Treading in the Formaldehyde of Tradition:
Kata as Somatic Text in the Japanese Nō and Kyōgen Theatres

by

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Abstract

One of the misconceptions of Western audiences of traditional Japanese theatre, particularly the medieval dramatic theatre nō and its comic counterpart kyōgen, is that they are "museum arts." That is, that they are now only being performed in an attempt to preserve them as intangible cultural commodities, rather than as living, evolving theatrical forms. This may be the result of orientalist assumptions made of the theatre by Western audiences. The purpose of this research is to investigate the truth of this claim through an investigation of *kata* (forms).

In order to discuss kata, which are fixed movement patterns that make up the choreography on the nō and kyōgen stage, it is first and foremost important to define what kata are and to establish how they function within the art. This is done in Chapter One through a survey of kata definitions, an exploration of excerpts of Zeami's *Fūshikaden* (*Teachings on Style and the Flower*, 1402), and a case study of the play *Aoi no ue* (*Lady Aoi,* late 14th/early 15th Century). Then, with the goal of demystifying the notion that kata are an impermeable, timeless tradition, Chapter Two lays out the canonization process of what I refer to as somatic text. Somatic text is the term I developed in order to describe the fixed movement patterns of kata as physical texts *written* through the body. Just as the lexical texts became canonized throughout the six hundred years of nō and kyōgen history, so too did the somatic texts. Finally, in Chapter Three I investigate the artistic and pedagogical theories surrounding the practice of kata today. By doing so, I hope to make kata accessible to English-speaking audiences in a way in which they might better understand Japanese theatres, as well as integrate this theatrical device into their own practices.

This research draws on a variety of sources including medieval theoretical treatises, early modern *katazuke* (form-added) manuscripts, contemporary performances, and personal interviews with current nō and kyōgen practitioners.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Jane Traynor. The research project of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Searching for Kata: The Historical, Pedagogical, and Artistic Factors Motivating the Fossilization and Preservation of Somatic Text (kata) in Medieval Japanese Theatre," No. Pro00066000, July 11, 2016.

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Table of Contents

Table of Tables

Table of Figures

Introduction

> "Noh is avant-garde theater…Modes of theatrical expression which are fine-textured and filled with mystery but have a condensed stylization like those of Japan can be found only in the Orient. It is into this utterly quiet lake of ancient wisdom which is the Orient that we wish to dip."[1]

This quote from French playwright Eugene Ionesco (1909-1994) is reflective of the overarching Orientalised perspective on Japanese theatre of Western modernist thespians. While this exotified approach is certainly demonstrative of perspectives commonly held until the late twentieth century, scholars, such as Edward Said, have laboured since then in order to debunk misconceptions and clarify gross overgeneralizations regarding the conceptual "East." Why then, are various forms of active Japanese theatre today still so vastly overlooked by scholars of the performing arts? As Diego Pellecchia notes in his article on nō (能) theatre in the *Cambridge Companion to Theatre History*,

> "…Noh and forms of traditional Japanese theatre are little taught and practiced in theatre departments. Noh is typically associated with 'World Theatre' courses, touching on different Asian traditions […] and echoing the typical positioning of Noh in theatre history books, often subsumed under a geographically as well as chronologically cluttered 'Oriental Theatre' category."[2]

[1] Yasuo Nakamura, *Noh: The Classical Theater*, trans. Don Kerry, (New York/Tokyo: John Weatherhill, Inc., 1971), 232. Please note that for Japanese names the typical Japanese name order of last name followed by the first name is maintained in all cases.
[2] Diego Pellecchia, "Traditional Theatre: the case of Japanese Nō," in *The Cambridge Companion to Theatre History,* ed. David Wiles and Christine Dymkowski, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 140.

Is this perhaps in part due to residual attitudes towards nō which are left over from its first encounters with the West in the Meiji period? Ionesco's quote above certainly makes nō, or any "Oriental" theatre for that matter, seem barely tangible. Regardless of what factors might be at play, one thing that may help to combat these attitudes is a better understanding of nō as a theatre art as opposed to a cultural artifact. While there has been plenty of scholarship on the literature of nō, as well as anthropological studies of its role in society throughout its development, there has been less attention paid to nō as a dramatic art. One aspect which has been particularly overlooked in English scholarship is also possibly the most perplexing aspect of nō to Western theatre[3] practitioners, *kata* (forms).[4]

The full discussion of what kata are and how they appear on the stage will be found in Chapter One. However, broadly speaking kata are fixed movement patterns which are performed and passed on as part of the oral tradition of the art. They can be found not only in the medieval dramatic nō theatre and its comedic counterpart kyōgen (狂言), but are also prevalent in other Japanese theatrical traditions such as kabuki (歌舞伎), the popular theatre of the Edo period (1600-1867), and the puppet theatre which developed alongside it, known as *bunraku* (文楽), or alternatively, *jōruri* (浄瑠璃). Additionally, kata can be found in Japan outside of the theatre in contexts such as martial arts (for example, judo, karate, and aikido). Kata are often a part of their respective curriculums and students are typically required to learn and perform them to a certain standard in order to progress through the ranks.

[3] It should be noted that "Western theatre" in this thesis refers primarily to the Anglo-Saxon textual theatrical tradition.
[4] The kata explored in this thesis should not be confused with the Indian dance drama, kathakali, which is unrelated.

In defining kata, this research borrows the parameters laid out by Watanabe Tamotsu in his book *Kabuki: Kata no Miryoku* (歌舞伎　型の魅力, *Kabuki: The Charm of* Kata) which examines the use of kata in kabuki theatre. For Watanabe there are two types of kata. One is a broader definition which encompasses the formalized systems of all performance elements. These systems may include items such as masks, costuming, hand props, and stage setting, to name a few.[5] The second usage is kata in a narrow sense. This refers to what Watanabe designates as the essence within all of kata. Specifically, he is referring to an actor's stylized movements and gestures on stage.[6] Within this narrow definition, there is again a distinction between kata*,* which he explains is the overall sequence of movements on stage, and katachi, which is a still moment of fixed form.[7] Narrow-definition kata will be the focus of this thesis. Specifically, this thesis will examine the historical, pedagogical, and artistic factors at work in kata to decode and contextualize their functions as somatic texts within the context of nō and kyōgen. The term "somatic text" is a term which I use in this research to frame kata.[8] While traditional text is written through the medium of ink on paper, a somatic text is one that is written through the medium of movements through the body. The specific movements within kata can be likened to words, which, when strung together in a specific order, create a physical text and the transmission of this text is one that relies wholly on the learning, repetition, and transmission of

[5] Tamotsu Watanabe (渡辺 保), *Kabuki: Kata no Miryoku (*歌舞伎　型の魅力, *Kabuki: The Charm of* Kata*),* (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 2013), 7.
[6] Watanabe, *Kata no Miryoku*, 7.
[7] Watanabe, *Kata no Miryoku*, 8.
[8] After developing this term independently, I found another dissertation entitled "Writing the Body: Maupassant, Babel, and the Somatic Text" written by Janneke M. van de Stadt (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2000), which uses the term "somatic text" as well. However, that thesis uses the term in a different way and is unrelated to the work in this research investigation.

these movements by their practitioners. This concept will be explored in further detail further in both Chapters Two and Three.

The reason why this investigation focuses specifically on medieval Japanese theatre when the phenomenon of kata is prevalent across a variety of performance disciplines is because nō and its formation can be considered to be the beginning of the formalized Japanese theatre tradition. There are a variety of reasons for commencing this study at the genesis of nō, particularly with regard to the solidification of kata. The first is because of the patronage given to nō by the third Ashikaga shogun, Yoshimitsu (1358-1408).[9] As will be discussed in Chapter Two, patronage plays a significant role in the formalization of an art. Additionally, many of the plays performed in nō today are attributed back to a star performer of Yoshimitsu's time, Zeami (ca.1363-ca.1443). By examining his work, it may be possible to identify the origins of any physical continuity which remain prevalent in today's practice. Alternatively, any discrepancies since then may be attributed to cultural, social, or political pressures the piece might have sustained over its six-hundred year history. This extremely large window provides a large scope within which the formalization of kata can be observed. Finally, the first theoretical texts on nō were written by Zeami at this time as well. In this research, Zeami's treatises on nō will be consulted as a means of determining how explicit movement instruction was documented in his time. In order to do so, in Chapter 1 there is an investigation of Zeami's section on *monomane* (roleplaying) in the *Fūshikaden* (風姿花伝, *Teachings on Style and the Flower,* 1402),

specifically, his subsections on roleplaying women and mad persons. As nō was (and continues to be) performed primarily by male performers, these sections will be used to identify whether or

[9] Thomas Blenman Hare, *Zeami's Style: The Nō Plays of Zeami Motokiyo*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), 12.

not Zeami left specific instructions on how to accurately portray female characters or if he approaches the topic in a more abstract manner.

Beyond Zeami's treatises, the other primary resource which will be used to explore the implications of kata is a recording of a Hōshō school performance of *Aoi no ue* (葵上, *Lady Aoi,* late 13th – early 14th Century). This is an anonymous play revised by Zeami and thus should complement the *Fūshikaden* sections on roleplaying women and mad persons. The performance will be examined in conjunction with a Kanze school *katazuke* (型付, form-added) manuscript of *Aoi no ue*. This is a version of the performance text which includes annotations of the physical movements on stage at designated times in conjunction with the script.[10] This will facilitate the comparison of the kata of the same play between two different schools, while simultaneously allowing for the examination of kata both in text and on stage.

As the purpose of this thesis is to act as a bridge between Japanese studies and performance studies, there must be a variety of steps taken to ensure complete clarity. One important step is to illuminate how kata fit into nō, kyōgen, and other cultural traditions of Japan. In order to do this, one must consider the formalized vocational system of *michi* (道, way), a disciple-master knowledge transfer methodology that was evident in both secular and religious traditions.[11] Starting originally as a tradition developed in the practice of esoteric Buddhism, the concept of michi was eventually extended into secular practice first through *kadō* (歌道, the way of poetry), but eventually making its way into other practices such *sadō* (茶道, tea ceremony),

[10] Eric C. Rath, *The Ethos of Noh Actors and Their Art*, (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 102.
[11] Noel John Pinnington, "Models of the Way in the Theory of Nō," *Japan Review*, No. 18 (2006): 30.

kadō (華道, flower arranging), and *kyūdō* (弓道, Japanese archery). Likewise, *nōgaku* (能楽, nō and kyōgen theatres) is no exception. How kata were developed within a michi system, as well as the impact the michi ideal continues to have on them today, will be discussed in Chapters Two and Three respectively.

Within the michi system, there are a few particular points of interest with regard to somatic text. Since this a system from which a culture of secret teachings has developed, it is logical to see how an ephemeral, oral tradition, such as kata, is so appealing in regard to maintaining the esoteric nature of the art. There is also the meditative nature of repetition cultivated by the art. As Konishi Jin'ichi suggested in "Michi and Medieval Writing," even simple household chores, if performed in accordance with strict etiquette, can theoretically become meditative enough for the practitioner to attain *satori* (覚り, a moment of enlightenment).[12] This religiosity is not unusual when considering the overtly Buddhist themes addressed in both nō and kyōgen plays and michi's original development within the esoteric Buddhist tradition. Additionally, in comparison to a variety of other arts which come from the tradition structure of michi, there are particularly close ties between *kadō* (the way of poetry) and nō in the fact that Zeami's treatises are modeled on theoretical writings on waka poetry.[13] This deliberate linking of art forms was by no means accidental, and the intentional association from one form to another needs to be recognized as it had a social impact on nō, in conjunction with an artistic one.

This concept of social elevation leads into the primary question addressed in Chapter Two, which is, "What underlies the process by which kata become fossilized?" While the social status

[12] Konishi Jin'ichi, "Michi and Medieval Writing," trans. Aileen Gatten, in *Principles of Classical Japanese Literature*, ed. Earl Miner, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985), 196.
[13] Pinnington, "Models of the Way," 43.

of nō has been elevated multiple times throughout its history, this social evolution has been only part of a larger web of influences, which resulted in the fossilization of kata. Drawing on Haruo Shirane's discussion of factors which impact the canonization process, the preservation and transmission of texts, the writing of literary histories, and the impact of institutional discourse are all important points of consideration. [14] In the case of nōgaku specifically, the sequential reliance on patronage, the desire of the government for social and political control, and the development of a national narrative allowed for kata to experience a reasonably undisrupted, continuous history.

Nō's initial patronage from Yoshimitsu naturally played a role in the shaping of nō as an art form. Zeami and his troupe were constantly catering their art to the palate of the warrior elite and in particular, negotiating the tastes of Yoshimitsu himself, in order to remain in his favour. If one's livelihood is dictated by a single patron who is in charge of supplying one's funds or stipend, as was the case for Zeami and his troupe, it is natural that one develops one's art according to what said patron likes. In order to assure continued patronage, one continues to practice the art in that manner and encourages one's successors to do the same.

This patronage becomes even more complex when one's patron is the de facto head of state, particularly one asserting dominance over a newly unified country. In the Edo period, the Tokugawa shoguns sought ways in which they may assert their total authority over Japanese society. This included becoming omniscient of all matters concerning the official state theatre,

[14] Haruo Shirane, "Introduction: Issues in Canon Formation," in *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature*, ed. Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 1-27.

nō, leading to the development of katazuke*,* annotated performance texts which solidified designated movements in conjunction with the official performance texts of each school. [15]

Finally, the state theatre was elevated into an even higher status as it transformed into a national, cultural icon in a country-wide nationalization movement spurred by contact with the West in the Meiji period. As Edward Said discusses in his 1978 book *Orientalism*, the dichotomy between the East and West is fabricated in an effort to build identity in contrast to a conceptualized "other."[16] However, this has not merely impacted the identity of the West or the identity assigned to the East by the West, but has also resulted in conscious and calculated identity-building by Eastern nation states as they drove to autonomously distinguish themselves from the West. For Japan, this was extremely prevalent during the Meiji period, a time in which they established national history, literature, and of course, art. Nō was once again swept up in this socio-political response and came to be regarded as the Japanese equivalent of opera.[17] At this point, any change to the art would jeopardize the purity of any inherent national essence. This is an example of what John Guillory identifies as the "*intrinsic worth* of canonical works."[18] If the canon is being defended through the argument that there is some sort of intangible essence within the canonized texts, then any modification to said texts places this subjective and oftentimes weak justification in jeopardy.[19]

Just as written texts are subject to canonization through a variety of influences, so too are somatic texts. By breaking down the canonization process of kata, misguided attitudes towards

[15] Thomas D Looser, *Visioning Eternity,* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell East Asia Program, 2008), 50-54.
[16] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 40.
[17] Rath, *Ethos of Nō,* 221.
[18] John Guillory, "Canon," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, second ed., ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 236.
[19] Guillory, "Canon," 236.

kata from the West that consider it a mysterious, unbroken tradition should consequently be dispelled. Change has been an inevitable part of the process. After all, the notion of maintaining continuity with the past through the repetition of "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature" is part of Eric Hobsbawm's theory of "Invented Traditions."[20] Through this repetition, such systems become normalized within their societies, hence fulfilling the role for which they were invented. Therefore, it must be recognized that these so-called timeless traditions have not spawned as a product of spontaneous generation. Instead, it is important that the origins of these seemingly perpetual practices should be constantly sought out in attempts to contextualize the traditions. Furthermore, since the crystallization of traditional art forms like nō exist as they are today thanks only to their invention and re-invention over time, they should serve as a reminder that such traditions may continue to be subject to further reinvention in today's society.

This raises the final research question, which is addressed in Chapter Three. As mentioned above, the study of nō in academic discourse primarily focuses on nō as a cultural product or as a historical artifact; however, nō is very much a vibrant, contemporary form of theatre practice and thus, it is important for it to be considered as such in conjunction with the other existing scholarship on the topic. It is possible that this general disregard can be, in part, attributed to an absence of academic works considering nō as a contemporary subject of study, as well as minimal accessible scholarship on nō's artistic theories framed in the context of contemporary theatrical application. Whatever the case, the third research question of this investigation addresses this by asking "Now that we have these somatic texts (kata), what is their role now and

[20] Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, ed., *The Invention of Tradition,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1.

how do they impact the art?" This question is designed to help uncover how kata are used and approached today, specifically concerning the idea of flexibility in nō and kyōgen and where the boundaries between nōgaku and something entirely different are drawn. In order to investigate this, works written by active theatre practitioners such as Komparu Kunio (1926-1983)[21] and Nomura Mansai (b. 1966)[22] will be consulted. Additionally, I have sought out contemporary nō and kyōgen practitioners to discover their perspectives, particularly in regard to kata.

By digging deeper into the contemporary state of nōgaku, the misconception that nō and kyōgen are dead museum arts performed simply for the sake of posterity will be set straight. Nō and kyōgen are both living and active theatres that currently walk a narrow line, constantly negotiating the past with the present. This is embodied in the act of performing kata itself, as the actors are bound by a predetermined physical script, yet are ever present in the performance at hand. The artistic theories and practices that have been developed as a result may ultimately provide a fresh perspective on Western theatre, particularly for works such as those written by Samuel Beckett, in which adherence to the original text is often a point of contention for today's theatremakers.

There are undoubtedly many alternative perspectives from non-Western performing arts that may force a reconsideration of the Western theatrical tradition as it is currently understood. However, so long as the Eastern theatres are, in Western perspectives, continually trapped in a superimposed Orientalist dichotomy, meaningful critical dialogue will never be pursued. Ideally,

[21] Komparu Kunio, *The Noh Theater, Principles and Perspectives*, (New York: Weatherhill/Tankosha, 1983).
[22] Mansai Nomura, *Kyōgen Saibōgu* (狂言サイボーグ, *Kyōgen Cyborg*), (Tokyo: Hinoki Shoten, 2013) & Mansai Nomura, *What is Kyōgen?* (What is 狂言？), (Tokyo: Hinoki Shoten, 2003).

this research will provide a window into Japanese theatrical thought and practice, allowing Western readers to appreciate the various commonalities.

Chapter One: What is Kata?

" [Kata] are like computer programming software; one stands on stage with a body and voice that are encoded with kata…"[23]

- Nomura Mansai, *What is Kyōgen?*[24]

The assertion by Samuel L. Leiter that "[t]he kata learned by an actor are considered treasured possessions" [25] summarizes the attitude towards kata held by practicing traditional performers. Of course, this paper aims to unveil the reasons why kata have become so integral to the art; however, in order to do so, it must first be established what kata is exactly. In order to do this, this chapter will first look at various definitions and classifications of kata, followed by a historical exploration of early stage performance practice. Finally, this chapter will end with a case study of a performance of *Aoi no ue* in order to fully understand the implications of kata as they are realized on the nō stage.

Recalling Watanabe's definition of kabuki kata mentioned in the Introduction, as well as Leiter's definition of kabuki kata in *The A to Z of Japanese Traditional Theatre,* it is clear that in some contexts, kata can refer to a variety of theatrical components ranging from costuming to hand props to stage settings for kabuki, and in other cases, even to speech or chant.[26] However, the concentration of this research is what Watanabe calls the "narrow definition" kata, which focuses on only the movements performed on stage. Leiter explains that "[*k*]*ata*, then are the

[23] All translations are the authors unless otherwise noted.

[24] Nomura Mansai, *What is Kyōgen?* (What is 狂言？) (Tokyo: Hinoki Shoten, 2003), 52.

[25] Samuel L. Leiter, *The Art of Kabuki: Famous Plays in Performance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), xviii.

[26] Samuel L. Leiter, *The A to Z of Japanese Traditional Theatre*, The A to Z Guide Series, No. 180 (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2010), 165-166.

very bones of kabuki performance. They are the building blocks of which every production is constructed," later clarifying that "[kata] exist in all forms of traditional Japanese theater."[27] The kata which are the focus for this paper are specifically those of the traditional theatre, nōgaku, a theatre which predates kabuki by approximately two hundred years.

What is Nōgaku?

Nō, the Japanese medieval dramatic theatre, and kyōgen, the accompanying comic interludes, are theatres whose formal origins date back to the Muromachi period (1392-1573). Nōgaku developed from an earlier popular performance called *sarugaku*, which was originally performed at shrines for religious events.[28] When the troupe of nō's founding father, Kan'ami (1333-1384), gained enough popularity to draw the attention of Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu in 1374, they were able to secure patronage from their newfound audience in the warrior elite. Furthermore, Kan'ami's son, Zeami, was personally favoured by the Shogun and consequently, was able to receive the cultural education necessary for the art be elevated socially.[29] This elevation in status helped nō to continue from this time until the present day by the process addressed in Chapter Two.

Nō practitioners today are generally divided according to the five *shite* (primary performer) schools: Kanze, Konparu, Kongō, Hōshō, and Kita. However, separate schools exist for other roles such as the *waki* (secondary performer) and each of the four instruments in the

[27] Leiter, *The Art of Kabuki,* xxi.
[28] Haruo Shirane, ed., *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 917.
[29] Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature,* 918.

orchestra.[30] Kyōgen also has two extant schools, the Izumi and the Okura styles.[31] Each school has its own variations of both style and kata. Due to this separation of schools, performers learn and rehearse plays independently from one another and come together only at the time of performance. Nō and kyōgen are both performed on traditionally designed stages (Figure 1) in premodern versions of the Japanese language. They are performed in a specific stylized manner

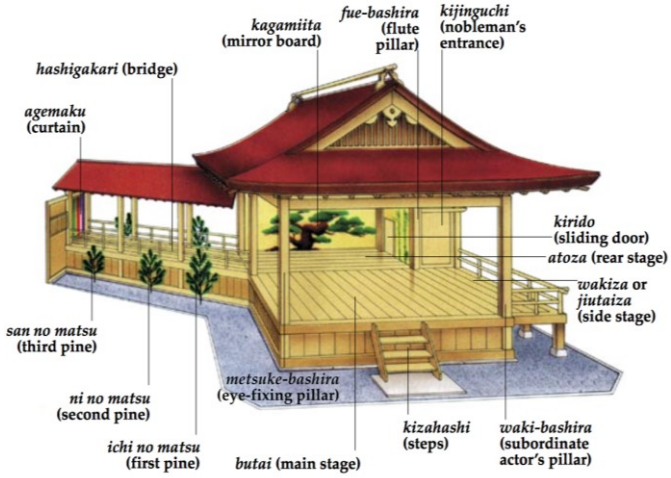

Figure 1: The nō stage.
Source: http://trvimg.r10s.jp/share/image_up/13429/LARGE/BeLxJF.jpeg

in their speech and movements, both of which are passed down orally from generation to generation within practicing families. While written texts and recorded material are used in contemporary practice, they are seen as supplementary to the learning process, hence transmission and practice rely primarily on the actors' internalization of these movement units. Kyōgen performer Nomura Mansai uses a contemporary technological metaphor to express the proficiency in kata expected of practitioners.

[30] Shinko Kagaya and Miura Hiroko, "Noh and Muromachi Culture," in *A History of Japanese Theatre,* ed. Jonah Salz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2016), 32.
[31] Jonah Salz, "Kyogen: Classical Comedy," in *A History of Japanese Theatre,* ed. Jonah Salz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2016), 70.

> The human body is like a type of hardware. It is not a matter of knowledge; if one has an elaborate computer that has allowed one to master software like kata or *kamae*, only then, will one have the ability to demonstrate personality. Regardless of my own intentions, the kyōgen that has been hammered into me since when I was very young has made my body into a suitable computer.[32]

As seen here, kata essentially form their own language which, once learned, may be employed with ease on the nō stage. The details of contemporary practice and transmission are discussed in further detail in Chapter Three.

What are Nōgaku Kata?

The aforementioned definitions of kata, while helpful in identifying kata in general, are ultimately borrowed from a separate theatre genre. It is therefore important to seek out definitions within the nōgaku practice and scholarship itself. In sources on nōgaku, kata has a variety of translations into English. Jonah Salz defines kata in kyōgen as "the deconstructed, named, patterned forms."[33] Furthermore, within the edited volume *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World,* the word "kata" is translated as "formalized gestures,"[34] "physical forms

[32] Nomura Mansai, *Kyōgen Saibōgu* (狂言サイボーグ, *Kyōgen Cyborg*) (Tokyo: Hinoki Shoten, 2013), 11.
[33] Jonah Salz, "Why was everyone laughing at me? Roles of passage for the kyōgen child," in *Learning in Likely Places: Varieties of Apprenticeship in Japan,* ed. John Singleton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 86.
[34] James R. Brandon, ed., *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 4.

or patterns,"[35] "specific forms,"[36] and "stylistic movement patterns."[37] Richard Emmert, who provided the latter translation, also considers kata to be one of three physical building blocks of nō, the other two being *kamae* and *suri ashi.*[38] However, in the same book, the *kamae* and *suri ashi* are classified as kata themselves.[39] This disparity in definitions of kata is actually paradoxically consistent across the performers who were surveyed for this research project as well.[40] For some, a kata must be named to be considered a kata, for others, "kata" can refer to a movement which depicts an action, or the particular way a family or individual performs, or the style of the theatre in general (i.e., kyōgen kata).[41] This seems to indicate that while there is a general consensus that kata are indispensable to the art as the basis of movement on stage, there is less importance given to coming to a unified definition of what kata does or does not encompass.

In *The A to Z of Japanese Traditional Theatre* Leiter explores nōgaku kata in depth, stating that,

> Nō movement kata consist essentially of formally composed vertical and horizontal movements, this the body moving forward or backward, to the right or left, in circles, in addition to movements of looking up or down and movements of the arms. There is rarely any twisting of curving body movement. All movement – whether abstract

[35] Dōmoto Masaki, "Dialogue and Monologue in Nō," in *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World,* ed. James R. Brandon (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 143.
[36] Nomura Shirō, "Teaching the Paradox of Nō," in *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World,* ed. James R. Brandon (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 208.
[37] Richard Emmert, "Expanding Nō's Horizons: Considerations for a New Nō Perspective," in *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World,* ed. James R. Brandon (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 26.
[38] Emmert, "Expanding Nō's Horizons," 26.
[39] Brandon, ed., *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World,* xii-xiii.
[40] The full breakdown of the performer interviews used in this study will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.
[41] Shigeyama Akira, Shigeyama Dōji, Katayama Shingo, and Diego Pellecchia, personal interviews with author, July and August 2016.

> or concrete – must be both beautiful and psychologically appropriate to character. […] Movements may sometimes make logical sense only when performed to words that give them meaning; at other times they may not have any discernable meaning.[42]

Similar to Watanabe's definition mentioned in the introduction, Komparu Kunio clarifies the difference between kata and katachi in his book *The Noh Theater: Principles and Perspectives.* According to Komparu, kata, which he translates as "pattern[s]," are the building blocks which, under the circumstances of a performance, coalesce into katachi*,* or "form." He states, "[i]n Noh, the actor-become-character uses kata to express the inner shape of the mind of the character in an outward form. The audience responds to this form and understands the mind."[43] However, due to the importance that Komparu places on the process of costuming and staging, which develop the characterization necessary to achieve katachi, he clarifies that *shimai*, or nō dances, are fundamentally different in nature. Instead, *shimai* foreground the kata themselves.[44]

Types of Kata

Perhaps the most extensive discussion dedicated to kata alone is found in Komparu's book. In Chapter Thirteen, "Movement Patterns: Components of the Dance," Komparu explains that all movements on the nō stage are composed of "units of movement, called kata, or

[42] Leiter, *The A to Z of Japanese Traditional Theatre,* 167-168.
[43] Komparu, *The Noh Theater,* 221-222.
[44] Komparu, *The Noh Theater*, 222.

patterns."[45] According to Komparu, though stylized, movement is central to expression on the nō stage since facial expression is limited by the masks and vocal expression, in its chanted style, is intended for "lyrical evocation of thoughts and emotions…rather than direct communication of intent or will."[46] Leiter also stressed the purpose of communication in movement, claiming that kata were not created for purely aesthetic reason. Rather, he believes that they are the result of the actors' need to externalize "a hidden idea or emotion."[47]

Since nō was originally a mimetic performance art, which was eventually refined into a more symbolic or metonymic[48] performance style that also integrated dance into its development, kata appear in a variety of ways and cover a range of functions within nō plays. Komparu has consolidated these movement types in a chart (Figure 2).

The two extremes of these would be a realistic-dramatic kata, such as brandishing a halberd (*naginata de kiru*) (Figure 3), compared with an abstract-pure dance kata, such as the

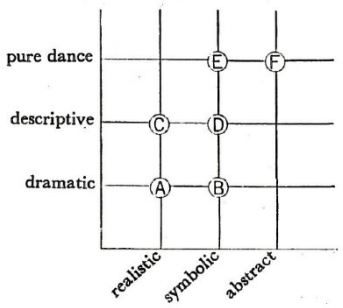

Figure 2: Classification of dance patterns.
Source: Komparu, *The Noh Theatre*, 219.

Figure 3: Using the naginata on the nō stage.
Source: http://www.cocouru.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/4941051de7dc2a293d84e3cd7f8d81a3.jpg

[45] Komparu, *The Noh Theater*, 214.
[46] Komparu, *The Noh Theater,* 215.
[47] Leiter, *The Art of Kabuki,* xix.
[48] A movement described as metonymic refers to a gesture which is related to the larger action which it denotes. This is in contrast to a symbolic movement, in which the gesture is unrelated to the larger action which it denotes.

left-right pattern (*sayū).*[49] The former is a very literal movement employing an actual halberd (*naginata)* on stage to show the action of the play, while the latter is a simply aesthetically motivated movement pattern. It should also be noted that abstract forms such as stamps may be as rhythmically or aurally motivated as they are aesthetically motivated due to the fact that such motions are intended to bring forth deep, percussive sounds from the stage.

Nō is most esoteric in its use of symbolic kata. For example, actions such as weeping (*shiori*) (Figure 4), in which the actor raises one or two palms towards their face, may not be as easily read as a realistic action due the necessity for the audience to understand the sign system.[50]

Figure 4: Weeping (*shiori*) performed with one hand (left) and two hands (right).
Source: http://www.kome100.ne.jp/main/contents/cec/v-nmn1/v-noo1/v-sys1/v-ssa9.jpg

For this symbolic-dramatic[51] gesture, the actor can perform the action of weeping, just as they performed the action with the *naginata*; however, the audience must be able to read the gesture as the metonymic action for crying. Similarly, the realistic-descriptive motion of looking at the moon is very literal in the body language of the actor. Looking up and offstage, the audience can imagine the moon being viewed. In comparison, the symbolic-descriptive action of "using the mask" (*omote o tsukau*) is descriptive in that the turning of the head from side to side can either

[49] Komparu, *The Noh Theater,* 217-218.
[50] Komparu, *The Noh Theater,* 217.
[51] Some "symbolic" kata, such as those identified as symbolic-dramatic kata by Komparu, may perhaps be more accurately classified as metonymic, however in the discussion of his analysis, his original terminology will be maintained for consistency.

indicate that the character is searching for something, or that the wind is blowing.[52] In all of these cases, the audience is not explicitly shown the moon, the item being searched for, or the wind blowing on the stage. However, the symbolic-descriptive actions suggest less intuitive situations as the motion of the head moving back and forth may be less obvious to uneducated audience members than say looking off into the distant sky while reciting a poem about the moon. This formalized action requires the understanding of the implications of the physical lexicon. Additionally, the mask itself also carries a certain degree of metonymic communicative meaning. Masterfully crafted, the nō masks are multivalent in that the expressions of the nō mask change according to its angle on stage and the interplay of light and shadow on its surface (Figure 5). Particularly due to the subtle expression of the neutral mask, any change in expression, though minimal, is ultimately impactful in contrast. Similar to the metonymic nature of the *shiori* kata, due to the subtlety of the masks, some prior understanding of how to read the expression may be necessary in order to fully understand the emotion the performer is trying to communicate.

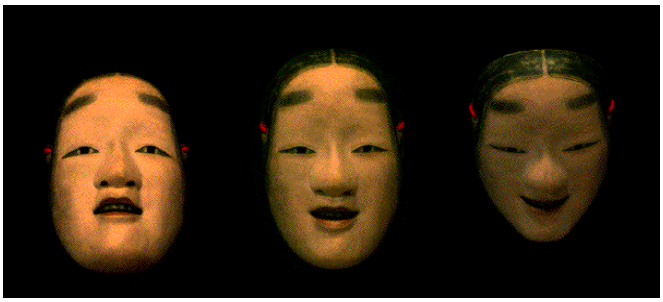

Figure 5: A *ko-omote* (young woman) mask photographed at different three angles
Source:
http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/5840/390/400/Takigi_noh.jpg

[52] Komparu, *The Noh Theater,* 217-218.

The symbolic and metonymic movements specifically are crucial elements of nō as a reflective, introspective art. Komparu believes that "[…] symbolic movements communicate to the audience a much richer sense of the state of mind of the hero than would be possible with everyday gestures."[53] Perhaps this is because more abstract movements are less codified than movements used in everyday life. By minimizing an action to a metonymic representation of that action, there is left a space in which the audience may reflect and project their interpretation onto the character. Metonymic movements are enough to suggest to the audience the basic motions and emotions of the story, however, they do not fully show the audience what they are trying to communicate. The responsibility of the audience, then is to extrapolate from these actions and use their own imaginations to complete the picture. This approach to art draws from the aesthetic term, *yūgen*. *Yūgen*, often translated as "mystery and depth," is a concept from the medieval period which emphasizes the aesthetic appeal of suggestion and implication. Furthermore, since Zeami equates this term with the notion of courtly grace on stage, he suggests a specific aesthetic which best evokes *yūgen* on the nō stage.[54]

Perhaps due to the fact that *yūgen* is integrated into the structure of nō, kata are not necessarily limited to dramatic or aesthetic movement, but may also encompass physical states. As mentioned previously, the *kamae* and *suri ashi* are identified by some as kata. Despite the fact that *suri ashi* is essentially the act of walking on the stage and *kamae* is, in a sense, the neutral stance while standing on the stage, their inclusion as kata indicates that walking and even stillness are just as important as any movement on the stage. Komparu states that stance (*kamae*) and carriage (*hakobi*, also translated as "walk") are the acquisition of technique for non-

[53] Komparu, *The Noh Theater,* 216.
[54] J. Thomas Rimer and Yamazaki Masakazu, trans., *On the Art of the Noh Drama: The Major Treatises of Zeami* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 93.

movements.[55] Leiter also agrees that there can be kata in non-movement.[56] Komparu's theories on space addressed earlier on in *The Noh Theater* can perhaps shed some light on the emphasis that non-movement receives. In Chapter 7, "Time and Space in Noh," he indicates that nō not only has an awareness of creating positive space on stage, but also of using just enough positive space to bring the audience's awareness to the negative space. The same can be said for movement as well. Due to the fact that the movements are slow and suggestive, there is just enough movement to emphasize the stillness in between.[57]

It should also be noted that non-movement should not be mistaken for inaction. The *kamae* is a strenuous position in which the body is held in a state of prepared tension. The *kamae* is very much a "ready stance" from which the actors can move. The *suri ashi* too, are not simply walking as one pleases. Instead, each step is deliberate and calculated, with just as much thought given to the movement of the feet as is given to the movement in the rest of the body during more dynamic kata. Even the way the actor navigates the stage can be reflective of the type of character they are playing. As Komparu states, "[t]he *shite* weaves a web of fantasy in curves and the *waki* draws reality in straight lines."[58] Therefore, the subtler movements and non-movements, such as walking and pauses, should not be overlooked, but rather included in the larger system of kata employed in nōgaku.

[55] Komparu, *The Noh Theater,* 216.
[56] Specifically, Leiter is referring to *mie* in kabuki, which are aggressively struck poses (which are often exaggerated) performed at climactic moments of the play (*Art of Kabuki*, xix), however, the principle that stillness is just as calculated or deliberate as movement is applicable in the same way to nōgaku.
[57] Komparu, *The Noh Theater,* 70-72.
[58] Komparu, *The Noh Theater,* 216.

Early Kata

While we may never be able to fully recreate nō theatre as it was in Zeami's time, we can consult some of his theoretical works to gain further insight into his expectations regarding movement on the nō stage. When speaking about movement, was he more abstract in his suggestions? Or alternatively, does he reference concrete actions? Either way, does he expect his writings to be followed exactly, or are they merely his suggestions for what works in the art?

From the drawings of actors' postures in the *Nikyoku santai ningyōzu* (*Figure Drawings,* 1421), which are Zeami's supplementary illustrations of three primary roles on the nō stage, it can be deduced that Zeami had a specific image of how the body of the actor should be presented on stage.[59] In a comparison of the three types of drawings that represent the three character types of old men, women, and warriors (Figures 6-8), it is clear that Zeami understood the importance

Figure 6: *Nikyoku santai ningyōzu* (*Figure Drawings*), illustration of an old man

Figure 7: *Nikyoku santai ningyōzu* (*Figure Drawings*), illustration of a woman

Figure 8: *Nikyoku santai ningyōzu* (*Figure Drawings*), illustration of a warrior

Figures 6-8 reproduced with permission from the Hosei University Nogami Memorial Noh Theatre Research Institute.

[59] "二曲三体人形図 [*Ninkyosantai ningyōzu*]," Japanese Performing Arts Resource Center, accessed February 25, 2017, http://www.glopad.org/jparc/?q=en/zeami/nikyokusantai.

of the structure of the body in story-telling. Older men should be more forward leaning, yet not aggressive, whereas warriors are depicted as being more grounded and active in their stance. Women are depicted with bent knees; however, their posture is further back than the old man's, suggesting the weight is distributed differently. Another place where Zeami explores the body on stage is through his *monomane* (roleplaying) section of his treatise, the *Fūshikaden*. The selections analysed here are the "women" and "mad people" sub-sections which have been chosen due to the fact that they are relevant to the play *Aoi no ue* analysed later in this chapter and demonstrate varying perspectives on approaching roleplaying. Furthermore, since nōgaku was performed only by men during Zeami's time, these sections are particularly valuable in determining whether suggestions for playing roles of the opposite gender were primarily motivated by the psychology of the character or by a desire to achieve a certain physical form on stage.

Due to the concise nature of these sections, it is clear that Zeami did not set out to summarize all of the movements used in all of the plays which employ these roles. The secret texts were meant to be supplementary and not an alternative to the *in-situ* teacher-disciple instruction of the art. Since it was expected that physical knowledge of the art was to be transmitted orally, there may not have been much reason for him to record all movements in minute detail. In fact, practically speaking, leaving movement instruction to the in-person instruction would be the most natural and efficient method of transmission. According to Zeami in the introduction of the *monomane* section, the ability to roleplay was perceived as necessary basic training: "[t]here are so many things on roleplaying, I would like to run out of brushes (It is impossible to write everything down). Nevertheless, since is it an essential component of this

way (*michi*), the many forms of roleplaying should be studied zealously by any means possible."[60]

Additionally, by only highlighting certain movements within the treatise, as opposed to every single movement in detail, Zeami was able to emphasize the importance of the movements he did choose to mention. For example, Zeami's discussion of the key points of roleplaying women is as follows:

> In general, playing female roles best suits the training of a young lead actor. However, this is not a simple task. Firstly, if they are inappropriately attired, the performance is not worth watching. When roleplaying women such as court ladies and attendants, since actors cannot easily see the conduct of such individuals first-hand, one should be sure to seek out detailed information on such matters. In general, when wearing robes and trousers, the garments should not be determined by the personal preference of the actor. One should look into what is appropriate attire. As for relating to ordinary women of the world, since this is something with which the actor will be familiar, truly, this kind of role should be easily performed. If they wear the correct kimono or robe, the general form will be elegant enough. Also, as for performing *kusemai*, *shirabyōshi,* or roles such as madwomen, the actor should not hold handheld items like fans tightly. Robes, trousers, and such should be hemmed long, the actor's hip and knee should be straight, and their body should be supple and graceful. As for the appearance of the mask, if you lift it upward, the appearance is bad. If you point it downward, the appearance from the back will also be bad (a nō mask looking down

[60] Zeami 世阿弥, *Fūshikaden* 風姿花伝*,* in *Karonshū; Nōgaku ronshū* 歌論集；能楽論集, Nihon koten bungaku taikei 日本古典文学大系 65 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1961), 219.

> just the right amount is more beautiful). Additionally, if the actor holds the neck too strongly, they will not resemble a woman. In any case, they should wear robes with long sleeves and should not allow their hands to be seen. Things like the sash too should be tied delicately. Therefore, when an actor takes great care with the costuming, it shows the actor intends to perform well. When an actor roleplays anything, if the costuming is poor the performance will not be good. Especially in the case of female roles, appropriate costuming is essential.[61]

Zeami primarily emphasizes the importance of appropriate costuming for the female roles, identifying larger points such as the over-all choice of garments to the smaller details such as the length of the kimono and the tightness of the sash (*obi*). However, Zeami also explicitly indicates some movement and posturing details, particularly warning against holding the "neck too strongly" and encouraging straight knees and hips. The attention he pays to the mask is also still applicable to contemporary performances. Furthermore, Zeami addresses movement in a subtler way through his emphasis on mimesis, stating that when depicting high-ranking court women, the actor must "be sure to seek out detailed information on such matters" in order to accurately portray courtly women.[62] While nō is no longer as mimetic as it once was, and as it was most certainly beginning its process of refinement into a more symbolic or representational performance style during Zeami's time, the traces of such mimesis can still be found in the realistic movements as discussed above.

[61] Zeami, *Fūshikaden,* 220-221.
[62] Zeami, *Fūshikaden*, 220.

In contrast to the literal, physical descriptions of how to present women on stage, Zeami chooses to take a different approach to describing the nuances of roleplaying mad people. Though almost twice as long as the passage on roleplaying women, Zeami takes the space to delve into the psychological depths of negotiating such roles.[63] Mentioning practical elements such as the importance of costuming and the necessity of practice only in passing, Zeami instead focuses on the actor's understanding of the complexities of the characters and the challenges of negotiating this with the body on stage. Zeami starts by identifying the range of types of possession in nō theatre including, "gods and Buddha, vengeful spirits, and spirits of the dead" and that the knowledge of the context of each possession is important to the performance, suggesting that there is not one single method for portraying madness.[64]

He later explores the nuances of balancing the two consciousness of the character on stage. He states that,

> [A]s for mad people, though it is said that the true intentions of a possessed person are mad, roles like crazy women and people possessed by things such as gods, demons, or *asura*, above all else, will be difficult. It is the case that when one is angry as a woman, when one aims to perform the true intentions of the possessor, the appearance will not be suitable. When one performs with the intent of resembling a woman, there is no logic to the possession. Also, when a woman possesses a man, it is the same idea.[65]

[63] Zeami, *Fūshikaden,* 223-225.
[64] Zeami, *Fūshikaden*, 223.
[65] Zeami, *Fūshikaden*, 224.

Here it can be understood that Zeami considered the actor's reflections on the characters to be just as important as learning the movements in order to provide the best performance possible.

While is it difficult to understand to what extent kata in Zeami's time resemble kata as they are now, an examination of Zeami's reflection on roleplaying reveals that there was definitely importance placed on how characters appear on stage, which in turn translated to specific somatic details in the case of women. His insistence on accurate mimesis of court women also shows that there were certain expectations as to how courtly women moved, and thus, any breach of this would contradict the audience's horizon of expectation. This standard likely impacted the continued portrayal of court women on the nō stage in later times. Conversely, Zeami's explanation of the complexities of the psychology of mad people also shows that the careful introspection necessary for a strong performance was recognized even from Zeami's time. Returning to Leiter's definition of nōgaku kata mentioned earlier, one may note that his claim that "[a]ll movement – whether abstract or concrete – must be both beautiful and psychologically appropriate to character," echoes Zeami's insistence on the consideration of both the aesthetics and the character's logic when performing.[66]

Finally, it should also be noted that the extent to which Zeami's comments on roleplaying serve as either helpful advice or as direct instruction may also be debated depending on the translation of the auxiliary verb *beshi.* In the above translations, I have chosen to translate *beshi* as "should." This is because the implications of "should" in contemporary English, like *beshi* in classical Japanese, can range from an indication of appropriateness, to a suggestion, to an

[66] Leiter, *The A to Z of Japanese Traditional Theatre,*167.

imperative command.[67] As a result, I have been able to maintain a certain degree of the ambiguity from the original text in order to reflect the challenges of interpreting how instructive his comments on movement and body posture were actually meant to be.

Kata in Text and Performance

Another means by which changes to kata may be traced is by comparing katazuke manuscripts to filmed performances. The katazuke text which will be used in this case study of the popular nō play *Aoi no ue*, is an undated manuscript catalogued in Waseda University Library's *kotensekisōgō* (Japanese and Chinese Classics) database. The manuscript is a Kanze-style katazuke belonging to the Umewaka Collection. Though undated, it can be estimated that this manuscript dates back to sometime during the 1800s due to dates of similar texts in the collection (dated 1823, 1825, and 1828)[68] along with the older orthography of words and the lack of consistency of *dakuten* (voicing marks) throughout the text.[69] This manuscript is also clearly written for someone who has memorized the play or had access to a complete written script. The entire verbal script is not present, instead pieces of the verbal script are noted, and then followed by the corresponding movement. For example, from the line "*Yūgao no yado no yareguruma,/ yarukatanakikoso kanashikere*" ("In ruins like Yūgao's house,/ I know not how to flee my passions)"[70] just the final part "*kanashikere*" is quoted as the cue for the actor to turn left and

[67] Haruo Shirane, *Classical Japanese: a grammar* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 112-115.
[68] 1823: http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/chi12/chi12_03643_0071_0001/index.html
1825: http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/chi12/chi12_03643_0071_0006/index.html
1828: http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/chi12/chi12_03643_0071_0011/index.html
[69] The use of voicing marks and orthography in Japanese writing were not consistent until the language reform, *gendai kanazukai* (modern *kana* usage), in 1946 (Christopher Seeley, *A History of Writing in Japan,* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 153-154.)
[70] Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature,* 928.

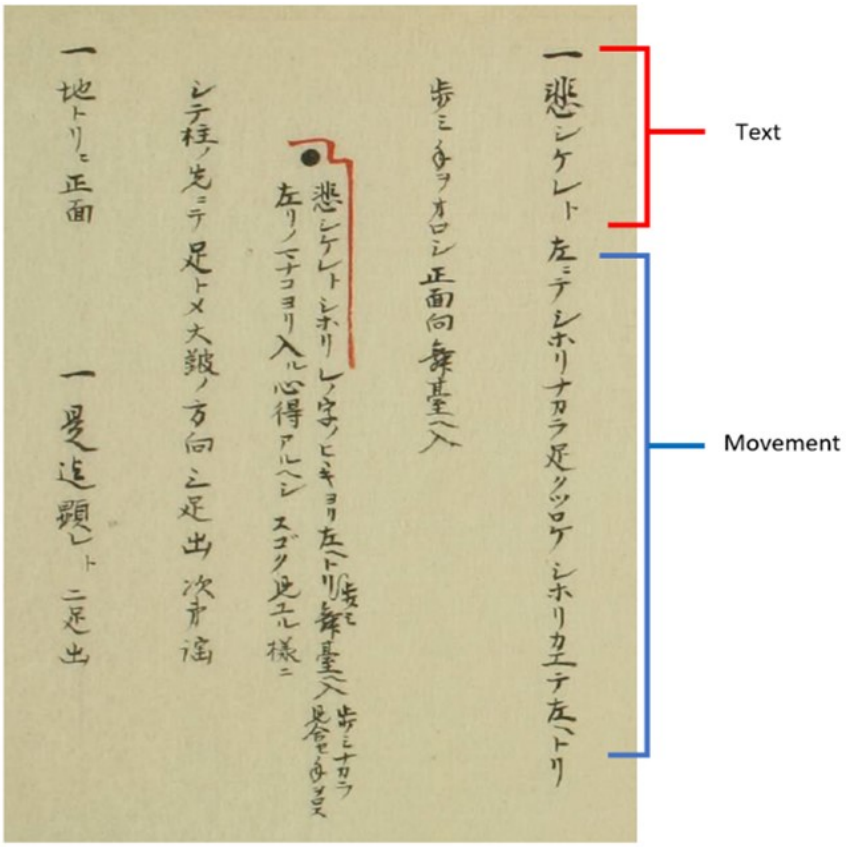

Figure 9: Diagram highlighting the parts of a katazuke manuscript.
Source: *Aoi no ue, adachigahara, kanawa: kanzeryū no* katazuke, katazuke, from Waseda University Library's *kotensekisōgō* (Japanese and Chinese Classics) database, http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/chi12/chi12_03643_0071_0024/index.html

perform the *shiori* kata (Figure 9). Therefore, discrepancies between the oral text referred to by this document and alternative performances cannot be examined using this manuscript alone. However, since this research is focused on only the movements of the performance, the text as is should be sufficient.

I will be comparing the katazuke text to the actions performed in a 2001 performance of *Aoi no ue.* It should be noted that the performance is a Hōshō style performance. Therefore, any discrepancies may reflect stylistic differences between schools, however, any similarities between the text and performance may also indicate standard conventions deemed necessary to all performances of *Aoi no ue.* Most importantly, any differences, despite how minute they may

be, may in fact alter the portrayal of the character as will be discussed below. The play *Aoi no ue* is an anonymous play revised by Zeami which draws inspiration from the "Heartvine" chapter of the eleventh-century *Tale of Genji* (源氏物語, *Genji monogatari*). Lady Aoi, the primary wife of the tale's protagonist Genji,[71] is weak from childbirth and therefore susceptible to the malignant spirt of Lady Rokujō, who is a neglected, jealous lover of Genji. Aoi, symbolized by a kimono laid at the front of the stage, lies on her sickbed as help is being sought to understand the nature of her illness. Teruhi, a medium, is asked to identify the spirit possessing Lady Aoi and once the spirit of Lady Rokujō has been confirmed, a Holy Man is summoned to exorcize Lady Rokujō, who in the second act appears transformed into an evil spirit (signified through the use of a *hannya* mask (Figure 10)).[72] The two points I will be examining are the entrance of the spirit of Lady Rokujō in the first act, along with the usage of the stick hand prop by the transformed Lady Rokujō in the second act.

Figure 10: *Hannya* mask.
Source: Author's image

[71] It should be noted that Genji himself is not present in the nō play.
[72] Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature,* 925-36.

In the 2001 performance, when the spirit of Lady Rokujō enters the stage, the actor stops at the third pine and performs a one-handed *shiori* (weeping) kata twice (Figure 11) before proceeding to the first pine, stopping, and turning towards the front (Figure 12).[73] In the katazuke manuscript, there is no mention of the third pine. Instead it reads "cross the bridge, at the first pine turn towards the front, stop."[74]

Figure 11: The *shite* weeps at the third pine

Figure 12: The *shite* faces the front at the first pine

Source for Figures 11-12: Hōshō nōgaku dō 宝生能楽堂, *Aoi no ue* 葵上, television broadcast from June 2, 2010, originally performed on May 20, 2001, accessed on February 25, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hI8edPXNS0

This initial weeping at the third pine may be either a stylistic choice by the performers, or of the Hōshō school to emphasize Lady Rokujō as sympathetic character. In the original chapter in the *Tale of Genji*, Lady Rokujō unintentionally possesses Lady Aoi. The possession in the "Heartvine" chapter is merely an undesirable side effect of her strong emotions and once she realizes her role in the possession of Lady Aoi, Lady Rokujō is mortified.

[73] Hōshō nōgaku dō 宝生能楽堂, *Aoi no ue* 葵上, television broadcast from June 2, 2010, originally performed on May 20, 2001, accessed on February 25, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hI8edPXNS0

[74] *Aoi no ue, adachigahara, kanawa: kanzeryū no* katazuke, katazuke, from Waseda University Library's *kotensekisōgō* (Japanese and Chinese Classics) database, http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/chi12/chi12_03643_0071_0024/index.html (accessed February 25, 2017).

> Though she had felt sorry enough for herself, she had not wished ill to anyone; and might it be that the soul of one so lost in sad thoughts went wandering off by itself? […] More than once she had the same dream: in the beautifully appointed apartments of a lady who seemed to be a rival she would push and shake the lady, and flail at her blindly and savagely. It was too terrible. Sometimes in a daze she would ask herself if her soul had indeed gone wandering off.[75]

In the nō play however, Lady Rokujō is often portrayed as a more malicious character who seeks intentional revenge against Aoi stating things such as "Oh, how I hate you!/ I will punish you."[76] It is thus possible that by repeatedly portraying Lady Rokujō as weeping before she begins to speak, the Hōshō performer may be choosing to portray Lady Rokujō more sympathetically, similar to her portrayal in the original chapter.

Another difference between the 2001 performance and the katazuke is the usage of sweeping motions (*yoko ni harau*) and striking motions (*uchiorosu*) the transformed Lady Rokujō makes towards the Holy Man with the stick hand prop. In the performance, Lady Rokujō employs four sweeps and three strikes with the stick before succumbing to the divine powers invoked by the Holy Man.[77] In the katazuke, however, it states there should be three sweeps and five strikes.[78] While this alone does not seem like a significant difference between the two, it is possible that these movements further align with the different portrayals of Lady Rokujō suggested by the differences in weeping above. In contrast with the striking motion, the

[75] Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, trans. Edward G. Seidensticker (New York. Alfred A. Knopf: 1991), 167.
[76] Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature,* 930.
[77] *Aoi no ue* 葵上, television broadcast.
[78] *Aoi no ue,* katazuke.

sweeping motion can be interpreted as less aggressive due to the fact that the strike is more linear and targets the *waki* directly (Figure 13).[79] The sweeps, on the other hand, flow from side to side and emphasize the space between the *shite* and the *waki* (Figure 14).[80] By opting for fewer strikes and more sweeps, the Hōshō actor suggests a Lady Rokujō who is less actively aggressive.

Figure 13: The *shite* performs the sweeping motion (*yoko ni harau*) with the hand prop

Figure 14: The *shite* performs the striking motion (*uchiorosu)* with the hand prop

Source for Figures 11-12: Hōshō nōgaku dō 宝生能楽堂, *Aoi no ue* 葵上, television broadcast from June 2, 2010, originally performed on May 20, 2001, accessed on February 25, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hI8edPXNS0

Additionally, in the katazuke manuscript, there are additional notes added to the kata instructions which suggest repeating either sweeps or strikes more than once. Assuming the actor follows the upper limit of these suggestions, the count then increases to five sweeps and five strikes which, in a theatre of minimal movement, is quite the increase over the same actions in the Hōshō performance. Furthermore, in the katazuke manuscript the additional sweeps and strikes come in the form of quick repetitions of the same movement.[81] When the moments of attack on the Holy

[79] *Aoi no ue* 葵上, television broadcast.

[80] *Aoi no ue* 葵上, television broadcast.

[81] *Aoi no ue,* katazuke.

Man are separated into units defined by pauses or additional moves (such as head movements or steps) in between, there is actually no change in the number of these instances between the performance and the text. Instead, the only thing that changes is the number of times the sweeping or striking kata are repeated in succession. These quickly repeated actions may also have the effect of suggesting a more overtly aggressive Lady Rokujō.

Table 1: Number of Sweeps and Strikes of the *Shite* in *Aoi no ue*

Source							Total
Hōshō Performance	○	○	▲	○	▲▲	○	○ = 4 ▲ = 3
Katazuke (minimum)	○	▲	○	▲▲	○	▲▲	○ = 3 ▲ = 5
Katazuke (maximum)	○	▲	○○○	▲▲	○	▲▲	○ = 5 ▲= 5

Legend: ○ = one sweep, ▲= one strike

This table shows the frequency of sweeps and strikes performed by the *shite* in *Aoi no ue*. Multiple icons in a single box indicate a repetition of a single motion twice or thrice consecutively.

Conclusion

As discussed above, kata may refer to both the basic building blocks of movement on the nō stage, as well as the moments of non-movement (such as the *kamae*) and the simple act of walking on the stage (*suri ashi*). Within movement kata, kata may serve a variety of purposes on the stage, ranging from dramatic functions to metonymic expressions to abstract dance. This

importance of movement on stage, as well as the form of the body as a whole, has played a significant role in the art as may be deduced through Zeami's theoretical writings on the art. Furthermore, by examining Zeami's perspectives on roleplaying, it is evident that since nōgaku's earliest times when an actor presented on stage there was an expectation for them to negotiate their form and movements according to both aesthetics and the logic of the character. In the highly stylized contemporary form of nō, every motion on the stage continues to hold a great deal of importance.

In the example above one may see the impact that very slight differences in kata may make in the interpretation of the overall performance. Though often highly symbolic and minimal, each movement, or in fact, non-movement on the nō stage is highly intentional and the addition or subtraction of a single motion can modify the portrayal of the character. It is clear to see that kata are used as physical communication tools on the nō stage and thus have integrated themselves into the performance genre itself. However, this brings us to the question of how these movement became so integral to the art to begin with? The preservation of the movements alongside a written text is not prevalent in Western theatre genres, which suggests that the environment in which nō and kyōgen developed is likely to have played a large role in the canonization process of not only the lexical texts, but also the somatic ones as well.

Chapter Two: The Canonization of Kata

"[T]he alternative to homogenizing works is to historicize them."

- John Guillory, "Canon"[82]

While nō does have a certain historical continuity that most invented traditions could only hope for, its history is not as unchanged as frequently perceived in popular Western discourse. The tradition of nō has, in fact, been subject to a series of reinventions throughout its six hundred years of history. Nō, as it is today, is the result of an art being shaped and reshaped to fit the needs of society as it changed throughout time. Kata can at first seem to contribute to perceptions of nō as unchanging. Since kata consist of fixed series of patterns, they may invite incorrect assumptions that the art is merely mindless reproduction, or a mode of historical preservation that leaves no room for creative interpretation. However, would the same perspective be applied to the works of Shakespeare, for example, or even to the scripts of nō plays themselves? There appears to be a double standard for creativity across mediums. The written forms of canonized texts are less likely to be challenged as unimaginative. For example, performing Shakespeare's plays with the original text is more likely to be framed as engaging with a classic as opposed to being dubbed uninventive. Instead, the idea that such texts have existed as they are since their origins is interpreted as proof that there is something inherently special in both the general content and the specific words of the text. If this were not the case, then why would these texts be subject to such extensive literary study or so frequently revisited in later works or interpretations? In an attempt to subvert this double standard, this chapter will examine kata as text through the critical approach of canon formation. By exploring the social and political factors that affected the canonization of nō, and consequently its extra-textual

[82] Guillory, "Canon," 244.

elements such as kata, this chapter will help to dispel the illusion of the timeless nō tradition and in turn, highlight the historical processes that nō underwent to develop into what we recognize today.

Kata as Text

When the series of fixed movements that make up kata are interpreted from the perspective that each movement is in a sense a *word* that eventually coalesces to create a single linear text, it becomes possible to examine kata as a text and view it in its historical context as such. The somatic texts, which are texts *written* with movement through the body, of contemporary nō kata have been subject to and in turn molded by the same societal influences as the literary nō texts we have today. Thus, it is not unlikely that they have also been canonized through the same process. To overlook the canonization process of nō kata simply because they exist in a different medium from the literary texts would be a mistake. But why has kata been fossilized alongside the written text? Proponents of the most extreme perspective might argue that over its long history, nō performance has attained a certain artistic perfection and since it has reached this state, any modifications would only jeopardize that excellence. In his essay "Canon" John Guillory first addresses the conventional, conservative critique that "for a work to be canonical [it] must mean that over successive generations, preferably many generations, readers continue to affirm a judgment of greatness, almost as though each generation actually judged anew the quality of the work."[83]

[83] Guillory, "Canon," 236

However, this conservative perspective, akin to similar perspectives on canonical literary works, is problematic. By what standards are these pronouncements of greatness bestowed? Furthermore, is the "greatness" of nō a transcendental message held within the performance that has struck each and every generation of audiences? This would be highly unlikely. It would be a mistake to assume an inherent "greatness" of the physical nō canon, that is, the canon of nō's kata. After exploring the implications of such an assumption, Guillory dismisses the feasibility of such a criterion and that applying said judgement to textual canons proves to be problematic.[84] This is most notably supported by the idea that there are "many different and mutually exclusive standards of greatness" between canonical works and the fact that "the same works have been judged great for different and incompatible reasons."[85] Furthermore, Haruo Shirane quotes Guillory's assertion that "[c]anonicity is not a property of the work itself but of its transmission";[86] in other words, the interest lies not in the production of the work but in its reproduction. The fact that nō has been reproduced for six hundred years implies that throughout time, societies have found value in the nō, and through examining the continuous dialogue between the society and the art we may glean a better understanding of both. As Guillory states, "we must see [the history of the canon] as the history of both the production and the reception of texts."[87]

In order to best understand the process by which nō became crystallized, it is best to start at the beginning and work chronologically towards the present, as each earlier influence in turn directed nō down the path which led it to later influences. Guillory notes that there is a natural

[84] Guillory, "Canon," 236.
[85] Guillory, "Canon," 236.
[86] John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), 55, quoted in Haruo Shirane, "Introduction: Issues in Canon Formation," in *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature*, ed. Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 2.
[87] Guillory, "Canon," 238.

flexibility of the literary canon, "that works are continuously added to, as well as subtracted from [it]"; thus it would be wrong to assume that the physical canon is fundamentally dissimilar.[88] Why would a physical canon, one that runs specifically in conjunction with a fixed literary canon, be held to a different expectation? Of course, here we are proceeding with the knowledge that there is a certain natural flexibility of the kata canon, that the nō of today is not a perfect preservation of the nō of the Muromachi period. In addition, it can be argued for both nō and Western theatre that since each performance is dependent on the performer's interaction with the audience, no particular performance can ever be perfectly recorded and reproduced; thus we will never be able to fully realize nō as it was originally performed. In nō, this idea of the uniqueness of each performance is summed up in the term *ichi-go ichi-e* (one time, one meeting). To accept this is to accept the inherent ephemerality of performance that is perhaps one of its defining factors. But despite its transience, kata was not excluded from the canonization process.

Why Kata?

Before we embark on the journey through nō's history, it is important to recognize the traits of nō theatre which made kata susceptible to canonization. The resistance of kata to the impermanence usually expected of cultural products that are so linked with the human body is unusual. Other theatres around the world have canonical texts but have since lost any physical manifestation of the original form of the performance, the works of Shakespeare being one such example. Thus, it is important to note as well the predisposition that nō kata had to becoming set due to the nature of nō's performance and the artistic tradition that it initially belonged to.

[88] Guillory, "Canon," 237.

Nō, being an art in which various schools of artists come together for a single moment of performance, not only highlights the ephemerality of the performance, but also the technical mastery and precision required to approach collective art in that fashion. Even each "rehearsal" or *mōshiawase* only consists of a discussion of the piece and partial run-throughs.[89] All associated parties rely on a certain expectation of the roles of each of the parties involved. This has led to a mutual expectation between performers that each party will in turn remain faithful to their script, whether that script is explicitly written out, such as the textual lines or the musical score, or not, as in the case of kata.

Furthermore, Zeami recognizes nō as a *geidō* 芸道 (way of performing art). Noel Pinnington discusses the implications of using such a term:

> [T]o call his art of performance a "michi" was, among other things, to characterize it as a complete way of life, a discipline entered into in early childhood and only left when preparing for death, a journey demanding total dedication, and, according to some, a path leading to higher knowledge, a wisdom of universal significance.[90]

Thus, in characterizing nō as a michi, or "way," Zeami made it clear that he saw performance as a craft, a profession which required total commitment in order to attain an appropriate level of proficiency. Due to the Buddhist roots of the concept of michi, there is also the integrated notion that menial, repetitive tasks, such as cleaning, gathering firewood, or drawing water, could in turn lead to a moment of *satori*, or enlightenment.[91]

[89] Karen Brazell, ed., *Traditional Japanese Theater*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 31.
[90] Noel John Pinnington, *Traces of the Way, Michi and the Writings of Komparu Zenchiku* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell East Asia Program, 2006), 2.
[91] Konishi, "Michi and Medieval Writing," 196.

As Konishi Jin'ichi states in "Michi and Medieval Writing," michi are a vocational method of transmission that imply an expertise in an area. To be a person of michi is to be a specialist. The term itself suggests mastery of a craft or skill transmitted from generation to generation. The scenario in which a student's education is precisely monitored by a teacher in a one-on-one or one-on-few environment is the exact environment conducive to transmitting somatic texts. Just as the texts of the plays were and are still transmitted through oral "parroting," the kata are transmitted through a similar process of mimicry and precise correction, the initial goal being the ability to mirror your teacher's art exactly. On the road to attaining full mastery of the art, it would be expected that the student's first steps would be developing the skill set to, at minimum, replicate their master's teachings before pursuing any creative innovations. Metaphorically, it may be equated to laying a solid foundation on which one may later build a house.

This student-disciple relationship feeds into another element of canonization touched upon by Haruo Shirane, that of canonization through education. It is necessary in michi that one not only masters the craft for one's own sake, but that one in turn recognizes one's responsibility to transmit one's knowledge to future generations. But then how does the teacher determine what is necessary for their students to learn, both so that they are able to make a living off the profession, but also so that the art will continue to be sustainable into further generations of practitioners? Of course this may be, to a certain extent, up to the discretion and preferences of each individual teacher; however, the teachers must also negotiate the tradition of the art as it was designated by their own teachers. Their skills were shaped only due to the teaching of those who came before and the transmission of those teachings; thus, they must negotiate the need to respect the skills and perspectives they trained so long and hard to acquire with the need to

assess the tastes of the contemporary consumers. The impact of patronism on the canonization of nō will be discussed more thoroughly later in this chapter.

It should be noted that in examining nō training, there is a duality to the notion of michi and its implications in practice. On the one hand, there is an assumption of conformity. The expectation of exactitude and rigor of the training is very much evident even in nō training today. Perhaps because of the emphasis on even minor, repetitive actions, there is the assumption that "those practicing *michi* did so in an ethos of self-denial and conformity, holding perfect imitation of the teacher to be the primary ideal" and that "[t]he good pupil was not to add anything nor to take anything from what was taught."[92] Such expectation of fidelity to the tradition was well known to Zeami and was intentionally evoked by the usage of the term. On the other hand, however, Zeami was prepared to be very flexible. As discussed later in this chapter, Zeami remained conscious of his patrons' preferences and would modify the art accordingly in order to maintain sustainability of the art. Even today, performers will adjust their performances to the particular audience of that day. This negotiation between reproduction and creation is something that has persisted from the beginning of nō's formalization and continues to be an essential paradox in contemporary practice. While the notion of flexibility will be discussed in Chapter Three, it is important to first understand the rigidity of the tradition in which nō is situated. This tradition will be contextualized in the remainder of this chapter.

First Steps to Formalization

The impact of patronage on nō is evident from its initial formalization. If we go back to Zeami and his development of nō from popular street performance into high art patronized by the

[92] Pinnington, *Traces of the Way,* 2.

warrior upper class, we see a need to cater to a newfound demographic. In the *Fūshikaden*, Zeami talks about what is appropriate or not to present to such elite audiences, and is mindful of the tastes of the upper class. Specifically, he considers their appreciation of a more refined and stylized form of acting. For example, in the introduction to the section on *monomane* (roleplaying), Zeami states that "[i]n general, men of lowly occupation should not be…shown to men of refined tastes. Should they see such things, they will merely find them vulgar, and the performance will hold no attraction for them."[93]

Zeami's repeated insistence on the importance of the audience and the performer's potential impact on them makes clear the value he places on the role of the audience to the art. However, Zeami clearly did not see all audience members as equals. In the *Kakyō* (花鏡, *A Mirror Held to the Flower,* 1424) he suggests that for indoor or banquet performances, the actor "should play to the most important members of the audience,"[94] indicating that some audiences may hold more weight, most likely because of their wealth or status or both. Additionally, in the *Fūshikaden*, Zeami recognizes the "dull-witted audience, or the vulgar audience in the countryside or far-off provinces" and the challenges they would have appreciating nō, due to the lack of understanding of the art.[95] However, instead of dismissing the idea of performing for such audiences at all, Zeami encourages flexibility from the actor, suggesting they return to an "easy style" of performance.[96] This indicates two things. The first is that the nō Zeami was performing when he wrote this treatise had changed enough from his initial public performances through his catering to his new audience that he realized that former audiences may no longer be

[93] Rimer, *On the Art of the Noh Drama*, 10.
[94] Rimer, *On the Art of Noh Drama,* 83.
[95] Rimer, *On the Art of Noh Drama,* 41.
[96] Rimer, *On the Art of Noh Drama,* 41.

able to relate to it. The second is that he acknowledges that while nō may have gained a new audience demographic, it remains important to cater to all spectators in order to remain open to all potential sources of support: "unfortunately, as our art is based on the desires of the audience, successful performances depend on the changing tastes of each generation."[97]

This is not to understate the impact of the warrior elite on the art. Zeami spends much of his treatises speaking about the art in regard to his most influential patrons. For example, he states, "…when performing in a strong fashion before an audience that admires Grace,[98] which has become so popular these days, the actor must depart to some extent from a strict representation or that forceful quality and shift his performance in the direction of Grace."[99] Zeami saw the interest of the upper class as crucial to the development and survival of not only the art, but of his troupe. Should they fall out of favour, they would be back to suffering the hardships of performance without stable patronage and furthermore, should the shogun choose to shift his interests to another troupe, they would be subject to direct competition with said other who would be obviously favoured. The looming possibility of losing patronage drove shifts in Zeami's style. For instance, "the movement away from monomane toward yūgen in his dramatic theory of the 1420's was in large part a response to Dōami's success with Yoshimitsu and Zōami's with Yoshimochi."[100] Thus, the tastes of those with power and wealth have shaped the art to their preferences, even without directly engaging in the creation of the art itself.

[97] Rimer, *On the Art of Noh Drama,* 41.
[98] "Grace" here is Rimer's translation of *yūgen*.
[99] Rimer, *On the Art of Noh Drama,* 48.
[100] Hare, *Zeami's Style*, 31.

Zeami's Writing

Zeami's impact on the fossilization of nō goes beyond the catering of performance toward his patrons' interests through the additional element of his writings. Zeami's cultural education and thorough understanding of the warrior elite made it possible to not only perform works that matched the interests and aesthetics of the warrior class, but also provided him with a level of literacy that helped to develop the canonical potential of the art. By integrating older, more respected content, such as Buddhist themes and poetry, Zeami laid the foundation for nō to become canonical by drawing on previous canons. Without this strategic development it is unlikely that nō would have become canon otherwise.[101] Zeami also realized the content of the art needed to be conducive to performing what was popular at that time; thus, he spoke in the *Fūshikaden* about the importance for playwrights to write plays which evoke *yūgen* in order to facilitate *yūgen* in the aesthetic of the performance.[102] Zeami stresses that the text and the performance are symbiotic, once again emphasizing the link between the text and the movement.

Balancing these two notions, Zeami took one more step towards the canonization of nō by physically writing down the plays. While the impact of that act is quite evident on the literary aspect of nō's canonization, it likely, in turn, had an impact on the extra-textual elements such as kata. Once the text is solidified, the actions associated with the text may consequently also become canon. And just as both the content and the language of the text become reflections of what is deemed important or necessary to a certain demographic, any fossilized movements would echo the culture of the time.

The final impact that Zeami had on the canonization of nō is the fact that he wrote treatises such as the *Fūshikaden*; critical documents that referenced all elements of the

[101] Shirane, "Issues in Canon Formation," 4.
[102] Rimer, *On the Art of Noh Drama,* 48.

performance. As Shirane suggests in *Inventing the Classics*, the writing of critical commentaries on a work help to elevate the status of the work and identify it as worthy of becoming canonical.[103] The treatises of nō were inspired by poetic commentaries, mimicking their style and in turn linking nō to a more recognized, higher art form. Thus, while Zeami's texts were not accessible to the public for hundreds of years,[104] the fact that they existed created a layer of foundation on which the legacy of nō could be built. Even before the treatises were made available, the knowledge that such texts existed made nō more esoteric, which subsequently fed into its ability to become canonical in later times.[105] Furthermore, the existence of such texts within an institutional framework is also what ensured that these documents were preserved and transmitted which in turn ensured their availability for later reproduction.

External Control of the Art

Moving into the Edo period, nō's concept of patronage took on a new meaning. Following the Neo-Confucian model, the Tokugawa shogunate took nō patronage to a new level as it became the state theatre. Much like the Ashikaga shogun Yoshimitsu, the new shogunate also needed an art to help culturally define their regime. Leadership based on the Neo-Confucian hierarchy emphasized certain expectations for the upper class, and an attunement with the arts was certainly not overlooked. The study of literary arts, in conjunction with any military training, was important for "improving the morals of the samurai."[106] Dore explains that Hayashi Shihei (1738-1793), a Japanese scholar, best summarized the ideal for non-professional samurai stating that those of the samurai class should, "[p]ractise [their] military skills with devotion and at the

[103] Shirane, "Issues in Canon Formation," 15.
[104] Rimer, *On the Art of Noh Drama,* xxi.
[105] Rath, *Ethos of Noh*, 58.
[106] R. P. Dore, *Education in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley/Los Angeles. University of California Press, 1965), 69

same time learn something of astronomy and geography, of the tea ceremony and of the Nō drama,"[107] suggesting the importance of the theatre to their education.

However, the Tokugawa Shogunate pushed its patronage further than previous patrons in that it essentially outright demanded explicit canonization. As Thomas D. Looser points out in *Visioning Eternity*, the 1647 requirement of the nō *iemoto* (the authoritative "family head" who maintained control of the family's art) to submit their performance texts, complete with katazuke*,* forced artists to bind their art to the documents submitted to the shogun.[108] Looser characterizes this as a display of power by the shogun, a way of exerting full control over the art, and theoretically in turn a part of the world over which he governed. By having access to every detail of the newly canonized knowledge, the Tokugawa shoguns placed themselves at the apex of cultural literacy.[109]

Knowledge of nō did not simply feed into the knowledge of the state, but into the upper samurai class in general. This meant that they were educated in both the state theatre and the literary classics required to fully understand the cultural nuances within the performance. In a time where literacy was becoming more prevalent in classes other than the aristocracy, the shogunate supported a theatre performed in an older version of the language, one which was linked to elite poetry and Buddhist study. Guillory notes the importance of the language used in canonical texts, stating, "more sophisticated linguistic facility is signaled in many ways – for example, by the capacity to recognize quotations from canonical literature, recognitions which subtly broadcast the level of educational acquisition."[110]

[107] Dore, *Education in Tokugawa Japan,* 64.
[108] Looser, *Visioning Eternity*, 50.
[109] Looser, *Visioning Eternity*, 52.
[110] Guillory, "Canon," 242.

Shirane takes this concept even further and elaborates that "[t]he knowledge of or access to the canon, particularly to the language embodied in the canon, has often been used as a means of maintaining social distinction and hierarchies."[111] Focusing on the concept of the "language embodied in the canon," it is clear that the elevated language of nō scripts was intentionally kept in order to maintain a certain esoteric air about the art. However, it may also be extrapolated that the stylistic movements of kata are similar to the older, poetic language in nō in that *reading* these movements requires a certain degree of literacy in the *language*. The ability to understand stylized kata may parallel the notion that complete understanding of the performance was reserved only for those with the appropriate cultural education. In theory, descriptive, mimetic movements are easily read by all; however, symbolic actions require a deeper understanding of the nuances of the art. Stylization may have helped to make the art more exclusive to certain classes of citizens. Thus, the symbolic and abstract kata may have also been intentionally maintained or emphasized in order to match the esoteric complexity of the text. Furthermore, in comparison to the popular theatres of the time, the slow, minimal, and refined movements of nō seem to be an intentional rejection of the loud, dramatic, and hyperbolic staging of kabuki and bunraku. This would have distinguished the theatres, which had different social implications, not just linguistically, but visually as well.

Of course, when the person holding all of the power has total access to what the art *should* be, this in turn impacts the actors. The art that they transmit must remain faithful to the text submitted by their *iemoto*, so long as their patron continues to be the functioning head of government who holds these texts. Should the actors deviate in the slightest, they would run the risk of contradicting the knowledge and therefore the expectation of the shogun. If the

[111] Shirane, "Issues in Canon Formation," 15.

knowledge of nō was being equated to power, it would be unlikely that the performer's deviation would be seen as anything other than defiance or inadequacy. Therefore, it should be recognized that kata as we know it today is likely to have been greatly impacted by what was set by a particular *iemoto* on a particular day in the mid-seventeenth century based on what they believed the shogun's preference to be. Later changes might have only occurred through the personal preferences and approval of the acting shogun, or through minor alterations of the performers that may have slipped through unnoticed.

The installation of the *iemoto* system also fed into the construction of genealogies, providing validation for the practicing families by giving them an authoritative claim to the history of, and thus, the contemporary practice of nō. This fit right into the pre-existing system endorsed by Zeami in which he restricted the transmission of secret texts to only the chosen succeeding leader of the troupe, the *ichidai hitori* (one student per generation); however, the Tokugawa Shogunate added an additional layer to this internal system through the external backing of the *iemoto*'s authority. Under the Tokugawa system, the *iemoto* had full control over the art, including control of the repertoire, content of the texts, and staging.[112] This additional layer of regulation stripped performers of a certain degree of their autonomy and resulted in the art becoming less flexible.

The Embodiment of National Identity and Culture

During the premodern era of nō, its canonization was used as a means of creating cultural distinction between social classes. However, after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the role of nō was to act as a unifying national symbol. Nō, an art specifically used to stratify a society, now

[112] Eric C. Rath, "Interlude: Iemoto: the family head system," in *A History of Japanese Theatre,* ed. Jonah Salz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 100.

became representative of that same society as a whole. Nō is a prime example of a "cultural [phenomenon] that had been specific to a particular region or social community… [which] became identified with the nation."[113] In the transition to the Meiji period, nō was almost lost as a consequence of losing its governmental patron. Soon after, however, we see nō worked into the national dialogue. With the shift in Japan's attention to national narrative building, nō became less about defining the status of select individuals amongst the people within Japan, and more about giving all of the Japanese people a unified cultural identity on the world stage. As Shirane states, "canon formation can be a means of resisting cultural hegemony, of establishing separate ethnic, national and gender identities."[114] It was necessary for Japan to develop its national canon and fabricate a social unity in order to maintain its autonomy and match the national identities being created in the West.

From the domestic perspective, Japan was looking to show the world that it was an equal player, in a language that everyone else was speaking. Part of that language was developing a national narrative complete with "inherently Japanese" cultural products to support this. Due to the interest in *kokubungaku* (national literature) during the Meiji period, there was an increase in study of Japanese literary texts, particularly those written in kana, as they were considered more "Japanese" than texts written in Chinese script. Thanks to the trends of nineteenth-century Western literary studies, Japanese literary studies also grew to encompass drama.[115] This provided yet another parallel between Japanese and Western culture. Chikamatsu Monzaemon became compared to Shakespeare and nō was elevated to the status of opera in the West.[116] At this point, it would also be worth speculating how much of nō's stylization was, once again, in a

[113] Shirane, "Issues in Canon Formation," 13.
[114] Shirane, "Issues in Canon Formation," 12.
[115] Shirane, "Issues in Canon Formation," 7.
[116] Shirane, "Issues in Canon Formation," 8.

direct rejection of kabuki, the more popular other nationally recognized theatre. If kabuki was Japan's theatre of the common people that was also becoming canonical, then as the theatrical representative of elite culture and high art, nō would have to differentiate itself in style as well as content, just as opera was from Shakespeare.

It must be noted, however, that at this point, nō was less likely to make drastic changes in response to shifting social situation or changing tastes of the audience. On the contrary, the political forces supporting nō encouraged the art to remain as it was. Nō was being integrated into Japan's historical narrative: it became a physical representation of history, like any other piece of visual art or artifacts, to be placed on display for the world to see. It became more of a relic in the sense that the spectators were no longer guiding the performance with their tastes. Instead, nō took on a museum-like quality in that audiences were only to take in what was presented as is, as a learning opportunity or as a window to the past. The reason for this was that the very basis of its justification for becoming canonical was its link to earlier times; nō was in part considered a classic because it had survived as long as it had.

Orientalism's Impact

The Western emphasis on drama in literary studies inspired the inclusion of theatres such as kabuki and nō in Japan's national dialogue. Beyond this, however, the Western interest in nō as a mysterious, exotic theatre was also pivotal to the form in which nō became canonized. Acknowledgement and recognition of nō by prominent western visitors only indicated that the developing national dialogue was being presented.[117] However, this western perspective also fed

[117] William Lee, "Chikamatsu and Dramatic Literature in the Meiji Period," in *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature*, ed. Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 184.

into the ethos of nō, allowing the art the opportunity to magnify its esoteric image. As discussed earlier, elements such as secret texts and vocational training both added value through mystery. The element of secrecy was embraced once again, only this time, the intended audience was significantly more broad than Zeami could have ever imagined.

This orientalist perspective may have played a role in pushing nō to further crystallize both in canon and in kata. First, as Said outlined in *Orientalism*, orientalist writings tend to evoke a sense of timelessness.[118] If Western audiences of that time, a potential new consumer of nō, were looking for art that evoked such timelessness, then it is logical that the performers would deem necessary that the notion of the "unbroken tradition" become magnified. In order to emphasize this, the concept that kata mastery equates to reproducing the play exactly as one was taught, may come to the forefront while any intentional or unintentional modifications to kata would be disregarded. Therefore, while the actual passing on of kata may continue to follow its own typical path in which the extra-textual components remain reasonably fluid, the conception surrounding the idea of fixed patterns of performance may have been altered to suit the tastes of the time. This might have been what has carried forward and promulgated the notion that nō is a "museum art," particularly in popular and scholarly Western reception. This concept has been noted by Leiter as well, who states, "[t]he tendency to classicalize kata and set them in the formaldehyde of tradition evolved in the second half of the nineteenth century."[119]

Orientalism may also be a contributing factor to the art becoming yet even more stylised, feeding off the idea that Japan was the home of a timeless and mysterious culture. This could have possibly pushed nō performers to latch on to those movements that they felt to be more abstract or at least less explicit in what they were describing. The length of nō plays has

[118] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism,* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 72.
[119] Leiter, *The Art of Kabuki,* xvii.

continuously grown longer over time, particularly during the Edo period[120] but there have been also such instances documented in contemporary practice (specifically, the late twentieth century).[121] This element of nō might have potentially been exploited as another means of adding to the mystery of nō. Additionally, maintaining a performance's slow pace and even slowing it down further after the Edo period may have also contributed to defining itself from newer forms of Western-style theatre. Perhaps contemporary Western viewers who still travel to Japan with orientalist expectations encourage and promulgate this cycle of self-orientalising perspectives on nō as it continues to push itself in the opposite direction from contemporary Western drama.

The Canonization of Kyōgen

The canonization of kyōgen is intimately linked with the canonization of nō; however, as the comic counterpart to nō, the reasoning and process differ slightly. Kyōgen has been an essential aspect of nō since the beginning of nō's formalization. By Zeami's time, comic interludes between nō plays had become the ideal.[122] Thus, Zeami speaks to the importance for kyōgen actors to remain equally as conscious of their patrons as the nō performers. He states in the *Shūdōsho* (習道書, *Learning the Way,* 1430) that "a kyōgen actor must, avoiding all vulgarity, allow his well-born audience to experience humour that is both clever and endearing."[123] Certainly, should a kyōgen performer overstep his boundaries, he would swiftly be forced to pay the price. The kyōgen troupe who presented a "theme of distress to the nobility" and consequently had their director dismissed from his post, as recounted in the *Kammon gyoki,*

[120] Looser, *Visioning Eternity,* 198.
[121] Hare, "Nō Changes," 127.
[122] Jonah Salz, "Kyogen: Classical Comedy," in *A History of Japanese Theatre,* ed. Jonah Salz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 79.
[123] Rimer, *On the Art of Noh Drama,* 170.

demonstrated that the patrons of kyōgen were not afraid to hand down hard punishment to those who crossed the line.[124]

Kyōgen became an even more important part of the nō program moving into the Edo period, as the language of nō was becoming more and more removed from any vernacular dialect the population was speaking. As always, the role of the *ai kyōgen* (the kyōgen actor cast in a nō play who recounts the plot of play in colloquial language between acts) was crucial to the audience's understanding. However, it should be noted that during the Edo period, the play texts of kyōgen were also documented for the first time and kyōgen also grew to face the same language challenges as nō.[125] Additionally, the *hon kyōgen* in between nō plays were used to fill the time in which the actors would change their costumes in preparation for the next piece. As the costumes became more elaborate, the costuming time also increased, lending more time for the kyōgen actors to take to the stage.[126]

Once kyōgen was supported by Tokugawa patronage, it took similar steps towards canonization as nō. One of these steps included the establishing of the *iemoto*, the implications of which were discussed above. Like nō, the process also included written plays, versions which included the full dialogue. Unlike nō, however, this was the first time kyōgen had been driven to write down plays in full. Before this time, kyōgen plays were not written down for a few reasons, which include maintaining the secrecy of the craft and minimizing the possible repercussions of having concretely offended someone.[127] This also reflects the highly improvisational nature of the art prior to the Edo period. Until the plays of Tora'akira in 1642, the only documentation of

[124] William R. LaFleur, *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1983), 139.
[125] Salz, "Kyogen: Classical Comedy," 88.
[126] Salz, "Kyogen: Classical Comedy," 91.
[127] Salz, "Kyogen: Classical Comedy," 87.

kyōgen scripts was the *Tensho-bon* (1578), which merely outlined the basic plot of the skits, as well as the transcription of songs or particularly pertinent lines. What is also interesting to note here is that while very little dialogue (if any) was documented, key movements are, suggesting the importance of physical storytelling in their performances. Just as with nō, once the text became written, they become more susceptible to solidification along with the actions that matched the text.

However, due to the pressures exerted on newly formed kyōgen schools during the Edo period, plays with their complete dialogue had to be documented and submitted for government approval.[128] Since the plays performed during this time had to be submitted to the Shogunate for approval, the developing kyōgen canon was explicitly moderated by the Tokugawa government. Therefore, as a satirical, comedic form, it is important to note that the kyōgen canon as it exists today theoretically only consists of plays which were not seen as too disruptive or aggressive towards Edo-period socio-political structures. The shogunate effectively made kyōgen less dangerous for itself, and consequently, kyōgen went through a process of refinement and formalization on both the page and on stage.

As William R. LaFleur argued in his book *The Karma of Words,* kyōgen's place in Tokugawa society was within the program of a nō performance. "It was tolerated as the permitted and circumscribed eruption of an alternative, *inverted*, set of values, an eruption that quickly subsided as the kyōgen performers ran offstage and the licet world of nō returned."[129] In other words, the Tokugawa shogunate allowed for a brief consideration of an upheaval of societal values, albeit only within this controlled context in which it was both quickly dismissed and held up in comparison with the grandeur of the preceding and succeeding nō performances.

[128] Salz, "Kyogen: Classical Comedy," 88
[129] LaFleur, *The Karma of Words,* 145.

LaFleur goes on to iterate that "the ritualization of nō included also the ritualization of potential dissent from the values of the Tokugawa regime."[130] Considering this, kyōgen had become as indispensable to the functioning of state theatre as nō itself, carving out its own space within the cultural tradition.

The writing-down of kyōgen plays during the Edo period also meant that the language became fossilized, like that of nō. This development of a fixed canon in an older form of language may have increased kyōgen's capacity to become part of the national canon later on. As kyōgen plays do not have a set author whom their texts are attributed to (save for spurious attributions to Priest Gen'ei [c. 1269-1350]),[131] there was no single figure advocating for kyōgen to be elevated in status, as Zeami did for nō. However, with its long, integrated history with nō, kyōgen simply needed the right opportunity to enter the national canon. This time was the postwar era. During Japan's demilitarization after 1945, both kyōgen and setsuwa slipped into the greater national canon. The two are similar in that they consist of short, authorless tales targeted towards a wider audience and were perceived as folk traditions necessary to the new national narrative moving forward, their main purpose being to fill the gaps in the canon left behind after the extraction of more militaristic texts.[132] Perhaps this additional exposure has contributed to the wave of popularity kyōgen has enjoyed since World War II.[133]

It should also be noted that according to Jonah Salz, the kyōgen canon is still reasonably open. Salz cites instances in which old plays are revived by current practitioners as a means of asserting themselves.[134] This seems to be limited to the revival of older pieces that have fallen

[130] LaFleur, *The Karma of Words,* 145.
[131] Salz, "Kyogen: Classical Comedy," 82.
[132] Shirane, "Issues in Canon Formation," 26.
[133] Salz, "Kyogen: Classical Comedy," 68.
[134] Salz, "Kyogen: Classical Comedy," 88.

out of the repertoire or adaptations of canonical plays from other schools; however, the fact that they are capable of reintroducing these works to the canon shows that kyōgen has a flexibility that nō does not. This may be due the fact that as a comedic genre, it has never reached the elite state that nō has long since occupied, and therefore was able to maintain more flexibility. Perhaps it is due to the fact that kyōgen's play text canon was first solidified quite a bit later than the nō canon or the notion that the kyōgen canon is not recognized as having notable authors. Without such individual dominance of the canon, such as Zeami in the nō canon, there is more fluidity when it comes to inserting or extracting pieces from the canon. Without needing to remain faithful to a single author or type of play, kyōgen is still capable of catering to the preferences of contemporary audiences.

The Inevitable Link

From their formalized beginning, nō and kyōgen existed in a symbiotic and increasingly interdependent relationship until the modern era. The vernacular, comic theatre of kyōgen only became elevated in status through its relationship with nō, similar to the way in which nō elevated its own status through connections with the other higher arts of the time. By linking itself to nō, kyōgen was able to sustain its practice throughout time due to the consistent patronage; however, such a link required kyōgen to remain complementary to nō, in both style and content. Nō, on the other hand, had in kyōgen a means of remaining accessible to popular audiences, while still maintaining the historical language required of a high art. Furthermore, by having a sister art, nō was able to settle into its own genre without having to negotiate the need to expand further in order to address other topics or themes. Kyōgen has grown to contrast with nō. Intellectually, it engages with contradicting themes, affectively, the light-hearted, comedic skits

complemented and emphasized nō's stoic drama. Similar to the concept of complementary colours, kyōgen and nō were able to highlight the elements of each other by being precisely the opposite.

Identity is built on relationship to another. For example, in Said's theory of Orientalism he states that "the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience."[135] He later expands on this suggesting "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self."[136] Thus the identity projected onto the East may have, in fact, been less about defining what the "East" was, but rather, defining the "West" through what the West was not. Nō and kyōgen developed side by side addressing the aspects of the art which fell outside the realm of the other, thereby creating two distinct styles that are ultimately of the same art. By having this dichotomy since their origins, they have always had a foil by which they could define themselves. Just as the constant negotiation with the desires of patrons help to define nō and kyōgen over time, their dialogue with each other also contributed to building their arts as we recognize them today.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while nō and kyōgen have maintained some degree of performance continuity since the Muromachi period, they have by no means remained static as art forms. This is due to the shifting socio-political environments in which they have existed throughout time and the various intentions their patrons had regarding their development. Initially, nō was elevated in status through the patronage of the warrior elite, who were looking to become

[135] Said, *Orientalism,* 2.
[136] Said, *Orientalism,* 30.

cultural competitors with the aristocracy. In the Edo period, however, nō became the state theatre and subsequently a means for the shogun to display his knowledge, placing him at the cultural apex of society. After the Meiji Restoration, nō, which was once used to socially stratify a society, was then used in a single, unifying national narrative. While these three notable times in nō's history have undeniably shaped the literary canon of nō, it should be noted as well, that these same influences have also created the social environment for kata to fossilize as well. It was kata*'s* unique position as a vocational craft, transmitted directly from master to disciple which allowed kata to be more susceptible to canonization than other physical theatre forms around the world.

Of course, there would be no nō without kyōgen, both in the form of the *ai kyōgen* roles and in the accompanying *hon kyōgen* interludes. Due to their intimate nature, the two genres were able to develop in contrast to one another throughout their history. As the comic theatre with a more common form of language, kyōgen was unlikely to have been elevated to the status of a high art without its association with nō. By integrating itself with the nō plays and program, performing satire of nō plays, and eventually becoming locked into an older, unchanging language style, kyōgen eventually accumulated all the necessary aspects to become canonical once the opportunity arose.

Chapter Three: *Kata in the Contemporary World*

"Language is a process of free creation; its laws and principles are fixed, but the manner in which the principles of generation are used is free and infinitely varied. Even the interpretation and use of words involves a process of free creation."

- Noam Chomsky, "Language and Freedom."[137]

As discussed in Chapter Two, nō and kyōgen have complex histories which influenced the canonization of both the literary and somatic texts. Perhaps due to the long tradition or the various factors which fabricated the "timelessness" of said tradition, nō and kyōgen have often become branded with the term "museum art," suggesting that the theatres are only performed for posterity, in order to maintain the cultural content as a historical artifact. For this to hold true, it would be necessary for the tradition to remain inflexible as any changes to the tradition would be counterproductive to its so-called preservation. On the contrary, however, in their canonization processes, nō and kyōgen have proven to be capable of transitioning between the needs of different audiences. In fact, if nō and kyōgen were not flexible, it is unlikely that they would have survived this long. Understanding this, I have inquired into the practice of nō and kyōgen today in order to discover whether or not nōgaku has finally attained "museum art" status, or if the flexibility demonstrated throughout its history is still present in today's performances.

In order to do this, I embarked on a field research trip to Kyoto, Japan in the summer of 2016, where the Kyoto Art Center was hosting its 32nd annual Traditional Theater Training

[137] Robert Andrews, *The Columbia Dictionary of Quotations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 501.

(T.T.T.) Program. In this four-week program practicing artists teach both foreign and Japanese students where they are taught either nō, kyōgen, or nihon buyō (Japanese dance). The program prides itself on students not only learning traditional arts, but also learning them through traditional teaching methods. My field research was two-fold. The first aspect of the research was experiential. In order to assure that I had a firm understanding of the art and the culture surrounding it, I participated in the kyōgen class. However, this limited experience alone would not provide me with the deeper insight required for this research project. Therefore, I also conducted interviews with three of the instructors of the program: two kyōgen performers, Shigeyama Akira and Shigeyama Dōji, and one nō performer, Katayama Shingo. In addition to these three participants, I also conducted an interview with Diego Pellecchia, a visiting scholar at Ritsumeikan University who also has long-term training experience in nō.

Research Participants

I requested interviews with these individuals due to their extensive knowledge of either nō or kyōgen. They also all have experience working with amateur actors, particularly foreigners, and are therefore accustomed to communicating their knowledge to people outside of the tradition. Shigeyama Akira (b. 1952) is a practitioner of kyōgen and has been involved in the T.T.T. program since its beginning and also has experience teaching foreign students abroad at the University of Hawai‘i. Shigeyama Akira’s involvement with Jonah Salz and the Noho Theatre Group has led to his work in kyōgen-style adaptations of Western theatre, particularly the works of Samuel Beckett. Shigeyama Akira’s son, Shigeyama Dōji (b.1983), was trained by Akira’s father Shigeyama Sennojō (1923-2010) and is also a kyōgen teacher of the T.T.T. program. Having attended an international school from a young age, he is a fluent speaker of

English and has also participated in international fusion theatre productions. The Shigeyama family is a branch within the Ōkura School of kyōgen, and Akira and Dōji Shigeyama are part of the secondary line of the Shigeyama family, not the primary line. Katayama Shingo (b. 1968) is one of three nō teachers for the T.T.T. program. As a nō performer trained in the Kanze style, he has worked in both Japan and the U.S.A. in order to increase awareness and interest in traditional performance arts. The final participant is Diego Pellecchia, who is both a scholar of nō and a practitioner trained in the Kongō style. Pellecchia is also actively involved with the International Noh Institute, another organization in Kyoto which hosts a summer intensive program similar to T.T.T.

It should also be noted that the participants were adamant that their interview were reflective of their perspectives only and were hesitant to assume that their opinions should apply to all performers. Additionally, none of the performers I interviewed are the primary successor for their style and therefore may express more flexibility regarding the art than their main lineage counterparts. This is not to discount the opinions of the participants, however, since as practitioners and teachers of nō and kyōgen, they are contributing to the state of the art now and any such contributions should be identified. The findings below represent insights from these participants into kata themselves, as well as explanations of the theatrical and artistic systems in which kata exists.

The Artistic Tradition of Nōgaku

All of the participants recognized kata as an integral element of their respective traditional theatres. It is a necessary part of the fabric of the art. In the chapter entitled

"Expanding Nō's Horizons: Considerations for a New Nō Perspective," Richard Emmert asserts that, in his perspective as a nō practitioner, kata are one of the three movement elements that he believes defines nō as nō.[138] According to Emmert, kata, along with the *kamae* and *suri ashi* in combination with various musical elements, create nō primarily through the evocation of concentration, energy, and tension on stage. He states, "[w]ith them, a performance becomes more clearly *nō* than anything else, no matter how story, masks, costumes, or stage differ from traditional *nō*."[139]

As something so integral to the art, kata have indeed shaped both the art and the perspective of the practitioners. The remainder of this chapter will explore this impact as revealed to me through the interviews I have conducted. In order to do so, however, we must debunk the notion that performing plays with predetermined movement patterns is uncreative or stagnant. There is, in fact, plenty of room for interpretation within any given performance. On a macro scale, this appears in things such as the costuming choices for a nō play, and on the micro scale, this may appear as a slight modification in the portrayal of a kata. In both cases the choice is guided by the rules of the art.

Consider, for a moment, any sport. Within that sport there are rules that dictate how the game is played. Take soccer, in which players (with the exception of the goalkeeper in a specific area) may not use their hands. Essentially, there is nothing that stops the players from simply picking up the ball and throwing it into the other net. However, as soon as they do, they are either cheating the system or playing an entirely different game. The interest in the sport comes in how each player or team chooses to play within the rules. Acting in nō and kyōgen is similar.

[138] Richard Emmert, "Expanding Nō's Horizons: Considerations for a New Nō Perspective," in *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World,* ed. James R. Brandon (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 25.
[139] Emmert, "Expanding Nō's Horizons," 29.

When nō and kyōgen actors act within the nō and kyōgen genres, they are making an intentional choice to play by the rules of that game. If they want to do something else, they do something else. For example, Shigeyama Dōji writes both kyōgen plays and comic skits. If he has an idea which fits the kyōgen genre, then he writes it as a kyōgen play. However, he is not limited to remaining within that style and therefore when a different medium proves to be more conducive to the content he is trying to communicate, he simply writes it as such.[140]

The notion of finding creativity within the strict rules or conventions of the art is not limited to only theatre. In fact, the theatrical tradition mimics the structure of the Japanese premodern poetic tradition. Considering the influence that waka had on the development of nō, as discussed in Chapter Two, it is no surprise that the tradition of nō once again mirrors that of *waka*. With rules surrounding word usage, subject matter, and the number of syllables through which sentiments can be expressed, true mastery of the art is reliant on the understanding of the canon and mastery of the conventions. The iconic Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241) of the Mikohidari house of poetry wrote in the *Eiga no taigai* (詠歌大概, *Essentials of Poetic Composition*, ca.1222):

> When it comes to the meaning [*kokoro*] of poetry, newness must come first. (One must seek out a conception or an approach that has yet to be used.) When it comes to diction [*kotoba*], one must use old words. (One must not use anything not found in the *Three Collections*. The poems of ancient poets collected in the *Shinkokinshū* can be used in the same way.)[141]

[140] Shigeyama Dōji, personal interview with author, August 2016.
[141] Haruo Shirane, ed., *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 606.

Here Teika lays out his expectation for appropriate poetry stating that using only the approved "old words" of canonical poetry, one must be able to express new meaning or reframe older perspectives.

These types of conventions create different perspectives on creativity in art. When the conversation shifts from considering what a performer can do that has not been done before to considering what they understand about the tradition and how they are able to carve a space out for themselves within that tradition, it changes how the performer approaches and experiences their work. For some, this structure is far more interesting than more open-ended artistic cultures because, as Pellecchia rhetorically asked during his interview, "what makes art interesting without a frame?"[142]

Kata are one of these frames. The actors must adhere to the script of the somatic text at hand, at the same time finding ways to express the text as they want it to be presented on stage. In this context, the analogy of kata to text can be brought one step further, to language. Just as humans move from basic language acquisition to eventually using that language to express themselves in a variety of ways, the process of learning and engaging with kata once again parallels that of lexical texts.

[142] Diego Pellecchia, personal interview with author, July 2016.

Kata as Somatic Language

Perhaps because of the young age at which traditional actors begin to train, learning the lines and movements of nō and kyōgen plays is often compared to learning one's alphabet.[143] In order to manage the complexities of later kyōgen training, plays are broken down into previously learned kata to make the process more manageable. It is therefore crucial that students have a solid foundation in kata and are able to recall them automatically.[144] This is similar to becoming extremely familiar with numbers early on in order to comfortably engage with more complex math problems in the future. As we can see from examples such as Shigeyama Akira, Shigeyama Dōji, Nomura Mansaku, and Nomura Mansai, once they have acquired this somatic language they are capable of integrating it into their other works. Whether this takes the form of translating Western works like Beckett and Shakespeare into the kyōgen style or the form of bringing the physical language of kyōgen into newly-produced fusion pieces, the actors can apply their skills in a variety of ways.

This act of translation is perhaps most clear through Shigeyama Akira's work *translating* Samuel Beckett's *Act Without Words I* (1957) into a kyōgen-style performance. This is a play that has no spoken words and explains only the physical staging. Due to the constraints of kyōgen's traditional stage, various concessions had to be made in order to accommodate the lack of stage technology. For example, where needed, Shigeyama Akira and Salz would substitute *kurogo* (man-in-black) stagehands where wire and pulley systems may have been used in the

[143] James R. Brandon, ed., *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 8.

[144] Jonah Salz, "Why was everyone laughing at me? Roles of passage for the kyōgen child," in *Learning in Likely Places: Varieties of Apprenticeship in Japan,* ed. John Singleton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 86

original.[145] Any person unfamiliar with Beckett may find this a perfectly acceptable exercise of creative vision, however those who are familiar with Beckett are likely to know of his insistence that stagings of his productions must follow the stage performances exactly.[146] With this knowledge, one might assume that such kyōgen adaptations would be unacceptable to Beckett; however, the opposite proved to be true. Referring to evidence that Beckett expressed support for Salz and Shigeyama Akira's adaptations, Preston claims that, "Beckett was far more flexible in his work with directors and actors in Japan."[147] However, this may not necessarily be the case. Unlike Western artists who often disregard the stage directions of Beckett's plays, Salz and Shigeyama Akira were not trying to change Beckett's play, but rather translate it into another somatic language. Beckett himself translated many of his plays from French into English and was therefore aware of the nuances and compromises necessary when engaging in such a task. Every act of translation is in part an exercise in linguistic competency and in part subjective interpretation. Just as plays may be translated between verbal languages, to perform something in a kyōgen style would be like translating that performance from one physical language to another.

It should also be noted that the language of kata is always learned in context. In kyōgen there is a specific progression of plays that a child actor in training should learn. Starting with either *Iroha (Learning the Alphabet)* or *Utsubozaru (The Monkey-Skin Quiver)* at the age of three to five, they move into the *aikyōgen* role in *Yashima* and the ritual dance *Sambasō* in their mid-teens, and eventually graduate with the play *Tsurigitsune* (*Trapping the Fox*) in their early twenties. According to Jonah Salz, each of these plays requires certain fundamental skills

[145] Carrie J. Preston, *Learning to Kneel: Noh, Modernism, and Journeys in Teaching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 232.
[146] Preston, *Learning to Kneel,* 231.
[147] Preston, *Learning to Kneel,* 232.

necessary for a kyōgen performer.[148] In order to practice and then showcase these skills, actors perform them within the context of these plays. Salz also notes that there is a handful of other plays which may be performed at various ages after graduating with *Tsurigitsune*, all of which require and showcase certain refinement of a performer's acting technique.

Kata in nō are also taught in context. Pellecchia compared learning kata to learning ballet patterns, the difference being that in nō, performers never practice the kata in isolation.[149] This may be because on their own kata are not useful to performers, rather, they are tools which, in their appropriate context, are used to help inform the understanding of the play. Emmert contributed a similar observation, stating that, "[…] the feel of the same kata often differs greatly from play to play, depending again on the role being performed as well as the actor-dancer performing."[150] Once actors have both the basic foundation and the context of the plays, then meaning can be introduced into the equation. James Brandon explains that, "[m]eaning is gradually acquired and internalized through the physical process of repeatedly doing the movement and voice, a process that functions beyond verbal or intellectual explanation."[151] This is a process which Pellecchia defines as "characterization," not simply reproduction.[152] Leiter also provides a similar perspective stating that these "[…] numerous repetitions lead the actor to an appreciation of the interior truth behind his physical exertions in the role."[153] He further clarifies this process by comparing it to Russian theatre practitioner Constantin Stanislavski's (1863-1938) later theories, specifically the "method of physical actions." This method requires

[148] Salz, "Why was everyone laughing at me?" 88.
[149] Diego Pellecchia, personal interview with author, July 2016.
[150] Emmert, "Expanding Nō's Horizons," 26.
[151] Brandon, *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World,* 8.
[152] Diego Pellecchia, personal interview with author, July 2016.
[153] Samuel L. Leiter, *The Art of Kabuki: Famous Plays in Performance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), xx.

conscious choices by the actor on stage "as to how the character will relate physically to his "given circumstances." Once the appropriate choices have been made, the actor will find that the proper emotional responses will arise within him naturally, without forcing."[154]

Internalization

This type of approach to movement in the context of traditional theatre is reliant on two parties, both of whom know their role in the process. The first is the teacher. They impart unto the student the predetermined physical patterns, the kata, in minute detail. Once a kata is learned, however, it is the role of the student to reflect on what the movements and gestures are saying, internalize it, and then work on introducing meaning. According to Nomura Mansaku,

> [I]t isn't a matter of just applying forms (kata) that you have learned from your teacher. It's not "ah, let's use this kata here" or "that kata will work there." The point is you must use the opportunity to rethink your acting: "why is that kata used there?" and "what does this kata mean?[155]

Similar to performing classical music, the student's first job is to learn the music – the notes, the tempo, the volume, and such – as it is written on the sheet music. However, it is only after the music has been memorized that the musician can really work on breathing life into the piece and making it their own. This process is heavily reliant on the student, since the teacher cannot do the learning for the student, either physically or intellectually.

[154] Leiter, *The Art of Kabuki,* xx.
[155] Nomura Mansaku, "Experiment in *Kyōgen*," in *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World,* ed. James R. Brandon (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 176.

This is by no means to say that teachers are indifferent to their students, Katayama reflected on his teaching experiences and noted that there were students of all types. He noted that some students get better when they are praised whereas some get better if their teacher is strict with them. Some students were able to pick up on things right away, while some learn very slowly, while others make very little progress initially and then get very good very quickly.[156] Thus, as with many other aspects of nōgaku, subtlety should not be mistaken for passivity.

However, since the learning process does foreground introspection, Pellecchia explained that there is no debriefing of performances (as is common in western theatre practice) with your teacher in nō. However, this was the exact environment he sought out when he came to Japan. Pellecchia was adamant that just because there is not the same exchange of questions one might expect to find in the West, it does not mean that it is a passive experience.[157]

Shigeyama Dōji spoke of a similar training experience with his grandfather. During his training process he did not always immediately understand why his grandfather was teaching what he was teaching, but due to the close relationship they had, Shigeyama Dōji had both the trust and respect to simply follow along and eventually grow to understand the logic being taught through the actions. In order to do this, he was expected to spend time on his own thinking about why he was doing what he was doing. However, if he still could not figure it out on his own, his grandfather was open to answering his questions. The development of his understanding of this logic was especially important for Shigeyama Dōji. He stated during his interview that, "the most important thing [he] received from [his] grandfather is his logic."[158] If he understood the logic of the play, along with the logic of the actions, that then became the information he used to inform

[156] Katayama Shingo, personal interview with author, August 2016.
[157] Shigeyama Dōji, personal interview with author, August 2016.
[158] Shigeyama Dōji, personal interview with author, August 2016.

his own performances. In this reframing of kata on stage, the idea that kata are restrictive is contested. If the movements follow the logic of the context, then drastic changes may only impose illogic on the situation.

Adaptability and Audience

Understanding the logic of both somatic and lexical performance texts is also crucial in the communication of the story to the audience. Furthermore, the actor needs to understand not only what they are performing, but also for whom they are performing in order to make an informed decision about how to do so. In my research, every informant brought up the audience in one way or another. This indicates that nō and kyōgen performers are just as conscious of the audience as any other thespian. If these forms of theatre truly were "museum arts," the role of the audience in performances should remain inconsequential. Since the beginning of these theatrical traditions, the audience has shaped not only how performers think about their art, but how the performance actually manifests itself on stage. Even in contemporary performances, great care is taken by the performers to gauge their potential audience and modify the performance accordingly.

For example, in a performance of *Tsuchigumo* (*The Earth Spider*) in Washington, D.C. in 1988, the performers used more spider web than normal in an effort to engage the foreign audience.[159] It is important to note here that Brandon dismisses any notion of "authenticity" or "inauthenticity" with regard to performance. The concept of authenticity is just as fragile as any other invented tradition and typically what is considered authentic does not have a stable

[159] Brandon, *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World,* 159.

identity. Instead, it is often far more the projection of an idealized concept than an actual concrete experience. Since the performers are always adapting to their audience, one might argue that the most authentic approach would be performers treating the performance as they usually do and modifying it according to what they believe best suits the audience of that time. Nonetheless, Brandon later clarifies that said adaptation was not simply based on an assumption that Western audiences needed different performances than Japanese audiences, as similar modifications had been determined ahead of time and used in the advertising of the same piece when it was performed in Tokyo in the 1960s.[160] In his interview, Pellecchia stated that he believed theatre was a communication between two entities. The choices nō and kyōgen practitioners make when presenting their work are dependent on what they want to communicate with their audiences.

For those raised within a traditional family, being on the stage at such a young age fosters an acute awareness of the audience from the very beginning. After his debut performance in *Iroha*, Shigeyama Dōji reportedly asked why the audience was laughing at him.[161] As bizarre a response as this might initially sound coming from a comedic performer, according to Salz, Shigeyama Dōji had been so self-consumed with delivering a perfect presentation on stage, he had completely forgotten that kyōgen was supposed to be funny.[162] Due to the immediacy of the audience of a live performance, however, Shigeyama Dōji was quickly reminded at a young age that regardless of how seriously he took himself, the audience ultimately plays just as big a role in the performance as the actors. This brings us to a very specific responsibility of the kyōgen

[160] Brandon, *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World,* 159.
[161] Salz, "Why was everyone laughing at me?" 98.
[162] Salz, "Why was everyone laughing at me?" 98.

actor which perhaps is the driving factor for artists to maintain spontaneity in their art: the responsibility to make the audience laugh.

Between nō and kyōgen, kyōgen is the genre in which it would be most obvious should the actors ever become more focused on the precise reproduction of the art rather than entertaining their current audiences. Physicality plays a huge role in the actor's ability to evoke laughter, particularly when the language may be challenging for contemporary speakers. The fact that kyōgen works with both lexical and somatic texts, though, may be part of the reason why it continues to be so accessible today. Despite not understanding any Japanese, many students of the 2016 T.T.T. kyōgen class were able to fully enjoy *Kuchimane* performed by the teachers and performers Shigeyama Akira, Shigeyama Dōji, and Maruishi Yasushi (b. 1974). This is because the language of kata is not restricted to only Japanese speakers. Through the kata of the play, the three teachers were able to come together and use both their bodies and the somatic script to convey the story.

In kyōgen, as with any other comedy, simply performing the required movements and saying the required words will not necessarily evoke the desired response from the audience. This, in combination with the expectation of both the performers and the audience that the audience will laugh is what contributes to kyōgen's steep learning curve, as Shigeyama Dōji explained. He stated that for a while, you are young and cute and people will laugh at anything you do on stage. After a while, however, you grow up and people stop laughing. He explains watching his grandfather and repeating, or thinking that he was repeating, exactly what he saw on stage – only to produce very little response from the audience. He would think "I'm doing it exactly how grandfather is doing it, but why is he funny and I'm not?" This, however, was not something his grandfather could coach him through. Other than providing the helpful feedback

"If you did it once and it wasn't funny, why are you doing it the same way again?" his grandfather knew that it was something Shigeyama Dōji had to figure out on his own.[163] They may perform the same kata, but he was Sennojō and Dōji was Dōji and thus, it was on Dōji to figure out what worked for him on the stage. As Nomura Mansaku stated, "kyōgen changes with the personality of each actor, with each audience, with each age."[164] In his interview, Shigeyama Dōji expressed the difficulties he faced managing the expectations of the audience but also the indescribable feeling he received when something finally clicked and he was able to make the audience laugh. The success of a kyōgen play is not for someone to be able to reproduce it exactly as they were taught; it is about communicating the play in such a way that the audience is able to respond appropriately. That these artists are able to take plays which are hundreds of years old and make the audiences of today (even audiences that do not speak any Japanese) laugh is a testament to their strength as performers and their desire to share the joy of the art.

In contrast, due to the introspective nature of nō in both its performance style and in the audience's response, the role of the audience in the performance is initially less evident than in kyōgen. However, nō performers also take great care to consider their audience. In the book *The Noh Theater: Principles and Perspectives*, Komparu Kunio states that, "[i]n noh the audience and the performer always act upon each other."[165] The importance of this relationship is reflected in the structure of his book. Following the first two chapters, which focus on the "sanctity and magic"[166] of nō and explaining some important terms and vocabulary, the importance of the relationship of the audience and performers is prioritized as the next vital piece of information

[163] Shigeyama Dōji, personal interview with author, August 2016.
[164] Mansaku, "Experiment in *Kyōgen*," 158.
[165] Komparu, *The Noh Theater,* 17.
[166] Komparu uses these terms to link nōgaku back to the two performance genres from which it developed. Sanctity is inherited from the ritual nature of *dengaku* (field performance) and magic is inherited from *sarugaku* and its connection with what we would now identify as Shinto institutions. (Komparu, *The Noh Theater,* 3).

necessary for the reader to understand moving forward with the book. Before explaining movements, masks, costuming, or music, Komparu ensures that the reader is fully aware of the audience's role.

In order to explain this abstract concept visually, Komparu describes this precarious relationship in terms of the shape resulting when two points are placed at the correct distance between each other. If the points are too close to each other, the lines extending from one point to another (these lines seemingly have an assumed tension/flexibility to them) will create a circle, if the points are too far apart from each other, then the lines flatten out to almost a straight line. However, according to Komparu, the ideal shape between them is an oval (Figure 15). This metaphor for the relationship between audience and actor is a visual way of expressing the necessity of the appropriate amount of space between audience and actors to create the ideal atmosphere for the performance.[167]

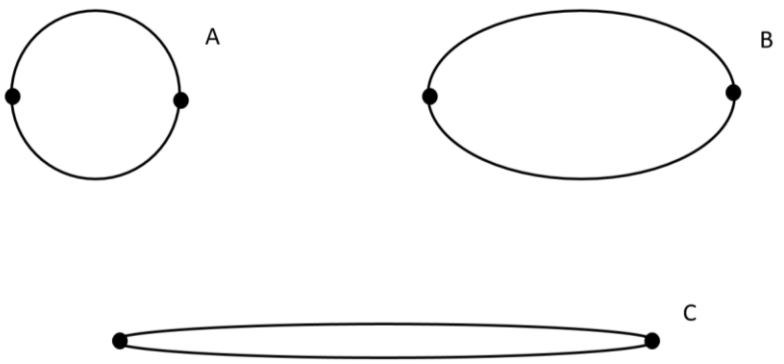

Figure 15: Komparu's theory of the space between actors and audience. Diagram A shows the shape created when the audience and actor are too close, Diagram B shows the shape created when the audience and actor are at perfect distance, and Diagram C shows the shape created when the audience and actor are too far apart

[167] Komparu, *The Noh Theater,* 18-19.

This concept of space, or "*ma*" is extremely important in nō as an art and Komparu later delves into the concept of time, space, and space-time, three concepts which share the same kanji (間), in their own chapter later in the book. In relation to kata, however, *ma* feeds back into the notion of *ichi-go ichi-e*. While Shigeyama Akira did not use the term *ichi-go ichi-e* specifically, he identified the same concept by using the term "*ma*." Shigeyama Akira explained that even if someone performs a kata they have performed before, it will inevitably be different. Specifically, "*ma*" is different (*ma ga chigau).*[168] *Ma* here can be interpreted as both the time and space. A performer will never perform the same play for the same audience in the same space twice. Even if these three elements can be recreated, time cannot be rewound and that will change both how the piece is presented and received.

The Impact of Time on the Body and the Art

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the fixed structure of the performances plays a very practical role within the performance tradition. If each person in a nōgaku piece trains separately and the ensemble for any given piece spend very little time together before the actual performance, it is important that each player, each musician know their role precisely so that they may seamlessly come together as individual pieces of a larger whole. Paradoxically, the structure which dictates the performance is also what allows the performers to embrace the spontaneity of the moment. This is the part of the system that preserves freshness within the art. It does not matter if an actor has performed the same kata over and over again. The fact that they

[168] Shigeyama Akira, personal interview with author, August 2016.

are performing with someone with whom they have little to no practice performing the piece consequently results in a dynamic performance.[169] In this sense, despite the long performance history and fixed somatic text, nō and kyōgen potentially hold a spontaneity that longer runs of Western theatre do not have.

This comfort with the long-term passage of time has been noted by nō performers from the beginning. Zeami accounted for the impact of age on the actor's ability to perform.[170] As much as a performer must be aware of the changing needs of the audience, they must also be aware of the inevitable changes within themselves. Discussing this in *Fūshikaden*, Zeami states, "[i]n nō, as well, we should recognize as the flower that which does not stay the same. Rarity comes from not remaining the same, but moving on with diverse means of expression."[171] Nō researcher Masuda Shōzō further extrapolates on the ephemerality of the body in the context of nō, stating, "[n]ō, since it is performed by the flesh, is dependent upon the flesh of the next generation for its transmission. Zeami established a method so that this transmission can take place even as the nō always maintains a fresh excitement."[172] These perspectives are reminiscent of the aesthetic concept of *mono no aware* (the pathos of things), in which the beauty of something is found in its impermanence. Instead of seeing the ephemerality of the human body as an obstacle for the stage, its beauty is embraced and worked into the theoretical and practical fabric of the art.

Tom Hare writes, "[i]f the change from element to element in a performance is too abrupt or forceful, if it is not governed by an overarching performative intent, the performance comes

[169] Brandon, *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World,* 165.
[170] Tom Hare, "Nō Changes," in *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World,* ed. James R. Brandon (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 132.
[171] Hare, "Nō Changes," 130.
[172] Hare, "Nō Changes,"139.

apart, like a marionette with severed strings."[173] He later continues, "[…] change is part of the actor's technical vocabulary, but it is always governed by an intentionality that is less subject to change – which may indeed be immune to the effects of change at all."[174] In a world where everything is expected to move quickly, nōgaku is not afraid to move slowly. Emmert argues that "[nō] can and it should preserve and it can and it should create"[175] While slow change runs the risk of being mistaken for no change in a fast-paced society, for a theatre simultaneously pursuing diametrically opposed goals, it ensures that there remains a balance between innovation and preservation within the art.

Kata Transmission: Written Text

When one considers the preservation of text, it typically takes the form of the passing on of a physical manuscript. If the script for the text was originally transmitted orally, it may have also gone through the additional step of transcription in order to be preserved on paper. However, as somatic texts, kata do not exist outside of the body. There may have been some attempt to transcribe the movements into words in katazuke but these documents have not replaced instructors for the transmission of the art. According to Pellecchia, this is likely due to the personal nature of katazuke. He clarified that such texts are created purely for the purposes of the individual actors. Katazuke are important in that they help each actor to remember key movements after learning the play, however, the role was never more than that of a supporting document for later reference.[176] Learning the play through lessons with one's instructor is the

[173] Hare, "Nō Changes," 131.
[174] Hare, "Nō Changes," 131.
[175] Emmert, "Expanding Nō's Horizons," 21.
[176] Diego Pellecchia, personal interview with author, July 2016.

priority, the expectation being that the performers commit the kata to muscle memory. Any notes taken are supplementary and for personal use only.

While it is possible that written components continue to be kept private as a means of maintaining secrecy around the art (as discussed in Chapter 2), it is more likely the case that documents, such as katazuke, remain personal simply because they would be useless to anyone else. Any actor who has annotated their own scripts with their blocking can understand how incredibly personal such notes are. Unless said individual is the stage manager or director managing the master script for the production, there is no need to annotate every single movement or for the notes to make sense or even be legible to anyone else. Movements that they are sure they will remember or which seem logical from context may not even make it to the page; meanwhile, the smallest movement might be documented for a range of reasons. Documentation may indicate a perceived importance of the movement to the staging of the text or it may simply have been the result of an actor continually forgetting the movement in practice. In the case of nō or kyōgen, katazuke have a practical function in that a play that the actors are taught might not be performed again for many years and, when that opportunity arises, the actors may have minimal time to devote to preparation. While the performance should, to a certain extent, be programmed into their muscle memory, it is also helpful to have a reference document to trigger the memories necessary to perform the play again at a later time.

Beyond personal reference, it is possible that katazuke can be used as historical documentation, as seen in the example of Kanze Hisao researching annotated performance notes in order to restore performances to forms seen in an earlier time.[177] However, it seems that

[177] Nagao Kazuo, "A Return to Essence through Misconception: From Zeami to Hisao," in *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World,* ed. James R. Brandon (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 120.

written resources are not used often in day-to-day activities. Shigeyama Dōji mentioned that they had a family manuscript which was rarely accessed.[178] It seems that written text is also used to help accommodate amateur students, such as those in the T.T.T. program. When we began to learn our play for the recital, *Shibiri* (*Pins and Needles*), we were given scripts in both Japanese and English. In addition, there was a script with the romanized pronunciation of the Japanese to assist the non-Japanese speakers with learning the text. However, all in-class instruction followed the traditional "parroting" method and when kata were introduced, there was a clear preference for the actors to not be holding their scripts as they learned the movements. The teachers also allowed us to record them reading the lines so that we could practice parroting on our own time (as opposed to simply being asked to memorize the written script alone). Overall, oral instruction was given much more precedence than learning from additional resources.

Kata Transmission: Audio/Video Recording

What is also notable is that recording technology seems to have become just as, if not more, supplementary to the art as written text. As noted above, the students of the T.T.T. program were encouraged to both video and audio record so that they would have materials to refer to during out-of-class practice. In a sense, this allowed students to take the teachers' instruction into their own practice outside of the class time, in order to accommodate the tight timeline in which the program runs. Additionally, when there was confusion over differences in how each of the three teachers were teaching one of the chants for a *komai* (small dance), Shigeyama Dōji played an audio recording of the same song on his phone, stating that it was a

[178] Shigeyama Dōji, personal interview with author, August 2016.

recording of "the master," his grandfather Sennojō. This demonstrates that recording technology has changed the way performers can consult the teachings of previous teachers.

These digital recordings are not always looked to as law however. Pellecchia mentioned that while he uses recordings in his own training, they are always taken with a grain of salt, as each performance is dependent on the actors, audience, and environment of that day. It is a fixed perspective, visual representation of the way it was performed on that day, but nothing more.[179] In a personal conversation, a peer from the T.T.T. nō class expressed to me her frustrations caused by the limitations of a video recording. After practicing a *shimai* extensively outside of class using a recording of one teacher as reference material, she spent her class being corrected by another, more senior teacher. The recording, it turned out, was incorrect in some of the steps. While it is certainly very frustrating to have been taught something that was significantly incorrect, it highlights the limitations noted by Pellecchia and helps to illuminate why such materials are used as only a part of the training process.

It was not surprising, then, that whenever I asked if recordings could ever replace the teaching process, there was a unanimous "no" from the participants. There seems to be a firm belief that the art cannot be separated from the teacher-disciple relationship and thus supplementary materials such as katazuke and recordings would be useless on their own. In an interview with Shigeyama Dōji, he explained the impact that his grandfather's teaching has had on him as a kyōgen actor extends beyond the basic techniques he was taught. He explained that he believed that his grandfather was the best artist and identified himself as his grandfather's greatest work of art. Stating that everything he could do was due to his grandfather, he feels that

[179] Diego Pellecchia, personal interview with author, July 2016.

the only way to demonstrate and prove how great his grandfather was as an artist was to be a great artist himself. He also went on to say that he felt that people do their best work when they are doing that work for others, suggesting that any greatness he achieved on stage was due to his personal motivation to represent his grandfather well.[180] This anecdote reveals both a relationship and personal perspective that is rarely discussed in Western theatre discourse.

Similarly, in *Nō and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World,* there is a chapter in which Nomura Mansaku suggests that kyōgen plays a very large part in his identity as a performer, stating, "[m]y hope, when I appear in a new play, is not much that the audiences will like me, but that they will praise kyōgen."[181] A statement like this allows us to see the collectivist nature of this art. Such a selfless perspective is somewhat in opposition to the eclectic culture of the West, in which a performer is more likely to seek out teachers and training opportunities that work for them instead of becoming a vessel for a single style. In the nōgaku tradition, the training takes the forefront, decentralizing the actor from the performance. This is clearly a very polarizing framing of what is more realistically a spectrum of training styles which are not necessarily as dichotomous as they appear at first glance; however, nōgaku's unique relationship with the past is something that makes its current state of great interest. Nō scholar Tom Hare suggests that, "[…] there must be a middle ground, a happy compromise between fastidious and compulsive adherence to an ideal of tradition and the notion that a performance inheres solely in the interpretation of the individual genius."[182]

Perhaps kata hold the answer to this "middle ground." After all, actors must negotiate their obligation to the forms while understanding that any actions performed through the filter of

[180] Shigeyama Dōji, personal interview with author, August 2016.
[181] Mansaku, "Experiment in *Kyōgen*," 180.
[182] Hare, "Nō Changes," 140.

the body will be consequently individualized. Returning to the argument that kata are like their own language, a performer is performing the somatic "words" that they had no role in shaping yet still use them to create their own meaning. As a result, the actor changes the composition of the language ever so slightly. However small the impact, the fact that it passes through that performer means that they consequently shaped it for future users. When nōgaku performers embrace this approach, they exploit the opportunity to create art which, like language, is simultaneously personal and impersonal. By performing kata, that performer is becoming the vessel for someone else's artistic vision; however, by being the vessel for the kata, the kata is inherently that performer's creation; it is simultaneously subjective and objective. Kata are an art form which belongs to both entities. Leiter claims that studying kata "often permits one to understand both the nature of the actors who created them and the differences in the actors who have followed their leads."[183] Individuals who are immersed in the traditional are always in conversation with the past. Whether that conversation is a dialogue or a monologue (for either side) is dependent on the person.

Regardless of if or how kata may or may not occupy this conceptual "middle ground," the fact that kata are born from an environment which makes this discussion possible is also important to note. Beyond preserving and transmitting the kata themselves, these artists are preserving and transmitting this way of teaching as well. If these artists were concerned simply about reproducing what was performed on stage, would it not be sufficient to record and transmit the culture in that way? Considering the bigger picture, these performers are not simply

[183] Leiter, *The Art of Kabuki,* xxi.

preserving somatic texts in isolation as simple video recordings would, but they are also preserving the environment in which the text exists.

Teaching and Learning: A New Audience

Recently, as the world has become more globalized and nō and kyōgen have gained audiences around the world, these traditional theatres have faced the new conundrum of managing a different type of student. Obviously, the intimate, long-term relationship built between teacher and disciple requires extensive commitment from both parties. Unfortunately, however, many international thespians do not have the time or the resources to commit fully to the michi of nō or kyōgen. While these students may never have the chance to fully acquire the physical (or verbal) languages of nōgaku, during training experiences in the T.T.T. or other similar programs, they are able to develop some literacy in the art and, consequently, gain exposure to some of the artistic theories above. Perhaps most importantly, they experience first-hand the dynamic aspects of the art and have the opportunity to dispel any previous misconceptions that these theatres are isolated in history.

As in any other period in nōgaku's history, however, we see the practitioners catering to the consumers of their age and making necessary adaptations. Now that nō and kyōgen have effectively become cultural commodities, programs like the T.T.T. exist in order to give curious participants, both international and Japanese, exposure to the art. Due to the interest from international students, teachers are facing students with varied exposure to the Japanese culture, many of whom are requesting to be taught a theatre in a language that they do not speak. Their time with these students is also limited and has resulted in modifications to the teaching process;

for example, having three teachers alternate in the instructing of the same play to a large group of students over the span of four weeks. It is slightly unorthodox but nonetheless part of how one type of nōgaku instruction has evolved to suit the times. Despite these inevitable structural modifications to make these programs feasible, the teachers still do their best to teach the students in the most traditional way possible.[184] However, this unconventional teaching method has perhaps an unintentional impact beyond simply making the program possible in such a short period of time. Having three teachers teaching the same thing at the same time actually makes the implications and process of oral transmission extremely evident.

During my time in the T.T.T. program, it seemed that some students perceived that there was only one way to perform the play. It is possible that this was due to a limited understanding of the nuances of oral transmission or a misunderstanding of the function of kata. Regardless of why this is the case, I observed that some students in the kyōgen class refused to accept the way one of the teachers taught a kata, replying instead that one of the other teachers had taught it differently. In reality, there were three kyōgen instructors, and consequently, three ways that specific kata was taught. There were even differences between Maruishi Yasushi and Shigeyama Dōji, who were both taught by Sennojō and would theoretically have been taught the same pattern in the same way. According to another participant, the nō class experienced variation between instructors was well. It seems that the natural flexibility of the art is not the first expectation of participants. Instead, they appear to trust that there is a single version of the kata and that all of the teachers are teaching them the same thing. The idea that each teacher has their own style or that mistakes are a reality in oral transmission comes second. This raises questions

[184] Shigeyama Akira, Shigeyama Dōji, Katayama Shingo, and Diego Pellecchia, personal interviews with author, July and August 2016.

as to whether or not this is in part due to preconceived idealizations of the theatre. If this is the case, then why exactly and to what extent these idealizations exist is unclear to me at this point but should be the topic of study in the future.

What became evident throughout the training process, however, was that due to the human element of somatic text, kata is not transmitted as a pristine, single image. Instead, it is as if a series of similar but not identical images are placed over top of one another to coalesce into an approximate representation of the original form. Any potential errors or outliers become lost in the greater scheme of the learning process and the kata become the lowest common denominator of what a person has been taught, along with their own understanding of the process.

Nomura Mansaku, who also has experience teaching kyōgen to foreigners, seems to have embraced the role that foreigners are playing in today's kyōgen.[185] Nomura has come to the realization that kyōgen performed by foreigners will never be like the original Japanese kyōgen. Instead of dismissing it, however, he recognizes the effort and care that students put into creating a successful performance.[186] He has also learned that it is not necessary for the students to reproduce an identical copy of the original Japanese for the students to come to a full realization of some of the acting philosophy behind kyōgen. Reflecting on a particular student from his time at the University of Hawai'i, Nomura Mansaku concludes, "[b]ecause kyōgen changes with the personality of each actor, with each audience, and with each age, he had grasped the essence of kyōgen well."[187]

[185] Mansaku, "Experiment in *Kyōgen*," 181.
[186] Mansaku, "Experiment in *Kyōgen*," 181.
[187] Mansaku, "Experiment in *Kyōgen*," 180-181.

Mansaku may be somewhat unique in his standpoint, acknowledging that some lines of transmission are stricter and focused on preservation.[188] Hare also noted that innovation in critical nō discourse is not usually treated as a positive thing.[189] This may be in an attempt to identify nō and kyōgen as cultural artifacts as they are now, and in a sense, canonize and preserve an older and more elite physical language. Despite this, Mansaku sees the interaction between the traditional and the contemporary as a necessary cycle: "I've got to keep performing traditional kyōgen in order to find the new. And ideally, doing new plays improves my kyōgen acting as well. It goes back and forth."[190] Negotiating strict unwritten rules surrounding the art certainly poses challenges for those wishing to move beyond traditional performances, but Mansaku seems to believe that it is of value for both to be in contact noting the impossibility for contemporary kyōgen actors "to live isolated from modern life or from contemporary theater."[191] This is an example of the factoring of time into the greater discourse of the art since despite its traditional roots, nōgaku is an active presence in the contemporary world. Just as an actor must embrace the impact of time and aging on their body, they must also take into consideration the impact of time on nōgaku and act accordingly.

Conclusion

In Shigeyama Akira's interview, he self-identified not as a kyōgen actor, but as an actor who also performs kyōgen.[192] In his long history of performing experimental and fusion works, he has proven that he is not limited to performing only traditional kyōgen. Instead he uses his

[188] Mansaku, "Experiment in *Kyōgen*," 173.
[189] Hare, "Nō Changes," 125.
[190] Mansaku, "Experiment in *Kyōgen*," 176.
[191] Mansaku, "Experiment in *Kyōgen*," 173.
[192] Shigeyama Akira, personal interview with author, August 2016.

skills as a kyōgen actor and brings them into other genres of art, creating something entirely different. This demonstrates two notions surrounding kata. The first is how performances can be translated into somatic texts, just as they may be translated between lexical texts when there is a somatic language for the performance to be translated into. Furthermore, but looking at sequences of kata within a performance, they may be internalized and interpreted like text. As a result, nōgaku artists often face the challenge of negotiating two simultaneous texts on stage.

The second is that for many performers, simply performing within the physical conventions of nō and kyōgen is not enough for performers to define a work as nō or kyōgen. This emphasizes that kata are part of a larger system, more of which needs to be engaged before a performance is considered a part of the genre. This genre may arguably include more intangible elements such as the teacher-disciple relationship and the tradition of oral transmission. It in this environment, however, that kata are able to remain dynamic and engaging for their practitioners.

Conclusion

"Japanese theater, existing paradoxically in a world where transience is venerated as a mode of life, has overcome the merely ephemeral quality of live stage by the employment of kata."

- Samuel L. Leiter[193]

From aesthetically motivated abstract forms to symbolic movements used to help tell stories on the nō stage, kata are the basic building blocks of nōgaku theatre. As is evident from Zeami's treatises, the catering of movement and the body on stage to patrons has played an integral role in the success of nōgaku as an art and ultimately the development of nōgaku as its own theatre genre. It comes as no surprise then that current practitioners still consider kata to be integral to the art, despite their long history and external perspectives that their repetition indicates a lack of creativity by contemporary standards.

These external perspectives are perhaps shaped by what Leiter describes as a "tendency to classicalize the kata and set them in the formaldehyde of tradition."[194] As explored in this investigation, however, kata are far from the mindless reproductions of movements maintained only to appease the expectations of yet another invented tradition. Instead, kata are the result of a long series of complex, yet continuous, societal influences which impacted the canonization process of the somatic texts alongside the oral texts. One of the primary contributors to this was patronism from both the social elite and official government structures. In order to ensure that nō continued to suit the tastes of those sustaining the art, performers were pressured to transmit the art as it was. Any drastic modifications in either style or content risked the possibility of

[193] Leiter, *The Art of Kabuki,* xix.
[194] Leiter, *The Art of Kabuki,* xvii.

displeasing the patron. However, this alone did not result in the canonization of the somatic text. The environment in which this tradition exists must also be identified as a contributing factor. Due to the teacher-student, vocational environment, it was only natural that the movements on stage would be solidified via the same process as the oral text. By examining this process, we can be reminded that "[k]ata are not static but continually undergoing change and development."[195] Kata, like language, are undoubtedly continuously subject to change, but they are not likely to be radically modified in a short period of time unless there is some external pressure forcing them to be so.

There seems, however, to be a double standard applied to kata on stage and other mediums of artistic expression. Take for example, a canonical stage text such as a work of Shakespeare. It is not often that the text of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, or *Romeo and Juliet,* for example, would be considered unimaginative or as something in need of modification. In fact, classic Western play texts are often performed with very little deviation from the original script even in very different mediums and settings. Take for example the 1995 film version of Shakespeare's Richard III[196] or the 1996 film version of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet,[197] in which both plays were adapted to the new medium of film with contemporary settings, but the original language of the plays was preserved. In the case of classical music, students of the classical repertoire are expected to work their way through the selected curriculum and are assessed on their ability to perform the pieces. Though there is an expectation for students to follow the score, it is not often that someone would make the assertion that such pieces are "museum arts." So why then, should a somatic text be held to a different standard than works of literature or musical scripts? Perhaps

[195] Leiter, *The Art of Kabuki,* xx.
[196] *Richard III*, film, directed by Richard Loncraine (1995, United Kingdom: United Artists, 1996). DVD.
[197] *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, film, directed by Baz Luhrmann (1996, United States: 20th Century Fox, 1997), DVD.

the lack of somatic texts (such as those found in nōgaku) in the Western theatrical tradition has shaped the theoretical discourse in such a way that movement is typically only viewed as an ephemeral element of each performance.

So what then can kata contribute to theatre practice and theory as a whole? Primarily, as mentioned above, kata can bring into question our standards of what constitutes "art" in today's society. Taking this one step further kata challenges our notions of creativity as a whole. It reminds us that the assumption that uniqueness is synonymous with creativity is only one perspective. Once alternative perspectives are embraced, they can then be applied to arts no matter their place of origin. As discussed in Chapter Three, consideration of the plays and methods of Samuel Beckett through the theoretical lens of kata provides a refreshing, alternative perspective to what is often perceived by contemporary thespians and theatre scholars as an obsessive micromanaging of his art. When one discards the assumed roles of a playwright being removed from artistic process once the play has been written and instead views Beckett as a holistically minded theatre creator, his insistence on maintaining stage directions then becomes a reflection of his desire to maintain the somatic text of his pieces. Additionally, as deeply intentional stage arts which resist and yet simultaneously embrace change, nō and kyōgen may perhaps also remind us to consider the purpose of innovation and its balance with sustainability and preservation in society as a whole. Finally, in a highly logocentric society, kata challenge us to consider and respect non-verbal language as complimentary methods of expression to the verbal or lexical words which people typically default to.

The understanding of kata as not simply a series of movements but as its own language system with its own rules and conventions developed with the intention of communicating to an audience may also shed some light on the challenges faced by practitioners desiring to integrate

this somatic language into their own works. Like learning a language, learning kata can be a long and difficult process, particularly for adults. Additionally, limited access to those with sufficient proficiency in traditional nōgaku kata makes the task of integrating the form of the art into cross-cultural or fusion works very difficult. After all, how can people be expected to write a story in a language which they do not speak? These challenges, however, may hold a silver lining. Perhaps instead of relying on monocultural practitioners to adopt foreign practices themselves, this may be used as a motivating factor to encourage more international and intercultural collaborations. We no longer live in a time of isolation from cultures across the globe, and theatre is undeniably a collective art form.

The study of kata also ultimately helps to demystify traditional Japanese theatre practices. These theatres are not some timeless mystery but stage practices which grapple with two texts simultaneously instead of the single lexical text, which is the typical convention in the West. Furthermore, these actors and families are not mindless robots which exist only for the benefit of maintaining intangible cultural assets. When given the benefit of the doubt that these theatres are, in fact, theatre, they can easily be observed through the same lens as any other theatre practice, in which the performers are consulted, context is considered, and conclusions are drawn from the evidence present. This would help to combat conclusions which are drawn from fabricated ideals that conform to biased assumptions, such as the notion that nōgaku is a "museum art" simply because it does not match a certain expectation of creativity or originality. Non-western theatres can hold content, form, and theoretical approaches to art which may facilitate new innovations within the current theatrical scene, particularly in a nation such as Canada, which so frequently prides itself on its multiculturalism.

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Appendices

Appendix I
List of Interview Questions

- Do you use the term kata in nō/kyōgen? If not, what terms do you use? What about *shosa* or katachi?

- How would you define kata?

- Can you create new kata? If yes, who is allowed to create new kata? How many times do you have to perform something for it to be considered a kata? Can you make new kata for old plays?

- If someone were to create "new nō/kyōgen"[198] would you still consider this to be nō/kyōgen? Or would this be a brand new theatre? Do you have a term for theatre that combines old styles with contemporary theatre?

- How were you taught kata? Were you taught kata the same way you teach us in class? If no, why do you choose to change how you teach us?

- When you learn plays, do you learn the "meaning" or is that the actor's interpretation? If yes, when you learn kata, do you learn the "meaning" or is that the actor's interpretation?

- Why do you consider learning kata to be important?

- Do you feel kata are restricting? Why or why not? Do you feel that you have creativity in kata? Why?

- Do you believe kata can be interpreted or "read" like text?

- Since all of the plays are memorized (both text and kata) do you think there is a point at which it becomes too hard to add more to the canon? In other words is the canon set at what it is now because that is what is manageable for the actors?

- Do you think it is important to keep the tradition of secret teaching? (ie, no written transmission) Why or why not? Do you think the use of technology (ie, video or audio recordings) are important to the art? Or do they threaten the traditional methods of transmission?

[198] For example, Mishima's *Five Modern Noh Plays* or new nō plays developed abroad and performed in English

- Do you feel the student-teacher relationship and the tradition of direct transmission is important? Why or why not?

- Do traditional Japanese theatre artists study other forms of theatre, either Japanese or Western theatre forms?