* use of allusions does not seem notably different from other works of the period. Nevertheless, Abutsu-ni is remarkably virtuosic in her appropriation of earlier poems, stories, and diaries. As Negri (2021, 109) notes, the numerous quotations are an 'homage to the culture of a recent past that defined and supported the authority of the aristocratic class in a period of great political and social transformations', and at the same time, a testimony of the author's participation at the cultural discourses of her time. Abutsu-ni thus makes excellent use of intertextual techniques to encode her key messages, which are closely linked to temporality: longing for a lost past, dissatisfaction with the present, and plans for the future.

15 Negri (2021, 110; see also Ratcliff 2009, 34-9) also points out that *Utatane*, along with her manual *Abutsu no fumi*, as well as other texts written by women, may have aimed to impart literary knowledge with other women at the time and thereafter.

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