

Intertextuality and the Crisis of Form in the Deathbed Narratives of Masaoka Shiki



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This presentation is about intertextuality and literary form in the deathbed narratives of modern Japanese haiku poet Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902). In the narrative entitled *Six-foot Sick Bed* (1902; Byōshō rokushaku), Shiki constructs a persona of a madman who writes in different registers and genres, and ventriloquizes poets from multiple literary traditions, including British Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). Through an examination of the intertextual relationships between Shiki and Coleridge, this talk offers two claims: in narrating his own death, Shiki brings to life a crisis of form in early nineteenth-century British Romanticism; Shiki's compulsion to safeguard his words in the voices of others is symptomatic of his own anxiety about literary form at the turn of the twentieth century. Shiki's compulsion to safeguard his words in the voices of others is symptomatic of his own anxiety about literary form in Japanese literature at the turn of the twentieth century.

Matthew Mewhinney is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Japanese in the Department of World Languages and Literatures at Boston University. His research focuses on lyric poetry, lyric theory, literati culture, and the relationship between prose and poetry in premodern and modern Japanese literature.

Mandel Reading Room (Rm 303)

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