Kabuki as a Women's Performing Art

A Thesis

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTERS OF ARTS

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Degree Conferral Date: June 2021

University of Minnesota

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Introduction

Kabuki is a performing art that originated in Japan and this art is probably best known for being performed exclusively by males. Despite the fact that this perception of the kabuki is prevalent in not only mainstream sources but also academia, it is simply not an accurate reflection of the history of kabuki. Thus, before diving into the actual contents of this paper, it would first be helpful to understand the research that currently exists in the field of kabuki in relation to women's involvement.[1] To begin, an already existing literature review by Frank Episale called "Gender, Tradition, and Culture in Translation: Reading the 'Onnagata' in English" had the goal of analyzing the last 50 years of English-written kabuki research in relation to gender and culture.[2] In this literature review, it cites that Earle Ernst, Faubion Bowers, and A. C. Scott are three authors who were critical to the establishment of kabuki studies within the post-World War II United States.[3] Episale then goes on to exemplify how these three highly-influential authors made many unreferenced claims and debated historical assumptions with a specific relation to how women are unable to perform kabuki.[4] It is likely because of these widely-cited texts that it is also quite common for articles to utilize phrases such as "kabuki, the all-male theatre" or "women's participation in kabuki ended in 1629" to further the point that women are uninvolved in kabuki. Even articles that do not focus on women's involvement in kabuki tend to dismiss women's involvement with these quick phrases. These sorts of phrases and/or arguments are seen in the works of Donald H. Shively, Faith Bach, Andrew T. Tsubaki, Mette Laderrière, Yoshinobu Inoura, and Toshio Kawatake just to name a few.[5] By no means am I trying to claim that all of these scholars actively attempted to exclude women's involvement in

kabuki, but rather that they simply utilized rhetoric that did so. Additionally to these authors, there are those such as Katherine Mezur and Laurence Senelick who recognize that kabuki is an art that plays with gender, but still reinforce the ideas that being male is necessary to kabuki.[6] Nevertheless, in some recent scholarship over the last 20 years, cases of women's involvement in kabuki has been getting fleshed out as exemplified in the works of Satō Katsura, Loren Edelson, Galia Todorova Gabrovska, Barbara E. Thornbury, Hideaki Fujiki, Ayako Kano, and Maki Isaka.[5] With this being said, let me share how this very paper will fit into this existing research.

One of the main motivations behind this paper is to help contribute to the existing research by specifically tackling these discourses that exclude women and portray kabuki as being "all-male." More specifically however, this paper aims to answer the following questions: How has women's involvement in kabuki shaped the art as a whole? What is the frequency of women's involvement? How have women been discriminated against in kabuki? How have conceptualizations of sex/gender contributed to the discrimination of women in kabuki? How have these dialogues sought to exclude women from kabuki change over time? These are the main questions I aim to discuss in this paper.

With this being said, this paper has two goals: (1) The first goal of this paper is to exemplify that women have been involved in kabuki since its origin and this will be accomplished by presenting a timeline of events of women's involvements starting from the Edo Period (1603-1868) to the modern periods of Meiji (1868-1912), Taishō (1912-1926), and a little after. This timeline section of this paper will be divided into three parts: one part dedicated to women's involvement in the Edo Period, a second part will be dedicated to women's involvement the early Meiji period, and the third part will

focus on women's participation in what I call "kabuki-blended spaces. Although women's involvement in kabuki does not end after these moments, the scope of this paper will be limited to these points. Next, (2) the second goal of this paper will be to analyze how varying conceptualizations of sex/gender have influenced the discrimination of women's involvement in kabuki. This second section will be divided into three sections with each section focusing on a major idea that have contributed to the discrimination of women in kabuki. The first related conception that will be analyzed is cultivation, the second related idea will be that of sexology, and the third will be that of naturalism. While I am not claiming these are the three sole ideas that contributed to the discrimination, they are nonetheless three that will prove to have been influential. Now, with the paper now being briefly outlined, let us examine how women were involved in kabuki during the Edo period.

----------Timeline of Women's Involvement in Kabuki----------

Women's Involvement in Kabuki Before the Ban (1603-1629)

At the very inception of kabuki's creation, women were performing in the art. In fact, the origins of kabuki have been widely established as being initiated by a troupe that was led by a shrine dancer by the name of Izumo no Okuni in 1603. Okuni and her troupe are most often known as *onna kabuki* (women's kabuki).[1] Despite being called "women's kabuki," Okuni's troupe was composed of both men and women that ranged up to fifty to sixty members.[2] It was this very troupe that introduced the new style of dancing, acting, and singing to a crowd in Kyoto in 1603.[3] There were also some other features of the new art that aided in its success.

One of the most notable characteristics of Okuni's troupe is that they subverted gender norms of the time through their acting styles, costumes, and humor. While it is unknown if Okuni's intentions were to disturb the gender norms, the effect is that it did just that. To begin, one of the features of the troupe can be summarized by the Confucian scholar Hayashi Razan (1583-1657) who was quite critical of the art, "The men wear women's clothing; the women wear men's clothing, cut their hair and wear it a man's topknot, have swords at their sides, and carry purses." [4] In other words, it was a standard practice for women to dress in masculine-coded clothing and for men to dress in feminine-coded clothing while performing kabuki. To go into more detail, Okuni specifically specialized in performing in roles called *kabukimono*. A *kabukimono* was a slang term of the time for a certain type of young man from the outskirts of the warrior class who were characterized by reckless and rowdy behavior.[5] Okuni is said to have represented this figure with novel, beautiful costumes and accessories in an erotic and humorous fashion that served to entertain audiences and subverterted the gender norms of the time.[6] While Okuni also performed as other roles, it is speculated that the popularity of the *kabukimono* role is what gave kabuki the name of *kabuki odori* (kabuki dance).[7] Additionally, it was not just Okuni and the women of the troupe that undermined gender roles. As Hayashi Razan's quotation implied, the men in Okuni's troupe also performed as courtesans dressed in feminine-coded clothing.[8] All this being said, what is of significance here is that the very foundation of kabuki is rooted in the work of Okuni and her troupe.

One of the next important succession of events that is relevant to this overall discussion is how women's involvement in kabuki began to be jeopardized. An early

example of an event that threatened women's involvement in kabuki was an incident in 1608-1609 between some imperial court members. Particularly at this time, five imperial court women costumed themselves in garments that were stylistically inspired from kabuki actresses, and these women then continued to sleep with some high-ranking courtiers.[9] After the reigning emperor heard of this incident, he decided to banish or execute all of the involved parties. The decision was motivated by the fact that the emperor did not want to encourage these types of morals within the court as it might threaten class stability.[10] Despite the fact that these court women were not actually kabuki actresses, kabuki and specifically the women in kabuki still managed to garner a negative reputation. This incident reflects one event amongst many that caused the women in kabuki to be viewed in an unfavorable light.

After this incident, it was not long until the position of female's partaking in kabuki as a whole was threatened. Particularly, the sequence of events in 1628 to 1629 have come to shape how kabuki is understood across the world today. In 1628, a fight broke out while a kabuki dancer by the name of Azuma was performing.[11] Azuma was then blamed for this brawl and she was banished from the city of Edo. After this event, a local-level law in Edo was placed that banned all women from performing in kabuki, jōruri, and other theatrical arts.[12] However, this ban was not strictly followed, and in the following year of 1629, the Tokugawa government fully banned females from performing on the kabuki stage on a larger scale.[13] It is at this point that women are usually considered to have officially banned from the art of kabuki.

Overall, the period of kabuki from 1603 to 1629 can be best defined from its high level of involvement of women. Okuni and her troupe not only participated in kabuki but

paved the way for the art as a whole. Moreover, Okuni and her troupe developed many of the fundamental features of kabuki that are still used today. However, in spite of the popularity of kabuki and the women in it, the events that occurred after Azuma's dance have come to shape how kabuki is understood today. Due to these events, women were banned from performing kabuki in 1628 and 1629. Despite the implementations of these bans, women's involvement in kabuki did not end as the next section will show.

Women's Involvement in Kabuki After the Ban (1629-1868)

While the records on female performers after the ban become scarcer, this section intends to fill in the gap for the remainder of the Edo Period. While there is clear evidence of women's involvement in kabuki towards the latter half of the 18th century, the path of how women continued to stay involved is a little murky. Thus, this section will first focus on how the ban against female performers was not successfully implemented well into the 1640s. Next, this section will offer three ways that women have used in order to continue participating in the art of kabuki. The first measure that women may have utilized is to simply conceal their gender with new costuming technology implemented into kabuki in the 1650s and 1660s. The second way women may have stayed involved is to perform kabuki in subsidiary theatres, temples, and shrines as these areas were not as regulated as the licensed major theatres. The division between the major and subsidiary theatres came to be fully implemented in the 1660s. The third path that female performers took to stay involved in theatre practice is the introduction of a specific type of kabuki known as parlor-kabuki. This new type of kabuki allowed women to perform in an almost completely unregulated space and it is speculated women's involvement greatly increased after 1714. It is important to

emphasize that it was likely not just one of these paths that were used, but rather, a combination of all three used in order for women to stay active in the art. The final part of this section will discuss the recorded evidence of women's involvement in parlor-kabuki in the latter half of the 18th century. Therefore, let us continue by discussing what happened initially after the ban on women.

In spite of the implementation of the ban on women in kabuki, women by no means vanished in the art after this date. This is known by two facts. The first is that there are records of women performing on the stage as late as 1642 or 1643.[13] Secondly, it is known that the ban against women was relatively unsuccessful due to the fact that the ban needed to be regularly reinstated such as in 1630, 1640, 1645, and 1646.[14] Therefore, as long as the regulations failed to be maintained, women could perform on the stage. While records do get a little more unclear from this point, there are reasonable explanations for how women continued to perform in kabuki.

The development of headgear allowed for camouflaging of a woman's gender. Specifically, the 1650s and 1660s saw many new accessories being incorporated to the *onnagata* role such as various forms of caps, scarves, and wigs.[15] The main reason that these new technologies were developed and implemented into kabuki was for *wakashu* who became banned from performing in kabuki in 1652.[16] To explain, a *wakashu* is generally considered a young male who is regarded as not having entered adulthood yet and they are the junior counterpart to male-male mentorship relationships.[17] In order to signify that one was a *wakashu*, a young male would have the forelocks of one's hair grown out.[18] Thus, if one were to shave their forelocks, they would have been considered to have entered adulthood and no longer be a *wakashu*. Therefore, in order to continue

performing kabuki, *wakashu* were able to camouflage their identities by hiding their forelocks with these new headgears.

Similar to women, *wakashu* were by no means absent in kabuki. In order to continue performing kabuki and maintain their status as a *wakashu*, the *wakashu* had two options. The first option was to shave their forelocks and then utilize caps, scarves, and wigs to hide their identity.[19] Although their forelocks would be shaved and they technically would not be considered a *wakashu* anymore, the *wakashu* would be able to give the appearance that they still had their forelocks by concealing their hair that was indicative of their gender. Alternatively, there are also reports of *wakashu* who let their forelocks grow out or *wakashu* who did not shave their forelocks at all.[20] While this method was riskier due to the fact that they still had their forelocks, the *wakashu* could still hide their hair with caps, scarves, and wigs. Either way, it was common to utilize the caps, scarves, and wigs in order to conceal one's identity. By the 1680s, these new costuming practices became a standard in the art. This can be exemplified with the following quote from a book about Kyoto customs published in 1981,

> Long ago when Ebisuya Kichirōbei [sic] and Ukon Genza were popular, they wore on their heads pieces of silk like hand-towels, and they called themselves *onnagata*. Now what actors do is to use helmets of copper on which hair is attached, and these are called wigs (*katsura*).[21]

Therefore, what can be seen from all of this is that these newly developed wigs effectively let *wakashu* hide their forelocks that were indicative of their gender/age status.

The development of these standardized practices for *wakashu* were also able to be applied for women. Thanks to the standardized use of caps, scarves, and wigs, women

could effectively be able to hide features that were indicative of their gender. In an Edo period context, hair for women not only represented gender, but also their profession, marriage status, and social status.[22] Thus, being able to conceal such a representative part of their marginalized identity would only make the job of kabuki-regulating officials even more difficult. This development could allow for women to continue performing on the public stage with a lower risk of being caught by government officials.

The second reason for why the ban against women was not reinstated was due to the development of the *sanza* system. The implementation of the *sanza* system provided spaces for performers to act in kabuki that were unregulated by the government. To begin, throughout much of the Edo period, kabuki theatres were under what is called the *sanza* system and this eventually became fully implemented in 1660.[23] The *sanza* system was a system that gave a license to only three major theatres at any given time, meanwhile, the unlicensed theatres were called subsidiary theatres (*hikae yagura*).[24] If a major theatre ever needed to be closed for whatever reason, these subsidiary theatres were established as backup theatres.[25] However, when the subsidiary theatres did not have the one of the backup licenses from a closed major theatre, they held performances of their own with actors that did not hold contracts with one of the three major theatres.[26] The actors themselves were essentially segregated from each other in that actors in the major theatres were prohibited from performing outside of licensed theatres while actors from minor theatres were not allowed to perform in the licensed theatres.[27] The differences between these theatres did not stop here because they were overseen by entirely separate offices. Major theatres were overseen by the Edo commissioner's office (*machi bugyōsho*), whereas other types of performances were overseen by an entirely

different office, the Temple/Shrine Office (*jisha bugyō*).[28] While the Temple/Shrine Office oversaw other types of performances such as "commoner street and temple performers" (*gōmune)*, it was not uncommon for temples to not register with it at all in order to provide cheaper kabuki performances in comparison to major theatres.[29] Therefore, what is of utmost importance here is that the segregation of kabuki into "major" and "minor" performances led to varying levels of regulation.

Due to the fact that the regulation on kabuki depended on the location and registration status of performance, this is likely another major reason why women were able to perform in kabuki unnoticed. With the regulation mostly focused on the major theatre performances, it would be quite difficult for women to perform in these spaces. Conversely, the minor theatres, street performances, and temple performances were much less regulated and thus it would have been much easier for women to perform in these theatres. Likely, women and *wakashu* performed in the unregulated theatres. The reason for the speculation so far is due to a scarcity in records of women's performances from the 1650s to the 1710s. While it is theoretically possible that women were just rarely performing during this period, it is highly improbable due to the fact that there is evidence that there were many highly skilled women participating in kabuki in the 18th century.

The third and most probable reason for why the ban against women was likely not reinstated is in part due to the introduction of a new classification of kabuki. A type of kabuki deemed as "parlor-kabuki" (*zashiki kabuki*) was a new form of kabuki that appeared in daimyo house records as early as the 1660s.[30] Those who performed in parlor kabuki are known as "theatre masters" (*okyōgenshi)*. What distinguishes this from kabuki

that is performed on the major/subsidiary public stages is that parlor-kabuki was performed on stages in the private residences of wealthy patrons.[31] These wealthy patrons were not few and far between either. According to a Meiji-period survey, 69% of the land in Edo (the city) was handed over to wealthy samurai families while only 15% remained in the hands of temples, shrines, and the commoners.[32] The reason that parlor-kabuki took off in popularity is because it allowed samurai to see renown kabuki performances without having to enter the wards of the city that were deemed as boorish or indecent for a samurai to enter.[33] Those with high statuses could see kabuki without putting their status at risk. Despite this spatial difference, parlor-kabuki often relied on aesthetic and content choices that were made in the mainstream kabuki. For instance, many enthusiastic patrons included all of the factors of a standard public kabuki stage such as box office seats, a *hanamichi* (a type of runway), and even a special guest entrance which is called the "mouse gate." [34] Additionally, parlor-kabuki relied on the same repertoire of plays that were being utilized for the mainstream of kabuki.[35] Overall, this new form of kabuki found great success throughout the entirety of the Edo period.

There is a particular event that may have increased women's involvement in the newer classification of parlor-kabuki. In 1714, an incident between the kabuki actor Ikushima and a high-ranking woman from the shogun's inner quarters by the name of Ejima were discovered having a long-term relationship.[36] After this discovery, there were massive punishments for all involved. Ikushima and Ejima were both exiled from the city of Edo, fifty-seven other women were removed from the castle, and some men were even killed.[37] After this event, it was deemed quite risky for the low-ranking men of kabuki to travel into the high-ranking residences due to the fact that male kabuki actors were the

ones regarded partially responsible for the Ikushima-Ejima incident.[38] After the Ikushima-Ejima event, it became risky for the men of kabuki to make trips into the high-ranking wards of cities.

Regardless of the risk, a highly profitable market of wealthy, high-ranking residences still existed and in order for kabuki troupes to stay financially afloat, they needed access to these funds. Therefore, it has been speculated that after the time of the Ikushima-Ejima incident is when women really began taking on the mantle for parlor-kabuki.[39] This is speculated because women would be able to travel into these high-ranking areas without fear of being accused of being a kabuki actor as kabuki was mostly associated with men at the time. The women who were expected to fill this huge void left from the male kabuki actors are hypothesized to be the women that were already closely associated with kabuki circles.[40] These women who filled these new vacancies were likely the daughters, sisters, and wives of kabuki actors, as well as the women who were still participating in the mainstream kabuki secretly, not to mention other women instructors of performing arts who were teaching wealthy folk and commoners.[41] To summarize, there were many new vacancies in a job field that was most easily accessible for women at the time.

Women continued performing in parlor-kabuki late into the 18th century. For example, in a diary (*Enyū nikki*) compiled by the daimyo Yanagizawa Nobutoki from 1773 to 1785, an all-women's troupe of kabuki was put together to perform for the daimyo once or twice a year.[42] Nokutoki specifically patronized the actor Nakamura Nakazō and then, Nokutoki and Nakazō hired women who were already talented in acting and dancing.[43] Together, Nokutoki and Nakazō directed the plays and then hired women

would perform the staged plays.[44] This group of women would go on the daimyo's stage and they would perform kabuki plays. Nokutoki would not only provide a stage for the performers, but also arrange props, cast the actors, and prepare playbills.[45] He took a very active role in the preparation of each performance and it is speculated that he was not the only daimyo who did so. Parlor kabuki did not stop here either, it continued well into the 1800s.

Towards the end of the Edo period, women were still recorded as being involved in parlor-kabuki. Particularly, Ichikawa Kumehachi I (1846 - 1913) has recorded many details of her adventures with the theatre-masters she worked under (theatre-masters being those who participate in parlor-kabuki). To begin, Kumehachi gained much of her knowledge from her master and one of the very last theatre-masters, Mitsue.[46] Mitsue was not the only other woman theatre-master in this troupe. In fact, according to scholar Satō Katsura, theatre-masters did not take in male pupils in order to uphold their dignity as it would have been considered vulgar for someone like Mitsue to have male pupils she would perform with.[47] Kumehachi specifically described an event she attended with her master Mitsue in which the

> ...famous theatre-masters with patron households were… all women of forty years of age, and needless to say, no man could go into [the patrons' residences]... including those in charge of music and those in charge of wigs, all the members [of a troupe were] female, with no exception.[48]

The first thing this quote indicates is that Mitsue and Kumehachi were a part of a much larger group of women that were performing in kabuki towards the end of the Edo period. This excerpt also helps confirm that women utilized wigs to conceal their hair, like the men and *wakashu* in kabuki. Additionally, it confirms that women's role in parlor-kabuki

was indispensable and that they could not be replaced by men. This can be further backed up when we look at the setting.

The locations of the parlor-kabuki's performances support the idea that women were considered essential to this form of art at the time. As mentioned, parlor-kabuki performers were often hired by wealthy patrons. These wealthy patrons were not watching these performances alone, but rather they invited other wealthy guests such as daimyo and other samurai.[49] These guests were often accompanied by their wives and greeted by the in-house mothers or wives. When these women would attend, the space itself would be divided into two: an area for men and an area for women.[50] This would be accomplished by creating a separate room by using bamboo blind (*misu*).[51] Thus, in order to accommodate the space even further, the performances would accordingly be split into two. This is what Kumehachi meant when saying that men were not allowed in. While women may have been allowed to perform in the men's section, it could have been seen as improper for men to perform for the high-status women (especially after the Ikushima-Ejima event). Hence, during Mitsue's prime as a performer, it is quite evident that women were necessary for parlor-kabuki.

As the Edo period was coming to an end, massive change came with it, and this was no less true for the women in parlor-kabuki. As the Tokugawa regime was falling, the samurai and daimyo began crumbling and losing their influence.[52] What this means in many cases is that these groups lost their excessive wealth as well. If patrons lost money, they could no longer afford to hire the theatre-masters. This was the case for Kumehachi and her master, Bandō Mitsue. By the time Kumehachi became eighteen, her master Mitsue had lost her patronage from the three samurai households that supporter her (the

Kagas, Sanukis, and Akis).[53] In the words of Kumehachi, "Our vocation [*okyōgenshi]* disappeared.[54] Although the future for theatre-masters was bleak towards the end of the Edo period, women did not vanish from kabuki.

Overall, the Edo period was a dynamic period where women performers saw a lot of change. While women initially began the Edo period with the creation of kabuki, they soon found themselves banned in 1629. However, it can be seen that women continued performing in kabuki well into the 1640s due to the reinstatements of the ban which evidenced the poor regulation. Next, there are three reasons it has been speculated that the ban did not need to be reinstated once more. The first of those reasons being that in the 1650s and 1660s, the introduction and standardization of caps, scarves, and wigs in kabuki allowed women to conceal their gender with ease. The second reason is that the implementation of the *sanza* system effectively created the major and subsidiary stages which received different regulations from the government. Specifically, the subsidiary stages created spaces that were much less regulated than the major stages which once again created spaces for women to perform in. Next, the third reason that the ban was most likely not reinstated was due to the rise in popularity of parlor kabuki, which provided women with an almost completely unregulated space to perform in. It is particularly estimated that after 1714 that women's involvement increased in parlor kabuki. Thanks to the records, it is evident that women were known for their participation in parlor-kabuki well into the end of the Edo period. As the next section will show, women were still well-involved in the art during the modern periods.

Introduction to Women's Involvement in During Modern Periods

As the Meiji Period dawns, the structures of society along with those of kabuki saw a massive change. That is to say, as parlor-kabuki was dissolving, the women in it began transferring to other areas of kabuki and theatre in general. This being said, this section will be split into two parts. The first of those parts will focus on how women entered into the public sphere of kabuki as woman-actors during the Meiji Period. Next, the second section will then focus on highlighting some of the kabuki performances or kabuki-related performances that were conducted in theatrical spaces that have commonly been overlooked. While the second section will primarily focus on kabuki productions in the Meiji Period, it will also continue by analyzing how kabuki endured in these spaces in the periods that follow. However, before we can get to that point, let us continue the timeline to see exactly how theatre-masters adapted to the new changes occurring in the Meiji era.

Women-Actors in the Public Sphere

As mentioned in the Edo section of the timeline, parlor-kabuki was beginning to fail towards the end of the Edo period, and it is important to emphasize that it was not just a small number of theatre-masters who needed to find a new occupation. More specifically, this was not just the well-versed theatre-masters like Mitsue who have been doing parlor-kabuki for years who needed to find new vocations. But rather, it also involved those like Kumehachi who have just become newly trained in the art. To analyze one account from Kumehachi, "Theatre-masters were uncompromising, and my master [Mitsue] was one of the most demanding and accepted only six of seven disciples."[55] First, one of the implications here is also that other theatre-masters had more

than seven disciples and that Mitsue accepted only a fewer in comparison. Additionally, what can be seen here is that there was a whole generation of newly trained theatre-masters that have just been trained in the art of kabuki. Therefore, there it is evident that as the Edo period dawned, a surplus of well-trained performers now needed to find new occupations. Now, let us continue by seeing one realm of theatre all of these theatre-masters transitioned into.

One of the primary areas that theatre-masters began immigrating to was the public stage of kabuki. However, due to the ban on women that has been in place, the well-regulated public stages in the major theatres (*ō-shibai* or *san-shibai*) and many smaller theatres to a certain extent were still dominated and controlled by men. Therefore, when theatre-masters began transitioning into this field, a terminology shift occurred in that women theatre-masters (*okyōgenshi*) were now being called woman-actors (*onna-yakusha*).[56] The reason for using "woman-actor" instead of "actress" is because the word "yakusha" (actor) was assumed to be exclusively coded for men. Thus, the kanji for woman, "*onna*" was attached to the front of *onna-yakusha* (woman-actor) to indicate it was a woman that was the actor. Therefore, from this point forward, to describe the women directly involved in kabuki, the word woman-actor will be used. The occupation of a woman-actor in the modern periods can once again be best represented with the famous Ichikawa Kumehachi.

To exemplify how woman-actors became involved in the public stage of kabuki, we will begin with the notable case of Kumehachi. As the patrons of the Edo period began losing their wealth, Kumehachi's opportunities as theatre-master also began diminishing. Namely, due to the fact that there were not many performances being

conducted in the wealthy patron's residences, Kumehachi did not have the opportunity to perform alongside her master Mitsue unless she performed as a more minor role such as a lady-in-waiting or a stage assistant.[57] Thus, this is why Kumehachi began shifting from being a theatre-master [*okyōgenshi*] to a woman-actor [*onna-yakusha*]. However, Kumehachi's master, Mitsue was not so approving of this behavior so Kumehachi decided to return the theatrical name that Mitsue had given to her.[58] Furthermore, this transition is probably best represented by Kumehachi being accepted as a disciple to a famous kabuki performer by the name of Iwai Hanshirō VIII in 1873.[59] It is at this point in which Kumehachi can probably be called a woman-actor over being called a theatre-master. Kumehachi was not just any run-of-the-mill, average woman actor either, she excelled in this new sphere of kabuki.

Kumehachi was truly a success-story as a woman-actor. While her new master Iwai Hanshirō VIII (1829-1882) only saw his success as an *onnagata* (a specialist in women's roles), Kumehachi saw her success as an *onnagata* and as a *tachityaku* (a specialist in men's roles).[60] Kumehachi's success only skyrocketed from this point. This can be demonstrated by the fact that she gained the nickname of "*onna*-Danshū" which can translate to "Woman-Danjūrō" (Danshū being a haiku pen name for Danjūrō).[61] This nickname was given to highlight her talents and similarity to the well-renowned actor of the time Ichikawa Danjūrō IX (1838-1903). The fact that Kumehachi was compared to him was to be considered a high compliment as he was such an esteemed and respected actor. However, there are reports of Ichikawa Danjūrō IX becoming furious at the idea of low-ranking actors "invading" the high-profile theatres.[62] Despite this, a friend still somehow managed to convince Danjūrō IX to take in Kumehachi in as a disciple in 1888

even though she did not come from a famous kabuki family. This truly speaks to the remarkable legacy of Kumehachi. She was simply so talented to the point that even those who did not want low-ranking actors were convinced to respect her. It is at this point in which Kumehachi was finally granted the "Ichikawa" part of her name which officially makes her Ichikawa Kumehachi.[63] Although Kumehachi may have been the most legendary woman-actor, she was by no means alone in her aspirations.

While Kumehachi represents an exemplary case of an acclaimed woman-actor, there were many other women-actors who still managed to garner large audiences. For instance, a famous performer by the name of Nakamura Kasen (1889-1942) was a woman who had her theatre origins in an all-woman kabuki troupe (*onna shibai* or *shōjo shibai*) in the later part of the Meiji Period.[64] This type of kabuki theatre was one of the many forms of kabuki that only performed in small theatre houses (*ko-shibai*).[65] In other words, it was a type of kabuki that was not allowed to perform in one of the three major licensed theatre houses (*ō-shibai* or *san-shibai*). Kasen's fame was mostly on a local-level basis through her performances at these small theatre houses. However, she also had some appearances in the newly rising film industry of the time.[66] Although, many of these films did not take off in popularity due to poor advertising, it is evident that her fame was not exclusive to a local level. Nevertheless, Kasen represents just one more example of success as a woman-actor. Additionally, some other notable women-actors that garnered a reputation include the following: Matsumoto Kinshi who was a disciple of Matsumoto Kinshō, Bandō Noshio who was the daughter of Bandō Shūchō II and married to Shūchō III, Ichikawa Rikinosuke who was a disciple of Ichikawa Gonjūrō's disciple, and Bandō Tamasaburō III who is the daughter of Morita Kan'ya XII.[67] While it is important to learn

about some of the unique stories of specific women-actors, let us continue by trying to understand women-actors' involvement on a larger scale.

In order to understand the sheer number of women-actors that were performing in the Meiji Period, it would be useful to look at some of the actor directories that recorded data on women-actors. Actor directories typically list biographical information on popular actors of the time. The way I have acquired this information is through an analysis completed by scholar Satō Katsura. In her analysis, Satō analyzes actor manuals from 1912 that not only describe who is involved as a woman-actor, but also details the number. I have translated the findings of Satō here:

> At the top of the page of these directories, they recorded things such as a picture and the actor's autograph, along with hobbies and favorites, birthday, and height, etc., meanwhile, the bottom of the page recorded the actor's origin and the talk. "*Joyū Kagami*" (The Directory for Actresses) recorded 90 people, and amongst those, 19 were women-actors (8 were "Kabuki actresses", and 11 were "former Misaki-za actresses," Misaki-za is famous for being a theater for women-actors from around the 30s of the Meiji era). *Joyū Kagami* (The Paragons of Actresses) recorded 85 people, and of those, 20 are women-actors (3 "Actresses who are working in the Kabuki-za theatre," and 17 "old-school actresses" (the word "old school" *kyūha* in Japanese signifies that they were actresses in kabuki, but this word was used after the emergence of "shin-engeki") (in addition, there are about 10 people such as "actress that have passed away")....
>
> [Of the] "Kabuki actress" [that were listed in *Joyū Kagami*" (The Directory for Actresses)…There was Ichikawa Kumehachi, Ichikawa Suisen, Ichikawa Kyokubai, Ichikawa Kikuko, Bandō Noshiho, Onoe Umeyo, Sawamura Shigenoi, and Mihoki Mineko.
>
> [Of the] "Former Misaki-za Actresses" [that were listed in *Joyū Kagami*" (The Directory for Actresses)] … There was Matsumoto Kinshi, Sawamura Kikuhachi, Nakamura

> Sen/Chi-shō [Can be read either as Senshō or Chishō], Ichikawa Rikinosuke, Fujimura Tsurue, Ichikawa Sakishō, Iwai Somehachi, Ichikawa Sakiji, Nakamura Nakashichi, Ichikawa Wakahachi, and Ichikawa Sumaji.
>
> In *Joyū Kagami* (The Paragons of Actresses), Suisen, Kyokubai, and Mihoki Mineko are listed as "Kabuki-za Actresses" … [68]

One of the first things to note from this is that Satō specifically lists 19 women-actors. While many of these women-actors overlap with ones I have mentioned earlier, by no means is this list all-inclusive. What I mean by this is that there were still some women-actors that were not included in these manuals such as Nakamura Kasen or Bandō Noshio who have been mentioned earlier. This is likely because they were not as popular or newer at the release of these, but it can just once again be emphasized that these lists are not all inclusive. Nonetheless, it absolutely apparent that there was at least 21+ well-known women-actors and probably many other more local-oriented ones. Overall, throughout the Meiji period and following periods, there were certainly a couple handfuls of women-actors who were able to break into the public stages that were often men-dominated.

Women in Blended-Kabuki Spaces

While the last part focused on women who experienced success on the public stages of kabuki, this next section will focus on women's involvement in what I call "blended-kabuki spaces." What I mean by this is that there are many spaces outside of the public stages where performers have conducted productions that are strongly influenced by kabuki. However, for reasons that will be discussed more extensively in the second half of this paper, much of these spaces are largely neglected in many academic

discussions when talking about kabuki. In many regards, kabuki seems to be only recognized as such if and only if it is performed by men on the mainstream public stages. More often than not, if kabuki is performed in spaces that are more accepting of women, it is disregarded or ignored in many academic discussions. Thus, the intent of this section is to emphasize that kabuki can and has been performed outside of this mainstream kabuki stage. While I am not necessarily arguing that these various art forms as a whole should be classified as kabuki, I am trying to emphasize that there are portions and aspects of these arts that are indeed highly influenced or "blended" with kabuki. Moreover, this section is attempting to bring attention to the fact that kabuki does not need to be defined on *where* it is performed, but rather it can be based on the *methods of acting* that are used during any given performance. Additionally, as it will be shown in this section, it is not only the acting style that is similar across artistries, but it is the very performers themselves that pass through these various artistries with these kabuki acting methods.

Specifically, there are three main spaces in which women's involvement in kabuki or kabuki-related activities will be discussed. (1) The very first section will discuss geisha in how they are well-trained in kabuki and how the geisha themselves are recorded to have participated in the art. (2) The second section will discuss shinpa in relation to how it has deep ties with kabuki and women of notable-kabuki families. (3) The third and final section will analyze how the beginning of the film industry was deeply influenced by kabuki and how it acted as a space for women to publicly participate in kabuki. While this section is mostly focusing on performances that occurred outside of the mainstream public stage, I would like to emphasize that this will not be a fully comprehensive list in

that kabuki has been performed in many other spaces that are out of the scope of this paper. With this being said, let us continue the discussion by analyzing the kabuki performances held by geisha.

Before discussing how geisha have connections with kabuki, it is first necessary to discuss who geisha are and what they do. Although the term "geisha" has often been used in a poorly defined manner, an actual geisha is registered performer who hosts gatherings in order to pay off their art lessons in traditional Japanese music and dance.[69] Typically, even today, geisha can be found performing in similar places as they did centuries before, in small locales such as tea houses.[70] When called to a venue, geisha are required to modify their performances to not only the size of the space but also the size of audience. This attention to detail is also present when a geisha considers selecting a piece to perform. For example, a kabuki piece that references snow and pine trees would be inappropriate for a performance in the summertime.[71] Thus, any talented geisha not only needs to be well trained in traditional dance and music, but they also need to be extremely knowledgeable in their repertoire of pieces. Although geisha are often not recognized for such, there are a lot of comparisons that can be made between their art and kabuki.

Similar to other traditional arts of Japan such as kabuki, geisha are required to possess a high level of skill and etiquette in order to be considered talented in their art. Before a geisha can even perform, it is necessary for them to be immersed in at least five to six types of songs and dance including those of the shamisen (three-stringed plucked lute), drums, voice, and flute.[72] This level of training in performing arts is a standard practice for all specialist of Japanese traditional arts whether it be professional soloists or

professionally trained kabuki performers. Additionally, as mentioned before, it is required that geisha have a strong knowledge of their repertoire and the ability to match a piece to any given atmosphere. This is being mentioned again because most of that repertoire is derived from mainstream kabuki settings.[73] The very fact that geisha's repertoire overlaps with kabuki is a great example of the commonalities between the two arts as a whole. As described by scholar Kelly M. Foreman, "...[The Geisha] is an artist denied the privilege and salaries offered through the usual venue for artists who specialize in these types of music and dance—the Kabuki theater— which remains all male." [74] In other words, a geisha is someone who similar qualifications to those in kabuki, however, there is no way for them to reap the same benefits due to the sex assigned to them at birth. Even though geisha participate in a much larger array of activities than just kabuki, this nonetheless demonstrates how geisha's levels of talents rival those of kabuki performers. The commonalities between kabuki and geisha is best demonstrated when looking at actual examples from notable geisha or events.

One of the best examples of geisha participating in kabuki is a case from the famous Kawakami Sadayakko (1871-1946). Although Sadayakko is probably best known for her international performances and work in the new theatres such as shinpa (which will be the next discussed kabuki-blended space), she built up her foundational theatrical knowledge as a geisha. In fact, when reminiscing her days as a geisha performing kabuki, Sadayakko recorded the following:

> I actually love performing male roles. There was a theater called Yurakukan in Hamachō, with which Mr. Shibusawa [Eiichi] was associated. At that time I was a geisha, and I was asked to perform at their opening ceremony: I performed the battle scene of Soga Gorō. After that, at the end of every year, they would organize charity performances. We geisha

> would buy about one thousand-yen worth of tickets from our own pockets, and would enjoy acting in these performances. On those occasions we had much ado, rehearsing our plays, selling our tickets. From that time, I have always liked performing male roles, and was happy to take on all kinds of male roles that others disliked. I performed Gorō's battle scene, Tadanobu, I'ichi Hōgen, Gorō's encounter scene, Izaemon, Hachiman Tarō, Kudō's encounter scene—all roles of older men, or of fierce battles. I was especially proud of performing battles in which I would slit my stomach while standing up. I was quite the tomboy you see.[75]

As described by Sadayakko, it was not just one single performance, but rather a recurring use of the kabuki repertoire that geisha used. It is in this way that geisha can be seen as kabuki performers as well. Although geishas do not solely perform kabuki plays, it is nonetheless evident that they have strong connections and training in kabuki to the point where they are easily able to organize plays on an annual basis. Geisha were not limited to just performing kabuki in geisha-dominated spaces either.

While geisha in their own right have strong connections to kabuki, geisha were also occasionally recruited into kabuki circles. Namely, there are a few cases of geisha entering into kabuki not long after the ban on women in kabuki was revoked. For example, only three months after the ban's repeal in 1891, Ii Yōhō and Yōda Gakkai staged one of the first openly co-sex performances called "male and female co-production reform theater" (*danjo gōdō kairyō engeki*).[76] This was a 15-day kabuki-style performance that included six women who were all former geishas.[77] The reason that women were chosen over men for this performance was because the very intent of the performance was to encourage the abolishment of the male *onnagata* (women's role specialist).[78] One of the reasons geisha specifically were likely chosen for this performance was likely because they are already well-trained in everything a kabuki

performer is. Now, it is quite evident thus far that geisha are quite experienced in performing kabuki and it is for this reason that they have been included in this section of "kabuki-blended spaces." As the next section will show, geisha are by no means the only space that have similar characteristics with kabuki.

Similar to geisha, shinpa performers are another group of people who have a lot of connections with kabuki. While shinpa as a theatre is one that has a deep yet complicated relationship with kabuki, it is important to start with what shinpa exactly is. To begin, shinpa (literally means new school) is one of the new theatres (*shin-engeki*) that was originally founded by Kawakami Otojirō with a great deal of support and initiative from his wife and the aforementioned Kawakami Sadayakko.[79] By creating this theatre, the Kawakami duo along with their supporters advocated for what has been coined as "straightening" of theatre by scholar Ayako Kano.[80] What "straightening" means in this context is that shinpa was one of the first attempts in trying to make Japanese theatre "modern" or "realistic." [81] To continue, these "modern" and "realistic" features were often defined in opposition to the traditional arts such as kabuki, nō theatre, and bunraku. However, what is more important is that this theoretical practice did not cleanly translate into the actual practices and performances of shinpa.

In fact, in many ways, shinpa wound up to be quite close to kabuki in actual practice. This is evident from the fact that shinpa absorbed notable features of kabuki such the use of *onnagata* (women's role specialist, also called *ayama* in shinpa), music, dance, and melodrama.[82] As described by scholar Maki Isaka, "Shinpa emerged as a new type of theater but ended up being congenial to kabuki theater. In short, shinpa plays were kabuki-oriented but performed by new people. In terms of dramaturgy and acting

methodology, shinpa belonged to the kabuki establishment, and in terms of power politics, shinpa constituted the periphery of the establishment." [83] In other words, shinpa not only resembled kabuki in terms of acting styles, but also, the people in shinpa had working relationships with those in kabuki. It is because of these reasons that shinpa is included as a "kabuki-blended space." However, in order to fully understand this relationship between shinpa and kabuki, a further explanation is needed on just how this interconnection actually functioned.

One of the major features that caused shinpa to resemble kabuki is the power relationship that existed between them. To begin, in order to hold power in kabuki circles, one needed to have popularity and good relationships with those directing the plays. Thus, if an artist had a notable family or popular performances, they would be recruited to perform in the place that would garner them the most money. Those places would be the public major stages of kabuki. However, if an artist lost their political influence with other kabuki artists, they might become ostracized to the point where they could only perform in spaces that were viewed as being not as high-brow such as shinpa, film, or other "commercial theatres." [84] This can be best exemplified when analyzing an example from the life of a famous *onnagata* of recent times, Bandō Tamasaburō V (1950 - Present). When Tamasaburō was young and still establishing himself as an artist, he lost his political touch with those that were most influential, and in extreme terms, he became "exiled" or "ostracized" from the stages of kabuki.[85] In order to make the most of this "exile," he started to make a name for himself while performing shinpa. Although this ban was temporary and he did not end up becoming a full-time shinpa actor, the situation as a whole represents the power structures between kabuki and shinpa quite well. To state

clearly, kabuki was considered the highest or most respected level to perform at; meanwhile, shinpa (along with a few other artistries) were regarded as the outskirts or "periphery" of the art. Now, the reason this power dynamic between kabuki and shinpa is relevant to the overall conversation is because it had a huge impact on women involved in this kabuki sphere.

This power dynamic between kabuki and shinpa is crucial to understand for the larger discussion at hand. This is because a lot of women were pushed towards joining shinpa rather than kabuki. To elaborate, it was not just those who lost political favor in kabuki circles who performed in shinpa by any means, but it also included women who came from famous kabuki families.[86] To name a few, there was Ichikawa Suisen III (1917- 1978) who was the granddaughter of Dunjūrō IX, Mizutani Yaeko II (1939 - Present) who is the daughter of Morita Kan'ya XIV, and there is Namino Kuriko (1945 - Present) who is the daughter of Nakamura Kanzaburō XIV.[87] From excerpts, it is quite clear that some of these women were pushed towards shinpa over kabuki for the exact reason that they were assigned female at birth. For example, Kanzaburō spoke of his daughter as, "If she were a man, Kuriko would have made a great kabuki actor." [88] Moreover, for a tribute to Suisen, the following phrase was used, "Suisen, who would have probably been Ichikawa Danjūrō had she been born a male."[89] Even the women who were able to break through onto the public stage such as the aforementioned Ichikawa Kumehachi and Nakamura Kasen were also recorded for performing in shinpa.[90] In this very way that shinpa functioned as a space to not only exile those who lacked political power, but also to ostracize women as a whole from performing in kabuki. This dichotomy created between shinpa and kabuki served several purposes and one of those

purposes was to elevate kabuki at the expense of the women who wanted to participate in the art.[91] One could even say that given the power dynamics, shinpa basically became one of the most socially acceptable spaces for women to engage in kabuki-related activities. It is for this reason that shinpa is included under the "kabuki-blended" activities. As the next section will show, the beginnings of the Japanese film industry had not only strong connections with kabuki, but also with shinpa.

While shinpa is probably the realm of theatre that has the most intimate connection with kabuki, the Japanese film industry is another space that has also inherited strong influences from kabuki. To begin, many of the very first films that have taken place in Japan are just recordings of kabuki actors performing. For example, the oldest extant Japanese film called *Viewing Scarlet Maple Leaves* (*Momojigari,* 1899) is a recording of Ichikawa Danjūrō XI and Onoe Kikugorō performing a kabuki scene.[92] However, due to the fact that many of the films were shot outside on the dirt ground rather than the smooth wood floors of the kabuki stage, many of the high-ranking kabuki members began referring to films as "mud plays." [93] Despite these first impressions, this did not stop the early film industry from taking a strong influence from kabuki.

The beginnings of the Japanese film industry incorporated a lot of the stylized characteristics that have originated in kabuki. Just to begin, almost all of the screen performers in early Japanese films were recruited from the overlapping kabuki and shinpa scenes. Then, because the performers had their origins in kabuki and shinpa, accordingly, a few of the acting techniques were similarly adopted such as the *onnagata*. In fact, almost all films included the use of the *onnagata* until the 1910s.[94] Furthermore, the narrative style of many of the early films were created similar to kabuki in that they focus

on highlighting the talents of the performers rather than centering a narrative.[95] Additionally, most of these performances that were in the films utilized characteristics such as dance, song, etc. that were directly incorporated from kabuki and shinpa.[96] For instance, the iconic *mie* from kabuki in which an actor freezes for a moment before breaking out into a facial expression that emphasizes a particular emotion have been recorded in these early films.[97] Sometimes the film style itself are said to present the film in a way that highlights the kabuki-esque features such as the 1910 *Chūshingura*. This film solely used medium shots that lasted one to two minutes which gave the viewer an impression that they were sitting in the crowd and watching a kabuki performance on a stage.[98] There are even whole film genres dedicated to shinpa and kabuki with shinpa actors mostly performing in shinpa films (*shinpa eiga*) while kabuki actors mostly acting in classical films (*kyūha/kyūgeki*).[99] Moreover, there is evidence that suggests the film audiences may have shouted while the actors are performing on the screen which is similar to what is done during a live kabuki performance.[100] Additionally, when articles or critiques of films would be published, it was not uncommon to discuss actor's performances via kabuki terminology.[101] In short, it is quite evident that the origins of the film industry drew a lot of inspiration from the existing kabuki and shinpa scenes.

Even though film was heavily influenced from theatrical spaces that are dominated by men, women were by no means absent from the development film industry. Notably, as shinpa began losing popularity in the 1910s, it was at this time that women's involvement notably increased in film.[102] Specifically, as scholar Hideaki Fujiki has displayed in his chapter named, "Replacing the Onnagata," kabuki/shinpa's *onnagata* (women's specialist role) began losing momentum within the sphere of film throughout

the 1910s and became almost obsolete by 1924.[103] This does not mean that film no longer had women's roles, but rather, women's roles became more accessible to women who were also well-trained in kabuki/shinpa artistries. For example, some women that were contracted with shinpa troupes such as Kinoshita Yaoko (1892-1967), Miho Matsuko (1894-Unknown), and the aforementioned Nakamura Kasen all appeared in these early films.[104] It is also important to note that these women did not solely play women's roles either as it has been recorded that Kasen played a man in her very first film.[105] For the most part though, these women did play women's roles and they are said to have utilized the very same acting techniques that male *onnagata* were using to portray women.[106] It is in this way that the first few decades of film have strong influences from kabuki. Although these women were not called *onnagata* or *tachiyaku* (men's role specialists), in many regards the women were just that. This is not to say that every role that these women performed in were utilizing solely kabuki techniques, but it is undeniable that kabuki and the kabuki-influenced shinpa were influencing the style of acting that was hegemonic during this time. This leads into a slightly unrelated discussion, but it is important to emphasize that women being regarded as *onnagata* is nothing new. As Maki Isaka demonstrates throughout out much of her book, the *onnagata* is defined more by the style of acting than it is defined by the sex/gender of the *onnagata*.[107] In other words, *onnagata* is not limited to men, but this style of acting has been frequently utilized by women which is exemplified throughout this entire timeline of women performing as *onnagata*. The success of women performing kabuki in film does not simply stop at the Meiji period either.

Women using kabuki styles of acting in film was something that continued past the Meiji period. Particularly this is best exemplified with the career of Kurushima Sumiko (1902-1987). To begin, Sumiko was raised by a well-known shinpa practitioner, Kurushima Hagoromo and this helped her build some foundational skills that helped her gain her first major role in 1921.[108] She was noted for acting, dressing, and dancing in similar ways to *onnagata*, especially to a famous *onnagata* by the name of Tachibana Teijirō.[109] She saw major success with her acting as well considering that she appeared in 125 films from her breakout role in 1922 all the way to 1937 (and one post World War II film in 1956).[110] While not all of these 125 films centered her *onnagata*-related skills, the fusion between film and kabuki-related skills can especially be seen in her "dance films" and "small-song films" (*kouta eiga*) that were especially popular in the earlier half of the 1920s.[111] Even in the other films that did not have narrative-breaks for kabuki dances, her acting style was seen as an "old type" in that it did not resemble the newly influenced acting styles from Hollywood that was gaining traction in the Japanese film industry.[112] Although Sumiko is an outlier in her acting style especially in the later part of 1920s and 1930s, it is nonetheless important to this discussion to show that she directly incorporated kabuki into her acting style. Sumiko was not necessarily the last actress to have incorporated these types of acting techniques into film either as it will be shown in the next paragraph.

A more recent actress that blended many of the aforementioned realms of theatre was that of Yamada Isuzu (1917-2012). Although Isuzu is more popularly known for her roles in films made by iconic filmmakers such as Mizoguchi and Kurosawa, she is said to have more so aligned herself as a stage actor as opposed to a film star.[113] Perhaps this can

be best exemplified with the fact that she performed the leading *onnagata* in a 1968 kabuki production or that she performed with two Living National Treasures and distinguished *onnagata* of the time, Baikō VII and Utaemon VI.[114] Interestingly, Isuzu was complimentary called a "woman-actor" (*onna-yaksuha*) rather than the term "actress" (*joyū*).[115] This distinction in word usage represents how Isuzu's method of acting was able to channel the style of acting that was popular amongst women-actors that were before her time. There is even a case where she was able to truly utilize her similarity to women-actors in a biographical play dedicated to the aforementioned Ichikawa Kumehachi in 1979.[116] In this play, Isuzu was able to represent Kumehachi by playing roles for *onnagata* (women's specialist role) and for *tachiyaku* (men's specialist role) just as the real Kumehachi had done when she was still alive.[117] Even though Isuzu is not necessarily known for bringing kabuki/shinpa acting styles into film, the fact that she held such a prominence in both film and shinpa may itself be considered a blend of kabuki, shinpa, and film. What can be seen from all of this is that Isuzu was able to experience tremendous success in the realms of film, shinpa, and kabuki which is quite a remarkable feat.

As it has been shown throughout this section, kabuki is by no means limited to the public kabuki stage. Kabuki as a method of performing is present in many other realms of theatre outside of the mainstream public stage. As it was first explored, geisha are artists who are well-trained in kabuki and often participate in it within their own troupes. The second space that was analyzed was shinpa theatre which acts as a periphery space to kabuki. This was because outcasted kabuki performers and women that come from notable kabuki families were pushed towards performing in shinpa as opposed to the

mainstream kabuki stage. The third space that was explored was the film industry which held many of the standards set in kabuki throughout much of the 1910s and 1920s. In comparison to the mainstream public stages which were dominated by men, the spaces explored in this section were generally speaking much more accessible to women. Although a couple performers like Kumehachi were able to break through that barrier and become popular on the mainstream public kabuki stages, the aforementioned spaces provided many more opportunities for women to perform kabuki in comparison. By exploring how many of these spaces have incorporated or "blended" kabuki into their arts, it should be evident that kabuki is by no means limited to just the mainstream public stages.

Conclusion for the Timeline

Now, it is quite clear women have been actively involved in kabuki since its inception. However, it is important to once again emphasize that this is not an all-encompassing list and that there are other realms which could be regarded as a "kabuki-blended spaces" and that women's participation in kabuki does not magically vanish after the film industry began shifting acting styles. For example, while I will not be analyzing the following in a deeper extent, the following are more examples that could be regarded as kabuki-related. The first example that will not be analyzed to a deeper extent is that of Takarazuka. Similar to shinpa, many daughters of notable kabuki families are encouraged to take up acting in the all-women theatre of Takarazuka which has prepared kabuki performances of their own.[118] The second example that could be researched further could be how the teachers of traditional performing arts have often been dominated by women. While this includes teachers in Japan, this could also easily

include teachers in the international sphere such as Tohoku Azuma IV (1909-1998) who had established her own kabuki school in the United States and toured with her troupe.[119] Finally, there are even those like Gia Gunn (1990-Present, Gia Ichikawa is non-drag/performing name) who have broken into the mainstream drag community. Gia Gunn is a famous trans-woman who made her claim to fame as a drag queen on the reality television competition, "RuPaul's Drag Race: Season 6" (2014) and "RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars: Season 4"(2018).[120] On the show, she explains that she has been involved in kabuki since the age of 7 and that she still utilizes her skills she made in kabuki in her drag performances today.[121] She even goes as far as exemplifying her kabuki techniques on one of the seasons of the show.[122] Although these are only a few examples of other areas that could be discussed in greater detail, it seems important to share where future research could be directed.

Up until this point, I have focused on creating a timeline of women's involvement in kabuki since its inception, while mainly focusing on the Edo, Meiji, and Taishō periods. The first thing that was discussed was women's involvement in kabuki before the ban of 1629. Next, for the rest of the Edo period, three reasons were explored regarding how women stayed involved in kabuki. The first of those reasons was how new inventions of scarves, caps, and wigs allowed women to conceal their gender easier. The second reason was that the introduction of the *sanza* system caused most of the governmental regulation to focus on the major stages while subsidiary stages were less regulated. The third explanation was that parlor-kabuki provided women to perform for wealthy patrons within their own homes which were almost completely unregulated spaces. After these reasons were fleshed out, the conversation continued by analyzing

how women continued to stay involved as society changed during the Meiji and Taishō period. The second part of this timeline first began by analyzing the documented women who experienced success in the mainstream public sphere of kabuki, namely, the major stages. Next, I focused on spaces that have been frequently left out in many conversations about kabuki which I called, "kabuki-blended spaces" as they had mixes of performance styles. The three areas that were focused in the blended-kabuki space portion were those of geisha, shinpa, and film.

The major goal of this first section has been to demonstrate that all these documented cases of women's involvement in kabuki is not just some coincidence of unrelated events, but rather, women's participation in kabuki has been consistent and drastically changing throughout time. At this point in the paper, it should be quite evident that women have been continuously contributing to the art of kabuki and that the assumption that kabuki is solely made up of men is one of inaccuracy. Although the mainstream public sphere of kabuki even today is dominated by men, historically and presently, women perform in kabuki even if they have not been recognized as such. To call kabuki an art that is only performed by men after this is simply to ignore all of the spaces where women have performed kabuki. From this point on, the paper will shift focus to exploring *why* and *how* women have been getting excluded from kabuki throughout the centuries. This exploration will not consist of one simple explanation, but rather, this next section will focus on how the discourses that exclude women have changed and adapted over time to the current status of the world.

----------Discourses that Exclude Women from Kabuki----------

Introduction to Discourses that Exclude Women from Kabuki

Up until this point in the paper, I have focused on presenting a timeline of women's involvement in kabuki, however, this next section will concentrate on displaying how particular discourses of gender have served to discriminate against women involved in kabuki. What is meant by this is that at certain periods of time, particular ideas about gender and methods of acting became hegemonic in that they influenced many areas of life, including that of kabuki. Although this section is not claiming to be all-inclusive, this section will be analyzing some of the major theorizations that have served to exclude women from kabuki in one way or another. This section will be analyzing how sexism has been a dynamically changing force. Now, before diving into the first major theory, I will explain how gender will be referred to in this section and how it is commonly understood as today. After this, I will first explain how theories of Buddhist cultivation have come to discriminate against women in kabuki. The second section will focus on how theories of sexology contributed to the discrimination against women performers. Finally, the third section will focus on how naturalist theories created a binary system that aided to the discrimination of female performers. With this being said, let us continue to see how gender/sex will be utilized in this part of the paper.

Gender Performativity

Scholar Judith Butler describes gender as "an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts."[1] In other words, by reiterating specific actions, one is understood to be part of a gender identity. These

specific actions can range from anything from wearing particular clothes, to styling hair in certain ways, moving one's body in a specific manner, etc. What this means is that gender is an identity that does not naturally occur. Rather, it is represented through the actions one does and repeats. By doing those actions repeatedly, one is understood to be a part of a socially determined gender identity. Because societies are by no means consistent, this same instability is seen in gender. For example, an action that may be understood as being part of one gender in one specific time and space, could be considered part of an entirely different gender in another time period and/or space. Even within one given society, concepts of what actions indicate what gender differs greatly from person to person. Now, with general understanding of gender being established, let us get a little deeper into how this can be differentiated from sex by exploring the concept of gender performativity.

While gender certainly contains complexities, gender performativity refers to an even more specific idea. Gender performativity was generated by Butler that reflects the idea that gender arises from the "stylized repetition of actions" rather than from the body or biological characteristics.[2] Gender is performative exactly because it is derived from such stylized acions.[3] Any single gender is created by specific actions and it cannot sustain itself without these actions. In other words, a human body is simply a medium for gender rather than it being the source of gender. Only by recognizing that gender is dependent on actions can this conversation continue.

This invites a relevant distinction between the concepts of gender and sex. Gender refers to a socially determined identity that is highly variable to each society and social groups within a given society. However, sex refers to an identity that is assigned

according to one's biological characteristics.[4] While gender is produced by people according to actions that one does, sex is an identity that is assigned to people that is based off only a limited number of biological features. While there are many inconsistencies within a model of understanding the body with sexes, it has nonetheless become a method for classifying people. Thus, the distinction between the conceptions of gender and sex is crucial to maintain as it is quite common for gender to be equated to sex when the two concepts are vastly different. To refer to these concepts in an interchangeable manner often leads to people claiming that sex determines how one should act rather than sex just being a label of one particular variation in one's body parts. While there are countless differentiations in body parts across each our species, the labeling of sex is commonly considered to be one that is somehow determinative of how one should act rather than an inconsistent indication of the body parts a human might have. Contrarily, it is gender that is used to label the actions that people utilize in their daily lives (although this does not mean gender should be used to tell one how they *should* act by any means). Therefore, when the word "gender" is being used in this paper, it refers to performative aspects and not biological ones.

Cultivation of Womanhood versus Kabuki

The notions of gender that were hegemonic during the Edo period were highly influenced from medieval Buddhist schools of thought. The Buddhist conceptualization of cultivation proved to be one idea that became deeply ingrained in many parts of society, especially that of kabuki. Cultivation can be briefly explained as improving one's mind or spirit via the means of physical training.[5] By training or building up one's character through their body/physical work, one should be able to attain a greater

wisdom.[6] While there is a great variation of ways to cultivate such as meditation or repetitious monastery work, the type of cultivation that will be focused on here is the cultivation of the female body.

Cultivation was based on some preconceived notions about the female body. Arising from earlier medieval discourses on Buddhism, a female body was deemed to be inherently defiled, unclean, and riddled with sin from a past life.[7] There are many other negative attributes that were associated with the female sex, but these were not seen as an insolvable issues/traits. In order to deal with this "problem," the solution was to cultivate or "cure" the female body with a type of cultivation that centered on womanhood. It is in this way that cultivation recognizes sex and gender as different concepts. In fact, becoming a woman has even been described as being antithetical to being a female during the Edo Period.[8] This is because, in order to become a disciplined and controlled woman was to cultivate the rambunctious and controllable female body. In other words, womanhood (gender) was to cultivate the female body (sex) which was viewed as something that was defiled. Although this explanation certainly suffices as a foundation of cultivation, it can be better understood when looking at actual texts.

A text that truly exemplifies how the cultivation of womanhood has taken effect in overall gender theory during the Edo period is that of *Onna Daigaku* (Greater Learning of Women) that was attributed to Kaibara Ekiken in 1729. The *Onna Daigaku* is essentially a manual for how to become a proper woman in the Edo Period. The reason that this text has been chosen is because it utilizes cultivations as a commonsense notion in order to push forward an argument on how women should act. Moreover, this text represents the Edo period stance on femininity quite well in that it recognizes that gender

and sex are different concepts, but nonetheless, it asserts that those with female bodies should become women if they want to have a fortunate rebirth in their next life. An example from this text is the following:

> The five worst infirmities that afflict the female are indocility, discontent, slander, jealousy, and silliness. Without any doubt, these five infirmities are found in seven or eight out of ten women, and it is from these that arises the inferiority of women to men. A woman should cure them by self-inspection and self-reproach. [9]

As seen in this passage, Ekiken makes an issue of the female body by naming five afflictions that a female body supposedly contains. The very foundation of this idea reflects that it is believed that there are characteristics or traits of one's personhood that are controlled by their body. However, as in line with cultivation, Ekiken believes that these traits are able to be remedied. This is reflected when Ekiken says that these supposed "issues" should be addressed with "self-introspection" and "self-reproach." In other words, Ekiken expected women to cultivate themselves. While he recognizes the separation of sex and gender, he believes that a problem lies in the body. Yet, even if a woman does cultivate oneself, it is still made known that even with cultivation, men will be superior. While it has been well established up until now that the female body was seen to have afflictions and that they can be cured, let us continue the conversation by analyzing how to cultivate the supposed afflictions.

The cultivation of a female body in the *Onna Daigaku* (and other similar manuals) conceptualizes womanhood equal to the duties of a housewife. To be a cultivated woman in the Edo period is essentially to perform the unpaid job of a housewife. This is evident in the very first line of *Onna Daigaku*,

> Seeing that it is a girl's destiny, on reaching womanhood, to go to a new home [of her husband's], and live in submission to her father-in-law, it is more incumbent upon her than it is on a boy to reverence her parents' instructions. [10]

This quote stresses the importance of gendering of a child early in their life so that they can be obedient to their husband and husband's father. While there is a lot to pick a part here, I would like to place a focus on the assumption that a woman marrying a man is central to Ekiken's argument as a whole. As written throughout the text of *Onna Daigaku*, to be a woman is to be a wife to a man. This is further emphasized with the following quote:

> A woman has no particular lord. She must look to her husband as her lord, and must serve him with all worship and reverence, not despising or thinking lightly of him. The greatest lifelong duty of a woman is obedience. [11]

It is in this from the following quotes that it can be seen how the concepts of sex and gender can be differentiated. As seen in this quote, a woman is once again synonymous with doing the job of a wife. Then, to be a wife in the eyes of Ekiken is to be a servant. In this way, it proves to be very restrictive to women's lives. Similar to how cultivation attempts to limit women's lives in education such as the *Onna Daigaku*, this concept was also deeply ingrained in discourses of fields of study such as kabuki discourses.

Although cultivation had been integrated into gender theory of the time, let us continue by analyzing how this idea impacted women performers in kabuki. In order to reach this point, this section will first analyze how cultivation became incorporated into kabuki discourses. Next, this section will explain how this incorporation of cultivation caused women performers to be treated as a scapegoat for societal issues surrounding kabuki. The next impact of cultivation being incorporated into kabuki is that women performers were being viewed as a threat or danger to their communities. Lastly, the final

impact of this discourse that will be explained is that of women performers being banished from kabuki. With an outline being established, let us continue by starting with how cultivation influenced kabuki discourses.

Cultivation greatly impacted many areas of Japanese society during the Edo period including that of kabuki. As one might be able to guess, cultivation and kabuki were not exactly two realms of theory that harmonized well together. In fact, the very nature of kabuki was in defiance of what the cultivation of womanhood required. For example, while educational manuals like *Onna Daigaku* enforced sentiments such as "The only qualities that benefit a woman are gentle obedience, chastity, mercy, and quietness;" kabuki was rather embodying the opposite of these characteristics.[12] As a matter of fact, the word "kabuki" derives from the nominalization of the verb "kabuku" which means "to lean; to act and/or dress in a peculiar and queer manner." [13] Additionally, kabuki as a theatre, especially in the Edo period, was quite rambunctious, playful, and had many ties with prostitution. Moreover, educational manuals such as *Onna Daigaku* and *Onna Chōhōki* (1694, Great Treasure for Women) even specifically advocated that women should not even attend theatrical performances.[14] It is in this very way that participating in kabuki served to be antithetical to many of the Buddhist teachings of womanly cultivation that were prevalent in society. Even though it is quite evident that kabuki and cultivation did not blend well, let the conversation continue by analyzing some kabuki guidebooks that incorporated this very logic.

Although the ultimate goal of this section will be to show how cultivation has impacted women's involvement in kabuki, it is first necessary to explore how cultivation became incorporated into kabuki discourses. Similar to the educational manuals such as

Onna Daigaku, many guidebooks or reviews of kabuki performers utilized cultivation discourses as a sort of common sense notion in order to explain how women's kabuki became banned. For example, a guidebook of Kyoto, *Kyō-warabe* (Child of Kyoto, 1658) describes how women performers were received by audiences during the peak of women's kabuki:

> They afflicted the six sense-organs of people, they captivated their hearts by appealing to their six senses. Men threw away their wealth, some forgot their fathers and mothers, others did not care if the mothers of their children were jealous. Day and night they had their hearts on [the actresses], and exhausted the money-boxes in their godowns. They didn't tire of dallying as long as their wealth lasted. Although they concealed this from their parents and deceived their wives, it became know [just as nothing escapes] the meshes of the many nets pulled up on the beach of Akogi. Because this was so disturbing to the country and an affliction of the people, the *kabuki* of prostitutes was banned. [15]

As it can be seen, the main purpose of this passage was to point out that during the pinnacle of women's kabuki, men were exhausting their funds on women's kabuki to such a supposedly extreme and detrimental extent that women's kabuki needed to be banned. Although there is a lot to unpack from this short excerpt, the first thing that will be brought to our attention will be how the "problem" of men spending exorbitant amounts of money is blamed on women kabuki performers.

The first thing of importance from this passage that will be discussed is the blaming of women performers for the problem of men wasting their money and lying to their families. While at first glance, it may not seem like women performers are being blamed for this problem, however, when one considers that the solution to this problem was banning women from kabuki, it is quite evident that women performers are being held responsible for this issue. Even though this passage does not overtly and outright state that women are the problem, the fact that banning women from kabuki is treated as

the solution is evidence enough to prove that women are being viewed as the root of this problem. Rather than blame the problem of men "spending all of their families' savings on kabuki performances" on the very men who are making the choices, the problem is somehow being flipped onto the women performers. However, the conclusion that this excerpt reaches can be explained by utilizing the logic of cultivation of women.

It may be difficult to determine why women performers are being condemned for men's choices, but this can be explained when using the perspective of cultivation. To begin, the fact this excerpt refers to women's participation in kabuki as the "*kabuki* of prostitutes" indicates that women's performances were being interpreted as inherently sexual or tied to sex. The reason this would be is because the women in kabuki would be considered to not be acting in accordance with cultivation guidelines. This is known because there are quite a few cultivation manuals that demand that women do not act, dance, sing, or dress in a manner that might attract men.[16] Therefore, cultivation is able to revert the blame of this problem onto women. As opposed to keeping the men accountable for wasting their money and betraying their families, cultivation instead places the blame on women kabuki performers as they would not be "curing the problems of their female bodies." Although blaming women for the problems that men cause is by no means exclusive or unique to cultivation, this is just simply the way cultivation justifies the problem. With each time period including today, women are blamed for issues men create, but this is just an explanation of how this time period and place did so. Now, as it may be evident, this sort of conceptualization of sex and gender has some dangerous impacts for the woman kabuki performers.

One of the impacts of this theorization of sex and gender is that women kabuki performers themselves were being viewed as a danger to society. In other words, because women kabuki performers were not following the cultivation that would be expected of them, they were treated as threats to society. This can be exampled by the following 1662 guidebook that was also reviewing women's kabuki:

> When theatres were built for the prostitutes to give *kabuki* performances, the impetuous eccentrics among the high and the low became infatuated with them and thronged and jostled one another in the boxes of the theatres. Still unsatisfied, they constantly engaged them, consummated their trysts, squandered their inheritances, and ruined their names. Some, engaging in brawls and arguments, were taken to court. Women's *kabuki* was banned because it disturbed the country, caused deterioration in various ways, and was the cause of calamities. [17]

Similar to the last and many other guidebooks, excerpts, and reviews, women's participation in kabuki as a whole was being interpreted as an equivalent to prostitution. This once again indicates that women kabuki performers are being interpreted in a manner that is inherently tied to sex and that they are not cultivating. This once again shows that incorporations of cultivation are assumed to be "common sense" notions in that they do not need to be disputed. Next, this text exemplifies that it is once again women being blamed for the problems of society, rather than the mostly men audience who were starting the brawls or tarnishing their own reputations. Women's kabuki is not just being viewed as a threat to men's families, but to society and social order as a whole. This is seen when this excerpt justifies why women are banned with the statement of "Women's *kabuki* was banned because it disturbed the country, caused deterioration in various ways, and was the cause of calamities." Even though the women performers are not perpetuating the violence, they are being seen as the danger in this circumstance. This sort of rationalization feeds into another large issue at hand.

As both of the aforementioned excerpts in this section have shown, the banishment of women performers from kabuki is being justified through the logic of cultivation. Both of the passages explicitly make the connection to first blame women as the problem and then use this as a justification for why they should be banned from kabuki. Therefore, when brawls or fights broke out like the aforementioned altercations of 1628/1629, this is why performers like Azuma were blamed for the problem. She was not only exiled from the area, but as the 1629 banishment of women shows, women performers as a whole were being blamed for the problem. It is in this very way that cultivation flips the problem onto women performers. Because cultivation was able to justify why women were the problem, the restrictions on women performers were thus able to become justifiable. Therefore, in accordance with how cultivation restricted women, the government officials found it easier to restrict women rather than to restrain the violence that surrounded them. In this manner, institutional discrimination against women performers was able to expand.

The governmental discrimination is something that continued throughout the Edo period as well. As explored in the timeline part of this paper, due to the fact that women faced governmental regulation in the public sphere, women transitioned to performing in private residences of wealthy patrons. The very fact that women needed to transition to spaces with lower levels of regulation is one of the longer impacts of cultivation. This is because cultivation impacted the laws that caused women to be regulated in the first place. While the whole history of women's involvement is not directly attributed to cultivation, the fact that women were regulated in the first place was certainly impacted by cultivation as exemplified above. Thus, cultivation has affected women's involvement

in kabuki in that it forced them to find ways to perform kabuki in ways that would be safe for them. Moreover, because the private sector was almost completely unregulated, this became the safest place for them to perform in. Although there was obviously still risk involved, this realm was certainly the most reliable area for women to perform in. Additionally, after the 1714 incident between the kabuki actor Ikushima and the high-ranking Ejima, the private industry became much more accessible for women as it became a risky area for men to perform in.[18] Therefore, with the combination of cultivation influencing regulation and the private sector becoming more accessible for women, these are a couple reasons why parlor-kabuki proved to be a prosperous area of kabuki for women. It is in this way that cultivation is one of the ideas that has shaped women's involvement in kabuki throughout the Edo period.

Now, as it has been shown in this section, when discourses of cultivation and kabuki became incorporated, the result was that women performers were being negatively affected. First, women's involvement in kabuki was being treated as a scapegoat for the poor financial decisions by men. The sort of logic that cultivation justified made it that societal problems that men created were blamed onto women performers. Next, this sort of theorization of gender not only blamed women performers for their audiences' financial problems, but it also condemned them for the brawls that would break out at their performances. It is in this way that women were being accused of being threats to society. Because of all the factors explored thus far, these were then used to justify the banishment of women from kabuki. Thus, women not only faced prejudices for performing, but eventually experienced institutionalized discrimination. It is because of this discrimination that the private sector of kabuki became such an appealing place.

Although this was just one of the major ideas that influenced women's involvement in kabuki during the Edo period, it is nonetheless an important one. With cultivation in the Edo period having been explored, I will now take a jump to exploring some of the discourses that affected women's involvement in the post-Edo, modern periods.

Sexology's Influence on Kabuki

While the last section explored how cultivation had an impact on women's involvement in kabuki during the Edo period, this next section will focus on how sexology began to have an effect on women performers starting in the Meiji period. The reason that the Meiji Period is an important shift is because it is in this period that there was an entire change in government style from the Tokugawa government to the Meiji Restoration. It is in this period that Japan stopped many of its isolationist policies and it began receiving more influence from many other regions of the world. One of those influences being theories such as sexology. Before jumping into how sexology has had an influence on women's involvement in kabuki, it is first necessary to explain what sexology is. In this case, sexology is referring to the process in which sex came to be understood through medical terminology which initially started gaining popularity in Europe around the 1870s.[19] Not long after, many of these texts began getting translated into Japanese and many people in Japan began contributing to this movement with some texts being translated and written in Japanese as early as 1875.[20] However, even if some of the texts were not translated into Japanese, many Japanese academics were able to read the sexology texts in the native language of the text.[21] Therefore, it can be seen that these texts were similarly gaining popularity in Japan during this time as well.

One of the most important things to understand about sexology is the manner in which it was presented. The medium that sexology was delivered was through the vehicle of medical knowledge. What this means is that sexology was given a powerful position in discussions because it was able to be presented as "truth" or fact.[22] As a result, due to the fact that sexology was able to be introduced in such a seemingly indisputable way, this is what made its expansion and influence so effective. To give an example of its effectiveness, scientists were able to declare the sexual behaviors that they *personally* frowned upon as a medical disorder and thus society was able to ridicule those individuals that were "diagnosed" with those disorders.[23] It treated the people themselves as medical objects that could be labeled and classified with "factual" evidence. While this is how sexology was actually delivered, let us continue by looking at some of the traits or behaviors that it labeled and classified as factual disorders.

One of the most impactful conceptualizations of sexology that was popularized was that any single person's body could be classified into a binary system of sex. To clarify, when sex was being developed in the medical realm, it mostly relied on classifying human bodies into two categories: male or female.[24] By only classifying all humans into two categories, this created what is called a binary system, or in other words, a way of classifying that operates in between two boundaries. The tangible effect of this binary classification of sex is that anyone who had bodies that did not perfectly fit into one of the two sexes were labeled as some sort of "disorder" or their bodies were often forcefully altered in attempt to resemble the *normalized* male or female body.[25] The word "normalized" is emphasized here because even if one looks at all the people that have been classified into one of the sexes, there is an extreme range of physical characteristics

of body parts and body shapes. Despite this system clearly having clear faults, it still managed to become influential due to it having a precedence in medical and scientific knowledge at the time.[26] This system of dichotomizing the sexes became the launchpad for the popularization of many other theories of sexology.

One such theory that is based on the binary of sexes is that of physiological determinism. To explain further, physiological determinism means that a part of a human's anatomy is somehow supposed to dictate any given person's skills and personality traits.[27] In this case, physiological determinism means that one's assigned sex will somehow govern one's abilities and potential. It was extremely common for scientists to somehow come to the conclusion that females were inferior to males in any field such as strength or intelligence.[28] In other words, after the sexologists, medical specialists, and scientists of this time would label and classify people into one of two categories of sexes that they themselves created, they would then lay false claims of inferiority of females.

At this point, it seems necessary to mention how sexology had both commonalities and differences with cultivation's theorization of sex and gender. To a certain extent, both sexology and cultivation theorized the female body in a way that associated it with negative traits. It is in this way that sexology was not introducing notions that were completely different from what was already present in Japan. However, when womanhood as a gender is considered, this is where these two theoretical frameworks diverge. While cultivation concluded that a female body could be cultivated and to some extent "cured" with womanhood, sexology really does not differentiate sex and gender in any sense. In other words, when sex is equated to gender in sexology

theories, this essentially means that one's sex is being treated as if it is entirely determinative of one's talents and abilities. Therefore, sexology differs from cultivation in that sexology theories assert that sex is determinative of capabilities while cultivation makes more moral statements on what one *should* do in order to have a fortunate rebirth. This is not to say that cultivation by any means was kind to women, because as exemplified in the last section, women were still viewed as inferior to men even when they did cultivate. But, for the purpose of this conversation, the main difference between these two theoretical frameworks is *how* they discriminate against women and those with female bodies. Having laid out the theoretical framework of sexology, let us continue by seeing how this actually affected women's involvement in kabuki.

Now that the most common sexology claims have been established, I would like to next show how this had a specific impact in kabuki performance circles, reviews, commentary, etc. Namely, this section will focus on how the incorporation of sexology discourse contributed to the ongoing discrimination that women faced in kabuki circles. As scholar Ayako Kano has pointed out, whether it be an article that supported women's involvement in kabuki or an article against the movement, both still incorporated aforementioned sexology theories.[29] What this means is that regardless of the position that scholars took, sexology was taken as a commonsense notion to base their arguments around. Therefore, the first part of this section will be analyzing how sexology was incorporated into kabuki-related theory that wanted to exclude women from kabuki. Next, the second point of this section will be analyzing how sexology became incorporated into kabuki-related texts that were in support of including women in kabuki. Finally, the third point of this section will be presenting that regardless of which position

that was taken, due to the fact that they incorporated sexology theory, it caused women to be discriminated against in kabuki circles. That being said, let us see how sexology became incorporated into texts against women's involvement.

Sexology not only supported arguments that claimed women should not be involved in kabuki, but it was used as evidence for this claim. This is probably best exemplified with the following quote from Kojima Koshū:

> An undistinguished role might be best performed by a woman who can seduce the audience with her feminine form [*katachi*] and appearance [*sugata*]. But, for a role with a complicated personality, a role requiring portrayal of tormented suffering, or a role animated by intense passion, a woman with her simple brain operations and monotonous psychological functioning could never do justice. These roles would require the artistry of an *onnagata* who has the male's brainpower and psychological functions.[30]

To begin, Kojima is claiming two things here. The main argument is that females should not be in kabuki. Next, the underlying claim is that females have an inferior brain power and psychological capabilities in comparison to males. However, this underlying claim is not the thing being argued; rather, it is taken as a "truth" or "fact" for the rest of Kojima's claim. Despite the fact that the underlying claim is not being the disputed item, it is for this very reason *why* Kojima believes females should not be in kabuki. Therefore, in terms of sexology, Kojima is inadvertently arguing that those with female bodies are quite literally incapable of performing kabuki. It is in this way that sexology served as the very basis for many arguments that discriminated against female involvement in kabuki even though it was not the thing being overtly argued.

Sexology theories are integral to Kojima's argument. Specifically, physiological determinism is ever present in Kojima's argument. In fact, in this passage, Kojima deduces the potentiality of people's performance exclusively based on their sex. In

Kojima's eyes, when a female performs in theatre, they can only be known for their looks and seduction, however, when a male performs the artistry of the *onnagata* tradition can be recognized and respected for their skill. In other words, performing on stages can only be regarded as artistry when a male performs. If a woman succeeds at kabuki, it is due to their biologically assigned sex bringing them natural-born gifts of seduction and appearance. What can be seen from all of this is that Kojima came to the conclusion that people's biologically assigned sex determines the level of art they produce, rather than coming to the conclusion that he himself simply holds different standards for people based on their sex. This type of arguing directly undermines every talent of women performers. It accounts for their skills as being merely biological when in fact kabuki requires an intense amount of training. Thus, what we can see here is that Kojima's claim here has no basis without sexology.

The presence of sexology was also well incorporated into arguments that support women participating in kabuki. For example, despite holding a more supportive position on the topic, critics such as Yanagawa Shun'yō have also been strongly influenced by sexology writings. Yanagawa writes:

> No matter how good the actress and how skilled the *onnagata*, the two should not appear together on the same stage. They would only undermine each other's strong points, and would only displease the audience. No matter how skilled the *onnagata*, he could not bear comparison if placed side by side with a real woman. That a real woman would more closely resemble a woman goes without saying. [31]

What should first be noted here is what Yanagawa exactly means by "real woman" which is a female who is closely following the societal expectations of womanhood. Now, although Yanagawa does not take a negative opinion on women performers, he still incorporates sexology theory. Similar to Kojima, Yanagawa assumes that sex will

determine how any individual will act. This can be seen when he assumes that those with female bodies will succeed in kabuki because of their resemblance to "real women." Alternatively, he claims that male will then succeed at kabuki due to their "skills." Even though Yanagawa does not necessarily frame either of these as negative, this just once again reflects the notion of physiological determinism that was also present in Kojima's writings. Nevertheless, this clearly shows the omnipresence of sexology throughout the critical reviews of kabuki regardless of if they were positive or negative.

Now, let us move on to how the incorporation of sexology into theatre debates has affected women's involvement in kabuki. As shown in the analysis so far, sexology theory has been consistently ingrained as an underlying argument of these texts. With that being said, this has led both sides of the argument into a whole new assumption. Both sides of the argument hold the assumption that a woman cannot be an *onnagata* nor that a woman can have the same skills as the male-assumed *onnagata*. In fact, whenever the word "*onnagata*" is being used in these reviews, it is being contrasted with "woman" or "actress." Then, on top of that, as scholar Ayako Kano has pointed out in many reviews, the male-coded *onnagata* was consistently associated with skill, while actresses were associated with being more real.[32]

Many of the sexology-influenced assumptions that were made in these reviews lead to some problematic concepts. Specifically, the fact that *onnagata* were male-coded and associated with skill while actresses were female-coded and associated with realness shows evidence of physiological determinism. This is a problem because the sort of framework of physiological determinism exemplified here only allows males to be skilled in kabuki, but not females. For example, if a woman was to theoretically be successful in

kabuki, critics start attributing their accomplishments more to their sex than to their skills. Therefore, even if one attempts to make a case for women's involvement in kabuki as exemplified earlier while using this assumption, they would have still inadvertently asserted that females will be unskilled but rather rely on something "natural." This has an obvious impact in this art as kabuki is recognized as a highly skilled artistry. Even if one supports the idea of including women in kabuki but they keep the sexology arguments, it ends up biting itself in the end. Overall, the presence of sexology inadvertently undermines the talents of the women in kabuki by overshadowing their skills by focusing on their sex.

Overall, as this part has shown, sexology has had a major impact on kabuki reviews. Not only is it incorporated into negative opinions on women joining kabuki, but it is also well ingrained into reviews that are advocating for women's involvement. In fact, it works as the very basis for many of the arguments. Many are not overtly arguing in favor of sexology, but rather sexology is assumed to be fact. While negative reviews assume that females cannot perform kabuki because of their assigned sex, positive reviews assumed that females would be better at performing kabuki because of their sex. It is in this way that neither of the arguments allowed women to be seen as being actually skilled in the art, but rather, their skills would be overlooked by their biologically assigned sex. Now that sexology's influence on women's involvement in kabuki has been analyzed, let us continue to see how naturalism has affected women's involvement in kabuki.

Naturalism Contributing to a Binary within Kabuki

Another movement of theory that began having an impact on women's involvement beginning in the Meiji Period is that of naturalism theory. To begin, naturalism began taking off in performing arts at around the turn of the 20th century.[33] Although naturalism is a notoriously difficult idea to define, in 1908, the critic Hasegawa Tenkei describes naturalism as the following:

> Put briefly, naturalists must transcribe a truth as they observe it. They care little about whether this particular truth is universal, eternal, beautiful, or ugly. They do nothing more than depict it as it is… Because naturalists describe nature only in the way they actually experience or observe it, they never present their compositions as offering the whole picture of nature, the ultimate truth, or any steadfast experience. [34]

In other words, self-proclaimed naturalists often attempted to portray some sort of essence (or truth) of reality or nature. While this is certainly how the movement defined itself, this was not exactly how the movement always played out in action.

Naturalism may have been defined as portraying "nature" or "reality" however, the movement has strong associations with other sets of theoretical practices. Specifically, there have been quite a few critiques against the naturalism movement that claim that self-proclaimed naturalists asserted that anything that is modern or western is synonymous with being natural. For example, the poet Ishikawa Takuboku has criticized the Japanese naturalism movement in 1910 by saying naturalist writers' errors result from "their Roman Empire-like delusion to encompass every kind of modern tendency under the single name of naturalism." [35] In other words, naturalism served to be an overreaching term to engulf anything related to modernity and westernism. This leads to some

problems as what might be considered as “natural” or “common-sense” in one region of the world might be considered as “unnatural” in another part.

To tie this into theories related to acting methods a little more, ways of acting “natural” greatly varied across the world. So if a particular style of acting that was popular in Europe was introduced to Japan it could be presented as “natural” even though it went against what many considered to be the common-sense way of acting.[36] In no way does this mean any particular style is more “natural” or better than the other, nor does it mean that they had no similarities; but rather, the reason it varied with some Japanese acting styles is because “natural” ways of acting are subjective to time and space. Now, due to naturalism having strong connections with modernity and westernization, it hence has varying levels of success in various realms of art.

Next, let us focus on the realms of art where naturalism was most successfully implemented. The very first area that naturalism was incorporated into was the literary sphere around the 1880s when Tsubouchi Shōyō wrote about the notion in “The Essence of the Novel” (Shōsetsu shinzui 1885-1886).[37] Next, another major realm that naturalism started becoming incorporated into was theatre, specifically that of *shingeki* (new theatre). *Shingeki* is a genre of Japanese theatrical movements that focused on departing from traditional acting styles by orchestrating productions of European plays that bring in conceptions of modernism.[38] Specifically, this includes the *Bungei Kyōkai* (the Literary Society) established in 1906 by Tsubouchi Shōyō, the *Jiyū Gekijō* (the Free Theatre) established in 1909 by Osanai Kaoru, the *Geijustsu-za* (the Art Theatre) established in 1913 by Shimamura Hōgetsu, and the *Tsukiji Shōgekijō* (the Little Theatre) established in 1924 by Osanai and Hijikata Yoshi.[39] The *shingeki* movement was one of the first theatres

in Japan that successfully began incorporating naturalism, modernism, and westernism. It is also important to emphasize that it was not simply an importation and adoption of ideas from Europe, but rather it was more of a hybridization in that the leaders of *shingeki* took their own spins on these associated themes.

Naturalism was not just successful in *shingeki* either, but it also served to be quite successful in film as well. One of the major influencing factors of this success was the Pure Film Movement (*jun'eigageki undō*). The Pure Film Movement was a series of critiques that attempted to modernize film. Naoki Yamamoto has claimed that the Pure Film Movement modernized film through two means. The first means was the incorporation of naturalistic techniques that were being developed in the *shingeki* movement.[40] More specifically, this can be partially attributed to the fact that a new film company Shōchicku hired Osanai Kaoru who helped lead multiple theatre troupes in the *shingeki* movement.[41] Osanai helped implement naturalism by teaching actors the techniques that were formed during the *shingeki* movement.[42] The second major factor that associated naturalism with film was the increasing number of films from Hollywood that were being imported into Japan.[43] The importation of Hollywood films brought with it particular styles of editing films, ways of acting, and staging. These Hollywood-inspired characteristics became known as "natural" because of the strong association between the naturalism movement and westernization. Regardless, these are the two major characteristics that aided in naturalism's success in film. Now that naturalism has been explored in relation to *shingeki* and film, let us continue to see how the movement of theory continued to interact with kabuki.

Although naturalism saw quite a success in shingeki and film, it was much less prosperous in kabuki. While film and *shingeki* were able to portray modern events of the time through the newly developed naturalistic acting style, kabuki struggled to do the same. This can be best exemplified through the failure of kabuki being able to portray events that represented modernism such as the 1984 Sino-Japanese War. For example, when Ichikawa Danjūrō attempted to portray sailors on navy ships in a play at the Kabuki-za theatre, the play was a failure.[44] Soon after this failure around the end of the nineteenth century, it became less common for kabuki to try to portray contemporary events and it began investing more time and energy into sustaining the large repertoire of plays that were already successful.[45] There were times when kabuki was even filmed and it was called "kabuki cinema," however, this also was halted when naturalism began to be more incorporated into film in the 1920s.[46] This is not to say that mainstream kabuki has not portrayed newer pieces that match popular contemporary media after this event, but just that it has become less common to do so since around the arrival of newer acting styles that have been incorporated into *shingeki* and film. However, it can definitely be seen that naturalism and kabuki did not really incorporate together.

There are some identifiable reasons for why naturalism failed in kabuki to such an extent. Scholar Ayako Kano has summarized that this is because kabuki was not preferred for portraying modern events, especially war related ones, because it had become "feminized" and "queered.[47] What this means is that kabuki was starting to be understood as an art that had some sort of relation to homosexuality and queerness; these terms were often juxtaposed with the modern theatres that were called Kano coins as "straight theatre."[48] To circle back, this is why kabuki was seen as an ill-fitting theatre to represent

military endeavors, as it had these strong associations with queerness and homosexuality.[49] To give an example from a *Miyaku Shimbun* article,

> We hope that the members of this troupe, bearing such an honor, would acquit themselves well, without becoming slack [*dajaku*], and without so much as a rumor of love affairs. [50]

First of all, the "this troupe" that this passage is referring to is the Kawakami troupe. Next, the main hope behind this passage is that there will not be sexual or queer representations the military like kabuki was interpreted to do. Specifically, the "rumor of love affairs" are pretty directly referring to how kabuki was being rumored of being queer about during this time.[51] Thus, what can be said is that *shingeki* and kabuki were being contrasted in a way that portrayed *shingeki* as a theatre that was able to portray contemporary events while kabuki was not seen fit for doing so. Although kabuki may not have been viewed as being able to incorporate modern events, this all leads to a larger point.

Despite naturalism failing in kabuki, it still left an important impression on the art. Specifically, a binary was being created between the art of kabuki and the mediums of *shingeki* and film similar in the way that Orientalism functions. Scholar Edward Said describes Orientalism as a concept that relies on the constructed idea that there exists a basic and fundamental difference between "the East" and "the West." [52] This distinction is then used to describe the East and West in terms that associate the West with favorable characteristics and the East with negative attributes. Thus, by lowering and othering the status of the "East" in academic, political, and other spheres of influence, the "West" positions itself against the "East" for the purpose of asserting superiority over the "East." [53] While the distinction being made between kabuki and *shingeki*/film might not be as

cruel and relentless as the binary between the East and the West, nevertheless, a distinction that works off each other still exists.

The distinction created between kabuki and *shingeki*/film often worked off each other to privilege the latter of the two. To begin, *shingeki* defined itself as "that which is not kabuki." [54] Thus, at its very inception, *shingeki* defined and distinguished itself against kabuki. This then carried over to film by incorporating more modern and naturalist elements. Alternatively, the naturalism movement failed in kabuki and then kabuki began embracing the titles of being "traditional" or the "old theatre" (*kyū*geki). Additionally, another example of this division was the one presented earlier which was the one that portrayed kabuki as queer and unpatriotic while *shingeki* and film remain straight and patriotic. This sort of division made between the two is meant to lower the status of kabuki while raising that of *shingeki* and film. If *shingeki* and film are to be modern, natural, straight, and realistic, kabuki is to be traditional, unnatural, queer, and artificial. This distinction had some tangible impacts on women in kabuki as well.

The distinction made in between kabuki and *shingeki*/film has come to affect women by developing conversations that exclude them to one side of the binary. Specifically, this highly emphasized division has caused kabuki to seem unattainable to females. As seen in the sexology section as well, the male-coded *onnagata* were associated with being skilled rather than "real" while women were associated with being more "natural" or "real" rather than skilled. This type of dialogue easily aligns with the naturalism debate due to the fact that women are being associated with being natural while *onnagata* are associated with being unnatural. It also aligns with the dialogues of kabuki being traditional versus *shingeki*/film being modern. Due to the fact that females

were banned in kabuki in 1628, it became a commonsense notion that they were no longer participating in the art. Despite this not being true as the entire timeline section of this paper has presented, nonetheless, the idea was popularized and propagated. These distinctions both worked together to form a strong movement against women's involvement in kabuki.

The impact of this distinction can be seen with some quotes from reviewers. To begin, when one critic by the name of Katano Hakuro saw a film utilizing *onnagata*, he said the following:

> It is truly regretful that we see close-ups of a rawboned (and expressionless) woman's face in Japanese films. The use of onnagata was in itself no more than a relic of the past around the time of the Meiji Restoration, when the status of women had not yet been recognized. It is thus nothing but awkward if onnagata still exists in our modern age where we have things like radio-telephones and airplanes, and even more so if it survives in film, which principally requires naturalistic depictions. [55]

What can be seen here is that this critic clearly believes women should be used in films over *onnagata*. Additionally, this passage makes the claim that the male-coded *onnagata* are seen as ancient relics which is being contrasted with the modern era which is being associated more with women. Because women are being contrasted with *onnagata*, it is in this way that kabuki is being seen as exclusively male and unattainable to those assigned female at birth. Thus, while this quote does not necessarily say directly that women cannot do kabuki, it seems to be more of an assumed notion. It presents that only the male-coded *onnagata* is capable of crossing the border between traditional theatre and film, however, the critic is more so making the moral statement that they should not. In this way, this binary not only pushed women away from kabuki, it also pushed the male *onnagata* and even the acting style of *onnagata* away from film. In other words, this

author is arguing that females belong to the "modern" film while male *onnagata* belong to "traditional" kabuki.

Another example of an author maintaining this binary is Hasegawa Shigure. In one of Hasegawa's critiques where she writes about the possible introduction of more women into kabuki, she writes,

> Old plays [*kyūgeki*], however, should be played by *onnagata* as they have been in the past. This may be just a matter of being caught in old traditions, but since [the art of *onnagata*] has developed to such an extent already, it would break the hard wrought harmony to introduce actresses at this point. [56]

It is here that the critic very explicitly advises against including women actresses into kabuki. Not only does Hasegawa assume that women were not participating in kabuki, but she upholds the binary presented thus far. In Hasegawa's words, kabuki theatre is to be a traditional theatre for the male-coded *onnagata*, while it is implied that women actresses are for modern theatre and/or film. Additionally, as it has been seen in other critiques, the male-coded *onnagata* is being associated with being skilled which is being contrasted with women. To reiterate, being skilled in kabuki is specifically being contrasted with actresses. Also, Hasegawa does not just imply that women cannot be skilled in kabuki, but she also asserts that actresses would disrupt the harmony in kabuki even though they have been performing in the art since its inception. Although Hasegawa may not have the same background information as presented so far, it is quite evident that women's involvement would by no means be disrupting harmony in kabuki.

As it has been seen in this section, naturalism and kabuki have certainly had a contrasting relationship. First, it was presented that naturalism was not being incorporated into kabuki, but the theoretical movement did have success in realms such

as *shingeki* and film. Because kabuki struggled at portraying contemporary events, a binary began arising between kabuki and newer mediums such as *shingeki* and film. The distinction worked in a way that associated modern, western, and naturalism as a whole with *shingeki* and film while traditional ways of acting were associated with kabuki. This then caused actresses and *onnagata* which were being coded as male into this binary which associated actresses with newer mediums and the male-coded *onnagata* with kabuki. As the articles above have shown, *onnagata* and actresses were being distinguished from each other and they were each being pushed towards different theatrical spaces. Overall, naturalism was one of the many theories that aided in the development of a binary that contributed to the discrimination of women in kabuki.

Final Conclusion

As exemplified in this paper so far, women's involvement in kabuki throughout the Edo, Meiji, and Taishō periods have been met with many complications. Despite all of these flexible discourses that discriminated against women, this by no means stopped women from continuing to participate in the art. To reiterate the points of this paper once more, the main goals of thesis paper are (1) to present a timeline of women's participation in kabuki from the Edo period to a little past the Taishō period, and (2) to analyze how the discourses surrounding women's involvement have adapted and changed over time to discriminate against women. By this point, it should be quite clear that women's involvement in kabuki is by no means a couple instances of women participating, but rather it is a long history that deserves recognition for the contributions made to the art. To treat kabuki as an art that is only able to be performed by men is to simply ignore the great accomplishments, achievements, and struggles of all of the women that have shaped

the art to be what it is today. This is by no means to say that there were not spaces that were inaccessible to women and continue to be this way, but rather to say despite this discrimination, women managed to find ways to perform in an art-form they care about. With this being said, I hope that this is able to serve as a base launch pad for those who are interested in continuing research in women's involvement in the supposed "all-male" art of kabuki.

Notes for Introduction

1. This is a note to explain how Japanese names will be written in this paper. For writers that write in English, I list their first name first and then list their surname second. However, for writers that write in Japanese, I use the localized version of listing their surname first and then list their first name second. Similarly, for performers with origins in Japan, I list their surname first and then list their first name second.
2. Episale, "Gender, Tradition, and Culture in Translation," 89-90.
3. Ibid, 92-93.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid, 92-99, Bach; "Breaking the Kabuki Actors' Barriers," 264; Shively "Bakufu Versus Kabuki," 330; Tsubaki, "The Performing Arts of Sixteenth-Century Japan," 308-309.
6. Ibid, 102-104.
7. Some of the articles/books that talk about women's involvement in kabuki are the following: Edelson, Loren. Danjūrōs Girls: Women on the Kabuki Stage; Gabrovska, Galia Todorova. "Onna Mono: The 'Female Presence' on the Stage of the All-Male Traditional Japanese Theatre"; Isaka, Maki. Onnagata: a Labyrinth of Gendering in Kabuki Theater; Kano, Ayako. Acting Like a Woman in Modern Japan; Thornbury, Barbara E. "America's Kabuki-Japan"; Fujiki, Hideaki. Making Personas: Transnational Film Stardom in National Japan; Satō, Katsura, "*Onna-Yakusha to Kin-dai*"

Notes for Timeline Section

1. Shively, “Bakufu Versus Kabuki,” 34.
2. Ibid, 35.
3. Gabrovska, “Onna Mono,” 389.
4. Hayashi, *Razan Bunshū* (A collection of Razan’s works [1662]) quoted from Yakano Tatsuyuki, *Nihon Engekishi* (History of Japanese theatre), 23. Translation from Shively, “Bakufu Versus Kabuki,” 34.
5. Gabrovska, “Onna Mono,” 389.
6. Ibid, 390-391.
7. Ibid, 389-390.
8. Ibid, 390.
9. Shively, “Bakufu Versus Kabuki,” 36.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid, 39.
16. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 23.
17. Ibid, 19.
18. Ibid, 23.
19. Ibid.
20. Shively, “Bakufu Versus Kabuki,” 39.
21. Asai, “*Edo Meishoki*,” vol. 8, 1906, 756. Translation from Shively, “Bakufu Versus Kabuki,” 39.
22. Chaiklin, “Up in Hair,” 42-45.
23. Bach, “Breaking the Kabuki Actors’ Barrier,” 154.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid, 155.
26. Shimazaki, *Edo Kabuki in Transition*, 48.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid, 48, 285.

29. Ibid.
30. Ibid, 59.
31. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 70.
32. Shimazaki, *Edo Kabuki in Transition*, 56.
33. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 70.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 70-71; Shimazaki, *Edo Kabuki in Transition*, 54.
37. Shimazaki, *Edo Kabuki in Transition*, 54.
38. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 70-71
39. Ibid.
40. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 71.
41. Ibid.
42. Gerstle, Flowers of Edo, 65.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 71.
47. Satō, "*Onna-Yakusha to Kindai*" (Women-Actors and Early-Modern Period), 92-95.
48. Ichikawa Kumehachi, "Meika Shinsōroku," 108. Translation is from Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 71.
49. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 71.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid
52. Sonoda, "The Decline of the Japanese Warrior Class" 77.
53. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 72.
54. Ichikawa Kumehachi, "Meika Shinsōroku," 113. Translation is from Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 72.
55. Ibid.
56. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 9.

57. Ibid, 72.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Fujiki, *Making Personas*, 1-5.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 205.
68. Satō, "*Onna-Yakusha to Kindai*" (Women-Actors and Early-Modern Period), 88.
69. Kano, *Acting Like a Modern Woman*, 58.
70. Foreman, *The Perfect Women*, 67.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid, 71.
73. Ibid, 68.
74. Ibid, 74.
75. Kawakami Sadayakko, "*Joyū rekihō roku*" (Records of visits with great actresses), *Engei gahō*, 43. Translation from Kano, *Acting Like a Modern Woman*, 48.
76. Kano, *Acting Like a Modern Woman*, 32.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid, 57.
82. Ibid.
83. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 201.
84. "The destinations of such exile for him was not limited to shinpa but included other types of what's called "commercial theater," film, etc. Just as it was the case

for Kumehachi. That said, when it comes to this particular actor, Tamasaburo, shinpa was, with hindsight, arguably the most conspicuous venue of such exile, both quantitatively and qualitatively. By "qualitative," I mean the following. He was working hard to do the cultivation (shugyo) in the shinpa troupe and gained a lot for what would constitute his acting artistry. In the sense he made the greatest possible use of such an exile." Isaka (advisor), in email with Trae Larson, April 20th, 2020.

85. "In a sense, Tamasaburou was "exiled" to shinpa when he was young, just as many daughters of kabuki actors, who wanted to do kabuki, ended up becoming shinpa actors, and just as many offspring of minor kabuki actors, who wanted to do kabuki, ended up becoming shinpa actors,and just as the disciples of Ennosuke, who loved acting as kabuki actors but lost their place in kabuki circles, who wanted to do kabuki, ended up becoming shinpa actors.Tamasaburo was "exiled" to shinpa due to some political matters in kabuki circles, but with hindsight, his exile was temporary, and he didn't end up becoming a shinpa actor. He managed to come back to kabuki, and as one of the most important top notch ones at that. And now this example shows that he also managed to transfer a shinpa piece to kabuki. I think it's a quite telling example of how kabuki operates and how kabuki and shinpa are connected." Isaka, (advisor), in email with Trae Larson, April 7th, 2020.
86. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 71.
87. Ibid, 201.
88. Komatsu, *Kanzaburō, Araburu*, 141. Translation is from Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 201.
89. Agi, "*Ichikawa o Itamu*," 114. Translation is from Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 201.
90. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 201; Fujiki, *Making Personas*, 202.
91. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 201.
92. Yomota, *Motion Pictures*, 28.
93. Ibid.
94. Fujiki, *Making Personas*, 193.

95. Ibid, 55, 239-240
96. Ibid, 54.
97. Ibid.
98. Inuhiko, *Motion Pictures*, 33.
99. Fujiki, *Making Personas*, 6.
100. Ibid, 62-63.
101. Ibid, 55.
102. Ibid, 5, 193.
103. Ibid, 192-193.
104. Ibid 202.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.
107. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*. While most of this book is dedicated to the unraveling of the notion that only men can be *onnagata*, I personally would recommend chapter 7 "Female Onnagata in a Porous Labyrinth" for an in-depth analysis of Ichikawa Kumehachi's success as an *onnagata*.
108. Fujiki, *Making Personas*, 224.
109. Ibid, 240.
110. Ibid, 234.
111. Ibid, 244.
112. Ibid.
113. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 94, 218.
114. Ibid, 94.
115. Ibid, 95.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid, 76-77.
118. Ibid.
119. Thornbury, *America's Kabuki-Japan*, 43.
120. RuPaul and Nick Murray. "Episode 4: Shade: The Rusical," *RuPaul's Drag Race: Season 6*. 2014; RuPaul and Nick Murray, "Episode 1: All Star Super Queen Variety Show," *Rupaul's Drag Race All Stars: Season 4*. 2018. In Season

6, Episode 4 of Rupaul's Drag Race, Gia Gunn shows some photos of her performing kabuki at a young age and explains her involvement in the art. On Season 4, episode 1 of Rupaul's Drag Race All Stars, Gia Gunn performs a short kabuki performance that mixes some more modern music with some traditional kabuki movements. To see more of Gia Gunn's mixture of kabuki and modern elements, there are many performances of her on YouTube.

121. Ibid. Although Gia Gunn was still presenting as a boy when she was learning kabuki, this does not invalidate the fact that she is a woman that participates in kabuki. Rather, this perhaps indicates a flaw in kabuki practitioners' decision to focus on training boys as it cannot account for queer identities and people transitioning away from the gender assigned to them at birth.

122. Ibid. Gia Gunn does a short kabuki performance to exemplify her techniques in the first episode of Drag RaceAll Stars: Season 4 where the contestants are required to enter a talent competition.

Notes for Dialogues that Exclude Women Section:

1. Butler. *Gender Trouble*, 191.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, 182-185.
4. Witt, "Anti-Essentialism in Feminist Theory," 324-325.
5. Yuasa, *The Body,* "What is Cultivation," 85.
6. Ibid, 98.
7. Minamoto, "Buddhism and the Historical Construction of Sexuality in Japan," 95-96.
8. Kano, *Acting Like a Modern Woman*, 32.
9. Ekiken, *Onna Daigaku*, 33.
10. Ibid, 23.
11. Ibid, 27.
12. Ibid, 23.
13. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 13. A nominalization of a verb is essentially to turn a verb into a noun. An example of this in English is to change the verb of "to run" into "a run."

14. Ekiken, *Onna Daigaku*, 28; Yonemoto, "The Problem of Women in Early Japan," 53.
15. Nakagawa, *Kyōto Sōsho* (Kyoto Series), vol. 3, 7. Translation is from Shively, "Bakufu Versus Kabuki," 35.
16. Yonemoto, "The Problem of Women in Early Japan," 51-53.
17. Asai, "*Edo Meishoki*," vol. 8, 1906, 756. Translation is from Shively, "Bakufu Versus Kabuki," 36.
18. Isaka, *A Labyrinth of Gendering*, 70-71.
19. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 43.
20. Suzuki, "The Science of Sexual Difference," 268.
21. Rainer Hern, "Magnus Herschfield's Onnagata," 386.
22. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*. 53-54.
23. Ibid, 43-45.
24. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 148-149.
25. Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes," 19.
26. Suzuki, "The Science of Sexual Difference," 268.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid, 266.
29. Kano, Acting Like a Woman, 27.
30. Kojima, "*Geki no ikan ni yoru*," 147-151. Translation is from Page 22 of Kano's *Acting Like a Woman*.
31. Yanagawa, "*Joyū wa ooi ni yūbō*," 45-48. Translation is from Page 23 of Kano's *Acting Like a Woman*.
32. Kano, Acting Like a Woman, 23-24.
33. Yamamoto, *Dialectics without Synthesis*, 28
34. Hasegawa Tenkei, "*Kinji shōsetsudan no keikō*," *Shizen shugi*, 110. Translation is from page 29 of Yamamoto's *Dialectics without Synthesis*.
35. Ishikawa Takuboku, "*Jidai heisoku no genjō*," *Kindai bungaku hyōron taikei*, 3:334. Translation is from page 30 of Yamamota's *Dialectics without Synthesis*.
36. Ottaviani Gioia, "Difference and Reflexivity," 220-221.
37. Yamamoto, *Dialectics without Synthesis*, 26.

38. Ibid, 42.
39. Isaka, “Osanai Kaoru’s Dilemma.” 119.
40. Yamamoto. *Dialectics without Synthesis*. 43.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid, 43-35.
44. Kano. Acting Like a Woman. 66.
45. Ibid.
46. Yamamoto. *Dialectics without Synthesis*. 44.
47. Kano. Acting Like a Woman. 58-62.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid, 60-62.
50. Shirakawa, Nobuo. “*Kawakami Otojirō, Sadayakko: shimbun ni miru jimbutsu zō*”, August 19th, 1894. Translated by Kano on page 62 of Acting Like a Woman.
51. Kano, Acting Like a Woman, 58-62.
52. Said, *Orientalism*, 2-3.
53. Ibid, 7-8.
54. Isaka, “Osanai Kaoru’s Dilemma.” 120.
55. Katano Hakuro, “*Nihon eiga to gaikoku eiga no hikaku kenkyū*,” *Katsudō gahō* 165. Translated from Yamamoto. *Dialectics without Synthesis*. 41.
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