

THE TAKARAZUKA REVUE'S KABUKI CONNECTION: GENDER PERFORMATIVITY AS ESCAPE AND INDOCTRINATION

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According to their official Japanese website, the all-female Takarazuka musical revue troupe celebrated its one-hundredth anniversary in 2014. This popular group was founded by Kobayashi Ichizō in order to promote the town of Takarazuka in Hyōgo prefecture, which was situated at the terminus of his Hankyū railroad line, to tourists (Robertson 46). Jennifer Robertson mentions in her article “The ‘Magic If’: Conflicting Performances of Gender in the Takarazuka Revue of Japan” that he conceptualized the *otokoyaku*, or actress playing exclusively male roles, as a counterpart to the Kabuki *onnagata* (49). However, is this fact the only point of intersection between the two performance forms? This essay’s aim is to analyze Kabuki and Takarazuka performances in terms of assumed gender performativity on- as well as off-stage. It will also compare costuming techniques and aims of Takarazuka and *onnagata*, and seek to identify performative techniques in Takarazuka musicals which are similar to Kabuki *kata*. Finally, similarities and differences in play scripting will be illuminated by comparing the *sekai* and *shukō* of Takarazuka shows.

Gender reversal in the Japanese performance tradition has a long history, going back as far as the late Heian era, when dancers called *shirabyōshi* wore male court caps during their performances (Brazell 8). The conception of Kabuki

itself began with such an act of assumed performative gender when in 1603, a woman named Okuni danced in the dry bed of the Kamo River in Kyōto while wearing men’s attire (Brazell 13). As the shogunate did not approve of its ranking members patronizing the actresses, it prohibited the appearance of women on stage in 1629. Due to a further edict in 1652, aimed at preventing the patronization and prostitution of young men, only adult males remained allowed to take to the stage in a performative capacity from that year on (Brazell 14). The requirement to register as a male performer of female roles ultimately led to the *onnagata*, or “female role” specialization in Kabuki (Brazell 14).

One of the major differences between the *onnagata* of Kabuki and Takarazuka’s *otokoyaku*, according to Jennifer Robertson, is that of intended audience reception: *Onnagata* were intended to provide exemplary models for female viewers to emulate, while *otokoyaku* are to idealize the male gender not as a model for men, but once again for the consumption and internalization by women (49). This is already borne out in the Japanese terms for these gender-reversal roles – the *kata* in *onnagata* carries the meaning of “model” or “form,” whereas the *yaku* in *otokoyaku* merely indicates “role,” often in a context of serviceability (Robertson 51). Another indicator of the difference

between the two forms of assumed stage genderization is the fact that *otokoyaku* never perform contemporary Japanese men; no non-Western male characters past the Edo period exist in the entire Takarazuka repertoire (Robertson 49). In contrast to this, the Kabuki repertoire includes so-called *sewamono* as a major category of plays, in which the domestic lives of contemporary people are depicted (Brazell 543). Takarazuka's avoidance of contemporary Japanese characters extends to female roles, as well: in the documentary *Dream Girls*, in which up-and-coming *otokoyaku* Miki Maya explains at time index 11:38 to a *musumeyaku* student at the Takarazuka music school that she is "not Western enough," elaborating that, at least in the Takarazuka context, modern Japanese people are viewed as holding in their feelings, while Westerners are more "dramatic."

In spite of these differences in the conception of gender performance, as well as intended audience reception, similarities can be found, as well. For one, Robertson mentions that, in recent decades, both Takarazuka actresses and fans of the review have started to recontextualize the *otokoyaku* as having metamorphosed from their female base gender (58); the Japanese term *henshin* used to describe this metamorphosis is the same term the *onnagata* and Kabuki theorist Ayame used to describe the transformation of a male actor into a performer of female roles (Robertson 50). In addition, the aspect of idealization of the respective other gender is, if one disregards the purported intent behind the reversal, quite similar in nature in both performance arts. In Item III of "The Words of Ayame" as translated in *The Actor's Analects*, the famed *onnagata*

is quoted as stating that "to make a *samurai's* wife unfeminine just because she is a *samurai's* wife is bad acting. When one is playing the role of a strong-minded woman, one must see that her heart has some softness" (Dunne and Torigoe 51). It must be borne in mind that, as an actor and therefore a member of a lower social class, Ayame would not have had many direct interactions with women of the *samurai* caste, if any, and was therefore basing his idea of femininity on an ideal rather than reality. Another telling item is number XIII, in which Ayame states that "The *onnagata* should make it a principle not to depart from the conduct of a virtuous woman. In this respect, he should be willing to accept the standards of a real woman" (Dunne and Torigoe 55-6). Is the so-called "real woman" in this statement not rather an idealized version of said "real" woman? In that respect, the aims of the *onnagata* resemble those of the *otokoyaku*, as set forth by Kobayashi Ichizō himself. Robertson quotes the Takarazuka revue founder as proclaiming that "the *otokoyaku* is not male but is more suave, more affectionate, more courageous, more charming, more handsome, and more fascinating than a real male" (51). This perception can also be found in the troupe's fans, who stated in a poll by Ingrid Sischy on why so many people love Takarazuka's top 'male' stars, "Because they're so much more man-like than real men..." (Parker 249). In *Dream Girls*, a female Takarazuka connoisseur elaborates on this at time index 31:48 as follows:

They give you a dream, so you forget reality. Real life often isn't fun. In difficult times you go to Takarazuka, and escape into a different world: The men on stage

are endlessly kind to their women. In real life, men are kind when they're courting, but change when they marry you [...].

When performing as the opposite gender in a stage context, conventions for role gendering are necessary in order to distinguish the performed gender identity from the true gender of the actor. Kabuki as a performative art form relies on *kata*, i.e. "forms," which include "styles of walking, kneeling, gesturing, and speaking, as well as staging elements that support acting, such as costuming, makeup, wigs, and the use of hand properties" (Brandon 182). According to Katherine Mezur in her article "Undressing the *Onnagata*," the costume should be considered the primary vehicle for his performance of the female gender on stage (194). The *onnagata*'s purposefully restricting costume, in conjunction with the deliberately assumed "small" body posture, serve to transform the actor's gender coding on stage (Mezur 202-3). Mezur quotes Donna Haraway's book *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, in which it is stated that "the cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality" (Haraway 150); she goes on to state in reference to this quote, "What *onnagata* do with costuming is a process of cyborg-like 'distortion' of the constructed gender acts and the body beneath [...]" (Mezur 210).

Takarazuka employs similar techniques in the gendering of their performers; in fact, Robertson draws a direct link between the fictional woman portrayed by *onnagata* and Takarazuka *musumeyaku*. "A *musumeyaku* [...] pivots her forearms from the elbows, which are kept pinned against her side, constraining her freedom of movement and

consequently making her appear more 'feminine'" (51). An *otokoyaku*, on the other hand, "must stride forthrightly across the stage, her arms held stiffly away from her body and her fingers curled around her thumbs" (Robertson 51). An additional interesting fact can be found in Robertson's assertion that,

In keeping with the patriarchal values informing the Takarazuka Revue, and similar to the Kabuki *onnagata*, the *musumeyaku* have represented and performed the male-identified fictional Woman with little if any connection to the historical experiences and feelings of actual females. The *otokoyaku*, however, have been actively encouraged to study the behavior and actions of real males offstage, as well as those of theatre and film characters, to idealize men on stage more effectively, be they samurai or cowboys. (51)

Otokoyaku, then, actively train to perform maleness, just as *onnagata* practice femininity for their stage work, while *musumeyaku*, and presumably the male role *tachiyaku* in kabuki, as well, do not take any particular steps to observe their own gender for the purpose of their performance.

On the other hand, gender representation in the two stage arts does employ some very different techniques in terms of costuming and performative acts, as well. Helen S.E. Parker writes in her article "The Men of Our Dreams" that *otokoyaku* "generally present a visual image that fuses the masculine and the feminine," listing the use of eyeshadow and false eyelashes by *otokoyaku* during performances, as well as their often pastel-colored costumes (243-4). Parker also

asserts that *otokoyaku* voices, other than those of *onnagata*, being only in the low contralto register, are not “genuinely identifiable with male voices” (244), although it is difficult to discern how she considers the falsetto employed by *onnagata* to be any more authentic. Additionally, while her article primarily refers to the Takarazuka performance called *Fantasy Adventure*, at least the assertion of pastel costuming can not be considered a consistent feature of Takarazuka plays, as the three Takarazuka plays further discussed below, namely *Gyakuten Saiban: Yomigaeru Shinjitsu*, *Ōshanzu 11*, and *Chūshingura: Hana ni chiri yuki ni chiri*, do not feature a large amount of *otokoyaku* dressed in these colors; in fact, in the first title, the only character featuring a costume in the relatively “female” color of magenta, Miles Edgeworth, is not only an antagonist of the narrative, but also wears this shade in the source material for the musical; none of the major *otokoyaku* roles in the other two plays noticeably wear pastel hues that would appear out of the ordinary in men offstage. However, Parker does have a point in regards to the consistently employed, exaggerated *otokoyaku* makeup. In practice featurettes such as the one included as an extra on the *Gyakuten Saiban: Yomigaeru Shinjitsu* DVD, troupe star *otokoyaku* Ranju Tomo appears much more masculine, having not applied any makeup for the dance practice, than she does during the onstage performance of the show. Clearly, then, verisimilitude in the external appearance of Takarazuka *otokoyaku* is not a desired factor during official performances.

Regarding overall performance techniques, it is necessary to elucidate some of the *kata* used widely in the

Kabuki repertoire. James R. Brandon delivers an overview of these techniques in his portion of the collaborative work *Studies in Kabuki*. Among others, he mentions *danmari*, a type of pantomime showing off the actor’s techniques and costumes (66), *tachimawari*, or the dance-like staging of combat scenes (91/3), *shōmen engi*, which denotes playing scenes while facing the front of the stage, rather than the interagonist with whom the character is conversing (98), and *tsurane*, a long declamatory speech, often involving the *nanori* name declaration, given upon the actor’s entrance (104). In “Performance and Text in *Kabuki*,” Brandon also lists *mie*, or the frozen stance, which is one of the most conspicuous performance *kata* and whose purpose is to pull together the energy of the scene at a climactic moment (186-7) and *omoiire*, the reflective pose performed when thinking about how to speak or respond (187). While these examples are far from the only Kabuki performance *kata*, these visual and aural elements can be regarded as integral to the art. Moreover, they can be found in Takarazuka performances, as well, albeit not at the same frequency as in Kabuki.

Chūshingura: Hana ni chiri yuki ni chiri, a Takarazuka Snow Troupe play based on the store of the 47 *rōnin* immortalized on the Kabuki and Bunraku stage by Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shōraku, and Namiki Senryū, is the most non-Western Takarazuka play among those analyzed for the purpose of this essay. While it does not employ traditional Japanese stage music involving *shamisen*, *tsutsumi* or *shakuhachi*, opting instead for instrumentation in the style of old samurai movies, it does feature multiple instances of interpretive dance featuring the fan (at time index 13:55) or the *tenugui* (at

1:15:15) as a prop, which is reminiscent of Kabuki *shōsagoto*.

Furthermore, being situated in a Japanese *sekai*, or narrative “world,” it displays the most conspicuous Kabuki technique delineated in Brandon’s work, namely the *mie*, most clearly. For example, when Asano appears on an elevated platform behind his loyal group of retainers at the end of act one (time index 1:23:52), he clearly performs a *mie*, albeit without the customary turn of the head or the eye-crossing *nirami*. However, this is to be expected within the context of a Takarazuka play, as this most extreme form of *mie* is primarily performed by *aragoto*, or “bravura” male role actors, whereas the idealized male intended for female consumption as performed by Takarazuka is much more reminiscent of the more gentle *wagoto* male Kabuki role, which is described as refined, delicate, and effeminate by Brandon in *Studies in Kabuki* (71-2). In other instances, the whole scene freezes in a *mie*-like display before it ends with the lights fading to black, for instance after Asano attacks Kira with his sword and is detained at 23:16, and at the end of the first act at 1:24:03, where the Asano’s retainers freeze in the foreground of the stage as Asano performs his *mie* in the background. Additionally, Kuranosuke performs a *mie*-like stance at 1:27:45, only moving his head fractionally with each beat of music.

Another interesting parallel can be found in the theatricalization of the mechanics of theater, as one of the humorous scene breaks features stage attendants/Takarazuka chorus members dressed in black while carrying props made from cardboard such as a crow and a lodging house at time index 35:00. The intentionally lacking verisimilitude in this

scene is likely intended to lighten the mood, as immediately beforehand, Asano’s lady’s hair is cut as she becomes a nun.

In *Gyakuten Saiban: Yomigaeru Shinjitsu*, a hybrid world mixing elements of Japan and America is depicted. Based on the popular *Gyakuten Saiban* video game series about a defense attorney specializing in murder cases, which originally featured characters with Japanese names, script writer Suzuki Kei chose to set his work in America and utilize the character names of the English translations, likely in keeping with Takarazuka’s aversion against depicting a post-Edo Japanese society. The result is a world in which the characters, while ostensibly American, bow to each other Japanese style (e.g. Phoenix’s bow to Miller at time index 48:02).

The prominent acting techniques similar to those in Kabuki featured in this play are *shōmen engi*, *omoiire*, *tsurane* and *danmari*; it is also possible to make a case for *mie*, although the frozen poses displayed in this play are also shown in the video game and therefore not necessarily inspired by Kabuki.

Shōmen engi, the act of facing forward even while interacting with other characters, is uncommon in the Western-style musicals Takarazuka shows are inspired by, but abounds in this piece. For example, at time index 08:42, the main character, Phoenix Wright, faces the audience when announcing his decision to defend his former girlfriend Leona Clyde in court, rather than Leona, who is standing next to him. Another prolonged instance can be found at 54:10, where Phoenix explains to his courtroom opponent and erstwhile childhood friend Miles Edgeworth what his professional

philosophy is, and why he became a lawyer in the first place. Edgeworth himself joins him in declaring his own ideals at 54:35, also facing forward. This latter scene could also be regarded as *tsurane*, as it provides important background information on the two main characters in the form of a spoken declaration.

As for *omoiire*, examples of this technique can be found throughout the play. In contrast to Kabuki, however, this technique is often employed while characters mime thinking about something as their thoughts, which have been pre-recorded, are played via the theater's speakers. Such instances can be found, for example, in Phoenix's initial self-introduction which lasts until time index 1:15, as well as from 4:12, when Phoenix's thoughts introduce his assistant Maya Fey.

Danmari can be found in the main musical number, when the play features an introductory movie similar to a movie's opening credits introducing the characters. As this film ends and the curtain behind Phoenix lifts at time index 12:24, the other main characters are miming interactions with each other, utilizing some of their trademark behaviors from the video game source before joining Phoenix in dancing. Another instance can be found in Phoenix and Leona acting out their relationship in an interpretive dance as Larry explains their shared background to Maya at 1:03:52. This scene could also be interpreted as an element akin to *shōsagoto*, i.e. an interpretive dance scene in Kabuki like *Musume Dōjōji*.

Finally, the game's trademark *Igiari!* ("Objection!") pose, with the right arm outstretched towards the antagonist and the index finger pointing, could be interpreted as a *mie*. Many instances of this pose can

be found throughout the musical, beginning with Phoenix first performing it right before the main theme at 11:05. As it occurs here outside of the courtroom context, a case for its *mie*-like employment can be made. Additionally, at the end of the song introducing the character Miller, all actors on stage freeze at time index 21:15, likewise evoking *mie*.

In the sequel to this musical, *Gyakuten Saiban 2: Yomigaeru Shinjitsu, Futatabi...*, one of the best examples of Takarazuka *tachimawari* style battle can be found when Franziska von Karma, Detective Gumshoe, and Lotta Hart breach the stronghold of a group of hired criminals who have abducted Phoenix's aide Maya in order to force him into defending a criminal at time index 1:26:30. The three characters face their respective opponents either one on one or in small groups of two and three, and the fight is choreographed in a stylized and almost dance-like manner.

Finally, the musical *Ōshanzu 11*, based on the George Clooney version of the movie, is the most western work surveyed for the purposes of this essay. The play is set in Las Vegas, showing Danny Ocean planning a major heist with his companions after being released from prison. While some Japanisms can be found even in this play, such as Ocean's ex-wife Tess using the traditional introductory formula *yoroshiku onegaishimasu* at time index 27:04, she only slightly inclines her head instead of bowing, thus not breaking the illusion of an American play world. The only bow in *Ōshanzu 11* occurs in the same scene, at 27:25, when the stage manager bows to the antagonist Benedict in Japanese fashion before leaving, although this is done in such a hurry that it may well have been a reflex and can easily be overlooked.

In accordance with this American world, there are few occurrences of Kabuki-like techniques, although Ocean faces front while talking to his lawyer in the introductory scene until time index 3:16 of act 1 in a manner reminiscent of *shōmen engi*. Additionally, the quick costume change at 3:26 of disc 1, when Danny Ocean's prison garb is suddenly pulled below stage and he now wears a suit, is reminiscent of *hayagawari* ("Kabuki Glossary"). The fight scene at time index 19:12 of the first act is much less stylized than that in the second *Gyakuten Saiban* musical, which may however be occasioned by the fact that larger groups of people are fighting, as well as by the original story's provenance as an American action movie. Finally, two *shōsagoto*-like interpretive dance scenes occur, once at 32:12 in disc 1, where Ocean and a younger Tess act out their first encounter through dance while the current Tess narrates the scene in her song, and once at the very beginning of the second act, i.e. disc 2, where Tess' inner conflict about choosing between Benedict and her ex-husband is acted out in a dream sequence featuring the revue scene Tess is supposed to star in the next day.

As is evident in the above examples, the frequency of Kabuki-like performative techniques seems to be dependent on the world, or *sekai*, in which the Takarazuka musical is set. Another factor related to world usage that is of interest when it comes to the all-female revue is the plotting, or *shukō*, in Kabuki terminology. According to the glossary in Karen Brazell's *Traditional Japanese Theater: An Anthology of Plays*,

“Traditional kabuki playwrights considered plot (*shukō*) and world

(*sekai*) to be the two basic elements of play construction. *Shukō* refers to the way that the playwright plots the events and characters drawn from the *sekai*. It includes creating new characters and/or situations and applying conventional plot elements [...] to the materials from the *sekai*.” (545)

In this scriptwriting technique, Kabuki and Takarazuka plays are remarkably similar, as they both seek to adapt a pre-existing fictional (or, in the case of Kabuki, occasionally non-fictional) world to suit their own needs. Laurence R. Kominz states in his article “Origins of *Kabuki* Acting in Medieval Japanese Drama” that “to use the word *shukō* [...] is to imply that the author was working under one of the important constraints of Edo playwrights, namely, an audience that craves novelty and excitement” (29). Novelty, therefore, seems to be the main purpose for introducing a twist to the original *sekai* presented in a given Kabuki play. However, what purpose is there to be found in not directly adapting Takarazuka source *sekai* originally depicted in movies, video games, etc. to the stage?

In order to determine the purpose in retooling a *sekai* for the Takarazuka purpose, it is important to identify the troupe's mission. It can be seen in part in Kobayashi's conception of the *otokoyaku* as stated above, as well as in his statement, in accordance with the Meiji Civil Code which was in effect until 1947, that his actresses should become “good wives, wise mothers” (Robertson 48-9). Kobayashi thought that even the *otokoyaku*, by virtue of learning to understand men in studying and performing as them, would gain the necessary qualities to become said good wives and wise mothers after they

retired from the stage (Robertson 49). In *Dream Girls*, the school motto of the Takarazuka Music School, which all Takarasiennes have to attend prior to appearing on stage with the troupe, is mentioned as “Cleanliness, Purity, and Grace” at time index 21:05. All of these indicators point towards an agenda of reinforcing patriarchal values through the idealization and elevation of men in both fans and the Takarazuka actresses, themselves. An additional clue pointing towards this hypothesis is the fact that Robertson states that the management, playwrights, and directors of the Takarazuka revue continued to be exclusively male until at least 1992, at which time her article was written (59). The *Dream Girls* documentary seems to bear out this conclusion, as well, as all persons in positions of power at the Takarazuka Music School are male (such as shown for example at time indices 5:20, 10:28, and 21:05). Analyses of the *shukō* of *Gyakuten Saiban: Yomigaeru Shinjitsu*, first premiered in 2009, and *Ōshanzu 11*, a production whose latest run started and concluded in early 2013, in relation to their respective original *sekai* will show that the endeavor to elevate patriarchal values continues to persist even in relatively recent productions. As *Chūshingura: Hana ni chiri yuki ni chiri* is already based on a *sekai* in which patriarchal values abound, it does not warrant further inquiry in this context.

Gyakuten Saiban: Yomigaeru Shinjitsu, as mentioned above, is based on the visual novel/crime drama video game *Gyakuten Saiban*, initially released on the Nintendo GameBoy Advance in Japan in 2001. A remastered version on the newer Nintendo DS handheld received a US release in 2005 under the title *Phoenix Wright: Ace*

Attorney. As mentioned before, the Takarazuka musical utilizes the American names as established in this translated version. While ergodic elements such as discovering, examining, and presenting evidence do exist, most of the game consists of reading the interactions between the characters. At the climax of the game, past connections between the main character Phoenix Wright, his courtroom opponent Miles Edgeworth, and the supernaturally inclined Fey clan, of which Wright’s assistant Maya is a member, are uncovered. The particular case during which these events occur is the subject of the 2012 Miike Takashi movie *Gyakuten Saiban*.

The Takarazuka musical chooses not to focus on this most important case in the game. Instead, it takes as *sekai* the bonus case exclusive to the remastered DS version of the game. This added case did not feature Maya at all, thus minimizing the necessity to include her. Predictably, Maya is used as little more than comedic foil for Phoenix (as can be seen in her introduction at time index 4:12) or expository device (such as when Larry narrates the prior relationship between Phoenix and Leona Clyde to her at 1:03:52), whereas she is utilizing her supernatural power to aid Phoenix in his endeavors in most other cases of the game, and is therefore much more integral to the narrative. It is likely that this decision was made as Maya, who is supposed to be 16 in the first game, would not be an appropriate love interest for Phoenix. Instead, Leona Clyde, an original character loosely based on the bonus case’s defendant, who originally only had a connection to Phoenix by way of his deceased mentor, is introduced by script writer Suzuki Kei. It should be mentioned

at this point that the game's narrative focus is friendship; no canonical love story exists within its context. Yet, a love story was included in the Takarazuka script, likely to emphasize the idealization of the male, i.e. Phoenix Wright in this case, as proposed by Robertson.

The problem in *Ōshanzu 11* is slightly different in nature. The original movie, which is close in plot to the Takarazuka musical, does include the rekindling love story between Danny Ocean and his estranged wife Tess; it also features the group's plan to steal a large amount of money from casino owner Terry Benedict, who is currently courting Tess. While the depiction of the caper features some slight differences in the stage show, they were probably included in order to alleviate excessive technological explanations, as the 2001 movie version starring George Clooney as Danny Ocean utilizes, among other things, a device generating an electromagnetic pulse which interrupts the power supply.

The main *shukō* element which bears mentioning in this Takarazuka adaptation is the invalidation of the female love interest's independence. In the movie, Tess is an art dealer who is dating the antagonist Terry Benedict without being dependent on him financially. In the Takarazuka script, adapted by Koike Shūichirō, she is a lounge singer, whose newest show is about to be staged at Benedict's hotel, reducing her role from being an educated professional to an artist whose educational background is uncertain. Additionally, the second act (i.e., the second disc of the DVD set) of the musical begins with Tess' uncertainty of whether to choose Benedict or Ocean as romantic partner, as acted out in an interpretive dance dream sequence. In the movie, the

thieves use Tess without her knowledge as part of their scheme, and her defection to Ocean's side only happens after he is re-arrested for violating parole while getting away with the theft itself. Although Tess has not been limited in status to minimize her role, as Maya has been in *Gyakuten Saiban: Yomigaeru Shinjitsu*, she suffers from similar limitations in order to once again artificially bolster the importance of the male protagonist and antagonist, i.e. Danny Ocean and Terry Benedict. Additionally, the appearance of Tess alongside some of the thieves at the end of the movie when Ocean gets released from prison could be interpreted as Tess' primary interest being the money her ex-husband managed to steal, which would be an unacceptable idea in a theatrical world which seeks to produce "good wives and wise mothers."

As the above exegesis shows, the theatrical world of Takarazuka incorporates a number of techniques and terms which are either reminiscent of, or directly inspired by, the world of Kabuki. These concepts include the recent appropriation of the term *henshin* by *otokoyaku*; the idealization of the respective assumed gender roles of *onnagata* and *otokoyaku*; a variety of traditional Kabuki *kata* utilized in the performance of Takarazuka musicals in their original or slightly modified, but clearly recognizable forms; and the *sekai/shukō* dichotomy utilized in adapting an existing narrative, although Takarazuka's adaptation process is informed by the organization's patriarchal agenda rather than the desire to merely produce a novel approach as was the case in Kabuki. While ostensibly so aggressively western-oriented that depictions of contemporary Japanese

society remain taboo, the Takarazuka Revue clearly nevertheless draws inspiration from its roots in Japanese history and traditional art.

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