

Deconstructing representations of Ono no Komachi as a Japanese femme fatale in contemporary and popular culture

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In this analysis I put strong emphasis on presenting and analyzing representations of Ono no Komachi in contemporary and popular culture, as represented in the following examples of literature: a short story *Futari Komachi* (Two Komachi, 1923) by Akutagawa Ryūnosuke; a modern theatre play *Sotoba Komachi* (Komachi at the Gravepost, 1952) by Mishima Yukio; an American play *Three Poets* (1990) by Romulus Linney; and an example of anime entitled *Chōyaku Hyakunin Isshu: Utakoi* (Free Interpretation of Hyakunin Isshu Anthology: Love Poems, 2012).

Ono no Komachi is considered to be very talented court poet of early Heian Period (8-12th c.), as she is counted as one of the Rokkasen poets. Strongly enough, not much is known about her actual life. Thus probably, Ono no Komachi has become an object of legendarization processes e.g. medievalization and marginalization. In my opinion, she is a great example of constructed image, which presents her as a talented poet, but also as indescribable beautiful, seductive and coldhearted *femme fatale*.

In my analysis I apply deconstructionist reading practice to demonstrate the difference between „historical” Ono no Komachi and „constructed” Ono no Komachi.

Finally, Akutagawa perpetuated a stereotype of Ono no Komachi's images by presenting her as beautiful lady, who is charming, but on the other hand she lies and prostitutes herself to reach her goals. In result, she ends her life as ugly and lonely beggar. In Mishima's creation, Ono no Komachi is a real *femme fatale*, whose charm bond her lovers in irresistible desire leading them into deadly situations. However, she is a miserable old woman, who is a victim of her beauty. Linney considered Ono no Komachi to be an astonishing poet, and he created her as a lady of intellectual power. Unfortunately, her „natural” *fatalism* brings her to a very tragical end. Quite positive representation of Ono no Komachi is pictured in anime series. She is beautiful young lady, who is very determined to become a famous poet.