2-23-2021

Introducing Genzai Nō: Categorization and Conventions, With a Focus on Ataka and Mochizuki

Diego Pellecchia
Kyoto Sangyō University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/mimejournal>

Part of the [Acting Commons](#), [Dance Commons](#), [Dramatic Literature, Criticism and Theory Commons](#), [Japanese Studies Commons](#), [Other Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#), [Performance Studies Commons](#), [Playwriting Commons](#), and the [Theatre History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Pellecchia, Diego (2021) "Introducing Genzai Nō: Categorization and Conventions, With a Focus on Ataka and Mochizuki," *Mime Journal*: Vol. 27, Article 3. DOI: 10.5642/mimejournal.20212701.03
Available at: <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/mimejournal/vol27/iss1/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Current Journals at Scholarship @ Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Mime Journal* by an authorized editor of Scholarship @ Claremont. For more information, please contact scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu.

Introducing *genzai nō*: categorization and conventions, with a focus on *Ataka* and *Mochizuki*

Diego Pellecchia
Kyoto Sangyō University

The traditional Japanese stage art of *nō* is often rendered in English as “*nō* theatre.” Indeed, *nō* could be considered a form of “theatre” in a generally shared sense, since its plays are based on scripts and tell stories about distinctive characters. Its stage conventions, however, are far from those that have come to be associated with Western theatre. Masked actors clad in costumes bearing elaborate symbolism move on the stage according to highly formalized scripts, delivering poetic text in the form of chant or stylized speech. Musicians, chorus, and stage assistants all share the same small performance space: a wooden platform fitted with a roof and a passageway stretching from stage right, devoid of set design, except for the painted pine tree as a backdrop, and minimalistic stage properties. In a *nō* performance the spectator may notice what could be called, borrowing Brechtian terminology, “distancing mechanisms,” constant reminders of the fictionality of the performance, first and foremost the fact that its actors may take any role, disregarding any correspondence between the age or gender of the performer and that of the character. Indeed, it is because of its non-realistic aesthetics that twentieth century avant-garde practitioners drew inspiration from *nō* in order to counter what they considered to be the stale conventions of Western theatre realism.

Nō emerged in Japan in the fourteenth century as a stage art that incorporated a wide array of pre-existent performance, musical, and literary genres. Most of its currently performed plays were created in the Muromachi period (1336–1573) and they were later canonized into the some-240 plays that form a repertory shared across various stylistic schools.¹ Although all *nō* plays draw from the same expressive vocabulary, formalized by tradition, its repertory is surprisingly diverse. Some plays relate ancient myths and legends, stories of gods, demons, or ghosts, others portray events in the life of humans, ranging from deranged women to samurai or blind beggars.

Nō scholars and practitioners are often faced with the challenge of providing short definitions of *nō* but summarizing such a heterogeneous tradition in a few words necessarily entails foregrounding only some of its many features, inevitably ignoring others. One of the most frequently recurrent definitions of *nō* describes it as a performance art in which actor-dancers interpret deities or spirits, chanting and dancing according to a highly stylized, ritual-like choreography. This type of description

¹ The repertory of plays varies depending on the tradition of each of the five schools of *shite*—main actor specialist. The Kanze school, the largest *shite* school, counts 211 plays in its repertory. The number of plays in the other four schools’ current repertory: Hōshō school 182; Komparu school 170; Kongō school 201; Kita school 188. The total number of plays among the five schools is 244. However, only 139 plays are shared by all schools. The Kanze school repertory will be used as reference for this article. For a list of plays and their distribution see Yoshimura.

seems to refer mainly to nō plays belonging to the dramaturgical form commonly referred to as *mugen* (“dream and illusion”). *Mugen* plays typically revolve around a single main character (*shite*—pronounced “sh’tay”), usually a ghost or spirit, appearing in disguise in the first half of the play, and interacting with a supporting character (*waki*) who inquiries about a story or place with which the *shite* is connected. In the latter half of the play the *shite* reappears in his/her real form and re-enacts past events by means of chant and dance. One of the most unique features of *mugen* plays is that their stories are based on a precedent happening, of which the *shite* is the protagonist. In other words, the main character is at once protagonist and narrator of the story he/she re-enacts. In many of these plays the *shite* characters are, to borrow Shimazaki Chifumi’s wording, “troubled souls” in search of deliverance from a past that torments their existence, while *waki* characters first prompt the *shite* to tell their stories, and then witness their reenactment. It is thanks to the act of evoking, reminiscing, and elaborating a trauma that the *shite* can be released from suffering and reach enlightenment. In other *mugen* plays, such as those featuring deities rather than ghosts, the *waki* witnesses the appearance of a supernatural being who prays for long life and renews the promise to protect the land.

Actor-playwright Zeami Motokiyo (1363–1443) often celebrated as “the father of nō,” wrote numerous *mugen* plays, such as *Takasago*, *Atsumori*, and *Izutsu*, which are now considered among nō theatre’s finest. During the twentieth century, Zeami’s name rose to international fame also because of the discovery and publication of his notes on performance, which have been translated in several languages. As Zeami became representative of the “nō brand,” so did *mugen* plays, a trademark of his production.

The nō repertory also includes a large group of plays that do not conform to this style. These are referred to as *genzai nō* (“present time nō”) because their action develops in the narrative present, rather than centering on a supernatural apparition, or on the re-enactment of past events.² The main characters of *genzai nō* are not deities or spirits but living human beings, the structure of the play does not prescribe in the second act the revelation of a character appearing in disguise in the first act, but has a freer form that is shaped around the narrative, and the action does not necessarily center only on the *shite* but often involves several other characters. Because of these characteristics, *genzai nō* are often described as being “theatrical,” as opposed to the rituality of the *mugen* plays, as well as “realistic,” that is, lacking the supernatural component and formalized structure that is typical of *mugen* plays. Popular *genzai nō* tell the stories of mothers looking for their missing children, such as *Hyakuman*, *Miidera*, and *Sumidagawa*, or of warrior loyalty such as *Kosode Soga*, *Manjū* (also known as *Nakamitsu*), as well as *Ataka* and *Mochizuki*, which are analyzed in this issue of *Mime Journal*.

In *Ataka*, General Minamoto no Yoshitsune and his followers, led by strongman Musashibō Benkei, are on the run. Yoshitsune’s brother Yoritomo is pursuing them, unjustly accusing Yoshitsune to be plotting against him. The party reaches the Ataka barrier, guarded by the suspicious Togashi and his soldiers. Benkei contrives various schemes and convinces Togashi to let them pass. Finally, Benkei’s bravery and loyalty to his lord Yoshitsune is rewarded, and he dances in celebration of the narrow escape.

In *Mochizuki* Tomofusa, once a retainer of Lord Tomoharu, now runs an inn at the village of Moriyama after Tomoharu was assassinated by his ambitious cousin, Mochizuki. One day Tomoharu’s Widow and their young son, Hanawaka, visit the inn, where they meet Tomofusa. Soon after that, Mochizuki and his servant also happen to stop by the inn. Tomofusa, the Widow and Hanawaka realize that this is their chance to avenge Tomoharu. Using different disguises, they entertain Mochizuki with chants and dances, until Tomofusa reveals himself and, together with Hanawaka, strikes Mochizuki dead.

Even though both *Ataka* and *Mochizuki* are major plays, held in high regard because of their technical difficulties, and often performed because of their straightforward storylines and spectacular stage renditions, they would not fit in the short definition of nō mentioned earlier, in which supernatural

² There are 56 *genzai nō* plays among the 211 constituting the current repertory of the Kanze school.

beings recount past tales by means of stylized dance.³ Despite the general popularity of *genzai* plays such as *Ataka* and *Mochizuki*, not to mention others such as *Sumidagawa*, but also *Yuya*, *Jinen koji*, or *Yoroboshi*, *nō* in general has come to be predominantly associated with the aesthetics of *mugen*. As Mae Smethurst pointed out, lamenting the lack of interest in *genzai nō*, scholars and performers in Japan and in the West “have seemed to favor *noh* that is highly poetic and spiritually infused over *noh* in which the characters are not spirits or ghosts and in which the action of the play unfolds in a chronological sequence of events like that of real time” (*Dramatic Representations of Filial Piety* 1).

This article tries to understand the reasons behind the under-representation of *genzai* plays in common descriptions of *nō* first by looking at how the definitions of *mugen nō* and *genzai nō* have emerged, and how they may have influenced perceptions of *nō* both in Japan and abroad. In the second part, the article provides an outline of the themes and plot types found in *genzai* plays, introducing features of text, delivery, and other performance conventions. Finally, similarities and differences between *mugen* and *genzai* are compared, not only to point out differences, but also common features of the two categories.

Defining *nō*—Western and Japanese perspectives

The need for a formal definition of *nō* emerged during the Meiji period (1868–1912), when Japan opened to the outside world after a period of relative isolation that lasted over 250 years. During this period, Japan struggled to find a balance between rapidly absorbing Western culture and preserving past traditions, seeking a national identity that would represent the country on the new, international stage. Efforts were made to reconsider Japanese performing arts and their role. In particular, the advent of the European naturalist theatre of playwrights such as Strindberg and Ibsen had a powerful impact on traditional performance. In 1886 the Society for Theatre Reform (*Engeki kairyō-kai*) was formed with the purpose of turning kabuki, with plays that often featured murderers and prostitutes, into a “decent” art-form by Western standards. The repertory was adapted, and new plays were written in compliance with the current dictates of European theatre (Salz 128–29).

Nō was spared this treatment. Upon his return from an 18-month tour around the world, statesman Iwakura Tomomi (1825–1883) urged the Imperial Household that *nō* be elevated to state entertainment and be performed in honor of the many distinguished foreign guests who were visiting Japan at that time. Throughout the Meiji period, *nō* was performed in order to entertain Western spectators, many of whom appear to have been, to say the least, unimpressed by it. British diplomat Algernon Bertram Mitford (1837–1916), accompanying the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh, lamented how the poetry of the play *Hagoromo* (“The Robe of Feathers”) was “marred by the want of scenery,” also noting how “the suit of feathers itself is left entirely to the imagination” (Mitford 84). Unlike Mitford, Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850–1935), professor at Tokyo Imperial University and noted Japanologist, suggested that scenery should not be used at all, as the lyrical nature of *nō* would be marred by “any of the adventitious aids of the melodramatic stage,” but was also dismissive of *nō* dance, which he considered “tedious and meaningless to the European spectator” (Chamberlain 24–25). During a short visit to Japan in 1898 Osman Edwards (1864–1936), theatre critic and teacher, watched *nō*, which he categorized as “religious theatre” (Edwards 39). On this occasion Edwards saw various plays, among which the *genzai nō Shunkan*. He describes the scene of the unmooring of the boat, one of the highlights of the play, as being “so touchingly interpreted, that the primitive and even ludicrous makeshifts of the mounting seemed hardly incongruous” (47). Later, he states that *nō* plays “are a curious instance of wisely arrested growth” (56), finally noting that it would be better to compare them with European miracle plays rather than with “mature drama,” by which he is likely to mean Western realistic theatre.

³ As it is explained in the interviews featured in this issue of *Mime Journal*, both plays are considered *hiraki* or “milestone plays,” to be performed in celebration, as well as in demonstration of an actor’s artistic development.

While early foreign observers considered the staging of nō to be overly simplistic in comparison with European standards, especially because of its ritualism and lack of realism, later nō was highly praised by artists such as Ezra Pound, W.B. Yeats, Paul Claudel, and Bertolt Brecht, who were inspired by nō's spiritual dimension and ritualistic conventions. Arthur Waley, not an artist, but the translator of one of the earliest collections of nō plays published in English, grasped the potential of nō as an alternative to bourgeois drama, which he thought to be "the last stronghold of realism" (Waley 1998, 17). What emerges from this short survey of Western responses is that, during these early stages of its reception, nō was observed and identified on account of its "difference" from European theatre. While at the beginning difference was ridiculed, during a second phase of Western observation of nō, it was exalted.

Japanese scholars of the period endorsed this view of nō as ritual performance, in contrast with Western "realistic" theatre. As Tashiro Ken'ichirō noted, the expression *mugen nō* was not used until the late nineteenth century, when Western literature and theatre started to gain popularity in Japan, and it became necessary to locate nō within the new, wider perspective of world theatre. In this context the notion of *mugen* was functional to the creation of a "nō genre" clearly distinct from other forms of performance (Tashiro 8).

A common way to categorize nō plays, in use since the Edo period, is a system known as *gobandate*, by which plays are divided according to the type of narrative and general mood.⁴ This is generally determined by the shite character-type, though other formal aspects are also considered (e.g. the type of dance featured in the play). The five play categories and themes can be described as follows:

- First category, featuring benevolent deities blessing the realm.
- Second category, in which ghost warriors suffering in hell appear and recount their demise.
- Third category, featuring female ghosts or spirits.
- Fourth category, miscellaneous.
- Fifth category, closing plays, often featuring a demon or other supernatural being.

Looking at the five categories one notices how the first, second, third and fifth categories have a more or less defined content, while the fourth group gathers all the plays that do not fit well in any other group, hence the name "miscellaneous." One will also notice that the characters in the first, second, third and fifth category plays are supernatural beings, which means that *genzai nō* are concentrated in the fourth category, although the fourth group also includes some plays featuring non-human characters, such as vengeful spirits (e.g. *Aoinoue*, *Utō*) or female deities (e.g. *Kazuraki*, *Miwa*), further complicating the definition of each category.⁵

The *gobandate* categorization has been adopted not only by the five shite schools, but also by nō scholars such as Ikenouchi Nobuyoshi, Sanari Kentarō, or Itō Masayoshi in their annotated collections of nō plays and is generally used to introduce the nō repertory to new audiences. However, since the late nineteenth century period Japanese scholars started subdividing the repertory according to new criteria. In a recent publication, Nakao Kaoru has traced the emergence of the expression *mugen nō* in Japanese scholarship. As early as in 1905 Ikenouchi mentioned three types of nō plays: *mugenteki* ("vision-like"), *genjitsuteki* ("realistic"), and *chūritsuteki* ("neutral"—not belonging exclusively to either

⁴ The *gobandate* system is particularly useful to establish the order according to which plays should be staged on the occasion of an event featuring multiple performances.

⁵ There are a few *genzai* plays in the 3rd third category: *Yuya*, *Ohara gokō*, *Sekidera Komachi*, *Ōmu Komachi*, *Sōshi Arai*, *Senjū*, and *Giō*. About two thirds of the fourth category plays are *genzai nō*.

one or the other type). The expression *mugen nō* was used for the first time in 1926 by Sanari Kentarō (1890–1966) in his educational radio broadcast *Kokubungaku rajio kōza* (“Japanese literature radio lectures”) (Nakao 157–58; Tashiro 6). Sanari distinguished *fukushiki* (two-act) *mugen* plays from others, which he referred to as *geki nō* (“theatrical nō”), in which the shite is a living human being and the waki’s importance in the play is closer to that of the shite.⁶ Here the word “theatrical” refers to a Western, realistic form of theatricality.

Sanari’s definition of *geki nō* in the introductory volume to his *Compendium of Nō Plays* (first published in 1931) reads: “Plays in which the shite is not a ghost or spirit but a living human being, and has a close relationship with the waki. These plays have the same structure as normal theatre. In other words, these are *genzai mono*” (Sanari 150). Sanari draws a comparison between “normal theatre” (*futsū no engeki*), an expression with which he most probably referred to Western, realistic theatre, and *geki nō*. The compound *genzai mono* is comprised of *genzai* (“present time”) and *mono* (“play” or “piece”) and, in Sanari’s definition, referred to any fourth category play in the *gobandate* categorization, including madness plays and samurai plays (85).⁷ Sanari seems to use the expression *genzai mono* and *geki nō* interchangeably.

As Nakao noted, the starting point of Sanari’s discussion of *mugen nō* was not just the fact that the shite was a ghost and not a living being, but also the relationship between shite and waki. Sanari saw how in *mugen* plays the waki’s role is that of creating a purpose for the shite to appear, while the shite is at the center of the narration. This dynamic is often reproduced in *mugen* plays as an encounter between two previously unrelated characters, usually a priest (waki) and a deity, ghost, or spirit (shite). The audience witnesses the supernatural apparition of the shite because of the waki’s function as “medium” between the world of humans and that of spirits (Sanari 109–10; Nakao 160–63). The formalized dramaturgy of *mugen*, in which the relationship between shite and waki is pre-established by a recurrent plot structure, is opposed to the free-form theatricality of *geki* (or *genzai*) *nō*, which are characterized by diverse plot structures allowing shite and waki to interact in various ways. Furthermore, describing the “value of nō,” Sanari wrote:

Looking at the development of *nōgaku* dramaturgy, the one-act and two-act *geki nō* formats represent a development, yet from the point of view of plain theatre, these still seem to be nothing more than simple and primitive plays. Since it was perfected, *nōgaku* was able to survive a long period of five centuries because of the unique artistic value of *fukushiki mugen nō* plays, which represent the majority of the *nōgaku* repertory, hence characterize it the most. *Nōgaku* maintains a special place between simple, primitive *geki nō*, and developed theatre. I think this is because the features of *fukushiki mugen nō* have greatly pervaded *nōgaku*. In other words, *fukushiki mugen nō* could be said to be the standard according to which all of *nōgaku* can be evaluated. (Sanari 106)

Sanari envisions an evolutionary trajectory from “simple and primitive *geki nō*” to *mugen nō* in which *mugen nō* is seen as superior to *genzai nō* because of its unique features, which distinguish it from any other form of theatre.

Though the emergence of *mugen* plays is associated with Zeami’s dramaturgical production, *genzai nō* were written before, during, and after his time. Early *genzai nō* such as *Jinen koji* are attributed to his father, Kan’ami, while *Sumidagawa*, one of the most famous *genzai nō*, was written by his son

⁶ Sanari conceived of five types of *nō* play that appear to be placed on a continuum from simple to complex, from ritual to theatrical. The five types are: one-part *nō* (*tanshiki nō*); two-part *mugen nō* (*fukushiki mugen nō*); theatrical *mugen nō* (*gekiteki mugen nō*); one-act theatrical *nō* (*ichidan geki nō*); two-act theatrical *nō* (*nidan geki nō*). See Sanari (56–61).

⁷ Non-*genzai* plays belonging to the fourth category, such as *Aoinoue* and *Akogi*, are listed by Sanari as fourth category in the basic information preceding the analysis of each play but are not included in this general definition of fourth category play.

Motomasa. Many of the *genzai nō* featuring samurai were written much later, during the late fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries. Zeami passed on his repertory, largely composed of *mugen* plays, to his successors, who transmitted it until today, yet *genzai nō* were not discarded for a more “developed” form of *nō*. Instead, Sanari’s dismissal of *geki* (i.e. *genzai*) *nō* as “primitive” and promotion of *mugen* as the quintessence of *nō* seems to be based on a comparison with “plain theatre” (*jun engeki*), an expression akin to “normal theatre,” introduced earlier.⁸

The word *genzai* can be found in play titles of fifteenth and sixteenth century *nō*, such as *Genzai Tadanori* or *Genzai Nue*, distinguishing these *nō* from the *mugen* plays *Tadanori* and *Nue*; the protagonists of *Genzai Tadanori* and *Genzai Nue*, respectively the warrior Tadanori and the chimaera-like monster Nue, appear as alive beings, while in their *mugen* counterparts they appear as spirits.⁹ The expression *genzai nō*, bearing the same meaning of Sanari’s *genzai mono*, first appeared in 1957, when Koyama Hiroshi used it to refer to “all that is not *mugen nō*,” that is, identifying by difference from *mugen* rather than providing a precise definition of *genzai*, though he admitted that there are plays that display qualities belonging to both categories (Koyama 297–98). A year later, Yokomichi Mario upheld this identification of *nō* through difference (Yokomichi, “Mugen *nō* ni tsuite”). Yokomichi developed a more elaborate analysis of plays, focusing on the formal and narrative characteristics of the shift from the first act to the second act of a play. This transition is usually marked by a change in the shite, for example revealing his/her hidden identity, or by a change in the location where the action takes place (Yokomichi, “Nōhon no gaikan” 43). Like his predecessors, Yokomichi admitted the existence of plays that are neither *mugen* nor *genzai*, and created a third category, called *ryōgakari nō* (“double function *nō*”), comprising plays that combine elements from *mugen* and *genzai*. Examples include *Funa Benkei* or *Fujito*, in which the shite in the first act is a living being, while in the second act, the shite is the ghost of a different character. According to Yokomichi’s analysis, about 30 plays in the current repertory fall into this group (“Nōhon no gaikan” 44–50).

In the 1950s Yokomichi collaborated with *nō* actor Kanze Hisao (1925–1978), one of the key figures in the post-war revitalization of *nō*. Following the trend originating in the Meiji period, Hisao opposed *nō* to Western realism, questioning whether it would actually be possible for contemporary audiences to be moved by the non-realistic aesthetics of plays such as *Sumidagawa* or *Nonomiya* (Kanze, 21). Along with other practitioners and scholars, Hisao and Yokomichi joined the Nōgaku Renaissance Society, an ensemble that sought to provide new readings of Zeami’s theories, and apply them to contemporary practice (Hoff, “Kanze Hisao (1925–1978): Making Nō into Contemporary Theatre” 79).

From the 1950s, as more translations of Zeami’s treatises on acting and dramaturgy started to appear in Western languages, *nō* was once more taken as a model for a new theatre by Japanese and foreign practitioners alike. Benjamin Britten, Robert Wilson, or Suzuki Tadashi saw *nō* as inspiration for avant-garde performance.

Some characteristics of *genzai nō*

Themes and plots

The paper will now turn to *genzai nō*, considering its categorization, and some of its principal features. As it has been mentioned earlier, the fourth, “miscellaneous” category in the *gobandate* system gathers not only *genzai nō* but also other play types. This inconsistency has spurred scholars to consider subgroups. While Sanari employed the expression *genzai mono* to indicate any fourth

⁸ Sanari attributes to non-*mugen* plays the word “*geki*” (theatrical), suggesting a similitude not only with Western theatre realism, but also with kabuki plays, which are based on elaborate plots featuring numerous characters. See Nakao (164–65).

⁹ Many other plays with *genzai* in the title were written during the Edo period (1603–1868) but, with the exception of the two plays mentioned above, did not make it in the contemporary repertory. For a list of non-canonical plays see Watson. Also see Tashiro 7.

category play, nō scholar Nogami Toyochirō used it to identify a narrower group of plays, mostly featuring warriors, but excluding other characters in the *genzai* spectrum, such as deranged people. More recently, Shimazaki Chifumi has built on this categorization, and proposed a subdivision of the fourth category into nine subgroups, four of which are dedicated to *genzai nō* (Shimazaki 16, 54).

- *Kyōran mono*, or “mad-person pieces.”
- *Genzai mono*, or “historical pieces.”
- *Geizukushi mono*, or “musical entertainment pieces.”
- *Ninjō mono*, or “human-interest pieces.”

Shimazaki specifies that

there are two uses of the word *genzai* in the classification of Noh: 1) *genzai*-Noh; 2) *genzai*-*mono*. The first word is applied to realistic Noh in general, to distinguish them from *mugen* (visional) Noh. The term *genzai-mono* is more specific. It denotes a realistic Noh, whose *shite* is a maskless male of samurai class. (Shimazaki 59)

In other words, while Sanari and Koyama used the expressions *genzai nō* and *genzai mono* to signify the same thing, Shimazaki (following Nogami) distinguishes between *genzai nō* (a general dramaturgical category opposed to *mugen nō*), and *genzai mono* (a subgroup of the fourth category).

Kyōran mono (e.g. *Sumidagawa*) portray characters of men or women who became deranged as a consequence of psychological trauma, often the abrupt separation from a loved one, such as a child, parent, sibling, or lover.¹⁰ *Genzai mono* refer to a specific subgroup of fourth-category plays in which the main character is a samurai. Some of these plays feature the *otoko mai* celebratory male dance (e.g. *Ataka*), while others end with a sword-fight scene (*kiriai* or *kirikumi*—e.g. *Shōzon*). Shimazaki dubs these plays as “historical pieces,” because the sources of plays in this group are martial chronicles such as the *The Tale of the Heike*.¹¹ *Geizukushi mono*, or “musical entertainment pieces,” are enriched by various dances both to chanted and to instrumental music. In particular, most of these plays feature the *kakko* dance, performed with a small drum tied around the waist of the performer.¹² Finally, *ninjō mono*, or “human-interest pieces” (e.g. *Shunkan*) emphasize human relationships between family members or lord and retainer, though they do not feature the element of derangement, and the main characters are not warriors.¹³

Arguably, the four categories described above share numerous similarities, and the subjects they treat overlap. For example, the trope of children separated from their parents is at the center of mad-person’s plays (*Sumidagawa*, *Miidera*, etc.) but is also found in the *geizukushi mono* *Kagetsu* and, to some extent, *Jinen koji*. Similarly, the Confucian ethics of loyalty and devotion toward one’s parent or lord is at the foundation of numerous historical plays (e.g. *Kosode Soga*, *Nakamitsu*) but also pervades several musical entertainment pieces (e.g. *Mochizuki*, *Hōka-zō*) as well as human interest pieces (e.g. *Hachinoki*, *Settai*).¹⁴

¹⁰ *Kyōran mono* plays with a male protagonist are *Ashikari*, *Kōya monogurui*, *Utaura*, *Yoroboshi*, *Tsuchiguruma*, *Tokusa*. *Kyōran mono* plays with a female protagonist are *Asukagawa*, *Hanjo*, *Hibariyama*, *Minazuki-barai*, *Kamo monogurui*, *Hanagatami*, *Sakuragawa*, *Kashiwazaki*, *Miidera*, *Rōdaiko*, *Semimaru*, *Sumidagawa*, *Hyakuman*, *Fujidaiko*, *Sotoba Komachi*.

¹¹ *Genzai-mono* plays with *otoko mai* are *Ataka*, *Kiso*, *Kogō*, *Kosode Soga*, *Kusu no tsuyu*, *Nakamitsu* (aka *Manjū*), *Morihisa*, *Shichiki-ochi*, *Shun’ei*. *Genzai-mono* plays ending with a sword-fighting scene are *Daibutsyū kuyō*, *Eboshiori*, *Hashi Benkei*, *Nishikido*, *Shōzon*, *Tadanobu*, *Youchi Soga*, *Zenji Soga*, *Kan’yō-kyū*.

¹² *Geizukushi* plays are *Mochizuki*, *Hōka-zō*, *Sumiyoshi mōde*, *Jinen koji*, *Tōgan koji*, *Kagetsu*, *Tōei*.

¹³ *Ninjō-mono* plays are *Kagekiyo*, *Shunkan*, *Hachinoki*, *Settai*, *Torioi-bune*.

Though they may belong in different subcategories, *Ataka* and *Mochizuki* have samurai as protagonists, and both plays extol the virtues of martial allegiance to one's lord, featuring plot twists in which the main character contrives a plan involving disguise to overcome their opponent. While in *Ataka* the contrast between Benkei and Togashi is resolved positively and ends with a celebratory dance, in *Mochizuki* Tomofusa expresses loyalty to his deceased lord through vendetta, killing Mochizuki.

A common feature of *genzai nō* is the emphasis on the relationship between characters, yet depictions of the psychological or emotional dimension of a character also appear in *mugen* plays. The difference may lie in the fact that, while the plots of *mugen* plays focus on the shite, around whom the story orbits, *genzai nō* emphasize the relationship between more than one character—lord and vassal, husband and wife, parent and children, etc. This has been discussed by Sanari, Nogami and other scholars, who noticed how in *genzai nō* the waki is not a mere “listener” but takes an active part in the story. In some *genzai mono* (in the narrower sense of the term) the focus is distributed more equally among multiple characters, to the extent that a waki character as the counterpart to the shite is not required.¹⁵

Plot type necessarily influences the structure of a play. At the center of a *mugen* play are past events that are told through chant and re-enacted by the shite, who is at once narrator and protagonist of such events. Typically, these past events belong to the time in which their protagonist was alive, or, in the case of a deity or spirit, to a mythical “time of the gods.” The nature of the plot of *mugen* plays requires a two-act structure in which the end of the first act is marked by the exit of the shite. Contrarily, the dramaturgic center of *genzai nō* is the present. Since the main character of these plays remains the same throughout the performance, *genzai nō* do not necessarily require two acts. In fact, act and scene subdivision in *genzai nō* does not follow a pattern but takes free form. For example, both *Ataka* and *Mochizuki* are generally described as one-act plays, though it may be possible to identify different scenes within them. This is particularly relevant in *Ataka*, in which the characters move across three different locations: before the Ataka barrier, at the barrier, and past the barrier. Other scholars have identified four scenes: departure, travel, at the barrier, and past the barrier (Yokomichi and Omote 168).

Text and delivery

Apart from plot and structure, *mugen* and *genzai nō* differ in terms of performance conventions. Among these, the literary aspects of the text and its distribution among acting and narrative entities needs to be considered. The text of a *nō* play consists of a combination of stylized speech and chanted poetry, delivered by actors in monologs or dialogs, or by a chorus. Chant is often used to emphasize poetic passages, while speech may be used for dialogs or for narration.

While in *mugen* plays much of the text is in verse, a large part of which is chanted by the chorus, many *genzai* plays abound in actor speeches, including dialogs between characters. After all, it would seem natural that, in plays in which human relationships are emphasized, characters engage in longer dialogs between each other. This distribution of speech instances may also play a role in the general tendency to associate *genzai nō* with the aesthetics of theatre realism. From a point of view based on classical Greek notions, the highest degree of realism is experienced when characters imitate actions without the intervention of an external narrative voice (Stern 4, 34).

¹⁴ In fact, scholars' interpretation may differ. For Shimazaki *Mochizuki* is a *geizukushi* play, given its various dances, but for Nogami it is *ninjō mono*. Nogami explains that the main difference between *genzai mono* and *ninjō mono* is the lack of a celebratory dance (the dances in *Mochizuki* are a strategy for killing an enemy), the somber atmosphere, and the fact that most of them do not feature famous historical characters, with some exception. In his study of *Mochizuki*, also published in this issue of *Mime Journal*, Michael Watson categorizes *Mochizuki* as *ada uchi*—revenge play.

¹⁵ *Kiso*, *Kusu no tsuyu*, *Kosode Soga*, *Zenji Soga*, *Youchi Soga*, *Sanshō* and *Hashi Benkei* have no waki character. All of these plays are *genzai mono*.

In *Ataka*, the great majority of the text in the first part of the play, including the travel and arrival to the Ataka Barrier, and the ensuing confrontation between Benkei and Togashi, culminating with the beating of Yoshitsune, is delivered by the actors and not by the chorus. This is possible also because the great number of retainers of Yoshitsune, signing together or in dialog with Benkei, de facto serving the performative function of a chorus (fig.1). The chorus proper becomes dominant only in the latter part of the play, when the retainers are less active. In *Mochizuki*, almost all of Tomofusa's lines are speech, while the Widow and her son Hanawaka deliver lines as a mix of chant and speech.¹⁶ The play opens with a short monolog by Tomofusa, the protagonist, who sets the background of the story, followed by two long sections in which first the Widow and his son, then Mochizuki and his servant reach the inn and interact with Tomofusa. The *shidai* section, and the following *michiyuki* section, in which the Widow explains how she and her son were forced to escape after her husband was murdered, are chanted.

Figure 1. *Ataka*. Shite: Udaka Michishige. 15th Udaka Seiran Nō. Kyoto, 2014.

Photo: Stéphane Barbéry. Reproduced courtesy of Udaka Tatsushige.

In *nō*, the interpretation of the script and of its staging is a complex matter.¹⁷ Words in the same passage or even in the same sentence may flow seamlessly from the actor/character to the chorus, in what appears to be an act of collective narration. The lack of strong correspondences between actor, character, and narrative voice makes room for multiple interpretations of the text as it is delivered on stage. Moreover, Japanese language, devoid of pronouns or verb conjugations indicating the subject of the sentence, allows for this kind of ambiguity, difficult to preserve when translating it in a European language. In *mugen* plays, actors engage in long chanted passages in which they may be speaking *as* the character, but also *about* the character as in “third person.” This is less frequent in *genzai* plays such as *Ataka* and *Mochizuki*, where actors tend to maintain the identity of their character (Smethurst 6–17).

¹⁶ The only chant lines by Tomofusa highlight the dramatic reunion between him and his Lord's son: “He is the image of the lord who is lost to me / so that I am reminded again of the past! / Lord and retainer / grasp each other, hand in hand. / Now, as they remember the departed, / there is no time for their tears to dry.”

¹⁷ Takeuchi Akiko provides a narratological analysis of *nō* scripts, with a focus on Zeami's plays of the first and second category. Also see Frank Hoff.

The ambiguity of character and voice is particularly relevant to the interpretation of the chorus parts. Usually, the chorus chants lines that can be associated to one of the characters, most frequently the shite or the waki, though oftentimes attribution is debatable. An example is the *kuse* narrative section, which can be found in a great number of plays. In this section a character, usually the shite, tells a story that is related to the main narrative of the play by proxy of the chorus—a sort of “narrative within a narrative.”¹⁸ For example, the *kuse* of Ataka, describing Yoshitsune’s commenting on the broken relationship between him and Yoritomo could be thought to be Yoshitsune’s voice, and this is how it is often interpreted by Japanese scholars.¹⁹ However, in the translation presented in this issue of *Mime Journal*, Anthony Chambers assigns the first half of the *kuse* to an external narrator (Yoshitsune was born into a house / of bows and horses. Devoting his life to Yoritomo / he sent corpses beneath the waves of the western sea...) and the second half to Yoshitsune’s voice (This I know, and yet when I reflect...), as if Yoshitsune were first listening to his life story told by an external voice, then adding his reflections in first person. Both interpretations of the narrative voice in this passage are possible.

Mochizuki, too, has a *kuse* in which the chorus narrates the story of the Soga brothers implicitly comparing it with Tomofusa’s. In this case the *kuse* is attributable to the Widow and Hanawaka, who, within the narrative, declare that they will tell a story to entertain Mochizuki. The two sing the *sashi* section introducing the storytelling, later continued by the chorus, who then sings the *kuse*.

In less frequent cases, the chorus may act as a more clearly extradiegetic narrative voice. This instance can be noticed at the end of *genzai* plays where the concluding lines sung by the chorus describe the action developing on stage, and subsequently provide an insight into the future of the protagonists. It is the case of the last section of *Ataka*, in which the chorus describes Benkei and Yoshitsune’s ongoing escape (“He picks up the carrier’s box / and throws it on his shoulders / and feeling as though they had tread on the tiger’s tail / and escaped the serpent’s mouth, they head onward, down to the Province of Mutsu.”) Likewise, at the end of *Mochizuki* the chorus describes the killing of Mochizuki and the return of the protagonists to Shinano (“Their heartfelt desire accomplished / at last they will return to their home / On those lands to pass on this event to Tomoharu’s descendants / his name, too, to be known still now as an example of the Warrior’s Way / Of the Warrior’s Way of bow and arrow: an example.”)

Performance conventions

As it has been suggested earlier, *genzai nō* draw from the same expressive vocabulary as *mugen nō*: music, recitation and chant, movements, costumes and (sometimes) masks are conventions shared by all *nō* plays. What differs is how, and how frequently certain techniques are used instead of others. For example, since many *genzai nō* feature male characters, samurai or commoners, costumes such as *suō* (large sleeve jackets) appear frequently in plays like *Mochizuki*.²⁰ Also, a great number of *genzai* plays do not require the use of masks for any role, because all of the characters are male, as in *Ataka*. These features are not exclusive of *genzai nō*, but their consistent use makes them a trademark of the category.

Let us now observe the choreographic aspects of *mugen* and *genzai nō*. *Nō* movement could be generally described as a choreographic illustration of the literary script. With the exception of dances to instrumental music, *nō* actors move and gesture in combination with the delivery of chant or stylized speech. The choreography of a *nō* play consists of strings of movement patterns (*kata*) that can be divided into two general categories: “ground patterns” and “design patterns.” Ground patterns are more frequently performed and form the basis for most dance sections. These may be purely aesthetic

¹⁸ *Kuse* may be performed with or without the accompaniment of dance.

¹⁹ See, for example, the contemporary Japanese renditions of the text in Sanari, or Amano et al.

²⁰ See Monica Bethé’s essay in this issue of *Mime Journal*.

or may carry a meaning that depends on the context (i.e. on the chant they illustrate). Design patterns, instead, are performed less frequently, usually at highlight passages of the play, and tend to be associated with a specific meaning (Bethe and Brazell; Yokomichi, *Nō no kōzō to gihō* 273–75).

Another way to classify nō movements would be dividing them into “abstract” movements, whose relationship with meaning is ambiguous, and “mimetic” movements, whose appearance is close to “real-life” gestures, hence directly denoting meaning. Generally speaking, ground abstract movements are more frequent than mimetic ones, also because of their versatility. For example, abstract movements are largely used in *kuse* sections, in which the actor/character illustrates with gestures a story that is sung by the chorus.

In *Ataka* most of the characters’ movements are mimetic, that is, they represent actions the character is carrying out in the narrative.²¹ The only section that makes use of movements that illustrate the chant of the chorus, rather than the actions of a character, is the sequence before the *otoko mai* dance, toward the end of the play. As for *Mochizuki*, the only non-mimetic sequence of movements Tomofusa performs is toward the end of the play, when the shite circles the stage in the *sashi, sumi e yuki, mi wo kae, yūken* combination, which is often found at the end of plays as a formal closure of the performance (fig.2).²² Arguably, these are not gestures that Tomofusa performs in the narrative (i.e. after having killed Mochizuki); rather, they are an abstract expression of joy performed by the shite, as well as a formalized movement sequence that often concludes plays. This is the only instance of this play in which the shite acts more as a narrator than as a character.

Figure 2. *Mochizuki*. Shite: Udaka Tatsushige. 1st Tatsushige no Kai. Kyoto, 2015.
Still frame from video recording; Doi Shinjirō. Reproduced courtesy of Udaka Tatsushige.

²¹ The analysis of movement in this essay is based on the conventions of the Kongō school.

²² This combination features the movements *sashi* (pointing) *sumi e yuki* (go to downstage right corner), *mi wo kae* (sweep fan in front of face and point), and *yūken* (moving open fan up and down from one’s chest to above the head).

Another element of “realism” in *Ataka* and *Mochizuki* is the *kuse* section. While in the *kuse* of other plays the chorus narrates while the shite illustrates the chant with movement, the *kuse* of both *Ataka* and *Mochizuki* is an *i-guse* (sitting *kuse*), in which the character whose narrative voice is relating a story (by proxy of the chorus) sits in the middle of the stage, while the chorus chants.²³ Since the *i-guse* does not require the use of abstract movements, it enhances the general sense of “realism” of the performance.

Finally, it is worth considering the role of dance to instrumental music, present both in *Ataka* and in *Mochizuki*. In plays within the *genzai nō* spectrum, dances to instrumental music tend to be justified within the narrative, instigated by one character asking another character to perform a dance or by a character announcing they will perform. This is the case in both *Ataka* and *Mochizuki*, in which the various dances are performed in order to entertain other characters. Contrarily, the role of dances to instrumental music in *mugen* plays is ambiguous: it is unclear whether they are to be interpreted as if the character is actually dancing within the narrative, or if they are abstract expressions of the feelings of the character.

In *Ataka*, after Togashi’s suggestion (“do a dance to accompany the sake”), Benkei performs the *otoko mai* celebrating the resolution of the conflict. The dance represents the general auspicious mood with which the story ends, but it is also clearly justified as an element of the plot. *Mochizuki* features two dances: Hanawaka performs the *kakko* “waist drum dance,” while Tomofusa performs the *shishi* “lion dance.” Their purpose is entertaining Mochizuki—or putting him to sleep so that they can assault him. The case of the *shishi* is particularly interesting: this dance is the highlight of another play, *Shakkyō* (The Stone Bridge), in which the dance is performed by lion-like fantastic beasts. This is one of the most spectacular choreographies in the *nō* repertory, taking up the entire second half of *Shakkyō*. In *Mochizuki*, the shite performs an adaptation of this dance. Instead of a full costume, the shite wears a colorful robe, a smaller wig and two golden fans imitating the lion’s jaws (fig.3). The movements of this *shishi* dance are similar to those in *Shakkyō*, except that, since the setting is a room in the inn run by the shite, movements are more restrained. The *shishi* dance is rendered into a part of the narrative of the play, adding to the general sense of realism.

²³ Interestingly, *Ataka* and *Mochizuki* are among the very few plays in which the narrative voice of the *kuse* section is attributable to a character other than the shite—respectively, a *kokata* and a *tsure* (companion of the shite). Other such plays are *Kogō*, in which the narrative voice is that of the *tsure*, while *Orochi* and *Tanikō* have waki-based *kuse*. *Ataka*, *Mochizuki*, *Orochi*, and *Tanikō* are all late-Muromachi plays, a time in which non-shite characters were given greater relevance. See Lim.

Figure 3. *Mochizuki*. Shite: Udaka Tatsushige. 1st Tatsushige no Kai. Kyoto, 2015.
Still frame from video recording: Doi Shinjirō. Reproduced courtesy of Udaka Tatsushige.

Concluding thoughts

This essay has considered the meaning of the terms *mugen* and *genzai* in *nō*, pointing out similarities and differences between the two types of play in terms of narrative, dramaturgy and performance conventions. Looking back at the history of the *mugen-genzai* categorization schema, two patterns seem to have emerged. On the one hand, the identification of Western theatre in general with the aesthetics of realism. On the other, the depiction of *nō* as a ritualistic art based on abstract dance and poetry. This dualistic view appears to be an oversimplification generated both by the difficulty of comprehending *nō* as a genre identifiable with a single definition, and by the need to distinguish it from other forms of performance. *Nō* is generally associated with *mugen* not only because the number of plays that conform to this model exceed that of the plays categorized as *genzai*, but also because it is the most useful dramaturgical format for distinguishing *nō* from other forms of theatre.

The tendency to define *nō* by the features that most differentiate it from Western theatre originated in the contrast between traditional theatre and the imported Western art forms that spread in Japan since the late nineteenth century. During this time discourses of “real” and of “realism” developed following a narrative that pitted Japanese traditional arts as “non-realistic” against “Western” arts, generically associated with realism. Even today, *genzai nō* are often referred to as *gekiteki* (theatrical), an expression equating “theatricality” with the aesthetics of realism, yet the word *genzai* originally refers to the present time of the narrative, and not to whether the play or performance is more or less realistic. Furthermore, the term “theatre” has come to refer to a broad variety of styles that go well beyond realism, to comprise a most diverse spectrum of modern and postmodern performance. It seems inaccurate to use this word as if represented a clearly circumscribed genre.

It has been pointed out that since the Meiji period scholars have struggled to categorize the nō repertory, resulting in various attempts to comprehend its diversity. While *mugen* and *genzai* may be useful expressions in order to refer to different dramaturgical types in a concise way, they can hardly represent the totality of nō plays. Instead, *mugen* and *genzai* could be seen as two hypothetical extremes in a continuum, along which various shades of “dream” and “reality” can be found. On one end of the continuum, extreme *mugen nō* could be second or third category plays such as *Yashima* or *Izutsu*. These plays follow the two-act structure typical of *mugen nō*: a ghost as shite appearing in disguise in the first act and in real form in the second; a travelling monk as waki, falling asleep at the end of the first act and meeting the shite in dreams in the second; they both feature a dance to instrumental music expressing the feelings of the shite and end with the shite disappearing and the waki awakening from the dream. On the *genzai* end of the continuum there would be samurai plays such as *Hashi Benkei* or *Youchi Soga* (*genzai mono*, in Shimazaki’s categorization). Some of these plays do not have a waki role, masks are not used, dialogs abound, and there is a fight scene instead of a dance.

Perhaps *mugen* and *genzai* could be seen not simply as contrasting concepts, but as expressions of the dimensions of illusion and reality which coexist in a nō performance. For Sanari the point of *mugen* is not the waki’s dream, but the audience falling into a dream-like state, enthralled by the performance (Sanari 106; Nakao 161). In this view, “dream and illusion” do not really belong to a narrative. Instead, they are states of mind experienced by the spectator. *Mugen* has come to be associated with another keyword often appearing in discourses on nō: *yūgen* (“profound elegance”). This seems to be shifting the understanding of “dream” and “reality” to the dimension of reception, rather than production. Just like *yūgen*, *mugen* may not only be a quality of the script, but an effect arising during performance.

Finally, an additional difference between *mugen* and *genzai* may not be related with form, but with the function of nō performance. Summoning deities that bless the land, chasing demons, or evoking ghosts who are released from karmic torment thanks to the power of remembrance—the themes of *mugen* plays carry with them the original functions of nō: the communication with the divine and the commemoration of mythohistorical events, with their religious and political connotations. In this context, the masks which used to perform the roles of deity and spirit in *mugen nō* should not be seen as mere theatrical props, but as ritual objects on which the performance is centered. *Genzai nō* lack the summoning of a supernatural being that occurs within the narrative of *mugen nō*, but it may be argued that the function of remembrance and celebration of an epic past is also an integral part of this kind of play. Inasmuch as they are theatre, both *mugen nō* and *genzai nō* can be said to be, to borrow Marvin Carlson’s expression, “memory machines.”

Despite the attempts to advocate the unique features of its sub-genres, nō plays seem to resist clear-cut categorizations that were superimposed by scholars, and probably were not in the minds of the authors at the time of their creation. It may be possible that, as Sanari suggests in his laconic comment, the features of *mugen nō* have greatly pervaded all of nō, including its playwriting and performance style, making the distinction between genres all the more difficult. After all, one of the greatest pleasures of attending a nō performance, be it a *mugen nō* or a *genzai nō*, derives from its ambiguity. In an ideal nō performance, the line dividing truth from fiction, dream from reality, past from present, supernatural from human seems to blur, sublimating into an experience that goes beyond the attempts to force it into categories.

WORKS CITED

- “Ataka.” *Nō wo yomu* [Reading nō], edited by Amano Fumio, et al., vol. 4. Kadokawa gakugei shuppan, 2013, pp. 32–53.
- “Ataka.” *Yōkyoku taikan* [Compendium of Nō Plays], edited by Sanari Kentarō, vol. 1. Meiji Shoin, 1930, pp. 77–104.
- Bethe, Monica, and Karen Brazell. *Dance in the Noh Theater*. Cornell University Press, 1986.
- Carlson, Marvin. *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*. University of Michigan Press, 2003.
- Chamberlain, Basil Hall. *The Classical Poetry of the Japanese*. Trübner, 1880.
- Edwards, Osman. *Japanese Plays and Playfellows*. W. Heinemann, 1901.
- Hoff, Frank. “Kanze Hisao (1925–1978): Making Nō into Contemporary Theatre.” *Zeami and the Nō Theatre in the World*, edited by Benito Ortolani and Samuel L. Leiter, Center for Advanced Studies in Theatre Arts, 1998, pp. 77–99.
- . “Killing the Self: How the Narrator Acts.” *Asian Theatre Journal*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1985, pp. 1–27.
- Ikenouchi, Nobuyoshi. “Nōgaku no bunrui” [Categorization of nōgaku]. *Nōgaku*, Nov. 1905, p. 61.
- Kanze, Hisao. “Nō ni okeru dentō mondai—engisha to shite” [The problem of tradition in nō—the point of view of a performer]. *Kanze Hisao choshakushū*, vol. 3, Heibonsha, 1981, pp. 20–30.
- Koyama, Hiroshi. “Nō ni tsuite no obegaki: mugen nō to genzai nō to. [A memorandum about nō: mugen nō and genzai nō].” *Nihon bungaku*, vol. 5, no. 4, 1956, pp. 296–298, 263.
- Lim, Beng Choo. *Another Stage: Kanze Nobumitsu and the Late Muromachi Noh Theater*. Cornell University, 2012.
- Mitford, Algernon. *Tales of Old Japan*. Macmillan, 1871.
- Nakao, Kaoru. “‘Mugen nō’ to iu go kara nō no kindai juyōshi wo tadoru” [Exploring the reception of nō in the modern period by considering the word ‘mugen nō’]. *Higashi ajia kotengeki no dentō to kindai* [Tradition and modernity in East-Asian classical theatre], edited by Mitsuya Mōri and Fumio Amano, Bensei, 2019.
- Nogami, Toyoichirō, editor. *Yōkyoku zensho kaichū* [Complete annotated nō plays], vol. 4. Chūokōronsha, 1951.
- Salz, Jonah. *A History of Japanese Theatre*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Sanari, Kentarō. *Yōkyoku taikan* [Compendium of Nō Plays]. Introductory Volume. Meiji Shoin, 1930.
- Shimazaki, Chifumi. *Restless Spirits from Japanese Noh Plays of the Fourth Group*. Cornell University Press, 1995.

Smethurst, Mae. *Dramatic Representations of Filial Piety*. Cornell University Press, 1998.

Stern Tom. *Philosophy and theatre: an introduction*. Routledge, 2014.

Takeuchi, Akiko. "The Fusion of Narration and Character Voices in Noh Drama. A Narratological Approach to Zeami's God Plays and Warrior Plays." *Narratological Perspectives on Premodern Japanese Literature*, edited by Sebastian Balmes. Oldenburg, 2020, pp. 113–149.

Tashiro, Ken'ichirō. *Mugen nō*. Asahi Sensho, 1994.

Watson, Michael. *Genpei Noh Plays*. <http://www.meijigakuin.ac.jp/~pmjs/biblio/genpei-noh.html>. Accessed 12 Mar. 2020.

Yokomichi, Mario. "Mugen nō ni tsuite" [About mugen nō]. *Bungaku*, vol. 25, no. 9, Sept. 1957, pp. 43–50.

—. *Nō no kōzō to gihō* [The structure and performance conventions of nō]. Iwanami shoten, 1987.

—. "Nōhon no gaikan" [Outline of nō texts]. *Nō no sakusha to sakuhin* [Nō plays and playwrights], edited by Mario Yokomichi et al., Iwanami shoten, 1987, pp. 22–120.

Yokomichi, Mario, and Akira Omote, editors. *Yōkyokushū* [Collection of nō plays]. Iwanami shoten, 1964.

Yoshimura, Haruo. *Yōkyoku kōseihyō* [Data on nō plays' structure]. Hinoki shoten, 2014.