

## A THEORY OF RESISTANCE: PERFORMATIVITY IN MINAMOTO NO TOSHIYORI'S POETICS OF *RENGA*

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### INTRODUCTION


This paper examines the theoretical writing of the medieval poet Minamoto no Toshiyori 源俊賴 (1055–1129), in particular his treatises on *renga* (連歌 Japanese linked verse), by juxtaposing his ideas with the concept of performativity in speech act theory.

*Renga* is a dialogic form of poetry. With this dialectical process in mind, in Section One, I will introduce speech act theory established by British philosopher of language John L. Austin (1911–1960) and argue how Austin divides utterances into two categories: “constative utterances” and “performative utterances.” In Section Two, I will then examine how Toshiyori introduced *renga* poems in his treatises and demonstrate how Toshiyori regarded *renga* as a kind of “performative utterance.” I will next turn to French philosopher Jacques Derrida’s (1930–2004) critique of Austin, in particular his comments about the “disruption” of meaning, which I will show articulates a fundamental principle in *renga* as Toshiyori understands it. Finally, by including Derrida’s comments on Austin, I will explain how Toshiyori sees ambiguity as an opportunity for poets to take control of meaning, and in so doing to subvert relations of power. This is not the first time that Western literary theory has been used in discussion of Japanese literature. Most notably, Austin’s ideas have found their way into scholarship of prose narrative, such as *Genji Monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*).<sup>2</sup> However, to date, no such work has been done on poetry.

### 1. JOHN L. AUSTIN’S SPEECH ACT THEORY

In *How to Do Things with Words* (1955/62), Austin divides utterances into two categories: “constative utterances” and “performative utterances.”<sup>3</sup> A constative utterance, he says, is a speech act that simply presents information, that simply describes reality. A performative

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<sup>2</sup> Ikeda Daisuke 池田大輔, “Genji monogatari katarite kara no yobikake: monogatari no pafōmateibu no chikara” 『源氏物語』語り手からの呼びかけ—物語のパフォーマティブの力, *Monogatari kenkyū* 物語研究, vol.15 (2015): 27–34.

<sup>3</sup> John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 6.

utterance, on the other hand, performs some kind of action at the same time as it is being spoken:

We might say: in ordinary cases, for example running, it is the fact that he is running which makes the statement that he is running true; or again, that the truth of the constative utterance 'he is running' depends on his being running. Whereas in our case it is the happiness of the performative 'I apologize' which makes it the fact that I am apologizing: and my success in apologizing depends on the happiness of the performative utterance 'I apologize'. This is one way in which we might justify the 'performative-constative' distinction—the distinction between doing and saying.<sup>4</sup>

In this passage, Austin argues that a constative utterance simply indicates that something is happening outside of the utterance itself. "He is running" is judged to be true only if someone is actually running. Without an actual runner, the sentence makes no sense. The performative utterance functions quite differently because it is modified by no external fact. Everything depends on whether the act of apologizing itself is successfully conducted or not. To say "I apologize," is thus, strictly speaking, "doing things with words."

Austin divides the performative utterance into two stages of action, which he calls the "illocutionary act" and the "perlocutionary act."

I explained the performance of an act in this new and second sense as the performance of an "illocutionary" act, i.e. performance of an act *in* saying something as opposed to performance of an act *of* saying something; and I shall refer to the doctrine of the different types of function of language here in question as the doctrine of "illocutionary forces."<sup>5</sup>

An illocutionary act refers to an act of speech in which the speaker performs. For example, the statement "it's cold here" not only describes the fact of it being cold at a certain place, but also implies that the speaker wishes that his or her interlocutor would turn up the heat. It should be noted that this kind of utterance could easily be mistaken for a constative utterance, inasmuch as it comments on it actually being cold. In order to

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 99.

become an illocutionary force, the listener must understand the implied meaning: “please turn up the heat.”

The perlocutionary act describes the effect of the illocutionary act on the person spoken to. For example, if the person spoke “he convinced me to turn up the heat,” it becomes clear that the statement “it is cold” was accurately recognized as a performative utterance: a request to turn up the heat.

Using Austin’s terminology, I will be able to illuminate how Minamoto no Toshiyori regards the composition of *renga* poems as a performative utterance rather than a constative utterance. I argue that Toshiyori established his poetics of *renga* by emphasizing the effects of forces of performative utterances that a poet exercised on other poets when he composed a *renga* poem. I will next examine texts of Toshiyori’s poetic treatises to show how this is the case.

## 2. *RENGA* POETRY AS PERFORMATIVE UTTERANCE

To understand Toshiyori’s arguments, one needs first to understand what *renga* actually is. The term comes from the roots “ren” 連 and “ga” 歌 which mean link and poem, respectively. *Renga* consists of two or more small poems, independently composed, often by different poets, which are linked together by means of some unifying thematic element. Thus, one poet composes the first sub-poem, or stanza, and a later poet will follow up by writing his own stanza as a response to the former.

*Renga* has a specific form. It alternates stanzas of 5-7-5 syllables and 7-7 syllables. The most popular form of *renga* poetry in the ancient period was limited to two stanzas: an initial stanza of 5-7-5 syllables was composed by one poet, and a following stanza of 7-7 syllables was composed by another poet, either immediately or at a much later date. In the medieval period it became popular to make a longer form of *renga*, in which multiple stanzas of 7-7 syllables were linked in succession by different poets.

Minamoto no Toshiyori was a low-ranking courtier, but he was a prominent poet. Unlike his contemporaries, who tended to prefer Japanese poetry (*waka* 和歌), Toshiyori argued for the literary value of *renga*. In his poetry treatise *Toshiyori zuinō* (*Toshiyori’s Poetic Essentials*, 俊頼髓脳, ca. 1113), Toshiyori asserts that *renga* is one of the popular poetic genres and devotes pages detailing the history of *renga*. He then introduces forty-five *renga* poems and explains the circumstances of their composition. His discussion of *renga* is not limited to this book. In 1124 he compiled the fifth imperial poetry anthology *Kin’yō waka shū* (*Collection of Golden*

*Leaves*, 金葉和歌集) by order of Emperor Shirakawa 白河 (1053–1129; r. 1073–1087). In the tenth volume titled *Zōnobi ge* (Poems of miscellaneous kinds II, 雑部下) he devotes a section exclusively to *renga* poetry and includes nineteen example poems. There is a scholarly consensus that Toshiyori attempted to raise the position of *renga*, which had until then been considered inferior to *waka*, by incorporating this section of *renga* poetry in the officially approved imperial anthology.<sup>6</sup> Whatever his aims, Toshiyori clearly liked *renga*. His personal poetry collection, *Sanboku kika shū* (*Collection of Irregular Poems by a Useless Man* 散木奇歌集, ca. 1128), included fifty-five *renga* poems, either the initial stanza or the following stanza, which he himself composed.

Toshiyori argues that a *renga* poem is intended as a kind of communication between poets, as an opening composition implicitly invites a response. For an example, he tells a story in which the Heian poet Kiyohara no Motosuke 清原元輔 (908–990) discovered a 5-7-5 stanza written on the pillar of a bathhouse. Without knowing who wrote it or when it was written, he assumed it was an invitation to reply. The poem Motosuke discovered is as follows:

よみ人しらず	Anonymous Poet
春はもえ	Being burned in spring
秋はこがるる	Scorched in autumn
かまどやま	Leaves of Mt. Kamado (Mt. Oven).

元輔	Motosuke
霞も霧も	Both haze and fog
けふりとぞ見る <sup>7</sup>	Seem like smoke (wisping from Mt. Kamado).

これは、筑紫の、すいたの湯といふ所の、湯屋の柱に、たれともなくて、書きつけたりけるを、後に、人の語りけるを聞き、付けらるるとぞ。

According to legend, Motosuke had been told there was a scribble: “being burned in spring/scorched in autumn/leaves of

<sup>6</sup> Inada Toshinori 稲田利徳, “Kin’yōshū maki jū renga no bu: shō budate setchi no ito” 『金葉集』 卷十「連歌」の部—小部立設置の意図, *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kanshō* 国文学—解釈と鑑賞, 66, no. 11 (2001): 33–41; Ōno Junko 大野順子, “Minamoto no Toshiyori no waka to tanrenga” 源俊賴の和歌と短連歌, *Kokubungaku kenkyū shiryōkan kiyō* 国文学研究資料館紀要 37 (2011): 183–226.

<sup>7</sup> This *renga* poem was included in the third imperial poetry anthology, *Collection of Gleanings of Japanese Poetry* (*Shūi waka shū* 拾遺和歌集).

Mt. Kamado,” written on a pillar of a bathhouse in Suita Spring in Tsukushi province. It is said that he accepted this scribble as the first stanza of a *renga* poem and responded to it.<sup>8</sup>

There are four things to notice in this passage. First, we observe the three-line form of the initial stanza: the 5-7-5 syllable structure already discussed. Next, we see the second stanza responds with the 7-7 syllable structure. Third, we see that each stanza is composed by a different poet. Fourth, and most importantly, we gain an understanding of the nature of this poetic communication in Toshiyori’s comments: he argues that Motosuke accepted that a scribble on a bathhouse pillar was indeed an invitation to compose a reply. It was, in short a *renga* in the making. There is no evidence, either internal or external, that this original writing was meant to be the first part of a *renga*. It might very well have been a complete poem as it was. However, Motosuke nevertheless understood it necessarily as the initiation of a *renga* poem. So why did Motosuke recognize the scribble as the first stanza of a *renga* poem, which encouraged him to compose the following stanza?

If we bring here the distinction between constative utterances and performative utterances proposed by Austin, we could say that the initial anonymous lines were merely a constative utterance meant to describe the scenery of Mt. Kamado, full of leaves turning yellow and red in the autumn. However, Motosuke’s acceptance of the scribbled words as the first stanza of a *renga* poem suggests that these original lines were not a discreet poem in itself, but rather an invitation to some other poet to complete it by adding his own 7-7 syllable stanza. Thus for Motosuke (in Toshiyori’s reading), the initial lines constitute a performative utterance, whose illocutionary force is revealed in the reply.

Toshiyori introduced other *renga* poems in his treatises, which were composed in similar situations: a poet saw or heard a statement, which must have originally been made as a constative utterance and accepted it as the first stanza of a performative utterance by responding to it.

However, the question remains: why did Motosuke in Toshiyori’s reading insist on an illocutionary intent in these lines scribbled in a bathhouse? Could he not even imagine that it was just a simple poem, requiring no reply? I argue that a look into the social context in which *renga* was frequently performed in Toshiyori’s time might shed some light

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<sup>8</sup> Hashimoto Fumio 橋本不美男 ed., *Toshiyori zuinō* 俊頼髓脳 in *Karonshū* 歌論集, vol. 87 of *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文学全集 (Tokyo: Shōgakusan, 2002): 192–3, translation mine.

on this. The following *renga* poems come from Toshiyori's personal poetry collection, *Collection of Irregular Poems by a Useless Man*:

堀河院御時うりふねかきいれたりけるをみて

During the reign of Emperor Horikawa, the emperor viewed a painting of a boat, which looked like a melon.

御製 Emperor Horikawa  
 うりふねは A melon boat  
 うみすきてこそ must have scooped  
 まいりたれ and navigated the ocean waters.

まいりたりときこしめして御前にめされてつけよとおほせこと  
 ありければつかまつりける

The emperor, who heard of my arrival at the court, requested me to wait on him and respond to the stanza.

俊頼 Toshiyori  
 なみにふられて it is now seen  
 みなそこにみゆ at the bottom. (1569)<sup>9</sup>

堀河院弘徽殿にわたりてあそはせ給けるにくろおとこといふふ  
 へふきのこゑしけるをきこしめして

When Emperor Horikawa visited Kokiden Palace, he heard a piper's voice, whose name is Kuro-otoko (black man).

御製 Emperor Horikawa  
 くろおとこ A black man  
 くろとのほとに around the black door  
 おとすなり is making a noise.

中納言御まへにさふらひてとくつかまつれとせめられければく  
 ちにまかせてつかまつりける

<sup>9</sup> Sekine Keiko 関根慶子 and Ōi Yōko 大井洋子, *Awa bon sanbokukika shū honmon kōi hen: honmon kōi to shūchū* 阿波本散木奇歌集-本文・校異編-本文・校異と集注 (Tokyo: Kazama shobō, 1979), 212, translation mine.

Counselor Minamoto Shigesuke, who waited on the emperor,  
bustled and urged me to respond, I thus composed irresponsibly.

俊頼 Toshiyori  
ひこの白ぬし The white man in Hiko province  
ゆきたかゝるい is stepping on the white snow. (1572)<sup>10</sup>

Toshiyori composed these poems in similar social situations: in each, Emperor Horikawa 堀川 (1079–1107; r. 1087–1107) composed the first stanza and then people around the emperor, or the emperor himself, requested Toshiyori to finish the *renga* poem. Toshiyori selected many *renga* like these for *Collection of Irregular Poems by a Useless Man* and diligently added notes explaining how he composed the second stanzas, always by request of someone who was of a higher rank. What this tells us is that *renga* poems were often composed extemporaneously in unpredictable situations, where someone of a certain social status requires a quick response. Thus, poets like Toshiyori and Motosuke always had to be prepared to respond to first stanzas, tossed to them without warning.

These examples of *renga* as social events give context to Motosuke's response to the scribbled words on the pillar of a bathhouse. Motosuke, who must have been trained by his contemporaries to respond in any situation to the first stanzas thrown at him, couldn't resist seeing the bathhouse scribble as the first stanza of a *renga* poem begging for a response. What might very well have initially been what Austin calls a constative utterance could not be seen as anything but a performative utterance to medieval poets like Toshiyori and Motosuke, whose illocutionary force lay in their simple fact of existing.

Why then did Toshiyori emphasize illocutionary force in his poetics on *renga*? In order to answer this question, I will introduce French philosopher Jacques Derrida's critique of Austin's speech act theory in the next section and consider how Toshiyori incorporated the concept of illocutionary force into his discussion on *renga* poetry.

### 3. JACQUES DERRIDA'S DECONSTRUCTION BETWEEN "ORDINARY SPEECH" AND "INFELICITOUS AND UNSERIOUS SPEECH"

In this section, I'd like to overview how the French philosopher Jacques Derrida critiques Austin's concept of performativity. The important thing to be emphasized about Austin's speech act theory is that Austin excluded some types of utterances such as performing on the stage,

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 213, translation mine.

citing poems, and soliloquy, from what he calls “ordinary performative speech” because he argued these utterances were not original speech, but rather repetitions of speech composed at some point in the past.

...a performative utterance will, for example, be in a peculiar way hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage, or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy. This applies in a similar manner to any and every utterance—a sea-change in special circumstances. Language in such circumstances is in special ways—intelligibly—used not seriously, but in ways parasitic upon its normal use—ways which fall under the doctrine of the *etiolations* of language. All this we are excluding from consideration.<sup>11</sup>

Austin argues here that performative utterances such as acting and recitation of poetry are “hollow or void” because they are not original speech, but rather repetitions of speech composed at some point in the past. Such utterances cannot be truly “performative” in Austin’s sense of the word; but are instead “parasitic upon its normal use.”

Derrida deconstructed this distinction that Austin makes between “ordinary speech” and “non-serious speech” by claiming that “ordinary speech” was also “parasitic” because it was conducted by citing utterances stated in the past.

For, ultimately, isn’t it true that what Austin excludes as anomaly, exception, “non-serious,” *citation* (on stage, in a poem, or a soliloquy) is the determined modification of a general citationality—or rather, a general iterability—without which there would not even be a “successful” performative? So that—a paradoxical but unavoidable conclusion—a successful performative is necessarily an “impure” performative, to adopt the word advanced later on by Austin when he acknowledges that there is no “pure” performative.<sup>12</sup>

To simplify, what Derrida means here is that there are no performative utterances that are original; every performative, in order to actually work as a performative, must be in some sense a citation, that very thing that

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<sup>11</sup> Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 22.

<sup>12</sup> Jacques Derrida, “Signature Event Context,” *Limited Inc.* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 17.



Austin calls a “parasitic” “etiolation” of language. In order to ground his point, Derrida uses the example of the signature:

The effects of signature are the most ordinary thing in the world. The condition of possibility for these effects is simultaneously, once again, the condition of their impossibility, of the impossibility of their rigorous purity. In order to function, that is, in order to be legible, a signature must have a repeatable, iterable, imitable form; it must be able to detach itself from the present and singular intention of its production. It is its sameness which, in altering its identity and singularity, divides the seal.<sup>13</sup>

For Derrida, the signature is a kind of language that must be codified and formulaic in order for it to work. It can never be original. Furthermore, as Derrida argues, such an utterance like a signature is detached in time from the original moment of its iteration; and in this, there is a disruption of meaning depending on the context in which it is used. There are signatures in love letters. There are also signatures in divorce contracts. They do not mean the same thing. Derrida’s notion of the disruption of meaning between utterances of the past and the present helps us to more precisely understand, I think, Toshiyori’s discussion on composition of *renga* poetry.

#### 4. DISRUPTION OF MEANING BETWEEN STANZAS IN A *RENGA* POEM

Toshiyori appears to understand and approve of the disruption of meaning between stanzas of *renga* poetry as can be seen here in the following passage from his treatise, *Toshiyori’s Poetic Essentials*:

次に、連歌といへるものあり。例の歌の半をいふなり。本末心にまかすべし。その中らがうちに、言ふべき事の心を、いひ果つるなり。心残りて、付くる人に、言ひ果てさするはわろしとす。

There is a poetry genre called “*renga*.” It is said that a *renga* poem is equivalent to what a *waka* poem is divided in half, thus a *renga* poem consists of two stanzas, one of which is supposed to be composed by different poets. Poets should present whatever they want by following their hearts in each stanza. However, poets

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 20.

must complete making sense in one stanza. It is bad if a poet fails to put everything in words in the first stanza and have the other poet complete making sense with the second stanza.<sup>14</sup>

What is important to see in this passage is that each stanza should have its own independent meaning. The poet should “follow his heart,” aiming to “complete making sense.” It is important to recognize that the first stanza must contain its own complete meaning. Although a passage in a *renga* poem necessarily requires some kind of response, it does so not because it leaves something out for a later poet to clarify, but because it is a *renga*. Toshiyori then introduces examples of what he considers failed *renga* poems:

たとへば、夏の夜をみぢかきものと言ひ初めしといひて、人は物をや思はざりけむと末に言はせむはわろし。この歌を、連歌にせむ時は、夏の夜は身近きものと思うかな、といふべきなり。さてぞかなふべき。

For example, if a poet presents “someone who described summer night as short for the first time” in the first stanza, the other poet has to respond to it by saying that “would not be like me, who is lost in thought all night long” in the second stanza. This is bad. If you want to compose a good *renga* poem, you should say “summer night seems so short.” This first stanza meets the condition of good *renga* poems.<sup>15</sup>

Here, Toshinori contends that poets should compose each stanza, which should make sense independently. He introduces a bad example of the first stanza, which reads “someone who described summer night as short for the first time” and criticized it for having the second stanza serve for completing making sense. Toshiyori shows another bad example of *renga* poems from *Man'yōshū* (*Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves* 万葉集, ca.759), the first and longest of Japan’s poetry anthologies, as follows:

さほがはのみづをさきあげてうゑしたを  
 “From rice fields that I made by stemming the flow of Saho River  
 かるわせいひはひとりなるべし  
 You deserve to enjoy the first crop from them.”

<sup>14</sup> Toshiyori *zuinō*, 28, translation mine.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 28, translation mine.

これは、万葉集の連歌なり。よもわろからじと思へど、こころ  
残りて、末に付けあらはせり。いかなる事にか。

This is a *renga* poem from *Man'yōshū*. I dare to say that it's a bad one because the first didn't complete expressing what the poet wants to say. That's why the second stanza had to make up for it. How could such an insufficient *renga* poem have been chosen for *Man'yōshū*?<sup>16</sup>

We can observe here that Toshiyori again criticizes the first stanza for not having completed making a sentence. And he even criticizes the judgment of the compiler of *Collection of a Myriad Leaves*, who selected this *renga* poem for the anthology.

Toshiyori criticizes existing ideas on the composition of *renga* poetry because it didn't fully take into account the relationship of meaning between the first and second stanzas. A first stanza that doesn't make sense independently is defective, he contends. The ideal *renga* poem contains two independently meaningful statements, which taken together develops another consistent meaning for the poem as a whole.

In this way, Toshiyori's insistence on two independently meaningful stanzas whose meaning is disrupted by their juxtaposition anticipates Derrida's notion of disruption of meaning between utterances of the past and the present. For Toshiyori, who valued illocutionary force of utterances, it must have been natural to claim that a poet must respond to oneself, who had composed the second stanza, when the poet composed a *renga* poem by linking the first and second stanzas.

If we recall Derrida's discussion, who contended that all utterances were the result of citing utterances stated in the past and thus there was a disruption of meaning between utterances stated at the present and in the past because these utterances were stated in different contexts, we can argue that Toshiyori was aware that all words and expressions used for *renga* poems were the result of citing words and expressions composed by all poets in the past. According to Toshiyori, when a poet composes the second stanza by responding to the first stanza, the poet must be aware that both stanzas were created based on different contexts.

Furthermore, when the poet composes a *renga* poem by linking these stanzas, the poet must compose it based on another context because the poet would be encouraged to respond to the second stanza that the poet composed by himself. Thus, I argue that Toshiyori, who incorporated the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 28, translation mine.

illocutionary force of utterances into his theories, conceptualized the composition of *renga* poetry as the complex layering of different meanings and contexts, which were created by responses of poets to other poets as well as themselves in the past.

##### 5. AMBIGUITY AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE CONTROL OF MEANING

In this final section, I will demonstrate how Toshiyori regards the disruption between stanzas in a *renga* poem as an opportunity for poets to take control of meaning and, in so doing, to subvert relations of power.

*Toshiyori's Poetic Essentials* introduces several anecdotes in which people used *renga* to challenge or maintain relations of power. One of these anecdotes describes a banquet held at Higashi Sanjō: in 東三条院, the residence of Fujiwara Yorimichi 藤原頼通 (992–1074), who acted as Chancellor to the Emperor Go-izei 後冷泉 (1025–1068; r. 1045–1068). Toshiyori described how the high nobles (*kandachime*, 上達部) and attendant nobilities (*tenjōbito*, 殿上人) invited to the gathering were embarrassed because they failed to respond to a first stanza composed by a poet and monk Ryōzen 良暹 (?–?).<sup>17</sup> Toshiyori comments on the anecdote as follows:

この事を好むものは、あやしけれども、おもなくいひいでて、  
打ちわらひやみぬるものなり。その日も、付けたる人はいひけ  
めど、好まぬひとは、つつましさに、さやうの晴などは、えい  
ひ出ださで程へぬれば、やがて、こもりぬるなり。さればなほ、  
よしなし事なれど、かやうの折の料に、おもなく好むべきなめ  
り。

Although those who prefer *renga* poetry to *waka* have been regarded as being vulgar and low-minded, people should not hesitate to compose *renga* poems, but they should rather end by responding to others' stanzas with a laugh. At this occasion there must have been some participants who responded to the first stanza in their minds. And, as they did not prefer *renga*, they must have been embarrassed to present their *renga* poems at such an official occasion and ended up leaving the following stanza unspoken. Thus, even though *renga* is such a worthless word play, people should like to compose *renga* poems to prepare for that

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 240–245.

kind of opportunity.<sup>18</sup>

By pointing out that the nobles were embarrassed by Ryōzen, who was a low-ranked courtier and a poet, Toshiyori emphasizes that the power relation between the nobles and Ryōzen was subverted only because the nobles, who disdained *renga*, failed to respond to the first stanza that Ryōzen composed. One should take *renga* positively, even if it is only “worthless word play.”

In another anecdote Toshiyori also highlights how poets subverted relations of power by subverting the meaning of *renga*. At a banquet at the residence of a governor of Kawachi 河内 province, a poet and aristocrat named Minamoto no Shigeyuki 源重之 (?–1000?) composed the first stanza of a *renga*.<sup>19</sup>

重之	Shigeyuki
雪ふれば	When it snows,
あしげに見ゆる	Mt. Ikoma (Mt. Horses) takes on
生駒山	a grey and white dappled coat.

かうぶんた	Kōbunta
いつなつかげに	When do the horses plan to have the summer coat?
ならむとすらむ	when will the mountain have shadows? <sup>20</sup>

In the first stanza Shigeyuki describes Mt. Ikoma looking like a horse’s coat, dappled grey and white. There is wordplay in the color “ashige” as it is used exclusively for horses, and the name of Mt. Ikoma includes the character *koma* 駒, meaning “horse.” A low-ranked warrior called Kōbunta responds by cleverly responding to Shigeyuki’s “ashige” with the word “kage,” which can be taken two ways, depending on the kanji characters intended: “kage” 鹿毛, a word used to describe a horse’s deer-brown coat, and “kage” 影, a word that means “shadows.”

Kōbunta’s stanza is incredibly clever, because it fully accepts Shigeyuki’s wordplay centered around horses and doubles down by introducing an entirely different possible meaning. At the same time, he introduces the humorous idea that horses, like a tree-filled mountainside, can change their colors with the seasons. This absurd, though deliberate, proposal somewhat deflates Shigeyuki’s initial stanza by calling attention

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 244–5, translation mine.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 198–200.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 198–9, translation mine.

to his implicit, but unintentional, suggestion of just that possibility. I'd argue that Toshiyori, who understood that both stanzas were created based on different contexts, must have valued the disruption of meaning between the first and the second stanzas in the *renga* poem. Furthermore, Toshiyori emphasizes the fact that the governor of Kawachi hosting the event, who himself couldn't come up with a response to Shigeyuki's first stanza, was embarrassed when Kōbunta was praised by Shigeyuki. In this way, Toshiyori highlights how Kōbunta's poetic disruption of meaning between stanzas also entailed a disruption of relations of power. By remaining faithful to the total possibilities of meaning within the text rather than deferring to authorial intention, Kōbunta showed himself at least as good as Shigeyuki, and indeed better than the governor of Kawachi.

### CONCLUSION

I have so far examined how a prominent medieval poet Minamoto no Toshiyori conceptualized composition of *renga* poetry as a complex laying of utterances of the past and present by juxtaposing his ideas with Austin's concept of performativity within speech act theory.

Scholars of medieval Japanese literary studies have argued that Toshiyori, who was a low ranking courtier<sup>21</sup>, developed theories on the composition of *renga* poetry that liberated the second stanza from its previously servile role to the first stanza, allowing it to stand independently<sup>22</sup> in an attempt to establish the equal position to poet or courtier who challenged him to complete their *renga*. However, I would like to take that one step further, by applying Derrida's reformulation of

<sup>21</sup> Toshiyori composed *waka* poems in which he expressed his lament and sorrow for not having been able to obtain a high position. One of the examples is as follows:

七十になるまで司もなくて、よろづにあやしき事を思嘆きてよめる

I composed the poem to lament over my sufferings for having remained low-ranked without obtaining any positions until becoming seventy.

七十にみちぬる潮の浜楸ひさしく世にもむもれぬるかな

As the tide has come up for seventy years, sea catalpas have hidden themselves so long from the world.

*Collection of Golden Leaves* 665, translation mine.

<sup>22</sup> Koike Kazuyuki 小池一行, "Minamoto no Toshiyori to renga: *Sanbokukika shū maki jū o chūshin to shite*" 源俊頼と連歌-散木奇歌集巻十を中心として, *Shōryōbu kiyō* 書陵部紀要, vol.20 (1968): 54-69; Ishikawa Tsunehiko 石川常彦, "Tan renga shi ni okeru Minamoto no Toshiyori" 短連歌史における源俊頼, *Kokugo kokubun* 国語国文 39, no.10 (1970): 21-52; Fujiwara Masayoshi 藤原正義, "Toshiyori to renga" 俊頼と連歌, *Kita Kyūshū daigaku bungakubu kiyō* 北九州大学文学部紀要, vol. 18 (1978): 65-82.

performativity to Toshiyori's discussion. Toshiyori was aware that all utterances in *renga* inherited illocutionary force, and thus encouraged poets to respond by composing following stanzas. By incorporating the concept of illocutionary force into his theories on composition of *renga* poetry, he then argued that poets should compose *renga* poems by responding to utterances not only by other poets but also by themselves in the past. Finally, Toshiyori, who highlighted the disruption of meaning between utterances stated in the past and the present, conceptualized the composition of *renga* poetry as something naturally and necessarily layered with different meanings and contexts. This argument gives creative freedom for poets who were often tasked to respond to those of higher status. By asserting the supremacy of the *renga* in and of itself, as a text independent of its master, the author, the poet too could escape his own masters' intended meanings and contexts. In a short riposte of fourteen syllables, the poet discovers a world where no one reigns but he.

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