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The Sound, the Body, the Classics: Nagai Kafū and Traditional Theater

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Introduction

As the preamble to a study on the place of traditional theater in Nagai Kafū's 永井荷風 (1879–1959) work and poetics, Takahashi Toshio's 高橋俊夫 comment about having to write on Kafū and the arts of Edo—above all ukiyo-e—is particularly fitting: "It is a difficult task. Many things I want to write about. And that I should write about. An entire book, maybe. What can I do?"[1] To be sure, Takahashi's worries were exaggerated: the contribution of his ongoing research on Kafū and the traditional arts ranks among the most fruitful and influential in the field. Nonetheless, Takahashi's stature makes his despair no less relatable. Among those literary figures who tackled the issue of tradition in their work, Nagai Kafū is indeed one of the most complex. Whoever sets out to unpack the meanings associated specifically with the notion of "Edo" in Kafū's oeuvre will most likely feel discouraged by the vastness and density of his commitment to this segment of Japanese tradition and cultural history. Often labeled a "nostalgic" because of his interest in the recent past, he was nonetheless modern, and quintessentially so, in his approach to tradition and in his overarching meditations on the relationship between past and present.

More recently, however, as scholars have conceptualized—in increasingly complex ways—Kafū's uses of the past in his writing, the nature and the quality of his ideas about Edo have moved closer to the center of scholarly interest. Tada Kurahito 多田蔵人 has stressed how, in *Edo geijutsuron* 江戸芸術論 (Essays on the Arts of Edo, 1920), Kafū's speculations about the arts of the former capital city look at Tokugawa society through a present-day lens, that is, through the concerns and assumptions of his own time.[2] Shindō Masahiro 真銅正宏, writing about *Hiyori geta* 日和下駄 (Fair-Weather Clogs, 1915), another essay collection that Kafū published just a few years before *Edo geijutsuron*, has pointed out that when Kafū, as a flaneur, strolled through the traditional *shitamachi* 下町 (low-city)

[1] Takahashi, "Nagai Kafū to kaiga," p. 37.
[2] Tada, *Nagai Kafū*, p. 3.

neighborhoods of mid-1910s Tokyo, he was not so much searching for the vestiges of Edo as he was trying to look at his hometown from a closer distance, in an attempt to fully comprehend it.[3]

Endorsing Tada's, Shindō's, and other recent scholars' research on the subject, I reexamine in this article the corpus of work that Kafū devoted to traditional theater, and which he wrote in the late years of the Meiji period (1868–1912) and throughout the Taishō period (1912–1926). I hope this endeavor will add a new dimension to how scholars understand, on the one hand, Kafū's appreciation of modernity and, on the other, the diverse contexts in which the idea of the theater itself was being negotiated and reformulated during these crucial decades. As I try to show, his idea of kabuki in particular can be used as a lens, allowing speculation on the nature of modernity and the place of the classics in modern times—as well as on what in many ways can be considered Kafū's attempt to re-canonize certain works and practices holding only marginal significance in contemporary discourses and theories. Building on Takahashi's argument that *Edo geijutsuron* is sustained primarily by Kafū's keen sensitivity to sound and color and by his sense of place,[4] I try to demonstrate the extent to which the most exterior aspects of theatrical performance embodied, in Kafū's conceptualization of the arts' social function, a discernible marker of the artistic experience's highest value.

My working assumption is that Kafū's meditation on kabuki was perfectly consonant with what I consider his trademark modernity—that is, the tendency to interrogate and manipulate the past rather than rejecting it altogether. For example, the emphasis he places on space, color, and sound foregrounds the materiality of the performative act and downplays its literariness. In doing so, he ultimately opens theater up to the multiple allegiances and possibilities of the modern. Furthermore, by focusing in particular on the audience, he stresses the need both for a communal mode of artistic reception and for an idea of the theater—whether conceived to be a cultural tradition or a corpus of works—as an environment and a community unto itself. He rejects the principles of Meiji-era theater modernization and instead calls for separate standards to be used when evaluating Western and Japanese theater, arguing moreover for a social function for art—for its ability to provide the audience with a mental break, a distraction from daily preoccupations, an escape from everyday life. I therefore address, first, Kafū's personal experience of theater—on and offstage, both at home and abroad. After this, I touch upon Meiji-period theater reform, highlighting a set of issues that Kafū tackled, either directly or implicitly, in his various writings. I then proceed with a textual analysis of three particular works, the abovementioned *Edo geijutsuron* and the hitherto understudied early pieces *Hyōshigi monogatari* 拍子木物語 (Clapper Stories, 1900) and *Gakuya jūnitoki* 楽屋十二時 (A Day in the

[3] Shindō, "Sansakuki to iu bungaku janru," p. 89.
[4] Takahashi, "Nagai Kafū to kaiga," p. 42.

Dressing Room, 1901), occasionally digressing into Kafū's other works and experiences.

Nagai Kafū and Theater

Theater always held a special place in Kafū's life. It is well-known that his fascination with the arts of Edo was most likely due to his mother's influence when he was a child. Kondō Tomie 近藤富枝 has stressed also how Kafū's early appreciation of kabuki's sounds and rhythms may have had to do with his intimate acquaintance with the koto and the shamisen, which his maternal grandmother used to play.[5] Yet kabuki took on a whole new meaning for Kafū in 1900, when Enomoto Torahiko 榎本虎彦 (1866–1916) introduced him to Fukuchi Ōchi 福地桜痴 (1841–1906) at the Kabuki-za 歌舞伎座, giving the young man reason enough to believe that a career in theater was possible for him. Up to that point, he had already toyed with the idea of becoming a painter, and had then associated with novelist Hirotsu Ryūrō 広津柳浪 (1861–1928). He had even debuted as a *rakugo* 落語 storyteller with Asanebō Muraku 朝寝坊むらく VI (1859–1907) under the pseudonym San'yūtei Yumenosuke 三遊亭夢之助, before his father found out and forbade him from performing again. In fact, his father had never allowed him to pursue any artistic ambitions, convinced that a governmental position or a career in finance would be a safer choice for his eldest son.

At the Kabuki-za, Kafū gained first-hand experience of the world of the theater and actors, but his primary goal was to become an author. His first job, however, had less to do with writing than one might expect: his apprenticeship began with wooden clappers (*hyōshigi* 拍子木). He put a great deal of effort into learning how to strike the clappers properly, and his writings on the subject reveal that he acknowledged their importance as signals, as well as this particular training's relevance for his desired career as a kabuki playwright.

Despite his determination to achieve this dream, he quit the Kabuki-za only ten months after joining. He made this decision out of loyalty to Fukuchi—apparently, the latter did not appreciate Ichikawa Danjūrō 市川團十郎 IX's (1838–1903) experiments with realist drama (*katsureki* 活歴).[6] Kafū followed Fukuchi to *Yamato shinbun* 大和新聞 to work as a journalist. When *Yamato shinbun* dismissed him a few months later, Kafū tried to return to the Kabuki-za; but having published works that broke an extremely important rule in the world of kabuki—that one must not reveal publicly what happens behind the scenes—he was not allowed to do so. This, incidentally, was probably the main event that drove him to the novel, ultimately leading to his career as writer. The works that cost Kafū his return to kabuki were in particular his *Hyōshigi monogatari* and *Gakuya jūnitoki*.

[5] Kondō, *Kafū to Sadanji*, pp. 22–24.
[6] Ibid., p. 18.

Kafū's disappointment, however, did not keep him away from kabuki. He would always associate with kabuki playwrights and actors, always trying to enlarge his circle of acquaintances in that milieu. For instance, in 1909, after becoming friends with Osanai Kaoru 小山内薫 (1881–1928), he was introduced by the same playwright to Ichikawa Sadanji 市川左團次 II (1880–1940), just around the time Osanai and Sadanji founded the Jiyū Gekijō 自由劇場 (Freedom Theater).[7]

Kafū's interest in theater went far beyond kabuki, however, as he proved during his sojourn abroad between 1903 and 1908. While in the United States and France, and especially when he was in New York, he visited many theaters. We know from his travel diary, *Saiyū nisshishō* 西遊日誌抄 (Journal of a Journey to the West, 1919), that he attended Broadway performances almost every day, staying up late to read librettos in restaurants and coffee shops when performances were sold out—or after he had attended a play, to linger on the emotions it had aroused.[8] Minami Asuka 南明日香 has distinguished several patterns in Kafū's strolls around New York, one of which revolved around theaters and concert halls.[9] Most of his evenings were spent in theaters. He became a veritable habitué, who would watch the same show more than once, as he did with *Carmen*,[10] and who managed to see Sarah Bernhardt (1844–1923) on the stage three times in less than ten days. He wrote in his journal that a great part of his fascination with Western countries was rooted in his desire to know about their theater,[11] and indeed, during his sojourn in New York, he appears to have been eager to watch as many plays as possible. I have argued elsewhere that a note written on March 24, 1906, after a show that moved him deeply, testifies to a radical change in his life and especially in his attitude toward art. He wrote: "I can no longer watch plays with the detached eye of the critic, as I used to do when I was in my country. Did America entirely transform me into a lachrymose poet?"[12] This statement can be considered an acknowledgment of his artistic maturation, the transition from a more derivative approach, inspired by the "tragic novel" (*hisan shōsetsu* 悲惨小説) and by French naturalism, among other influences, to adopt a more personal and more original attitude.[13]

Kafū's interest in theater—especially opera—never flagged during and after his time abroad. It acquired moreover an additional dimension during the last part of his travels when, according to Mitsuko Iriye, he felt, as intensely as never before, a "preoccupation with the question of how to try to disentangle and

[7] Akiba, *Kōshō Nagai Kafū*, p. 168.
[8] Nagai, *Saiyū nisshishō*, p. 316.
[9] Minami, *Nagai Kafū no Nyū Yōku, Pari, Tōkyō*, p. 95.
[10] Nagai, *Saiyū nisshishō*, pp. 314, 335–336.
[11] Ibid., p. 315.
[12] Ibid., p. 319.
[13] Follaco, *A Sense of the City*, p. 78.

reconcile two different cultures which [were] both true and dear to him but which [could not] be artificially fused or superimposed upon one another."[14]

At the time, Kafū was pessimistic about the possibility of expressing his feelings, as a Japanese, through music in Western European style. Just a few years earlier, however, he had held a different view. In 1904, when he was living in Tacoma, Washington, he had written to his friend Ikuta Kizan 生田葵山 (1876–1945) that he wished to introduce musical drama to Japan, and not by translating Western works, but by creating original Japanese pieces.[15] Yet he was not to pursue this project immediately after his return to Tokyo. Indeed, at the time he purposely avoided the opera performed in Japanese at the Asakusa Opera House, which experimented with musical drama during the mid-Taishō period, seeking forms of expression that could reach a broader audience and thereby dislodge the rather elitist image associated with Western European opera. Kafū opted instead for the Imperial Theater's presentation of traditional opera sung in European languages.[16] Nearly three decades later, however, he had come to feel that "perhaps the time was ripe for doing opera in Japan,"[17] and wrote his only opera piece, *Katsushika jōwa* 葛飾情話 (Romance in Katsushika, 1938), which was performed in the late spring of 1938—at the Asakusa Opera House.

Meiji-Era Theater Reform

The three early Kafū works that I examine in this article are of interest because they were published at two different moments in the history of Japanese theatrical culture: *Hyōshigi monogatari* and *Gakuya jūnitoki* are based on the juvenile Kafū's experiences at the Kabuki-za and were written soon after his theater apprenticeship ended, while *Edo geijutsuron* is a more complex work, published when he was already a renowned writer and a respected intellectual. Despite this difference in the state of the author's career, however, both of these works' respective composition dates—the turn of the century and the mid-Taishō period—proved to be times of transition in the history of Japanese theater.

In 1893, Tsubouchi Shōyō 坪内逍遥 (1859–1935) published his essay "Waga kuni no shigeki" 我が邦の史劇 (The Historical Drama of Our Nation). In it, he praises the emotional abundance and intensity that he considered typical of Japanese traditional theater as well as the charisma of its actors. Yet he also argued that real modernization in theater could be achieved only by a "new" kind of drama whose works focused on a single core idea and realistic characters rather than on the narrative element.[18] In the same year, Kitamura Tōkoku 北村透谷

[14] Iriye, "Quest for Literary Resonance," pp. 106–107.
[15] Nagai, *Danchōtei sekitoku*, pp. 7–8.
[16] Shindō, *Nagai Kafū*, pp. 194–196.
[17] Akiyama, *Shōwa no sakkyokukatachi*, p. 437.
[18] Tsubouchi, "Wagakuni no shigeki," pp. 33–42.

(1868–1894) wrote "Gekishi no zento ikan" 劇詩の前途如何 (What Lies Ahead for Dramatic Poetry?)[19] for the literary magazine *Bungakukai* 文學界, in which he stressed "symmetrical harmony" as traditional Japanese drama's most distinctive characteristic:

> In music, sound effects, speeches, movements and behavior, dance, chanting, and in many other things, harmony is the core. Song is accompanied by movements of the legs and gestures by the hands, followed by various complicated demands. One part cannot be the whole, and the whole cannot be expressed by one part. Thus, our plays are in the service of symmetrical harmony. . . . I have come to realize that there is no way to eliminate the defective convention of symmetrical harmony in Japanese drama. [Therefore,] Japanese drama will have much difficulty in the future.[20]

Kitamura lamented how both the actors and the public failed to appreciate a play's real essence because they were far more absorbed in its conventional and unchanging form.

At the center of these authors' preoccupation lay their ambition and desire to locate drama within the realm of literature—hence their concern with elements of the play that fell outside the realm of performance. M. Cody Poulton associates this attitude with the Meiji period's radical transformation in literary and aesthetic standards. He identifies this shift's most remarkable feature as "the rise of the notion that all literary forms should be devoted to the portrayal of a modern, privatized self," which brought with it "an essentially *anti-theatrical* element." Poulton singles out two main devices used for the expression of modernity in the Meiji period: confession (in the realm of fiction) and dialogue (in the realm of drama). "The eventual victory of the monologic expression over the dialogic imagination is an important reason for the literary precedence of fiction over drama," he states, concluding that "as a consequence, fiction (*shōsetsu* 小説) began to replace the play (*shibai* 芝居) as the paradigm of cultural expression."[21]

These two ideas, a privatized self and realistic representation, are the grain against which Kafū seems to be adjusting his own theory of drama in the 1920s. In what follows, I demonstrate that his position was firmly grounded in his own experience of kabuki at the Kabuki-za, and that it drew in equal measure upon that theatrical practice's most material elements and upon these elements' emotional and intellectual reverberations. At the same time, one should not underestimate modern drama's didactic tendency, which, according to Poulton, "became even greater as theater became politicized in the 1920s and 1930s, as if

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[19] M. Cody Poulton stresses the fact that Kitamura used the word *gekishi* 劇詩 (dramatic poetry) rather than *gikyoku* 戯曲, whose use was then more customary for "drama." See Poulton, *A Beggar's Art*, p. 241*n*43.

[20] Mori, "Introduction," p. 11.

[21] Poulton, *A Beggar's Art*, p. xi.

to regain by ideological means the sociality theater had naturally lost in its march to modernization."[22] Indeed, theater's sociality is at the core of Kafū's meditation, and it comes as no surprise that this meditation took place during the Taishō period, a time of change, during which many new theater companies and halls emerged, many new magazines were founded, and theater's influence came to reach far beyond its own performance venues and the play-going public: it was "a time when modern theater and drama became major players in the rising bourgeois culture."[23]

In his own work, Kafū advocates an utterly different approach to theater. He believed that excessive concern with the social dimension of drama could undermine its ability to provide a space—both physical and imaginary—for people to momentarily disengage from their everyday preoccupations. He believed, in other words, in art—and especially in drama—as a mental break, as an opportunity to explore life at its fullest or to face larger-than-life projections of human emotions, before returning to reality.

Edo geijutsuron: The Value of "Exteriority" (and a Digression into Opera)

Edo geijutsuron is a collection of ten essays published in a single volume by the Nihonbashi 日本橋-based publisher Shun'yōdō 春陽堂 in 1920. Kafū was forty-one years old at the time. He had experienced by this point an early fascination with French literature (especially naturalism and especially Émile Zola among the naturalists), long sojourns in both the United States and France, and then a so-called "returnee" period (*kichō jidai* 帰朝時代), during which he overtly criticized Japan's uneven path toward national modernization. After this, he entered a phase that mainstream scholarship has often called his "return to Edo" (*Edo kaiki* 江戸回帰), a term which, although effective in evoking his love for Edo-period arts, I nonetheless find rather misleading because it fails to highlight sufficiently the critical perspective that Kafū brought to his narrative elaborations and aesthetic considerations.[24]

Even though *Edo geijutsuron* was published in 1920, Kafū had begun to write some of the essays it contains in 1913, seven years earlier, making the volume effectively contemporaneous with another non-fiction work, the above-mentioned *Hiyori geta*. These two collections deal with distinct aspects of late-Meiji and early-Taishō life—traditional arts and urban spaces, respectively—but they also both reveal their author's acquaintance and fascination with woodblock prints, albeit in very different ways. Kafū's interest in the topic is more obvious in the case of *Edo geijutsuron*, which is mainly a work on ukiyo-e, whereas in *Hiyori geta*

[22] Ibid., p. xii.

[23] Ibid., p. 31.

[24] This critical perspective is at the core of Evelyn Schulz's work on the urban dimension of Kafū's "returnee" works. See Schulz, *Nagai Kafū*.

the same interest is revealed through Kafū's multifaceted use of "famous places" (*meisho* 名所) in the text, whose main references are to pre-Meiji woodblock prints and to old maps of the kind he mentions in the work's opening section.[25] This familiarity with *meisho* is certainly also due to his knowledge of ukiyo-e, which he had expanded throughout the 1910s.

Only one essay in *Edo geijutsuron* deals specifically with theater: "Edo engeki no tokuchō" 江戸演劇の特徴 (Main Features of Edo Theater), written in 1914. The fact that his essay collection on ukiyo-e also includes an essay on theater indicates just how closely the two art forms, for Kafū, were related to each other.

In "Edo engeki no tokuchō," he goes through the most salient moments in the process of theater modernization. He begins with the contributions of Tsubouchi Shōyō and Mori Ōgai 森鴎外 (1862–1922) in 1896, listing the names of those whom he considered to be the main figures of the modernization process: Yoda Gakkai 依田学海 (1833–1909), Fukuchi Ōchi, Morita Shiken 森田思軒 (1861–1897), Ishibashi Ningetsu 石橋忍月 (1865–1926), and Okano Shisui 岡野紫水 (dates unknown).[26] Here the opening paragraph sets the mood of the entire text by juxtaposing the words "today" (*konnichi* 今日) and "old drama" (*kyūgeki* 旧劇), foregrounding the main opposition with which he grapples in the essay. Kafū explores the meaning of traditional theater, focusing on its presumed obsolescence, its being "old." He compares past and present, old and new dramatic forms, and puts forward his idea that as long as the audience is entertained and is not bored, as long as they feel a connection with the play—that "affection for the theater" (*kōgekishin* 好劇心) which he saw as providing the critical nexus between spectator and performance[27]—then there was hardly any reason for traditional theater to be sacrificed for the sake of modernity.

The most interesting aspect of Kafū's approach to the problem of theater modernization is his apparent determination to view *kyūgeki* not as something opposed to the "new," Western-inspired drama of his age, but rather as something radically different and, as such, hardly comparable. He calls for separate standards in drama criticism. He challenges the dominant paradigm established by his forerunners in drama theory in Japan who, eager to find analogies between Eastern and Western cultural traditions, situated the entire discourse around drama within the broader redefinition of culture that took place in the wake of the Meiji Restoration. "As of today, I wish for Edo drama to remain the way it is rather than to be radically modernized," he writes, deeming it "unnecessary to dissect the theater of Edo to evaluate it according to Western aesthetic principles."[28] In other words, Edo theater should be judged according to its own standards, rather than in comparison with the drama of the West.

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[25] Nagai, *Hiyori geta*, p. 109.
[26] Kafū, *Edo geijutsuron*, p. 258.
[27] Ibid., p. 263.
[28] Ibid., p. 258.

Edo theater's most striking and distinctive characteristic, as noted by Kafū's predecessors, was the preponderance of sound and music in the performance, to the point that these often overshadowed the script. A play's rhythmic patterns, its particular sounds and noises, were far more important than its plot, and by the same token, the meaning of the words the actors pronounced were far less significant than their voices. To be sure, Kafū does not fail to stress the importance of visuality, nor to mention the physical presence of the actor himself and his ability to captivate his audience, body and soul—to stir their *kōgekishin*. Yet sound seems to hold a special place in Kafū's understanding of drama, and this clearly has to do with his first-hand experience striking wooden clappers at the Kabuki-za.

It should be noted, however, that the aural and visual dimensions of a play are the most straightforward markers of its materiality, although Kafū does not use this term. He speaks instead of "exteriority." Yet it is quite clear from his words that he believes an act's value should be measured above all by the feelings it inspires through the *things* and the *bodies* onstage, which can be seen and heard. He emphasizes sound and color in particular. Early in the essay, he claims that his "interest in Edo theater lies entirely in its exterior form," that is, in its "music and sound," "its unique colors and tone," and in "the actor's style of recitation, based on traditional schemes, and the costumes he wears"—these ultimately conjure the "musical harmony" of the play.[29] Although he refrains from using the adjective "symmetrical," it is clear that Kafū's fascination with traditional theater lies in that very feature which Tōkoku considered to be the main obstacle in modernizing the Japanese theatrical arts. Stressing repeatedly in his essay that a distinction ought to be made between Japanese and Western drama, Kafū eschews addressing the material, or exterior, dimension of the play as something that might influence the transformation and modernization of national drama. Not admitting of comparison with Western theater, Japanese traditional theater should not be judged by the same standards. Its tendency toward harmony, therefore, should not be seen as necessarily hampering its advancement as a form of art.

This attitude should not lead us to conclude that Kafū's stance toward theater was merely nostalgic, nor that his fascination with Western theater had waned as soon as his interest in the Edo arts began to deepen after he returned to Japan. This observation necessarily draws us into a digression on the author's idea of opera and his later, one-time-only experience as an opera playwright. As I noted earlier, when he returned to Japan after five years in the United States and France, Kafū was convinced that something similar to the European operatic

[29] Kafū, *Edo geijutsuron*, pp. 259–260. It is worth mentioning that the Japanese term he uses for "exterior form," *gaikei* 外形, is the same one that Tsubouchi Shōyō applies in his discussion of traditional theater in "Wagakuni no shigeki" (pp. 40–41).

tradition could never exist in Meiji Japan. He lamented this through the voice of one of the I-narrators in *Furansu monogatari* ふらんす物語 (French Stories, 1909): "I belonged to a nation that had no music to express swelling emotions and agonized feelings. . . . Meiji civilization has given us endless anguish but no song to convey it. Our emotions are already too far removed from the feudal past to cling to its music, yet we find, however partial our attachment to the West, that differences of climate and manners cannot be easily overcome."[30]

This pessimism about Japanese music's ability to express emotions explains, at least in part, Kafū's contrasting positions regarding the possibility of an original Japanese opera, views that he expressed during and after his sojourn abroad. However, when he came to write his own opera in 1938, it fulfilled a twofold objective: to convey emotions common during the era of the 1930s and to generate a linguistic realism that might yield a work the public would consider familiar.

This last point is particularly noteworthy. In *Katsushika jōwa*, Kafū made a number of lexical choices that enhanced the symbolic meanings of the text, such as the profusion of terms of foreign origin, like *sutā* スター (star) or *basu* バス (bus). These choices reproduced the living language of the time, but also highlighted the need to create a new language for the late 1930s' new reality.

Kafū's interest in living speech was not limited to word-choice. He also made sure that the *recitativo*'s sonorous quality faithfully reproduced the language actually spoken in Tokyo, which was then a destination for many from the provinces. Ono Shōko 小野祥子 has noted that in 1940, only two years after he wrote his opera, Kafū observed in his journal that more than half of Tokyo's population came from other regions of the country. He was aware of the linguistic diversity of Japan's capital, and engaging performers born elsewhere was yet another strategy to ensure his piece's realism and familiarity.[31] Thus *Katsushika jōwa* expresses a topophilic sense of belonging, being a work whose associations relate to both the imagined space of the Tokyo suburbs where the story takes place and the real, lived space of the very district where the piece was itself performed.

Many critics and commentators who watched the show also stressed the fact that it was performed in Asakusa, drawing a parallel between the story's mood and the audience's taste in performance. Drama critic Ozaki Hirotsugu 尾崎宏次 (1914–1999) described the work's scenario as immature but praised it for being "perfect for Asakusa"; he added that the words and music worked well together, producing the agreeable impression of a natural "sung Japanese."[32] In his positive statement, Ozaki does not fail to notice what Akiyama Kuniharu 秋山邦晴 has considered *Katsushika jōwa*'s greatest merit: its being an experiment, the first opera written in a flowing, native-sounding Japanese, with Japanese commoners

[30] As quoted in Iriye, "Cultural Uprootedness," p. 169.
[31] Ono, "Opera 'Katsushika jōwa' to iu dekigoto," p. 52.
[32] *Ongaku shinbun* 音楽新聞, 6.5.1938.

as its characters, being moreover a work targeted to a specifically localized audience.[33] This originality was noticed also by music critic Ashihara Eiryō 蘆原英了 (1907–1981), who praised *Katsushika jōwa* as an outstanding piece of "popular art" (*shomin geijutsu* 庶民芸術) firmly placed in a local context: Tokyo. This quality, according to Ashihara, set it apart from previous works of opera excessively derivative of European models; and that quality, he surmised, would exert influence on later Japanese opera.[34] More recently, Suenobu Yoshiharu 末延芳晴 has observed that Kafū's short piece incorporates traditional European operatic themes, such as estrangement from one's original community, ambition, betrayal, and self-sacrifice, while nonetheless stirring a strong sense of familiarity among Japanese viewers.[35]

This familiarity can also be seen as reflecting a deep sense of belonging, one which both Kafū and Sugahara Meirō 菅原明朗 (1897–1988)—who wrote the music for *Katsushika jōwa*—sought, in their different ways, to achieve while working on the piece. Sugawara did this, for instance, by experimenting with rhythm and using a 6/8 metrical pattern perceived as "of the people" because of its similarity to the nostalgic tempo of traditional folk songs (*min'yō* 民謡).[36] Furthermore, he advised Kafū about the differences between written and sung words. He guided the writer toward a form of verbal expression that, on the one hand, was less complex and elusive but that, on the other, could better fit the music and serve the function Kafū himself had felt to be crucial at the beginning of his career: that of creating a "Japanese song" able to express the "present sentiment" of the Japanese individual.

Kafū, for his part, managed to inscribe a quintessential early Shōwa (1926–1989) popular narrative into the thematic repertoire of traditional European opera. *Katsushika jōwa* recounts the heroine Yoshiko's ambition and disillusionment; her departure from the "nest," represented by the suburbs; her subsequent estrangement from the community to which she belongs; and her ultimate tragic fate. It further details her reencounter with a former lover, now married to someone else; and her act of self-sacrifice, through which community bonds are reestablished and order somehow restored. These elements strongly resemble those of many operatic works, most notably *Cavalleria Rusticana*, one of Kafū's favorite works ever since his years abroad.

Yet despite Ashihara's enthusiasm for it, *Katsushika jōwa* did not represent a turning point in the history of Japanese opera. It did, however, successfully portray an alternative narrative of early-Shōwa Tokyo popular history and represented a

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[33] Akiyama, *Shōwa no sakkyokukatachi*, p. 461.

[34] Ibid., p. 466.

[35] Suenobu Yoshiharu 末延芳晴, "'Maboroshi' no Kafū saku opera saien: nakaseru kahin 'Katsushika jōwa'" 「幻」の荷風作オペラ再演：泣かせる佳品「葛飾情話」, *Asahi shinbun* 朝日新聞, 8.19.1999.

[36] Akiyama, *Shōwa no sakkyokukatachi*, pp. 452–453.

first attempt to put into music the diverse, fascinating array of emotions that characterized people's everyday life in wartime urban Japan. Consistent with Kafū's poetics, and timely in its deeper implications, this operatic work weaves together narratives of urban transformation, class difference, and cultural stratification, trying moreover to provide this tapestry with a poetic framework composed of traditional themes, diction, images, and topographies through which to engage in dialogue with the present time.

Kafū's experience as opera writer, and especially the contemporary public reception of his piece, demonstrate that, by the late 1930s, he had at length found a way to unravel the East-West conundrum behind his own operatic aspirations. Yet what is of particular interest is the fact that he had found the key to this unraveling in these same "exterior" and "material" features of drama that he considered most distinctive and valuable in traditional theater. The linguistic realism that he strove to achieve in *Katsushika jōwa* aimed to create for the public a sense of familiarity that was supposed to be attained not through the meaning of the words but through their intonation. In other words, Kafū had addressed the dilemma which had confronted him at the end of his sojourn abroad, the question of how to devise a strategy to express new and changing emotions through a semiotic system as effective as Western musical drama had been for Europeans and North Americans. He found his solution in the very principle upon which Japanese traditional drama was founded: sonorous harmony.

Thus the strategy he adopted in the 1938 opera can be considered the outcome of a long reflection on the value of drama that embraced both a play's material and abstract features but assigned the highest significance to the former. For Kafū, performance was what mattered most. Yet if it does not come as a surprise that he held such a view in 1900, when he was still a young aspiring kabuki author at the Kabuki-za, it might seem more unexpected from him in later decades, when his literary activity had grown more and more removed from his juvenile fascination with the theater and his voice as novelist had become more and more influential.

Such a perspective had indeed been foretold in "Edo engeki no tokuchō," in which he describes what he finds most appealing in a play:

> That feeling I get when I hear the sound of the clappers, and the music accompanying the beginning of the play, as the curtains undulate and finally open and a solo anticipates the performer's appearance on the *hanamichi* 花道 [a projection from the main stage extending out into the audience]; or when I watch the stage revolving until it disappears from sight while listening to the various instruments: all these features give me a pleasant feeling that can hardly be experienced elsewhere and that I do not find in anything but in Edo theater. The same applies to silent scenes [*danmari* だんまり], trap doors [*seridashi* 迫出], and fight scenes [*tachimawari* 立廻り].[37]

[37] Nagai, *Edo geijutsuron*, p. 259.

This passage clarifies the nature of Kafū's fascination with kabuki, which is rooted in admittedly "exterior" features, all appealing to either sight or hearing. His idea of Edo theater is foregrounded in his appreciation of its most exciting elements and is centered upon the emotional response that he *as audience* directs toward the performance. The performance, in other words, should be valued for its material dimension and for the emotions it elicits in the audience. Such a connection between the performance's materiality and the emotional sphere of its reception is the cornerstone of Kafū's theory of theater.

His emphasis on these exterior elements does not, however, imply any lack of insight or depth. On the contrary, he assigns to kabuki's aesthetic experience a significance that extends far beyond the spectator's mere viewing of the play's story. In "Edo engeki no tokuchō," he names two plays from the kabuki repertoire that he finds especially effective and fascinating, mainly for their exterior features: *Honchō nijūshi kō* 本朝廿四孝 (Twenty-Four Paragons of Filial Piety of Our Country, 1766; **figs. 1 and 1a**) and *Kiichi Hōgen sanryaku no maki* 鬼一法眼三略巻 (Kiichi Hōgen's Book of Strategy, 1731). He praises in particular the "Jisshukō" 十種香 (Ten Varieties of Incense) scene from the former and the "Kikubatake" 菊畑 (Chrysanthemum Garden) scene from the latter. In both cases, Kafū emphasizes visual and aural features that, from his point of view, affect the spectator's experience of the performance. With respect to "Jisshukō,"[38] he praises the elegance of Katsuyori's 勝頼 costume ("In *Honchō* [*nijūshi*]*kō*, at the beginning of the 'Jisshukō' scene, the beautiful sight of Katsuyori's long *hakama* 袴 trousers spreading over the palace stairs is simply unforgettable").[39] And in the case of "Kikubatake," he praises the beauty of the play's accompanying music, the way it effectively arouses all kinds of feelings ("In 'Kikubatake,' that moment when Torazō 虎蔵 tries to hide in the inner garden and the music accompanies his movements—one truly realizes then the importance of the musicians.")[40] This last scene, in particular, persuades him of the value of Edo theater even when set against the European operatic tradition. He observes that "just beating on the big drum will give you the illusion of hearing the sound of water, or of the wind, a simplicity of technique unattainable in the far more complex Western operas."[41]

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[38] Unfortunately, it is not easy to determine precisely which performance it was that Kafū attended, nor the precise costumes (and performers) to which he was referring when he mentioned these plays. For instance, as regards *Honchō nijūshi kō*, it should be noted that the work is a very important play in the kabuki repertoire, and that it was performed repeatedly during Kafū's lifetime. There was, however, a performance that he may have found particularly impressive because it featured his good friend and mentor Fukuchi Ōchi, alongside Nakamura Shikan 中村芝翫 V (1866–1940). This performance was held at the Kabuki-za on January 9, 1902, and Shikan played Katsuyori. Ōchi, together with Enomoto Torahiko and others, was responsible for writing the script. See Utei and Yoshida, *Kabuki nendaiki*, pp. 97–98.

[39] Nagai, *Edo geijutsuron*, p. 260.

[40] Ibid., pp. 260–261.

[41] Ibid., p. 261.

Figure 1. The "Jisshukō" 十種香 scene from *Honchō nijūshi kō* 本朝廿四孝. National Institute of Japanese Literature.
https://doi.org/10.20730/100017824 (image 8).

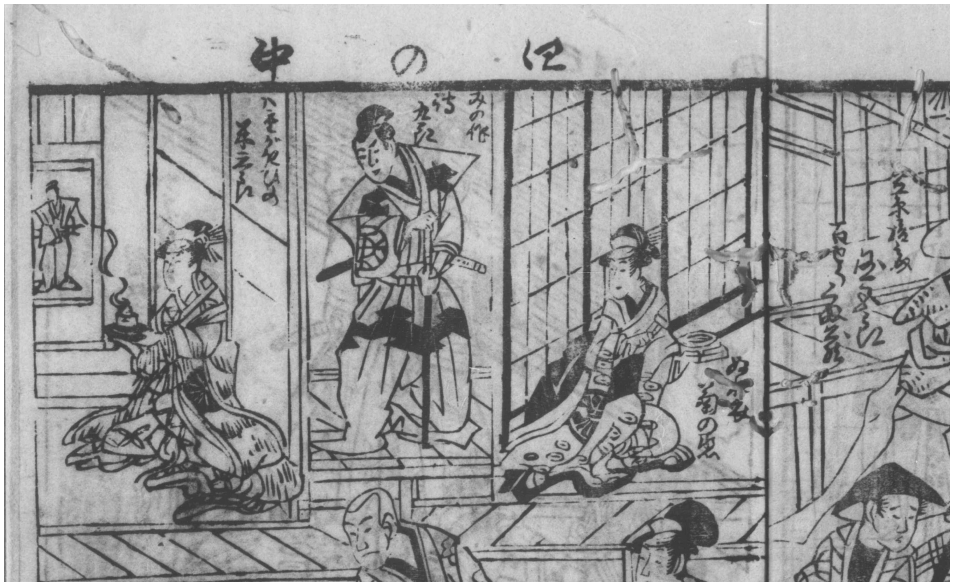

Figure 1a. Detail of Figure 1 (upper left), showing Katsuyori 勝頼 in his long *hakama* 袴 trousers.

For him, Edo kabuki's most distinctive feature is this simplicity, alongside the principle of musical harmony that undergirds the entire performance, and which includes not only musical elements but also staged sounds and clappers. These qualities are achieved by the play only as a whole and demand a long apprenticeship from all those involved in the performance. His overall aim, in comparing this tradition with that of European (or "Western," as he terms it)[42] opera, was not to determine which was more valuable but to substantiate his claim that the two were not comparable, that they were based on different principles. He also sought to assert that the latter's complexity did not establish it as the more sophisticated of the two, but was instead only one of its characteristics, placing it at a pole apart from the apparent simplicity of the former.

To sum up, in "Edo engeki no tokuchō," Kafū stresses the importance of theater as performance, as a composite product whose ultimate aim should be to produce feelings, to provide aural and visual impulses powerful enough that the viewer feels emotions, possibly together with the rest of the audience. His work as an opera librettist more than two decades later shows that, even when he embraced a mode of composition which he regarded as based on other, different principles, he still relied on the same "external" features that he considered distinctive of Edo theater. From this perspective, the problem of how to reconcile the difference between Japanese and Western forms seems solved. This view explains why he finally thought the time was "ripe" for writing Japanese opera.

Kafū developed this conceptualization of theater, however, much earlier than the publication of his essays on Edo-period arts. Indeed, in writing about kabuki in his early twenties, when the category of Edo was far from the center of his horizon and when traditional theater was a much closer reality for him, he introduced a number of topics and perspectives that shed further light on his relationship to the performing arts, and which anticipate the critical positions he would take later in his career.

Hyōshigi monogatari

Less than a decade after the publication of Tsubouchi Shōyō's and Kitamura Tōkoku's writings, Kafū began his apprenticeship at the Kabuki-za and wrote the essay that would cost him his (potential) career in theater: *Hyōshigi monogatari*.

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[42] I do not consider Kafū's use of the term *Western* (*seiyō* 西洋) rather than *European* for opera as a symptom of self-orientalization, or "occidentalization." Although he was aware of the fact that the plays he enjoyed watching had been composed in Europe, his personal acquaintance with performed opera took place mostly in the United States, more precisely in New York City; just like the consideration mentioned above, that "America" had turned him "into a lachrymose poet," his referring to opera simply as "Western" further clarifies how important the performed text rather than the libretto itself was for him. Some of his French stories show that, once in Europe, he strove to associate the spaces he saw with the information he had gained from opera scripts (and obviously from literature), but overall opera would always be a broader concept comprising text and performance, being therefore European *and* American. In a word: Western.

This text, which appeared in the December 10, 1900 issue of the literary magazine *Bungei kurabu* 文藝倶楽部 (Literary Club), is a brief (just about three pages) but straightforward account of his experience behind the curtain, thoroughly imbued with the desire to highlight the features of kabuki that he found most appealing and meaningful.

The essay can be roughly divided into three sections. In the first, Kafū explains why he considers clappers so important and lists a number of notable kabuki playwrights of the past, stressing the fact that each had played the *hyōshigi* when they were young.

In the second section, he compares the past with the present, complaining about the scant enthusiasm among people of his age for *hyōshigi*. He defines his present day as a "time when the way things are done no longer matters." He then juxtaposes this present to a past when clapper-beating "had become a form of art," corroborating this opinion by providing many examples of famous *hyōshigi* players, praising their styles, and describing their most distinctive characteristics.[43]

In the third section, he relates several anecdotes from his time at the Kabuki-za and touches upon the relationship between clapper-beating and acting. He suggests that the *hyōshigi* player may not be as important (or as popular) as the actor, but he is nonetheless expected to discipline himself, and especially his body, to "feel" like the latter.

From the start, it is clear what Kafū aims to bring to the fore. Adopting in his writing the same structure as a play, he entrusts the clappers with the task of opening the text and setting the mood for what follows:

> In theater, clappers play a role that is somehow similar, let us say, to that played by the trumpet for the armed forces: if the clappers do not sound, the curtain will not open, therefore no play will take place, just as the props onstage always wait for the clappers to sound before they move or stop. In short, if the clappers do not sound, there will be no theater at all. The audience may see the clapper-beater as a trivial, even a vulgar role, but it is nothing like that. Those who play the clappers are called *kyōgen kata* 狂言方, and they are on their way to becoming playwrights.[44]

This opening paragraph shows that Kafū took pride in his duties as a *kyōgen kata*, and that he was determined to emphasize the importance of clappers; it also very clearly demonstrates that he considered the play's aural dimension to be as significant as the script. He explicitly addresses the public and wants them to notice a part of the performance often too easily overlooked. He challenges the (presumed) assumption that clappers are useless, pointless, and unrefined, something somehow disconnected from the rest of the play, in the course of

[43] Nagai, *Hyōshigi monogatari*, pp. 373–374.
[44] Ibid., p. 373.

which objection he interestingly resorts to what was then regarded as the play's most important feature: the script. In other words, he acknowledges the recent and still ongoing debates about theater reform and, by arguing for a connection between *hyōshigi* and writing, he invites his readers to question the notion of theater as a performance based mainly on texts—a notion recently established at the time Kafū was writing. Although he does not deny the script's importance, he draws a direct parallel between a playwright (*sakusha* 作者) and a *kyōgen kata*, suggesting that whoever aspires to become a kabuki playwright (as he did then) cannot avoid playing the clappers first.

Kafū continues stressing how noises and sounds, alongside tools, costumes, and other material elements of the scene, all contribute not only to the beauty but to the very existence of the play. The work's value, he seems to imply, is inscribed in its long, tangible history, and therefore does not need to be renewed or reformed according to the changing sensibilities of the time.

While rough and mostly anecdotal, this short essay anticipates to a great extent Kafū's stance on theater in the 1920s and 1930s. By the time he wrote "Edo engeki no tokuchō" in 1914, the theatrical field had long overcome the opposition between script and performance. A play's literary character, and thus the script's artistic dignity, was now essentially unquestioned. The focus of Kafū, therefore, is on the polarities of new and old, the realistic and the anti-realistic (or more precisely, the not necessarily realistic), and the abstract and the material—in the course of setting forth his argument that traditional forms should be judged for their intensity and power as performance, and for their effectiveness in captivating the audience, rather than for the literary quality of their scripts. Conversely, *Hyōshigi monogatari*, written in 1900, belongs to a time when such opposition was still in effect. These circumstances explain Kafū's emphasis on the relationship between the play's ultimate material element—the clappers—and the imaginative act of writing.

The anecdotes which Kafū included in his essay were the main reason for the Kabuki-za not welcoming him back. Yet he did not include only episodes that he had experienced himself during his short apprenticeship. He also recounted stories he had read about or heard during that time, some of which had been circulating in the theatrical milieu for decades. He mentioned, in particular, a text that he clearly considered compulsory reading for anyone interested in traditional theater: *Hyōshiki* 拍子記 (Records of Wooden Clappers, date unknown), written by Sakurada Jisuke 桜田治助 III (1802–1877). Kawajiri Seitan 川尻清潭 is one of the very few scholars who have examined this book, and he has described it as something in the way of a written audio recording, an "album" that performers could consult when preparing for a role.[45] It is, in other words, a text focused on the soundscape of kabuki theater, devoting considerable attention not only to

[45] Kawajiri, *Shibai oboechō*; quoted in Maeshima, "Edo chūki Kamigata kabuki," p. 15.

voices and musical instruments but also and especially to wooden clappers, which explains Kafū's interest in it. He describes *Hyōshiki* as "a book that offers detailed descriptions of different ways of clapper-beating" and notes that it includes lists of "famous clapper-beaters."[46]

In this essay, Kafū attempts to reassess the role of *hyōshigi* in two ways, delving deeply into its history to do so. In the first place, he draws connections between clapper-beating, writing, and acting, removing the *kyōgen kata* from the background and placing him closer to the core of the performance. Far from considering clapper-beating as a mere step along the way to the more prestigious activity of writing, or as an activity that stands poles apart from acting, he asserts that the occupation possesses a prestige of its own. In other words, he does not view wooden clappers (or their sound) as a mere function or mere tool of the performance: rather, in addition to measuring duration and providing the play's rhythm, *hyōshigi* are an essential part of life for those involved in theater. Clappers marked rules, modes, and times related to performances and to performers' own daily lives. Thus, they contributed actively to those community-building processes that Kafū would praise as crucial components of the art of the theater.

Kafū introduces clappers as an essential element of the play, comparing them to the trumpet that indicates and accompanies particular moments of military life. This comparison further clarifies his idea of *hyōshigi* as a signal that is shared among the people who work in a theater, and also between them and the audience. In other words, it is a signal shared within a community, one that acts even as a binding agent. By the same token, he implicitly introduces the notion of theater as a community in which feelings of belonging and sharing are evoked for all by the beating of clappers. When he writes, "If the clappers do not sound, there will be no theater at all," he does not mean merely that the act will not take place, but that the clappers as signal are a key feature of, an indispensable precondition for, the fulfillment of the theater's social function.

Although he touches upon the few theater companies, based in Osaka, that perform "clapper-less acts" (*ki nashi no maku* 木なしの幕),[47] and whose playwrights do not begin their careers as *kyōgen kata*, he praises companies from Tokyo and stresses the fact that renowned artists such as Tsuruya Nanboku 鶴屋南北 IV (1755–1829) and Kawatake Mokuami 河竹黙阿弥 (1816–1893) used to beat clappers when they were young (which, he seemingly suggests, contributed to their excellence).[48] Of course, this emphasis on *hyōshigi* and on illustrious figures like Nanboku and Mokuami also reveals the young Kafū's desire to dignify the work with which he was entrusted at the Kabuki-za, and to chart a path that would hopefully lead eventually to a playwright position.

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[46] Nagai, *Hyōshigi monogatari*, p. 373.
[47] Ibid., p. 375.
[48] Ibid., p. 373.

His desire to reconsider *hyōshigi*'s status within the performance manifests in various ways throughout the text—for instance, when he recounts a story involving Mokuami. Asked by a *kyōgen kata* for advice, the eminent artist is said to have responded that the reason the young clapper-beater could not perform up to expectations was due to "just standing there, looking at the actors" instead of "rehearsing the script in your belly" and "measuring your breathing before you beat the clappers."[49] In this episode, Kafū juxtaposes acting with clapper-beating, shortening the distance between the two. Rather than watching the actor, the *kyōgen kata* must become the actor, and he must do this, not in his mind, but in his belly, carefully measuring his breathing—in short, with his entire body. Such a pairing of breathing and clapper-beating invites a metaphorical reading that establishes the *hyōshigi*'s clap (*chon* チョン) as one of the vital, and arguably most basic, functions of the theater world.

Gakuya jūnitoki

Every work revolving around Kafū's experience at the Kabuki-za subsumes his fascination with theater as community and his aspiration to actively participate in that community. The text where these feelings emerge most strikingly is probably *Gakuya jūnitoki*, published in the April 1901 issue of the literary magazine *Shinshōsetsu* 新小説. *Gakuya jūnitoki* is a composite narrative consisting of a set of micronarratives, mainly in dialogic form, structured as an hour-by-hour account of a day behind the curtain. The overall atmosphere, marked by a sense of camaraderie between the people involved in the text's various episodes, is carefree and upbeat.

The dialogic flow is often interrupted by onomatopoeia that imitate the distinctive sounds of the *hyōshigi* and other musical instruments. These provide the narration with rhythm and enhance the realism of the scenes described. Most sections, each one corresponding to a given moment of the day, end either with sound-words, such as *doron doron* ドロンドロン, *pata pata* パタパタ,[50] and (of course) the *chon* of the wooden clappers, or alternatively with direct speech. This configuration enables the reader to engage with the text on at least two levels. First, she can follow the narrative as if she were herself a character: placed *within* the scene, she listens to the conversations going on, sees with her own eyes what happens in front of her, is startled, taken aback, relieved, agitated by the many different sounds she hears. Second, she watches the scene as if the spectator of an actual play: sounds, dialogue, and movements conjure a veritable representation of a day behind the scenes, fulfilling a fantasy that many theater-goers most likely nurtured. Both these modes of reception are based on the assumption that the reader is familiar with the semantic codes of the theater, which enable her to interpret and understand not only what happens onstage but also what happens

[49] Ibid., p. 374.
[50] Nagai, *Gakuya no jūnitoki*, p. 391.

offstage. It is assumed that she can grasp immediately the meaning of a specific *chon* resounding at a particular moment, that she is able to decode the (mainly aural) signals disseminated in the text because she is part of the greater community that is the theater writ large, and that, as such, she can share moods and emotions with the other subjects involved. All this is possible, in short, because she is attuned to them.

The *kyōgen kata* and his aural marker, the onomatopoeia *chon*, appear repeatedly in these pages both to measure time in the "dressing room"[51] and to stress specific actions and habits. Kafū's enthusiasm for being part of such a circle pervades the text, whose main interest lies in representing theater as an authentic expression of humanity inspired by a sincere respect for both the arts and the audience. The stories he narrates and the characters he describes converge in a common theme of theater as a community, whose life, in its most sophisticated as well as in its most mundane practices, is based on a set of rules and rituals that revolve around the audience and their pleasure.

Gakuya jūnitoki lends further support to the idea that traditional theater, for Kafū, should not be assessed against new and mostly foreign standards of art criticism. Moreover, he does not seem concerned at all with the problem of determining traditional theater's artistic value. He does not look at kabuki through the lens of art or of literary criticism, nor does he concentrate upon the script, but rather encourages the reader to focus on an emotional response to the performance—to measure its worth by the pleasure gained. For Kafū, in other words, traditional theater is neither "art" nor "literature." It is instead a form of artistry that is grounded in age-old conventions and practices, one whose ultimate aim is not the achievement of some abstract standard of aesthetic beauty or the realistic representation of some subject or idea, but lies rather in an alternative creation of life, one that remains based nonetheless on a re-elaboration of life itself. This "alternative creation of life" is indeed the imaginative space where the audience can escape momentarily from their real life. Yet in a seeming paradox, this escape from reality is attained through live interaction and involvement with the play—above all with those features of the play that are most material (and thus most grounded in reality). This explains Kafū's insistence on the ordinary in *Gakuya jūnitoki*: by claiming his own place in the everyday life of the dressing room, he was trying to secure *his own place* in society at a time of uncertainty, when he was very young and still torn between his family's expectations and a genuine desire to pursue an artistic path.

Conclusion

Sound as a constitutive feature of narrative occupies a firm position in Kafū's literature. In the nomenclature of soundscape studies, the term *signal* indicates

[51] Kafū uses the word *gakuya* 楽屋 (dressing room) as a sort of umbrella term for the entire range of offstage spaces and activities.

"acoustic warning devices," sounds that must be listened to and which are often "organized into quite elaborate codes permitting messages of considerable complexity to be transmitted to those who can interpret them."[52] Those who "can" interpret signals are members of the community that generates them. This is true in the theatrical community, which is composed of performers and spectators and which shares a system of codes and symbols enabling each individual to interpret the *chon* of the wooden clappers and all the other characteristic sounds. And it is indeed through their response to these signals that a community can identify itself as such.

Gakuya jūnitoki shows how Kafū seeks his own place in the space of the everyday life of kabuki playwrights and performers. By contrast, in *Hyōshigi monogatari*, he attempts to dignify the most basic "signal" of traditional theater by setting it firmly in the material dimension of the performance, and also by evoking a bodily metaphor—the image of clappers as a play's respiratory system. This intertwining of materiality and communality underscores the notion of traditional theater that he displays in "Edo engeki no tokuchō," where kabuki is seen as an art-form whose value lies in its ability to stir a sense of belonging in the audience and to help them escape their everyday lives by entering alternative realities.

Kafū's keen sensitivity to sound and to the most exterior features of theater is thus rooted in his conviction that traditional arts can bring people together and generate spaces and patterns of communality. Through the most immediate, spontaneous modes of interaction and sharing between those who perform and those who attend their performance, modern subjects can put aside for a moment their individualism, their "privatized" self, and *feel together* for a while. This, for Kafū, is the ultimate goal of theater and its most fascinating quality, the one that established kabuki and the other arts of Edo as classics. Indeed, this is the 1914 essay's titular "main feature of Edo theater" that he intended to celebrate with his writing.

[52] Schafer, *The Tuning of the World*, p. 10.

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