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Immersed in the Fleeting World of Modernity: Edo Music and the Aestheticism of Melancholy in Nagai Kafū's Literary World

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Introduction: Modernity and Loss

In "Seiyō ongaku saikin no keikō" 西洋音楽最近の傾向 (The recent trends of Western music, 1908), Japanese author Nagai Kafū 永井荷風 (1879–1959) emphasizes the importance of music in his life. He notes, when he was living in the United States and France, that "if there is anything that gives me comfort, that guides me in my dark, lonely days, it is not religion, not literature, not painting, but music."[1] In the same essay, Kafū expresses his fondness for Wagnerian operas, the music of Richard Strauss (1864–1949), and Claude Debussy's (1862–1918) most famous work, *Prélude à L'après-midi d'un faune* (translated in English as *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*).[2]

Kafū had a wide range of music tastes. In both *Amerika monogatari* あめりか物語 (1908, translated as *American Stories*, 2000) and *Furansu monogatari* ふらんす物語 (French stories, 1909), Kafū had extensive references to Western music when narrating his sojourn in the United States and France. He mentioned his regular attendance at concerts and opera performances. At the same time, his later works, particularly *Edo geijutsuron* 江戸藝術論 (The arts of Edo, 1920) and "Ame shōshō" 雨瀟瀟 (1922, translated as "Quiet Rain," 1965), show the author's love for Edo-period (1603–1868) music performances, especially shamisen love songs, and music of the Edo theater.

While Kafū indulged himself in Western music and opera while he was abroad, he devoted himself primarily to the world of Edo music and music performance after he returned home. Are there any connections between his aesthetic taste for both Western and Edo music? What does it mean to express one's deep yearning for Edo in the late Meiji period

(1868–1912), an era marked by Japan's rapid development in modernization?

This article analyzes references to Edo music performances in Kafū's fictional writing. Focusing on two literary texts, "Fukagawa no uta" 深川の唄 (A song of Fukagawa, 1909) and *Sumidagawa* すみだ川 (1909, translated as *The River Sumida*, 1965), I will show that music performances referenced in Kafū's writing evoke his desire to be immersed in his nostalgic fantasy for Edo Japan, an imagined, lost past, unable to be returned to in the present. "Fukagawa no uta" makes references to the *utazawa* 歌沢 ballads, and *Sumidagawa* makes references to the *kiyomoto* 清元 ballads and, far more significantly, music of the kabuki theater.[3] References to Edo music performances express the protagonist's nostalgia for his lost Edo past, an illusion created by his melancholic state of mind resulting from a feeling of loss. Immersed in the lyrics and sounds of the past, he mourns for the good old days infused with his fantasy for Edo. He is hopelessly trapped in a whirlpool of melancholy created by himself.

Many scholars have worked on Kafū. He is cast as a modern man whose nostalgia for the Edo past problematizes modernity.[4] Edward Seidensticker notes in *Kafū the Scribbler* (1965) that "music brings together the pleasure quarter and the Edo theater, the two hemispheres of" the "shadowy world" of Edo Japan.[5] Edo Japan is an alternative to modern Tokyo, Kafū's native city reconstructed in the name of Western-style modernization. Rachael Hutchinson, in *Nagai Kafū's Occidentalism* (2011), interprets Kafū's love for Edo as a way of criticizing modern Japan. She holds that Kafū uses "The West" as a tool to "build his critical argument against the Meiji Westernization of Japan, and to contrast Edo as a counter-space to Meiji."[6] Gala Maria Follaco, in *A Sense of the City* (2017), explores the depiction of urban landscapes in Kafū's writing. By examining the dynamic tensions between cityscapes and Kafū's sensitivity to the city, her study shows how he reinvents the urban in his literary writing by drawing "in equal measure on the experience of the cities visited abroad, his readings, and his emotional response to Tokyo life."[7]

Acknowledging their viewpoints, this article contributes to the existing scholarly studies by reading Kafū's works from the perspective of music. On that account, I call attention to the similarities and links between his approach to tradition and modernity in his writing of music. Kafū's love for Edo music and music performance is deeply rooted in his intimacy with arts, literature, and music from nineteenth-century Europe. His

fantasy for Edo, I argue, is intertwined with his idealized vision of art, manifested in the form of women in the demimonde love songs from the Edo period (1603–1868). In both "Fukagawa no uta" and *Sumidagawa*, melancholic love songs that sing the willpower of women from the Edo licensed quarters are referenced.[8] To the women in these songs, the love that they desired was not socially allowed. These songs express the women's will to break the taboo that society placed upon them in the name of love. This, I will show, gives Kafū's male protagonists power to recuperate from their sense of loss. The women are an aesthetic representation of the male protagonists' lost Edo past, an endless, borderless world that is only attainable in their dreamy fantasy. While listening to the songs, the male protagonist immerses himself in the affective sound space of melancholy, in which he forever longs for her. References to Edo songs function as a dynamic medium that connects reality and fantasy, past and present, the self and the other, and the East and the West.

Kafū's love for music and music performance has always been blended with his fantasy for women. His female characters, forward-looking, free spirited, and willful, contrast sharply with his male protagonists, who are passive, ineffectual, and prone to self-absorption. She is his exotic other, who is both beautiful and dangerous, elegant, and lascivious. She is the manifestation of his fear and awe, who is unattainable to him in his real life.

For instance, when listening to *Tannhäuser*, Richard Wagner's (1813–1883) famous opera, Doctor B, the main male character in "Kyūkon" 舊恨 (1908, translated as "Old Regret," 2000), finds Venus, the Roman goddess of love who seduces Tannhäuser, reminiscent of Marianne, a lascivious and beautiful actress who was once his mistress.[9] Dr. B is particularly fond of Venusberg music, the music performed in act one, scene one in *Tannhäuser*. Played by the symphony orchestra alone for more than ten minutes, Venusberg music symbolizes the magical power of Venus, whom, in contrast to the pure and elegant Princess Elisabeth, is lustful, mysterious, and dangerous. Empathizing with Tannhäuser, whom Dr. B sees as "a satire of my past ecstasy, anguish, and shame," he finds himself deeply attracted by Venus, who to him resembles Marianne, the "the forbidden fruit" and calls to mind his "sinful pleasure" from the past.[10]

Doctor B's affectionate reaction to the music in *Tannhäuser* resembles the male protagonists' feeling to the Edo love songs in both "Fukagawa no uta" and *Sumidagawa*. Each protagonist is willing to be enchanted by the

sad melody hidden in the Edo love songs. It is as if Kafū's male protagonists gain spiritual energy by indulging themselves in melancholic songs that express the licensed quarters women's will to love. At the same time, my analysis will show that they refuse to take actions in real life, no matter how compelling the idea might seem. The conflict between the protagonists' desire expressed in music and their inability to act upon it in real life results in an emotional loop of melancholy, leading to a sense of hopelessness. I conclude my article by suggesting that this sense of hopelessness, stimulated by the protagonists' melancholic state of mind, inspires Kafū to continue crafting his idealized vision of art in literary writing.

Thus, Kafū's writing of Edo music is deeply rooted in modernity. I borrow modernity from Charles Baudelaire (1821–67), who sees the arts as manifestations of modernity. Kafū must have been influenced by Baudelaire, and he is perhaps Kafū's favorite French poet.[11] In "The Painter of Modern Life" (1863), Baudelaire notes that "modernity is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immovable. There was a form of modernity for every painter of the past; the majority of the fine portraits that remain to us from former times are clothed in the dress of their own day."[12] In his discussion of French fashion, Baudelaire sees it as a phenomenon of modernity. A dress from the past reflects the fashion trend of old times when that dress was considered as beautiful. People's ideal of beauty lasts for a very short moment. However, by creating art, an artist has the magical power to freeze time. They are "the painter of the fleeting moment and of all that it suggests of the eternal."[13]

In Kafū's works, Edo is "found under heavy shadows."[14] It is created by multiple fragments hidden in his writing—his love for France, his fondness for Edo culture, and his memory of Tokyo before he went abroad. These fragments, like a montage painting, are being put together to form an image of a woman, who can be Oito in *Sumidagawa*, Oyuki in *Bokutō kidan* 濹東綺譚 (1937, translated as *A Strange Tale from East of the River*, 1965), and Chiyomi in *Odoriko* 踊子 (1946, translated as *Dancing Girl*, 1965).[15] Images of these women then overlap, and, as with a multiple exposure effect in a photograph or film, they form a larger, single image of a woman. She is his artwork, who embodies "the arbitrary spirit that belongs to the Orient," which Kafū wrote in *Edo geijutsuron* and found lost in modern Japan.[16] Her image is transient, and yet the spirit that her image represents lasts forever. She symbolizes the Orient, the West, the

present, and the past. She is his idealized illusion, his dream of the lost Edo. By indulging in his melancholic memories, dreams, and fantasies, evoked via the Edo songs about her, protagonists are in mourning for her. Kafū's protagonists are the extension of the author, who are aborbed into their whirlpools of melancholy.

The Future of the Past

"Fukagawa no uta" was published in the literary journal *Shumi* 趣味 (Taste, 1909). It is also included in *Kanraku* 歓楽 (Pleasure, 1909), a collection of short stories that Kafū completed one year after he returned to Japan from France. The story is about a man's day trip to Fukagawa, located on the east side of the Sumida River. Fukagawa used to be one of the biggest entertainment districts during the Edo period and was among Kafū's favorite *shitamachi* 下町 (the downtown of the city of Edo during the Edo era) areas for this very reason.

The man is a flâneur, a stroller in the city, who explores Tokyo's hidden alleys though his sensory modality, especially his aural experience.[17] Walter Benjamin (1892–1940), in *The Arcades Project*, notes that the flâneur is a modern man who "abandons himself to the phantasmagorias of the market." He "seeks refuge in the crowd" of the marketplace.[18] The market crowd is like a veil, "through which the familiar city is transformed into phantasmagoria."[19] Being absorbed by the crowd, the flâneur strolls around the city to indulge himself in the frisson of urban life and discovers the metropolis's secrets.[20]

"Fukagawa no uta" begins as the narrator, claiming that he does not have a particular destination in mind but wants to feel his body in motion, boards a streetcar at Yotsuya Mitsuke, on the west side of Tokyo. He travels from west to east and finds himself getting off at Fukagawa. Throughout his streetcar ride, the narrator is bothered by various noises coming from the driver and the passengers. He is finally at rest when he gets off at Fukagawa, where he hears two old *utazawa* ballads performed by a blind shamisen player at the Fudō Temple. The story ends with the narrator returning to his home on the west side of the city, claiming that he needs to continue reading Friedrich Nietzsche's (1844–1900) *Zarathustra* poems, under the portrait of Richard Wagner.[21]

The narrator's urban experience can be read as an audience's experience of listening to an opera. He explores the city through sounds, and by doing so, transforms himself into the audience for the show. For example, the narrator uses musical terms to describes the passing scene

that he takes in during his streetcar ride. After he boards the streetcar, he immediately notices a contrast between the old Edo-style city streets and the newly built modern houses. He notes that this contrast is "terrible" 無残 (*muzan*), and senses a "chaos devoid of harmony" 少しの調和もない混乱 (*sukoshi no chōwa mo nai konran*). The street advertisements make him feel as though he is listening to "a discordant symphony performed by various advertisements" 調子の合わない広告の楽隊 (*chōshi no awanai kōkoku no gakutai*).[22] Moreover, the visual spectacle of the chaos of the city streets corresponds with the cacophony that he hears in the streetcar. When the train arrives at Kikumachi Sanchōme Station, the narrator notes:

> At Kikumachi Sanchōme Station, an unattractive woman and a young boy carrying his baseball equipment got on the streetcar. The woman was in her forties. She wore a short, padded coat, and carried her baby on her back. She also carried a lantern, and was holding a big, white cotton *furoshiki* bag. The young boy had taken his semester exam the day before and was talking about his test results.
> As time passed, the *chū chū* sound made by the old woman sucking her teeth diminished. Suddenly, it was replaced by the sound of a crying baby. All of the passengers were looking at the baby's face. The woman unbuttoned her padded coat. She took the baby by her arms. The collar of her cloth was dirty. Nevertheless, she put the collar aside and began breastfeeding her baby. I heard the conductor's voice as I noted that the baby had finally stopped crying,
> "The next station is Hanzōmon. Transfer here for Kudan, Ichigaya, Hongō, Kanda, and Koishikawa."
> "You are going to Koishikawa, right? Please be prepared to get off." He told the woman. In a hurry, the woman tried to reach the door. She didn't have time to adjust the collar of her cloth, though, and her darkish breast was visible from the outside. She carried her baby in one hand, the *furoshiki* bag and lantern in the other.
> The streetcar was surprisingly empty. Passengers waiting in line rushed onto it as soon as the door opened, trying to secure seats for themselves. The woman got pushed away. Her baby began crying, making a hi-pitched "hee hee" sound. Its nappy dropped onto the floor, and the passengers absentmindedly stepped over it. The woman started screaming, desperately. The conductor announced,
> "Don't forget to take all your belongings with you."
> He said that in a high-pitch voice. He must have gotten used to saying it. However, no one seemed to care about what he said. The nappy got dirty. The conductor stayed silent for a while, but could not restrain himself for long. In a hopeless voice, he said,

> "It's dangerous, please stand clear of the doors."
> Eventually, I heard the chiming sound of the bell.
> "Moving."[23]

From hearing the *chū chū* チユーッ チユーッ sound made by the old woman to the baby's high-pitched crying voice, the narrator is listening to a movement in "a symphony out of tune" 調子の合わない楽隊 (*chōshi no awanai gakutai*).[24] A diminuendo sign could have been written on the music sheet above the *chū chū* sound, and a crescendo sign and a pause sign could be written above the baby's crying. The dirty nappy incident is the climax, and the composer has an accent sign written above the woman's screaming and her baby's crying. The streetcar conductor acts as the conductor of this symphony. In a manner of speaking, passengers are like members of his symphony orchestra, who ignore his instructions and perform in their own ways. Eventually, the movement ends with a "*chin*" sound, made by the conductor. To the narrator, this jarring cacophony constitutes an atonal assault on the senses and is echoed by the city view that he likens to a "chaos devoid of harmony."[25]

The text focuses on several noises in the first half—human voices, mechanic sounds, and the sound of the bell. These sounds comprise a silent symphony performed on paper, with the chaos that the narrator observes from the streetcar constituting the play performed on stage. This array of urban noises captures the flow of life, which has been concealed in the crowd until now. He is traveling back in time in his mind as the streetcar moves forward. He takes modern transportation and travels from the west side of Tokyo to the east side. By doing so, he enters the imagined realm of the Edo past, the cultural hub of the Orient.[26] At the beginning of part two, the narrator gives his reasons for his decision to get off at Fukagawa:

> A few years ago, before I departed Japan, Fukagawa was a place of comfort. I found the area, and the river surrounds suited my taste; my desire, excitement, sorrow, and happiness were all satisfied when I was there. Streetcars had yet to be introduced at that time. However, urban developments had already begun destroying the beauty of the city streets. Across the Sumida River, on the east side of the Eitai bridge, I saw, in Fukagawa, the very few Edo-style backstreets that remained. I found the view very sad and forlorn. Yet I also sensed a *harmony, pure and aesthetically pleasing,* in these remnants of the past.[27]

Apart from having been the center of the erstwhile Edo entertainment culture, Fukagawa attracts the narrator because it is the place where he can both mourn for his lost past while simultaneously appealing to his senses and inspiring new literary creations. Indulging himself in his fantasy of this lost world, the narrator experiences a mixture of joy, sorrow, and nostalgia. Both the "symphony out of tune" and the two *utazawa* ballads, "Aki no yoru" 秋の夜 (Autumn night) and "Fukete au yo" 更けて逢う夜 (Meeting at night), which I will discuss later, take himself back in time.[28] He indulges himself in the melancholy provoked by Edo music performance—its musical timbre, and his melancholy evoked by hearing the actual performance generates a wistfulness in going back in time to recover his lost past.

There is a contrast between music referenced in the text and the narration—while linguistic descriptions of the narrator show his thoughts and actions, the music he attentively hears expresses his inner desire and triggers memories and emotions. The narrator wants to escape from his anxiety and dwell in his melancholic fantasy about his Edo past. And yet, without the modern context for the story, his anxiety would not have existed. The tension between what his desires and the reality he must face troubles him emotionally, resulting in a loop of melancholy.

The first *utazawa* ballad, titled "Aki no yoru," is a sad song about a woman of the quarters crying out for love. Perhaps to show that the narrator finishes listening to the entire song, Kafū in his story makes references to the first and last lines of the lyrics—"autumn night," and "all I hear is the sound of the temple bell."

> Autumn night,
> The long autumn night,
> The full moon,
> It looks like the heart of the man I long for.
> No matter how long I wait, he will not come to my door.
> All I hear is the sound of the temple bell.[29]

The full moon in the lyrics is a metaphor for reunion, and it symbolizes the mid-autumn festival, a time of the year when someone meets their loved one. However, at this happy time of the year, the female speaker, who works in the licensed quarters, still awaits her "lover," alone in the cold night. She longs to hear his footsteps approach her house, yet the only sound she hears is the bell from the local temple nearby. A paradox is embedded in the song—it depicts her longing for love, while, at the same

time, revealing that this cannot be realized. People gather with their loved ones on the night of the mid-autumn festival. However, a woman of the pleasure quarters must serve her customers; she cannot attain the love she desires.

This song expresses the woman's ill-fated craving for love. Having known her fate, she still wants to experience real love. In Japanese literature, the full moon in autumn symbolizes a family reunion, and the sound of the temple bell is a standard metaphor for enlightenment. Thus, both the moonlight and the sound of the temple's bell show the woman's awareness of the illusory nature of love. However, since she is blinded by the power of love, she ignores the warning.

The song is performed by a blind shamisen player. After getting off the streetcar at Fukagawa, the narrator walks around the former Yoshiwara district and enters the Fudō temple. There, he sees a blind shamisen singer, and is attracted by his performance. While listening to the song, the narrator imagines the singer's life. In his vision, the man was well-educated and came from a respectable Edo-period family. However, he lost everything, including his sight, during the Meiji Restoration and had to perform to survive. The narrator expresses his feeling of jealousy, stating that he thinks the man's blindness is a blessing for him; it grants him the right to live like an *Edokko* 江戸っ子 (a child born in the *shitamachi* of Edo). He is spared from witnessing the "vulgar, messy and unrefined" 俗悪蕪雑な (*zokuaku buzatsu na*) modern world caused by Japan's "unfortunate" imitation of the modern West. Also, because he is blind, he knows the right way to perform *utazawa* ballads. This "right" way refers to how the narrator imagines they were performed during the Edo period. He claims that the blind man's performance represents a very high level that the Yamanote geisha can never reach. His vision ends with the following remark:

> *Edokko* like him do not have the kind of anger and loathing that we modern people must experience. Nor does he suffer from the kind of desire we are suffering from, resulting in our indescribable anguish and pain. The Edo people would soon give up on things that does not work in their favor. They sneer at themselves if they do not.[30]

The singer's blindness suggests he can leave all his worldly attachments behind. In contrast to the narrator's assumptions about the singer, the licensed quarter woman he sings about, however, can only think of her love. She suffers in her longing for a lover, even though she knows

for a woman like her, all of this is in vain. The narrator imagines himself being jealous of the blind singer while listening to his song about the woman's desire. His melancholy overlaps with hers, as like the woman, he is also blinded. He wants to stay in his illusory Edo past forever.

The second *utazawa* song, like the first one, expresses another licensed quarter woman's desire for love. The text references the first line of the lyric, perhaps to show the transition between the two songs.

> It is so hard to sneak out to meet you in the middle of the night!
> To reach the fence, I must be careful.
> Looking into each other's eyes,
> I am in tears; my sleeves are wet.
> Ah, the wicked sound of the watchman,
> My heart is so full; my words burst out.[31]

"To reach the fence, I must be careful" suggests that the female speaker in the song is having a secret love affair. She can only meet her lover when nobody sees her. She bursts into tears when she finally sees him. At the same time, she is extremely cautious of her surroundings. She gets nervous when she hears the watchman chanting "watch out for fire." A woman of the licensed quarters is forbidden to have a real lover. However, in this song, the female speaker secretly breaks the rules. Perhaps she will be beaten to death if the master of the brothel finds out about it. She is both excited and scared when she meets her lover in secret. The watchman's chanting warns her of her dangerous situation. And yet she is unable to control herself, since she is blinded by love.

Both songs express licensed quarter women's outcry in breaking the taboo that society placed upon them. They are like moths throwing themselves into the fire, a famous Japanese (also Chinese and Western) proverb expressing a person's compulsive urge to be willing to die for something extraordinary and yet forbidden. Their hopelessness and the spiritual power such a feeling evokes are reminiscent of Kafū's discussion on woodblock paintings in *Edo geijutsuron*. He notes that when he sees those works, he empathizes with the Edo artists, who expressed their anxiety, frustration, and fear in the dark and forlorn colors of their artworks living under the authoritarian Tokugawa regime.[32]

Likewise, his narrator in "Fukagawa no uta" empathizes with the licensed quarter women in the songs. Like them, he wants to be blinded, so that he can ignore all signs of warning and indulge in his melancholy. And yet, he cannot. Hence, the story ends with the following remark:

> Alas, I must return home. It is my destiny. Cross the river, beyond the canal, up the hills…in a place faraway, in the shadows of the Okubo Forest, I can see the desk in my study. On it, a volume of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* poems is open and waiting for me, under the portrait of Richard Wagner.…[33]

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (serialized from 1883–92), Zarathustra left the world and lived as a hermit on a mountain for ten years but decided to return.[34] The narrator longs to savor his reveries of the Edo past evoked by the musical performances of the blind shamisen player. However, his "destiny" prevents him from staying in that world, keeping it as an artwork that expresses his fantasy. Hutchinson, in her reading of the ending, suggests that the narrator's return shows "Kafū wants to be able to use his literature to cherish the memory of Edo and make it live again on the page. Yet he realizes that he cannot ever escape entirely to the past, and his protagonist cannot stay in Fukagawa. Kafū is here realizing that anything he does must come from the present. He is not blind, and he has seen Tokyo and does suffer pangs of yearning and resentment."[35]

However, the narrator's issue here is not just about the juxtaposition he feels about the present and past. It is also about his aesthetic function of the arts. "Fukagawa no uta" is a beautiful elegy to Kafū's Fukagawa. By referencing the two *utazawa* ballads, Kafū's narrator mourns for the women in the songs. To him, their hopelessness and the spirit of the Edo artists are alike. Both are adrift in the modern era but are recovered by him. In his journey to the past, the narrator reimagines the songs he hears and turns them into objects of his melancholy. Both the noises he hears in his streetcar ride and the two *utazawa* ballads he hears at Fukagawa evoke his nostalgic longing for the spirit that belongs to Kafū's fantasy of the lost Edo past. Kafū is the painter of modern life, who transforms his narrator's nostalgic journey to Fukagawa into a work of art.

To Desire Is To Die for Love

In his preface to the fifth edition of *Sumidagawa*,[36] Kafū notes the reason he wrote this novel:

> Mentioned in the old songs, the banks of the Sumida River were among the few places left in Tokyo where I took rest during my daily walks. At the time, when I saw ruined streets, buildings at the Sumida River area, they reminded me of my boyhood impressions of the place and its legendary beauty that I had heard about ever since my childhood. I found myself lost

> for words as I threw myself into the music made of my vision, impression, and memory of the place. It is not so much that the ruins appealed to me, in harmony with their old glory. I was deeply hurt. The devastated landscape provoked me to create something. That something is *Sumidagawa*.
>
> The novel is my realistic depiction of my artwork, which is primarily about my impressionistic fantasy of the Sumida River, summoned by my sadness of witnessing the landscape of the Sumida River in ruins. At the same time, it is a work of art that expresses my idealized interiority, which is all about symbolisms that represent my lyrical essence evoked via me seeing the sceneries of the Sumida River.[37]

The Sumida River district was one of the hubs of Tokyo's merchant and entertainment culture in the Edo period. The Yoshiwara licensed quarter, one of Edo's most famous pleasure quarters, was located on the north side of the river and could be accessed by boat. Seidensticker notes that Kafū was particularly fond of the left bank of the river, the Fukagawa area, the setting for "Fukagawa no uta."[38]

In this preface, Kafū frames the Sumida River as "the aesthetic of ruins" 荒廃の美 (*kōhai no bi*). Kafū, like his narrator in "Fukagawa no uta," is in deep grief when he sees the remains of the old Edo districts and backstreets along the Sumida River. At the same time, this "landscape in ruins" 荒廃の風景 (*kōhai no fūkei*) excites him. These sites invite him to discover the city's concealed past and provoke his fantasy of recapturing his Edo past. Kafū's "quest for the aesthetics of the ruins" in *Sumidagawa* is expressed by the main character's yearning for the kabuki theatrical world, and be with his childhood sweetheart, a geisha-to-be.

Sumidagawa was serialized in the literary magazine *Shinshōsetsu* 新小説 (The new novel, December 1909).[39] The story describes Chōkichi, an 18-year-old high school student, and his self-indulgence in his hopeless dream. Chōkichi's mother, Otoyo, is a shamisen teacher of the *tokiwazu* 常磐津 ballads.[40] Having listened to his mother play shamisen since his childhood, Chōkichi wants to become a member of the kabuki theatrical world. However, Otoyo, who fully embraces the state-promoted dictum of *risshin shusse* 立身出世 (to rise in the world and be successful), wants her son to attend college and find his place in society.

Chōkichi falls in one-sided love with Oito, his childhood friend who is destined to become a geisha. His love for her overlaps with his desire to be part of the Edo kabuki theater. Chōkichi's uncle, Ragetsu, empathizes with his nephew's dilemma. Ragetsu's father once discouraged him from consorting with women from the Edo entertainment world. Thus, insofar

as the Edo entertainment district remains taboo for Chōkichi's family, he will continue to suffer from his inaction and self-torment because of one-sided love. He repeatedly refers to Oito as a person from "the other world" あっちの (*atchi no*). Enchanting and intimidating, she symbolizes the Edo entertainment world that Chōkichi both desires and fears.

Edo music conceals Chōkichi's desire and fear. The text makes significant references to Kawatake Mokuami's (1816–93) kabuki play *Izayoi Seishin* 十六夜清心 (Izayoi and seishin). Kawatake, also mentioned in "Fukagawa no uta," was a famous Kabuki playwright of the late Edo (and early Meiji) period. *Izayoi Seishin* is famous for its use of the *kiyomoto* ballad. Slow and melancholic, the *kiyomoto* ballads are essential parts of Mokuami's kabuki productions. Accompanied by shamisen, they are sung by the *tayū* 太夫 to explain performances on stage and express characters' emotions. This play is an adventurous love story of Seishin, a monk, and Izayoi, a *yūjo* 遊女 (woman who works in the Edo licensed quarter). While it has four acts, *Sumidagawa* references only the first act, which features the *shinjū* 心中 (love suicide) between Izayoi and Seishin.

As with "Fukagawa no uta," in *Sumidagawa*, the *kiyomoto* ballads referenced contrast sharply with Chōkichi's actions. Like the licensed quarter women in the *utazawa* ballads discussed in the previous sections, Chōkichi is blinded by love. He suffers from his love for Oito, whose presence tortures him. At the same time, his passivity and ineffectualness bars him from pursuing his love, intertwined with his dream. Perhaps the only action he takes in the story is to secretly blame Oito every time he sees her, "Ah, why does Oito have to be a geisha?" (*Ah, Oito ha naze geisha nan zo ni naru n da*).[41] Thus, at the *Miyatoza* 宮戸座 (the Miyato Theater) in Asakusa, while watching *Izayoi Seishin*, Chōkichi immerses himself in melancholy. Like Izayoi, he finds himself a victim of love.[42] The *tayū*'s chanting of the *kiyomoto* ballads not only expresses Izayoi's will and emotional struggle, but also Chōkichi's.

> The samisen began, and shortly the singers took up in unison. Chōkichi had long loved this sort of music, and despite the crying of a baby somewhere off in the theater and the shouts of spectators reproving it, he had no trouble catching the melody and words:
> "In the misty night, two starts, now three. And four, and five, the sound of a bell. Will there be someone pursuing me?"
> . . .
> "I have run away, they will not know where – as fearful of pursuing eyes as small fishes of nets and flares."

> The singers took up again:
> "She stops. From upstream comes a song. A boat has returned from the plum groves. 'If you are to come, my love, the moon of the sixteenth night. The night shall be without clouds, my love.' Was it a portent? The tempest passes, and suddenly, in the moonlight, face to face!"
> . . .
> His hair disheveled, no cloak over his kimono, a man came staggering onstage. He gave every indication of being at the end of his resources. He passed the woman.
> "Izayoi?"
> "Seishin?" The woman fell upon him. "How I wanted to see you!"
> Again there were shouts from the audience.
> "What a handsome couple!"
> "You're making me jealous."
> There was laughter, and the true devotees called for silence.[43]

This scene from the first act features Izayoi, who runs away from her brothel house to meet Seishin. The first act begins with the priest of the Gokuraku temple punishing Seishin with exile because of his adultery with Izayoi. On the night before Seishin leaves town, Izayoi risks her life and comes to meet him without letting him know beforehand. The line "In the misty night, two starts, now three. And four, and five, the sound of a bell," chanted by the *tayū*, is reminiscent of the sound of the temple's bell and the chanting of the watchman in the two *utazawa* ballads referenced in "Fukagawa no uta." In these music pieces, this sound is a warning sign. Like the women in the two *utazawa* ballads, Izayoi is reminded by the bell sound of her sad situation. She is not a free woman but is to be sold to the brothel where she will be forced to work. She fears being caught by men sent by the owner of the brothel house. Thus, the *tayū* sings of her worries and excitement, "will there be someone pursuing me," "I have to run away, they will not know where—as fearful of pursuing eyes as small fishes of nets and flares."[44]

As he watches Izayoi and Seishin facing each other under the bright moonlight, Chōkichi is reminded of the summer evening when he saw Oito off at the Imado bridge. He identifies himself with Izayoi and realizes that, to him, at this moment, "the stage was no longer a stage" (*mō budai wa budai de nakunatta*).[45] This detail suggests that Chōkichi has taken up the role of Izayoi in his fantasy. Her lines become his, and her stage becomes his stage. He suffers for and yet desires love, in line with Izayoi's love for Seishin. The *tayū*'s chanting affects him deeply. The melancholic music

evokes his memories of Oito and triggers him to equate his reminiscence with the performance on stage.

And yet, Chōkichi is warned about the illusionary nature of this unrequited love.[46] The theatergoers around him boisterously cry out during the performance. When they see Izayoi appear from the *hanamachi* 花道, they shout, "I can't see it! You are blocking my view!" 見えねえ、前が高いッ (*Mienee, mae ga takai!*), "Take off your hat!" 帽子をとれッ (*Bōshi o tore!*), and "Stupid!" 馬鹿野郎 (*Bakayarō*).[47] A similar scene takes place when they see Izayoi and Seishin commit suicide: "Looking good!" やア御両人 (*ya, gōryonin*), "Aha, I envy them!" よいしょ。やけます (*Yoisho, yakemasu yo*), and "Be quiet!" 静かにしろい (*Shizuka ni shoroi*).[48] The sounds of the theatergoers remind Chōkichi of the gap between dream and reality.

Thus, Chōkichi is pushed by an impulse to stay in his fantasy forever, like the male protagonist in "Fukagawa no uta." He becomes jealous of Izayoi and Seishin after watching the first act of the play.[49]

> He found himself so drawn to them as to be almost resentful. He could not be one of them however much he wished to. It would be better to die than to go on as he was—if only there were someone to die with him.[50]

Chōkichi's jealousy results from his awareness that he and Oito can never be like Izayoi and Seishin. Oito does not love him. Thus, although he wants to die for love, only he can act on his will. He therefore finds himself singing fragments of the melancholic *kiyomoto* ballads performed during the play as he crosses the Imado bridge:

> The cold wind struck him square in the face like a blow from a clenched fist. He shivered, and suddenly from the depths of his throat came a fragment of a jōruri ballad. He scarcely knew where he had learned it. "What more can one say? And yet . . ." It was a fragment of kiyomoto, a turn of phrase such as no other school could imitate. Chōkichi did not, of course, render it with the straining of the body, the fullness of voice that one would have expected from a real master. The phrase came from his throat and was lost in his mouth; but it brought a lessening of the scarcely tolerable pain. "What more can one say? And yet . . . it is true, it is true . . . the willows below the cliff . . ."[51]

"What more can one say? And yet . . ." 今さら云ふも愚痴なれど (*imasara iu mo guchi naredo*) are lines that the *tayū* chants to express

Izayoi's melancholy. In the scene in which Izayoi meets Seishin, she calls him a "devil" 鬼 (*oni*)—he wants to break up with her, knowing that she risks her life by running away from her brothel to meet him.[52] When Izayoi tells Seishin that she wants to live with him, he turns down her wish and tells her to go back to the brothel. She tells him that she wants to commit love suicide with him; she loves him so much and wants to be with him forever. However, since Seishin does not want to die, he asks her, "Do you have other ideas?" 外に思案はないわいの (*hoka ni shian wa naiwai no*). Out of words, Izayoi confesses to Seishin that she is pregnant with his baby, and her owner will punish her if he finds out. Perhaps inspired by her strong will to die, Seishin finally agrees.[53] The line "The willows below the cliff" narrates the scene where Izayoi jumps into the river. Seishin jumps soon after her.

Chōkichi, by repeating Izayoi's lines, shares her melancholy and emotional pain. He, too, feels desperate because he is blinded by love. Chōkichi is a sad, pathetic character, inhabiting a fantasy world of his own making. Since Oito, and the Edo entertainment world she represents, are unattainable, his world gradually crumbles, and death seems the only answer. The beauty and sadness of Chōkichi's melancholy is his impossible romantic longing, expressed via the *kiyomoto* ballads, and his powerlessness in carrying it out. To him, the only solution to heal his melancholy is to die for love, so that he can continue living in the illusion of love that he creates for himself. In his fantasy, like Izayoi and Seishin, he (a student) and Oito (a woman of the 遊郭 *yūkaku*) are lovers, with their love prohibited by Otoyo (who represents the dogma of *risshin shusse*). At the same time, this fantasy requires the presence of Oito in his real life.

Sumidagawa ends with Chōkichi in the hospital after catching typhoid fever. Ragetsu visits his room afterward and discovers Oito's portrait hidden in one of Chōkichi's textbooks. He also finds an unfinished letter in which Chōkichi laments that he cannot become a musician or a kabuki actor because nobody supports him. Since he does not dare kill himself, he wants to die from illness. Thinking about the letter and the photo, Ragetsu, in his heart (心の中に *kokoro no uchi ni*), imagines Chōkichi and Oito being a couple from a *ninjōbon* 人情本 (Edo period romance novel):

> Ragetsu thought of the beautiful young couple, Chōkichi with his thin, pale face and his large eyes, and the round-faced Oito, her mouth winsome and her eyes turning up at the corners. He drew the picture over and over again in his heart, like an artist working out a frontispiece for an old romance.

> Rest, easy, Chōkichi, he said. No matter how ill you may be, you are not to die. I am with you.[54]

Ragetsu is an important character in this novel. He is a teacher of *haikai* 俳諧 poetry, who, when he was young, was disowned by his father for having similar fantasies that haunt Chōkichi. He should have been the only person who could support Chōkichi. And yet he finds himself being torn between Otoyo's request and his empathy for Chokichi, when Otoyo asks him to persuade Chōkichi to give up his dream. The Chinese characters that Kafū uses for *kokoro* 心 (heart) and *uchi* 中 (in) are the same Chinese characters for *shinjū* 心中 (love suicide). Perhaps Kafū's choice of words is not a coincidence. *Kokoro no uchi* symbolizes Ragetsu's fantasy of Chōkichi, in which Chōkichi, fulfilling the desires in his letter, commits love suicide with Oito. Even then, this fantasy does not necessarily resolve Chōkichi's issue. Rather, it creates a hopeless, karmic circle. Like Chōkichi, Ragetsu was once a pathetic individual who was fantasy-driven. And yet he takes up the role of his father many years later. What had happened to Ragetsu happened again to Chōkichi. The cycle continues.

Conclusion

With Izayoi's line expressing Chōkichi's desire, he becomes a willing captive of the whirlpool of melancholy evoked via the *kiyomoto* ballad of the kabuki play. Edo music functions as a dynamic medium that unites fantasy with reality, past with present, modern and tradition. It is a powerful emotional trigger that brings together Chōkichi's nostalgia and longing for the old Edo theatrical world with his affection for Oito, a strong-willed, forward-looking, and assertive geisha-to-be who does not love him.

But what to make of this connection? In his discussion about the color of *ukiyoe* 浮世絵 (woodblock painting) in *Edo geijutsuron*, Kafū remarks:

> The painter's spirit shows itself in the strong, affirmative colors of an oil painting. If in the sleepy colors of the Ukiyoe woodblock print a similar manifestation is to be found, then the spirit must be one sagging under the burdens of an authoritarian age. It is impossible for me to forget these somehow sad and forlorn colors—their expression of the fear, the sorrow, the weariness of a dark day, is like the low, muffled sound of a courtesan weeping. In my dealings with contemporary society, I am sometimes outraged at the high-handed ways of the powerful, and I turn back to this

> art, to its forlorn, wavering colors. The darkness of the past comes back in the sad melody hidden there, to show me the arbitrary spirit that belongs to the Orient; and I know the profound futility of talking about righteousness.[55]

Kafū's writing on Edo arts give readers insight into the reason of his nostalgia for Edo. He romanticizes Edo artworks, stating that he is intrigued by "the arbitrary spirit that belongs to the Orient," concealed in the dark and sleepy color of the woodblock paintings. These artworks are artistic recreations of "the dark age" 暗黒時代 (*ankoku jidai*) ruled by the authoritarian Tokugawa regime.[56] The very fact they were able to make them shows the courage of the artists. They represent the spirit of the entertainment culture of Edo.[57]

Like Kafū's remark on Edo woodblock painting, my article shows that in both "Fukagawa no uta" and *Sumidagawa*, melancholic Edo music represents the hopeless yearning of Kafū's protagonists. The dilemma between what they desire and their passivity in real life brings them endless melancholy, leading to self-destruction. They thus immerse themselves in the songs that sing of licensed quarter women's willpower, which Kafū envisions, like his reading of the woodblock paintings, as belonging to the world of the past. Possessing it would liberate him from his everyday frustrations, caused by the social and personal obstacles he experiences in modern-day Tokyo.

Kafū is known as a modern writer who is drawn to Edo vernacular arts and culture. My analysis shows that his fondness for Edo arts is strongly connected to the Western modernity that he experienced abroad, intertwined with the inspiration he received from works by Baudelaire, Wagner, and other European writers and artists. References to Edo music in his two works show a desire to call for an alternative modernity of Meiji Japan, built upon the ruined landscape of the Sumida River caused by the urbanization of Meiji Tokyo.

Kafū's protagonists are willing captives of the melancholy they create for themselves. They do not seek to end their frustration and anxiety caused by the modernization of the Meiji period. "Fukagawa no uta" ends with its narrator going back to his study, and *Sumidagawa* ends with Chōkichi attempting to die alone.[58] Rather, Kafū's aestheticism, manifested in the ruined landscape, is about the evocation and affects of melancholy resulting in his protagonists' dilemma between what they desire, expressed in Edo music, and what they experience in real life. Kafū's writing of the lost Edo past does not reinforce the established binaries of modern and tradition, and East and West in Meiji Japan. Rather,

Edo is his artwork, and Edo music about licensed quarter women's desire represents his nostalgic longing.

NOTES

[1] Nagai Kafū, "Seiyō ongaku saikin no keikō," (The recent trends of Western music), in *Kafū zenshū* (The complete works of Nagai Kafū), vol. 5 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992), 309.

[2] When he lived abroad, Kafū was powerfully drawn to music dramas composed by Richard Wagner, the most important German composer of nineteenth-century Europe. Noted by Noguchi and Sano, Kafū mentioned in his diaries that he went to listen to *Tannhäuser* and *Tristan und Isolde* at least three times when he lived in New York and Lyon. Noguchi Takehiko, "Meijibungaku to Waguna: Nagai Kafū no ongaku to kanno" (Meiji literature and Wagner: Nagai Kafū's music and desire), *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* (National literature: text and analysis), 35.2 (February 1990): 64. Sano Jinmi, "Nagai Kafū to furansu ongaku" (Nagai Kafū and French music), in *Furansu to nihon: tōkute chikai futatsu no kuni* (France and Japan: two countries so far and yet so close), edited by Hasegawa Tomiko, Ikawa Toru, and Aiba Chiyoko, (Tokyo: Sōmi shupansha, 2015), 184.

Also, in an essay titled "Ōshu kageki no kenjō" 欧州歌劇の現状 (The current state of opera in modern Europe), Kafū highly praises Wagner, stating that Wagner's opera "is a work of art that pressures the audiences into accepting his aesthetic ideals with his artistic power and force. It is not the type of entertainment performed for banquets, and to enjoy it, the European aristocrats should study it with patience." Nagai Kafū, "Ōshū kageki no genjō" (The current state of opera in modern Europe), in *Kafū zenshū* (The complete works of Nagai Kafū), vol. 5 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992), 352.

[3] *Utazawa* ballads are short songs performed with shamisen accompaniment. They are known for their slow speed and singers' soft voice and low tone. Short songs are also called *kouta*, or *hauta*, and both flourished since the late sixteenth century. Ono Takeo (1906–1979), in *Edo onkyoku jiten* (The encyclopedia of Edo music, 1979), notes the history of the *utazawa* ballads. *Utazawa* ballads flourished since the mid-nineteenth century. Originally performed during banquets and social gatherings, they quickly became performances at the Edo theaters. Short songs are vernacular songs; they circulated among commoners and merchants of the Edo period. During the late Edo era, such songs recounted dramatic changes that took place in people's daily lives. Ono Takeo, *Edo*

onkyoku jiten (The encyclopedia of Edo music) (Tokyo: Tenbōsha. 1979), 29–30, 52–55.

[4] For example, see Jason Karlin, *Gender and Nation in Meiji Japan: Modernity, Loss, and the Doing of History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014), 342–43.

[5] Edward Seidensticker, *Kafū the Scribbler: The Life and Writing of Nagai Kafū, 1879-1959* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1965), 39.

[6] For example, Hutchinson notes how in the December 2 entry in "Shin kichōsha nikki" (Diary of a recent returnee, 1909), the male narrator's piano becomes his "constant source of both joy and frustration." The huge piano does not fit in his room decorated in traditional Japanese-style. Playing it assuages his nostalgia for his stay in the West, while seeing it in his Japanese room makes him feel sad and hopeless. To him, the piano symbolizes Western civilization. Thus, his complaints about his piano and his Japanese room represent Kafū's criticism of Meiji modernization, which Kafū believes is flat and shallow. To him, Japanese leaders were only interested in imitating the veneer of Western civilization but not its substance. Rachael Hutchinson, *Nagai Kafū's Occidentalism: Defining the Japanese Self* (Albany, N. Y.: SUNY Press, 2011), 166–168.

[7] Gala Maria Follaco, *A Sense of the City: Modes of Urban Representation in the Works of Nagai Kafū (1879-1959)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), 9.

[8] The licensed quarter is a cultural phenomenon of Edo Japan. It was a place full of teahouses, restaurants, and theaters—a demimonde where Edo men sought pleasure in plays, women, and sake at night. During the Edo period, Yoshiwara, Fukagawa, and Yanagibashi were the most famous licensed quarters in Edo (present-day Tokyo).

[9] Kafū wrote about music in *Tannhäuser* also in "Ōshū kageki no genjō." He notes he was impressed by scene one act one, which is about Tannhäuser's journey to Venusberg, the home of Venus. Kafū notes that two contrasted leitmotifs are performed in the overture—the pilgrim's chorus and Venusberg. The pilgrim's chorus leitmotif symbolizes goodness, purity, and atonement for sin. On the other hand, the Venusberg leitmotif symbolizes evil, lust, and sinfulness. Kafū suggests that by having these two contrasted leitmotifs performed together, the overture foreshadows Tannhäuser's tragic fate of being killed by his mental distress and pain caused by his conflicting emotions of pleasure and guilt and his "sinful pleasure" (*tsumi no kairaku*). Being a listener, he imagined the conflicts that resulted in Tannhäuser's contrasting emotion. Nagai Kafū, "Ōshū kageki no genjō" (The current state of opera in modern Europe), in *Kafū zenshū* (The complete works of Nagai Kafū), vol. 5 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992), 350–351.

[10] Nagai Kafū, "Old Regret," in *American Stories*, trans. Mitsuko Iriye, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), Apple Books. Japanese texts of the English translations that I quote here can be found in Nagai Kafū, "Kyūkon," *Kafū zenshū* (The complete works of Nagai Kafū), vol. 4 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992), 123–124.

[11] Kafū's *Amerika monogatari* (1908, translated as *American Stories*, 2000) begins with a stanza from Baudelaire's famous poem, "Le voyage" (The voyage). In addition, it has two essays in which he quotes Baudelaire's poems in French. In April 1913, Kafū published a collection of his Japanese translations of French poetry, titled *Sangoshū* (The coral anthology). This collection has seven poems by Baudelaire, all of which are from Baudelaire's famous poetry collection, *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857, translated as *The Flowers of Evil*, 2015). Charles Baudelaire, *The Flowers of Evil / Les Fleurs Du Mal (English and French Edition)*, translated by William Aggeler. (Digireads.com Publishing, 2015), Kindle.

[12] Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life (Penguin Great Ideas)*, trans. P. E. Charvet, (London and New York: Penguin Books, 2010), The Painter of Modern Life, IV. Modernity, 16–20, Kindle edition.

[13] Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life (Penguin Great Ideas)*, trans. P. E. Charvet, (London and New York: Penguin Books, 2010), The Painter of Modern Life, II. Manners and Modes, 5-6, Kindle edition.

[14] Seidensticker, *Kafū the Scribbler*, 38.

[15] *Sumidagawa*, *Bokutō kidan* and part of *Odoriko* are translated into English by Edward Seidensticker. The English translations can be found in *Kafū the Scribbler*.

[16] Here I quote Edward Seidensticker's English translation. See Seidensticker, *Kafū the Scribbler*, 71. Original text in Japanese can be found in Nagai Kafū, "Edo geijutsuron," in *Kafū zenshū* (The complete works of Nagai Kafū), vol. 10 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992), 147.

[17] Timothy Goddard also reads Kafū as a flâneur. He discusses Kafū's urban experience and how Tokyo is reimagined in Kafū's writing in his Ph. D. dissertation. See Timothy Unverzagt Goddard, "Teito Tokyo: Empire, Modernity, and the Metropolitan Imagination" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2013), 46–50.

[18] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 14.

[19] Ibid., 21.

[20] Ibid., 83.

[21] For English translations of Nietzsche's poems, see Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra, A Book for Everybody and Nobody*, trans. Graham Parkes, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[22] Nagai Kafū, "Fukagawa no uta," in *Kafū zenshū* (The complete works of Nagai Kafū), vol. 6 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992), 103.

[23] Ibid., 104–5. Here I give my English translation of the text.

[24] Ibid., 107.

[25] Ibid., 103.

[26] Follaco, in her study of the story, points out that the *densha* 電車 (streetcar, train) that takes the narrator to Fukagawa is "a heterotopia able to slow down and even interrupt the flow of time, a space where a new and autonomous plot can unfold, a sort of reverie: this emphasizes the uniqueness of the subsequent stroll in Fukagawa and reinforces the idea of a detachment of the quarter from the Yamanote by suggesting that the distance between the two can only be shortened through a dreamlike ride," Follaco, *A Sense of the City*, 124.

[27] Nagai, "Fukagawa no uta," in *Kafū zenshū* 6: 113. Here I share my English translation of the quoted passage. Seidensticker also translated this passage from Japanese to English. For Seidensticker's English translation, see Seidensticker, *Kafū the Scribbler*, 33.

[28] Audio recordings of the two songs can be found via the historical recordings collection of the National Diet Library.

Yoshiwara Yuki (singer), "Hauta: Aki no yoru," Nipponphone, Recorded May 1909, Historical Recordings Collection, the National Diet Library, https://rekion.dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/3575233.

Utazawa, Sagami (singer), Utazawa Toraemon (shamisen), "Fukete au yo," 1 and 2, Victor Japan, Recorded June 1935, Historical Recordings Collection, the National Diet Library, https://rekion.dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1322682; https://rekion.dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1322683.

[29] My English translation is based on the song lyric found in *Zokkyoku gakufu daisanhen hautashū* (Collection of *hauta* songs, music scores of Japanese vernacular music, vol.3), composer Machida Oen, (Tokyo: Seirindō, 1909), 18–19, https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/856055.

[30] Nagai, "Fukagawa no uta," in *Kafū zenshū* 6: 117. English translation of the quoted passage is my own.

[31] My English translation is based on song lyrics found in *Utazawa sanbyakushū ge* (Three hundreds *utazawa* songs, the latter volume), edited by Kaneko Hanō,

(Tokyo: Tomifumikan, 1920), 240–242, https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/917010.

[32] Nagai, "Edo geijutsuron," in *Kafū zenshū* 10: 147–148.

[33] Nagai, "Fukagawa no uta," in *Kafū zenshū* 6: 118. Here I did a word-for-word translation of the Japanese passage, trying to reflect the melancholic mood evoked in the original language. Rachael Hutchinson, in her discussion of the ending of "Fukagawa no uta," has a more polished, poetic translation of the same passage. See Hutchinson, *Nagai Kafū's Occidentalism*, 139.

[34] Inspired by *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, German composer Richard Strauss (1864–1949) turned Zarathustra's tragedy into a symphonic poem, titled "Also sprach Zarathustra." I haven't found any evidence that shows Kafū *actually* read *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. However, Kafū mentions it in "Seiyō ongaku saikin no keikō," alongside his admiration for Strauss. Kafū took in an orchestral performance during his overseas sojourn, and that experience made him want to read Nietzsche's book.

[35] Hutchinson, *Nagai Kafū's Occidentalism*, 139–140.

[36] This preface was written in 1912 and published in 1915.

[37] The fifth volume of the *Kafū zenshū* can be found in Nagai Kafū, "Sumidagawa," in *Kafū zenshū* (The complete works of Nagai Kafū), vol. 5 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1963), 61–62. This is the only place in this chapter in which this edition is used. For the rest of the chapter, I use the *Kafū zenshū* published by Iwanami shoten in 1990s. English translation of the quoted passage is my own.

[38] Seidensticker, *Kafū the Scribbler*, 33.

[39] The entire account, which has ten chapters, was published by Momiyama bookstore (Momiyama shōten) in a collection titled *Sumidagawa* in 1911. The collection has five stories and two dramatic works written by Kafū, all of which allude to his love for Edo culture.

[40] Like the *kiyomoto* ballad, the *tokiwazu* ballad is also a musical style related to *jōruri* puppet theater. Popular since the early eighteenth century, the *tokiwazu* ballad sings of erotic love. Also, noted by Shindō, during the Meiji era, teachers of *tokiwazu* ballads were mainly women. Since at the time, women from good families were not supposed to be teaching music about erotic love, being a female teacher of the *tokiwazu* ballad would not be a decent job for women. See Shindō Masahiro, *Nagai Kafū: Ongaku no nagareru kūkan* (Nagai Kafū, the space that music flows) (Kyoto: Sekai shisōsha, 1997), 99–100. Also see Ono Takeo, *Edo onkyoku jiten*, 163–164.

[41] “あゝ、お糸は何故藝者なんぞになるんだらう.” Nagai Kafū, “Sumidagawa,” in *Kafū zenshū* (The complete works of Nagai Kafū), vol. 6 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992), 221.

[42] Sasabuchi Tomoichi, in his study on Kafū, points out that Kafū’s literature expresses a sense of victimhood. His male protagonists often criticize others for the suffering and pain they experience in their life. For example, in “Ame shōshō,” the male protagonist frames himself as a victim of an unsuccessful marriage by blaming his wife. Sasabuchi notes that this victim mentality is the main reason why Kafū’s literature is often surrounded by an aura of melancholy. Sasabuchi Tomoichi, *Nagai Kafū: Daraku no bigakusha* (Nagai Kafū, the aesthetician of the decadent) (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 1976), 3–7.

[43] Nagai, “The River Sumida,” in *Kafū the Scribbler*, 204–205. Here I quote Seidensticker’s English translation of the passage in Japanese. For the original text, see Nagai, “Sumidagawa,” in *Kafū zenshū* 6: 241–242.

[44] Ibid., 204. Here I quote Seidensticker’s English translation of the original passage. For the original text in Japanese, see Nagai, “Sumidagawa,” in *Kafū zenshū* 6: 241.

[45] Ibid., 204. Here I quote Seidensticker’s English translation of the Japanese sentence “もう舞台は舞台でなくなった.” It can be found in Nagai, “Sumidagawa,” in *Kafū zenshū* 6: 242.

[46] Tada Kurahito, in his analysis of the references in *Sumidagawa*, makes an important observation about a gap between Chōkichi’s feelings for Oito and her feelings for him. In episode five, Oito invites Chōkichi to the night market during an unexpected visit to his house. Chōkichi does not reply immediately because he fears that his mother may hear about it. He thinks that she does not want him to associate with Oito because she is a geisha from the entertainment district. Without waiting for his answer, Oito tells him to pick her up after dinner, with Otoyo. Chōkichi replies to Oito with “a weak voice” (力の抜けた声 *chikara no nuketa koe* 238), which, according to Tada, reflects Chōkichi’s despair. Tada notes that Oito’s words “your mother will be coming as well, right?” (おばさんも一所にいらッしゃるでしょうね *Obasan mo issho ni irrasharu deshō ne*) breaks Chōkichi’s dream. Having heard her words, Chōkichi is in total despair. He realizes his love for Oito is an illusion. Tada concludes that “by showing Chōkichi the gap between reality and his fantasy, the narrative implies that Chōkichi can neither becomes an actor nor a musician of the Edo theater. He does not have a choice. It is this moment that Chōkichi’s story becomes a tragedy.” Tada Kurahito, *Nagai Kafū* (Nagai Kafū) (Tokyo: The University of Tokyo Press, 2017), 48–49.

[47] Nagai, “Sumidagawa,” in *Kafū zenshū* 6: 241. English translations here are my own.

[48] Ibid., 242. English translations here are my own.

[49] This scene is reminiscent Kafū's reaction to Wagnerian opera. Richard Wagner is perhaps Kafū's favorite European musician. In "Saiyū Nisshishō" (Leaves from a journal of a western voyage), Kafū notes how he was fascinated by Wagnerian opera while he was in the United States and France (The entire essay can be found in Nagai, *Kafū zenshū* 4: 299–345). In "Seiyō ongaku saikin no keikō," he wrote about how he was also impressed by Wagner's innovative development in music drama. Wagner is famous for his use of leitmotif in his music drama. Leitmotif refers to a repeated, short musical phrase associated with a theme, an event, an idea, or a particular person. One of the most famous leitmotifs in *Tristan und Isolde* is the "desire leitmotif," which expresses Isolde's desire for Tristan's love. The inversion of this leitmotif is the death leitmotif. Scholars of Wagner have argued that, by playing this trick in his music, Wagner wants to show that desire and death are two sides of the same coin. Desire can only be satisfied through death (The entire essay can be found in Nagai, *Kafū zenshū* 5: 309–325). In "Opera zakkan" (My random thoughts on opera, 1908), Kafū mentions this "desire leitmotif" in *Tristan und Isolde*. He states that he is moved by this leitmotif, which symbolizes "the love suicide between a couple who are in deeply love." Therefore, although it is hard to prove that *Tristan und Isolde* directly influences *Sumidagawa*, Kafū was clearly very much drawn to Wagnerian opera. Nagai, "Opera zakkan," in *Kafū zenshū* 5: 379.

[50] Nagai, "The River Sumida," in *Kafū the Scribbler*, 205. Here I quote Seidensticker's English translation of the original passage in Japanese. For the Japanese text see Nagai, "Sumidagawa," in *Kafū zenshū* 6: 243.

[51] Ibid., 205–206. Here I quote Seidensticker's English translation of the original passage. For the Japanese text see Nagai, "Sumidagawa," in *Kafū zenshū* 6: 243.

[52] Kawatake Mokuami, "Sato moyō azami no ironui: Izayoi seishin" in *Mokuami meisaku sen* (Collections of Mokuami's famous plays), vol.1 (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1952), 68. The first act of this performance presents Seishin as a selfish, pragmatic person. The man who announces Seishin's exile reveals that Seishin's secret love affair with Izayoi is the pretext for his exile. The real reason is that the temple suspects him of stealing three thousand *ryō*, but they do not have evidence. Therefore, they sentence him to exile to get rid of him. Also, neither Seishin nor Izayoi die in this act. Having grown up by the sea, Seishin is a strong swimmer. After the attempted love suicide, Seishin comes out of the water a few moments later. He sees a sick woman seeking help; she is on her way to deliver money to her father. Seishin helps her but then tries to steal her money. They fight, and Seishin accidentally kills her with a knife.

Blaming Izayoi for this tragic turn of events, he pushes the woman's body into the river and pretends her death to be a suicide. Thus, although no evidence in the play shows that Seishin did steal the money, his acts of thievery and throwing the woman's body into the river make it clear that he is not an honest man. In fact, as of the second act, Seishin has become a notorious robber. He and Izayoi meet again, and they become a robber couple.

[53] Ibid., 69. There is a clear contrast between Chōkichi and Izayoi, like the contrast between Kafū's male protagonist and his female characters. There is also a similarity between Izayoi and Oito; both women are action-driven, unlike the passive hero. Again, this contrast shows how Kafū connects Edo music with women. Izayoi is reminiscent of the licensed quarter women in the *utazawa* songs referenced in "Fukagawa no uta," and Chōkichi is reminiscent of the male narrator. Both Edo music and women represent a willpower that Kafū's male protagonist desires but are incapable and too afraid of acting out in real life. This is the cause of his melancholic state of mind. In both "Fukagawa no uta" and *Sumidagawa*, Kafū turns his male protagonist's melancholy into his artworks by having his melancholic self-immersing in the melancholic songs that sing licensed quarter women's willpower, and their tragic fate.

[54] Nagai, "The River Sumida," in *Kafū the Scribbler*, 218. Here I quote Seidensticker's English translation of the original passage. For the Japanese text see Nagai, "Sumidagawa," in *Kafū zenshū* 6: 259.

[55] Here I quote Seidensticker's English translation of the original passage in *Edo geijutsuron*. See Seidensticker, *Kafū the Scribbler*, 71. For the original Japanese text see Nagai, "Edo geijutsuron," in *Kafū zenshū* 10: 147–148.

[56] Nagai, "Edo geijutsuron," in *Kafū zenshū* 10: 147.

[57] Ibid., 219.

[58] Here I join Moriyasu Masafumi's (1915–2003) reading of Kafū. Moriyasu, in *Nagai Kafū: hikage no bungaku* (*Nagai Kafū, the literature of the shadows*, 1981), reads Kafū as a happy prisoner. He notes that Kafū in his writing often criticizes Japanese authorities for destroying old houses, streets, and culture for the sake of modernization, urban expansion, and economic development. At the same time, in *Sumidagawa* he takes on an authoritative role in writing about "the beauty of the ruins" 荒廃の美 (*kōhai no bi*)—the ruined scenery alongside the Sumida River, which echoes Chōkichi's ruined dream of becoming a member of the Edo theater. Kafū's works do not intend to solve the issues caused by Meiji modernization, nor the paradoxical role he creates for himself. His literary fantasy is the source of his pleasure. Moriyasu Masafumi, *Nagai Kafū: hikage no bungaku* (Nagai Kafū, the literature of the shadows) (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1981), 96–97.