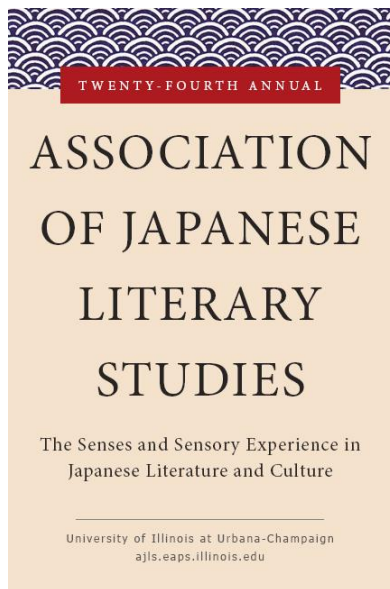


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## SMELLING MUSIC: THE “UNHEARD” SOUNDS OF TAKAHASHI CHIKUZAN

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Folk music in Japan has traditionally been a minor area of interest for English-speaking scholars, and it was not until the boom in popularity of so-called “Tsugaru-jamisen,” derivative of Tsugaru folk song, during the first decade of the 2000s that a more substantial popular and academic discourse began to emerge in English.<sup>1</sup> Recent work by scholars such as Gerald Groemer, David Hughes, Gerald McGoldrick, Henry Johnson, and Michael Peluse has supplemented the more dated analyses of Luciellenn Diane Dunsmoor and William Malm, and each apprehends its object using a variety of approaches including (ethno)musicology, anthropology, discourse analysis, and historiography.<sup>2</sup> Much of this work is grounded to one extent or another upon a methodology of transcription, deconstruction, and musicological analysis with the intent to concretize a “song” or “genre” in a monolithic manner, to make explicit the hidden rules assumed to give definition to their identities. While acknowledging the significance of this research and its contributions to our general understanding of folk music in Japan, I propose an approach to this field of study based on a very different consciousness about its object, one which uses a sympathetic approach to gain understanding by way of a “folk epistemology” fundamentally different from a modern “mass-music epistemology.”

This paper proceeds by looking not to academic discourse of folk music, but to the spoken and musical discourse of one of one of the most significant performers of Tsugaru-jamisen, Takahashi Chikuzan (1910-1998). By identifying Chikuzan’s concept of musical aesthetic with a series of olfactory metaphors, I show how he used both words and music as political weapons to resist a paradigm of unequal oppositions between city (center) and country (periphery), and mass (modern) and

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<sup>1</sup> “Folk music” itself is a problematic term, which I use as a useful compromise here. In this context, it refers to *min’yō* (folksong), including vocal performance and instrumental accompaniment. The specific meaning of “folk” is the focus of much of the following argument, and is largely interchangeable with “non-modern.” Tsugaru-jamisen is typically used to refer to solo performance of the Tsugaru *min’yō* accompanying shamisen; however, this is an anachronistic usage which misrepresents both public and insider consciousness about the music, especially through the postwar to pre-1980s period this essay covers. While the image of Tsugaru-jamisen has become practically synonymous with solo performance, much of its aesthetics are profoundly indebted to its historical form; thus, I employ the term to refer to both accompanying and solo performance.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g.: Gerald McGoldrick, “The Tsugaru-jamisen: its Origins, Construction, and Music,” MA Thesis (York University, 2005); Gerald Groemer, *The Spirit of Tsugaru/Blind Musicians, Tsugaru-jamisen, and the Folk Music of Northern Japan* (Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 1999); Henry Johnson, “Tsugaru Shamisen: From Region to Nation (and Beyond) and Back Again,” *Asian Music* 37 no 1 (2006): 75-100; Luciellenn Diane Dunsmoor, “Tsugaru Jamisen: The Development of a Solo Shamisen Genre in Japan,” MA Thesis (Washington: University of Washington, 1983)

folk (non-modern). My conclusion draws on this case to suggest wider ramifications for the way we study so-called non-modern music in Japan and elsewhere.

Enter Takahashi Chikuzan, a transformative figure of Tsugaru folk music who strove to elevate the perception of “folk music” in the public consciousness of the young postwar generation in particular. Chikuzan was born in the rural region of Tsugaru in Aomori prefecture, and was forced to take up the shamisen as an itinerant beggar after losing his eyesight at a young age and dropping out of school. He started out traveling northeastern Japan by himself, joined up with traveling song troupes during the war years, and during the postwar period became a stable presence on the radio and television as the favored accompanist of Narita Unchiku, the “father of folksong.” After Unchiku, his long-time mentor, retired in the 1960s, Chikuzan moved on to an unprecedentedly successful solo career combining both his unique brand of instrumental performance and intimate narrations of his compelling life story.<sup>3</sup> He was a master storyteller, and his thick rural accent was an indispensable aspect of his persona. Chikuzan was practically a household name throughout the 1970s: he performed in small and large venues all across the country and abroad, and was the subject of multiple television specials and a feature film biopic. His anti-war statements and emphasis on engagement with real, everyday life experiences undoubtedly contributed to his appeal among the young, and his apparent rustic simplicity helped to secure his place in a broader contemporary popular culture fanatic about all things nostalgic.

Much of Chikuzan’s popularity was due the fact that he appeared to 1970s Japan to be an anachronism. He was the perfect representation of a desired, disappearing (imagined) past identity, traces of which were becoming increasingly invisible as the country rebuilt and modernized following the devastating decades of war. He was thus an alien self from another time and another land, visiting modern (urban) Japan from a chronotope of pre-modernity (Tsugaru).<sup>4</sup> Visually-impaired, uneducated, performer of folk music and marked speech, he embodied a stereotype of the non-modern which was romanticized for its authenticity or realness.

Does this mean that he was complicit in a minstrelsy by which he parodied his native place of Tsugaru? In some ways perhaps, but I prefer a more charitable reading: his invocation and appropriation of the rural stereotype onstage was multifaceted, and while he and his manager certainly capitalized on the cultural objectification of the Tsugaru folk arts in the 1970s, he also complicated their

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<sup>3</sup> Chikuzan was not alone in either innovating new techniques or performing solo, although he was arguably the most important representative of Tsugaru-jamisen in the popular eye. Shirakawa Gunpachirō and Kida Rinshōei, rough contemporaries of Chikuzan, also exerted wide influence throughout the shamisen performing community. Among other accomplishments, Kida was responsible for establishing a system of performer certification [*shihan seido*] for his massive network of students in 1970, although it has not spread throughout Japan. Daijō Kazuo, Anthony Rausch, and Suda Naoyuki, *The Birth of Tsugaru Shamisen Music: Origin and Development of a Japanese Folk Performing Art*, trans. Anthony Rausch (Japan: Aomori University Press, 1998), 110.

<sup>4</sup> Marilyn Ivy has discussed at length the overwhelming discourse of nostalgia for an idealized past which characterized 1960s and 1970s Japan. Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 29-65.

representation through contradictory discourse.<sup>5</sup> He did so in one form by turning a dominant olfactionized discourse on its ear and throwing it back onto itself.

There is an established use of olfaction discourse in Japan, and so before addressing Chikuzan's interjection, it is important to understand the broader context of how rural Japan was created in the popular imagination in terms of smell. My interest here is particularly in ambiguous – but I would suggest othering and generally patronizing – dirty olfactive terminologies of *tsuchi kusai* (stinking of earth), *doro kusai* (stinking of muck), and *inaka kusai* (stinking of the countryside).<sup>6</sup>

These words reflect the implicit idea that city versus country is synonymous with class division: the city is perceived as saturated with elite political, military, and religious figures and all of the cultural, political, and economic capital they wield; conversely, the countryside is perceived to be dominated by the uneducated and uncultured working class. Thus, while the term *tsuchi kusai* (stinking of earth) literally refers to the smell of soil, following a free exchange of associations between uncultured = rural = farmer = soil = earthy/natural smell, it also comes to function as an epithet meaning “unrefined.” The same applies to the virtually-synonymous “stinking of muck” as well.

It is important to recognize that in some limited contexts, the label of “unrefined” may be applied as a positive valuation in the same vein as *soboku* (unadorned simplicity, rusticity) might. However, this usage invariably reflects a romanticized view of rural life, and in such cases these words are typically used to praise art and artisans precisely for being non-modern and lacking sophistication, and therefore play into the thorough encoding of the countryside as some idealized lost pre-modern topos.<sup>7</sup> In other words, it is praise derived from a poor premise. For example, art critic Okino Iwazaburō praises the *tsuchi kusai* art of Jean Francois Millet in a 1941 commentary, commending the authenticity in his portrayal of the peasant folk. His interpretation goes that Millet was more skilled at representing the reality of rural life than elite Japanese artists because he himself had grown up in a farming family. However, Okino states that Millet's success is derived in a large part from his “cowardice [*shōshinsa*] unique to rural folk” which can be “perceived through his paintings.”<sup>8</sup> In this way *tsuchi kusai* is offered as a compliment, but it ultimately serves to further the process of othering of the rural folk.

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<sup>5</sup> Ōta Yoshinobu coined the term “cultural objectification” [*bunka no kyakutaika*], referring to the phenomenon of local actors reevaluating their place-identified customs after those customs as a direct result of the objectifying outside (e.g. tourist) gaze. The nostalgia boom of the 1960s and 70s popularized and fetishized many aspects of “local culture,” like “local cuisine” [*kyōdo ryōri*] and performance practices, which contributed to their revival and renaissance. Ōta Yoshinobu, “Bunka no kyakutaika” in *Toransupojishon no shisō: Bunkajinruigaku no saisōzō*, pp 55-94 (Japan: Sekai Shisō-sha, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> While the following discussion is primarily grounded in the discourses of 1960s-70s Japan, there appears to be little evolution in the usage of these words, including among the Tsugaru folk music community, up to the present.

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed discussion of the coding of the countryside as an idealized *furusato* (“native place”), see: Jennifer Robertson, *Natives and Newcomers: Making and Remaking a Japanese City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 13-17

<sup>8</sup> Okino Iwazaburō, *Atena inki: bijutsu to shumi no zuihitsu shū* (Japan: Tōsui-sha, 1941), 262-3.

The third term, *inaka kusai*, referring to the “stink of the countryside,” is used to explicitly label rural inhabitants as uncultured back numbers, ignorant people who use marked vernacular speech – how vulgar!<sup>9</sup> Whereas, for instance, an object physically connected with soil like a carrot or potato can literally be *tsuchi kusai*, the “stink of the countryside” does not refer any real sense-able smell, and is most often directly attributed to people. It is defined only through opposition and negation (not urban, not educated, not fashionable), and unquestionably designates alterity in the body of the rural folk. In all cases, then, these earthy words of olfaction discourse are complicit in forming an uncomfortable metonym by which an imagined urban ideal is vested with immense cultural capital denied to its rural counterpart.

These are the discursive elements which Chikuzan appropriated and integrated into his public persona. He did not attempt to bridge the gulf between urban and rural Japanese – we are all the same people! – nor merely advocate for the positive aspects of his home region. Instead, he leveled an attack on Tokyo itself, lowering it to the status of its own uncouth representation of the countryside, responding that

there are those who speak of the people of “Tsugaru” as if we don’t count as human beings at all, because we’re just “that lot in Tsugaru, crawling around in the mud, stinking of earth.” This is just utter nonsense. If you ask me, it’s Tokyo that’s backwards! First of all, there’s no Tokyoite eating food of higher quality than the people around Aomori. In Tokyo, they don’t know what they’re putting in their mouths: they take food that was harvested who knows when, and mix in all sorts of sugar and other seasoning before eating it – you tell me which is of better quality. That’s nothing to put in your mouth! I also really get steamed when I listen to what writers and scholars have to say about us. No one in Aomori is drinking public water that stinks [*nioi no suru*] like it does in Tokyo. If you ask my opinion, that’s what I’ll tell you.<sup>10</sup>

Here he subverts the center-periphery relationship by accusing Tokyo of being the “smelly” place, suggesting that the city, the epitome of modern civilization, is backwards and polluted.

These words resonate strongly with the literature of olfaction studies. Classen’s seminal work on the subject argues that olfaction discourse is deployed to reaffirm group consciousness, often through a process of othering via language and representation. Dominant groups tend to classify themselves as inodorate or pure,

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<sup>9</sup> This usage parallels “hick,” “hayseed,” “bumpkin” or “redneck” in US parlance: strong accent and vernacular vocabulary are assumed to connote a lack of breeding, education, and/or intelligence. A parallel can be drawn with the negative perception of speakers of Black English Vernacular as well.

<sup>10</sup> Satō Sadaki, *Takahashi Chikuzan ni kiku: Tsugaru kara sekai he* (Japan: Tsugaru shobō, 2010), 138-9.

making any allusion to smell a mark of alterity.<sup>11</sup> Odorous labels like *tsuchi kusai* are therefore “far less a response to an actual perception of the odor of the other than a potent metaphor for the social decay it is feared the other...will cause in the established order” – in other words, a fear of contamination.<sup>12</sup> In this context, we can surmise that *tsuchi kusai* is deployed to defend the idea of an inordinate, modern, urban Japan. If we accept that “social categories are constructed and conveyed by olfactory codes” in this way, then Chikuzan’s intervention is a clever reversal of the dominant discourse and attempt to subvert its implied power relations.<sup>13</sup>

Chikuzan tries to take ownership of the concept of the “mucky smell of Tsugaru” by identifying it with aesthetic beauty: the smell of the earth is a good thing which can be refined. He made it his mission to elevate “the stink of the earth” as a conscious musical sensibility.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, he often employed the Tsugaru vernacular *tsuchi no kamari-ko* to refer to this quality.<sup>15</sup> The specifically localized vocabulary again stresses the locality of the musical sensibility as well as its ephemeral nature: the music, the language, and the land all stink, but they do so in a unique and largely ineffable way. Far from being ashamed by it, Chikuzan considered the “scent of Tsugaru” an essential aspect of his own performance, something that defined his music through every step of its evolution.

Chikuzan’s various marks of rural origin automatically indexed *tsuchi kusai* and all of the connotations associated therewith: this, he could not change. Instead, he strove to elevate his performance by creating new semiotic associations, bringing “*tsuchi kusai*” “folk music” into the avant-garde art space of the Shibuya “little theater” Jean Jean, to the stages of the primarily classical-music oriented National Workers Music Association (*Zenkoku kinrōsha ongaku kyōgikai*, hereafter “Ro-on”), and ultimately even to Carnegie Hall. Ro-on is a particularly interesting case, partly because the organization can be credited with Chikuzan’s initial breakout success, but also because they pride themselves on a history of democratizing access to the fine arts

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<sup>11</sup> Constance Classen, “The Odor of the Other: Olfactory Symbolism and Cultural Categories,” in *Ethos*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (1992): 158.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>14</sup> Chikuzan’s use of this metaphor is not limited to Japanese or Tsugaru music. Among his extensive collection of LPs, Chikuzan said that he most enjoyed the “ethnic scent” (*dozokuteki na nioi*) of Spanish Flamenco guitar. His producer Satō Sadaki also suggested that at one point that “perhaps a whiff [*nioi*] of the Mozart that he listened to so passionately had bled into his shamisen.” Matsubayashi Takuji, *Tamashii no neuro: hyōden Takahashi Chikuzan*. (Japan: Tōōnippō-sha, 2000), 184-5. Furthermore, he describes Aomori prefecture as having the “fragrance of a young woman” (*anesama kamari*), the town of Hakodate as having a “market smell” (*ichiba kamari*), and the Hokkaido ferry boats as “smelling...of the sweat of migrant laborers.” Satō, 47.

<sup>15</sup> *Kamari* is often glossed in writing with the character for *nioi* 匂, which is slightly more ambivalent than the decidedly negative stench of *kusai*. The *ko* (or *-kko*) suffix is often appended to nouns in northeastern Japanese vernaculars, but does not significantly alter the meaning. Chikuzan does not employ *kamari-ko* exclusively in relation to music, or as a positively-nuanced term: it first appears in his autobiography in a vignette depicting his impoverished upbringing, used in reference to a urine-soaked futon. Takahashi Chikuzan, *Tsugaru-jamisen hitori tabi* (Japan: Chūkō bunko, 1991), 17.

and improving laborers' "taste" (*jōsō*) "refinement" (*kyōyō*), and "human qualities" (*ningensei*).<sup>16</sup> While Ro-on was complicit in affirming the entrenched cultural capital of elite arts like opera and orchestral concerts, their purpose was to strive to improve such arts' accessibility to the everyday person. By adding Chikuzan to their roster, Ro-on helped to redefine his project and resituate Tsugaru folk music into a less marginalized sphere. As a result, Chikuzan was able to push back against the negative or regressive associations of *tsuchi kusai* folk music – including concerns over moral laxity afflicting contemporary popular singers' "lifestyles" (*kurashiburi*) and the general sense that folk music was only suited to providing background entertainment for drinking establishments and town festivals. In the process of elevating his music within the realm of art, Chikuzan redefined his audience from "customers" (*kyaku*) to "listeners" (*kikite* 聴き手) and made *tsuchi kusai* music into something to be listened to carefully (*kiku* 聴く) as opposed to merely heard (*kiku* 聞く).<sup>17</sup>

Chikuzan's aesthetic argument hinged upon maintaining his *tsuchi kusai* quality even as his music changed and evolved. He reported that his claim to *tsuchi kusai* was questioned when he created faster, more rhythmically complex performances in response to audience demand. This reflects an assumption that *tsuchi kusai* is incompatible with complex or technical performance. He countered that it was outrageous to think that he had lost touch with his *tsuchi kusai* roots because "...we call it the mucky smell [*doro kusasa*] of Tsugaru, and that smell [*nioi*] won't be cleansed from shamisen. Instead, I am striving for [*benkyō*] something a little pretty within it, something that people will want to listen to, and then make that into music." This passion was driven by the crisis he conversely perceived in the potential loss of this "smell" in others' music:

The scent [*nioi*] of Tsugaru in Tsugaru songs [*uta*] and the shamisen of Tsugaru has faded over time. I especially feel this in recent years. I am sure that the reason many people in Tokyo, Osaka, and even around Kyushu have begun to play Tsugaru-jamisen is because it has a powerful appeal, but I am concerned that if that results in the loss of the scent of Tsugaru, then in the end everyone will become disenchanted with it.<sup>18</sup>

In other words, Chikuzan uses smell as a metaphor to describe an unquantifiable and ineffable quality of music – intrinsically connected to the place of Tsugaru – which gave it its most fundamental sense of identity. While he acknowledged that folk traditions change over time, and indeed actively participated in Tsugaru folk music's historical evolution, Chikuzan also valued the stability of a folk music embedded in place and its performers' obligation to maintain its proper form.

Chikuzan did not define his musical aesthetics solely through this inversion of the place-grounded olfaction metaphor. He organized this semiotic definition around

<sup>16</sup> "Ro-on to ha," *Tokyo Ro-on Concert Guide*, last modified September 26, 2015, <<http://www.ro-on.jp/about/>>.

<sup>17</sup> Satō, 106.

<sup>18</sup> Satō, 137.

the sonic articulation of *sujimichi* (principle), a broad term which embodies the ambiguity of the smell metaphor well. *Sujimichi* might be best visualized as a core of an idea which is held in common between, for instance, various improvised performances of a single song, or throughout the diachronic historical evolution of Tsugaru regional music.

Gerald Groemer's more conventional musicological survey of pre- and postwar recordings leads him to the conclusion that Tsugaru-jamisen solo work has moved farther and farther from not only the original melody line of the sung folk music, but also the fundamental bouncy *hazumi*-style rhythm. He indicates that postwar Tsugaru-jamisen has been trending toward longer pounding digressions on the thick first string, more straightforward metronomic rhythmic sensibility, and less direct quotation of the original sung melodies.<sup>19</sup> Chikuzan's *sujimichi* is a practice which values these fading inheritances from the past, such as the allusions to folksong structure and *hazumi* rhythm. In contrast, contemporary shamisen player Kinoshita Shin'ichi's attempts to articulate a definition of the improvised Tsugaru repertoire helps to articulate the disappearance of the centrality of *sujimichi* to the style: "...because [for example] 'Tsugaru Jonkara-bushi' was originally a Tsugaru folk song, it naturally had a melody: the [vocal component of the] song was the main element, and the shamisen definitely played a secondary role..." but "if I were to take an extreme position, I would say that anything played in *ni-agari* [tonic-dominant-tonic tuning], two-four time, and in a minor scale would become 'Jonkara-bushi.'" <sup>20</sup> Kinoshita's transposition of "Tsugaru Jonkara-bushi" into the westernized vocabulary of "two-four time" and "minor scale" serves to distance it from the learned folk melody-based aesthetic, *hazumi* rhythm and connections to the melody structure, disavow *sujimichi*, and sanitize it of the place-specific and dated stink of the earth.

I argue that *sujimichi* is derivative of a folk epistemology, and has become more and more difficult to grasp in its own idiom as the dominant musical landscape has evolved and become permeated by modern/western music sensibilities. The shift from a largely folk-music based aesthetic economy to a mass-music based aesthetic economy is a shift in perception away from songs defined by *sujimichi* to those determined by more monolithic definitions.

This strongly parallels the epistemological literary shift described by Walter Ong from oral to literate cultures. Ong claims that oral cultures conceptualize individual literary works as archives of "formulas and themes" which are rhapsodized together in an improvisatory performance. As a result, specific elements of oral texts differ in each act of enunciation.<sup>21</sup> This rhapsodic improvisation is a perfect metaphor for Chikuzan's Tsugaru folk music, which is constituted by free combination of musical elements organized around a linear principle. In this way, folk musicians and oral storytellers string together essential elements through

<sup>19</sup> Gerald Groemer, "Tsugaru-jamisen in okeru sokkyōensōtekiyōso no bunseki," *Tōyō ongaku kenkyū*, no. 57 (1993): 45, 47-9.

<sup>20</sup> Kinoshita Shin'ichi, *Tsugaru Shamisen Style Book* (Japan: Shinko Music Publishing, 2003), 46-8, 50.

<sup>21</sup> Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 58.



creative means: as long as all of the core principles are maintained, the work retains the same identity. Just as two speakers can relate the same narrative using different words, two Tsugaru-jamisen players can perform “Dodare-bachi” with wildly differing note orders, embellishments, rhythmic densities – even playing in ensemble – and the fundamental rhythm, melodic mode, and structure will match with the sung verse. This means that we can conceive of the core identity of an oral text or folksong as being comprised of a series of keywords, phrases, momentums, and themes in contrast to the static sentences, paragraphs, and chapters which constitute the works of literate cultures.<sup>22</sup>

In this analogy, mass music is like a literate text: it is composed beforehand, often written down, to be reproduced as a faithful copy. Moreover, mass music is by definition recorded and commodified, technologically mass-(re)produced, ingraining in the listener a definitive or authentic singular form associated with a single artist or name. Mass music has its own consciously easy-to-consume aesthetic, its own compositional idiom: it doesn’t smell of the earth, but stinks of the industry.<sup>23</sup>

Gerald Groemer’s historiographical work on Japanese folk music argues that the rapid capitalization and industrialization of music in modern Japan caused a widespread and fundamental shift in listeners’ perception and values, what I have been describing as a move away from a folk epistemology. Mass music is designed in a way to be easily consumable that folk music is not: it relies entirely on hooks, brevity, and clichéd musical and lyrical tropes. Whereas Japanese folk music is often characterized by vernacular language, linguistically complex lyrics, malleable length and content, mass music tends toward homogenization and universal appeal. As a result, mass-music listeners become consumers lacking the tools to appreciate the music of a folk aesthetic economy, leading also to the drastic decline in the viability of the folk musician profession, particularly in the postwar period.<sup>24</sup> It may be argued that Tsugaru-jamisen and Tsugaru folk music’s enduring popularity and commercial success can be accounted for largely due to its performers’ exceptional ability to incorporate their fundamental folk epistemology – the stink of the earth – into a mass-music aesthetic economy, but that is an issue to be given more detailed consideration elsewhere.

Here, I ultimately would like to contend that these categories of folk and mass music sit at two poles of an epistemological spectrum, that the economic ideology of modern capitalism is responsible for the overwhelming trend toward massification, and furthermore that the massified listener is ill equipped to access music created

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<sup>22</sup> One of the difficulties in comparing literate and oral texts in this manner is that the former takes on, to some degree, the properties of the latter in the performative act of reading. Oral texts exist only in action, just as improvisational music does. However, written works become similarly mutable (although to an arguably mitigated degree) as a reader poaches from their text, just as musicians reading from a score inevitably add layers of interpretation in the act of performance. See: Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 167-70; Laudan Nooshin, “Improvisation as ‘Other’: Creativity, Knowledge and Power — The Case of Iranian Classical Music,” in *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 128 (2003): 242-296.

<sup>23</sup> See Simon Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock and Roll* (New York: Pantheon Books), 1981.

<sup>24</sup> Gerald Groemer, *Goze uta* (Japan: Iwanami shinsho, 2014), 6-7.

within a folk epistemology: they (we) cannot appreciate the smell of the earth. This conclusion, I think, has powerful ramifications for the way we approach the study of folk musics as objects of analysis: before transcription and musicological analysis – scholarly practices which render oral performance into monolithic “literate texts” – we must put a concerted effort toward grasping the music’s *sujimichi*, to understand it on its own terms.