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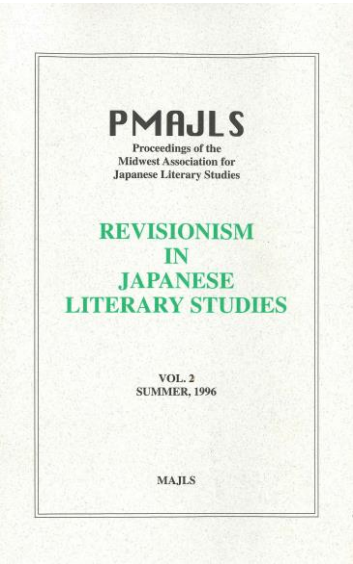

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THEATRICALITIES OF POWER: NEW HISTORICIST READINGS OF JAPANESE NOH DRAMA[1]

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Some of the most provocative scholarly work on theater in the past decade has emerged from the field of Renaissance studies, where New Historicist scholars such as Stephen Greenblatt, Joel Fineman, and Louis Montrose have investigated the complex negotiations between theatricality and politics operative in Elizabethan England. Mixing Foucauldian post-structuralism with Bourdieuian sociology, such studies have brought to the fore the extent to which "theatricality is not set over against power but is one of power's essential modes."[2]

Although contemporary critical theory has already made an impact on the study of Japanese narrative and poetry, the study of Japanese drama continues to lag behind its more theoretically sophisticated cousins. In what follows, I explore the promise that New Historicist strategies of reading hold for the study of Japanese noh theatricality by focusing on the unprecedented patronage and personal involvement of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (豊臣秀吉, 1536-1598) in the world of noh during the late Azuchi-Momoyama 安土桃山 period (1573-1600).[3]

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[1] This study was written with the generous assistance of a University of Oregon Summer Research Award and Junior Professorship Development Grant.

[2] Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 46.

[3] My discussion of Hideyoshi's patronage and performance of noh is indebted to the following studies: Morisue Yoshiaki, "Nō no hogosha," 211-26; Araki Yoshio, 195-96, 231-32, 389-401; Omote Akira

The Politics of Patronage: Noh as Cultural Production

If asked to single out the two most important turning points in the patronage history of Japanese noh drama, few noh scholars would hesitate in naming the first. The patronage history of noh underwent its most important mutation in 1375, after the young shogun, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (足利義満, 1358-1408), attended a performance of *sarugaku* 猿楽・申楽 noh by the Yūzaki troupe at the Imagumano district in southeastern Kyoto. During the early fourteenth century, both Hōjō Takatoki (北条高時, 1303-1333), the shogunal regent of the Kamakura shogunate, and Ashikaga Takauji (足利尊氏, 1305-1358), the first shogun of the Muromachi shogunate, were enthusiasts of *dengaku* 田楽 noh, but their interest in *dengaku* noh never compared to Yoshimitsu's patronage of *sarugaku* noh.[4] Yoshimitsu was so impressed by the performance at Imagumano that he soon established shogunal patronage for the Yūzaki troupe from Yamato province (led by Kannami 観阿弥, 1333-1384), and later added other troupes to the shogunal payroll, such as the Hie troupe from Ōmi province (led by Inuō Dōami[5] 犬王道阿弥, ?-1413).

Although it is probably going too far to say that after the establishment of shogunal patronage, noh's "ostensibly religious

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and Amano Fumio, 80-88; Hata Hisashi, 301-307; George Elison, "Hideyoshi, the Bountiful Minister," 223-44; and Jacob Raz, 126-29.

[4] On the "dengaku craze" in the early fourteenth century, see Gotō Tanji et al., 161-63.

[5] Dōami attributed his own success, in part, to the good impression Kannami had made on Yoshimitsu at Imagumano. See Zeami, *Sarugaku dangi*, in Omote Akira and Katō Shūichi, 293 and 301.

purpose was clearly subordinated to that of entertainment,"[6] Yoshimitsu's sponsorship certainly made it possible for noh to begin to shed its folk trappings and to adopt the more refined style of an aristocratic performance art. 1375 thus marks the beginning of noh drama's transformation from a popular provincial entertainment for commoners to an aristocratic art form staged for the military ruling class. Though noh troupes never ceased to perform both at the capital and in the provinces before popular audiences, the institution of shogunal patronage meant that noh troupes now had to learn to cater to the tastes of the military elite.[7]

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[6] Thomas Blenman Hare, 13.

[7] In *Fūshikaden* 風姿花伝 (*Teachings on Style and the Flower*, 1402-1418), Zeami (世阿弥, 1364?-1443) makes it clear that, although the goal of every performative art should be "to calm the hearts of a wide variety of people and move the feelings of high and low alike [*geinō to wa shonin no kokoro wo yawaragete jōge no kan wo nasamu koto* 芸能とは、諸人の心を和らげて、上下の感をなさむ事]"(Omote and Katō, 45: translation mine), the success of noh in the Muromachi period depended upon the favorable response of the nobility (*kinin* 貴人). Zeami's conception of the nobility included members of the military elite, such as the shogun and his high-ranking officers, as well as members of the court aristocracy. Zeami advises the noh actor to consider the attendance of the nobility as the foundation of one's performance, since it was of the utmost importance that the noh actor perform in an elegant style in accord with the feelings, expectations, and tastes of the nobility (see Omote and Katō, 27-28.). Even after Yoshimitsu's death, when Zeami and his troupe fell out of favor with the Ashikaga shogunate, Zeami never lost sight of the importance of performing in an aristocratic manner in the capital (cf. Zeami's harsh criticism in *Sarugaku dangi* 申楽談儀 (Omote and Katō, 298) of provincial noh actors who repulse the shogun with their "countrified performance style [*inaka no fūtei* 田舎の風体]"). Playwrights such as Zeami recognized that not just any characters should be embodied on the noh stage, but only such as might appeal to the imagination of the audience, especially members of the shogun's inner circle, who sought in noh the symbolic power of "*yūgen* 幽玄," or

Yoshimitsu's sponsorship helped noh become an "aristocratic" art form, or at least an art form possessing "aristocratic" pretensions and "aristocratic" symbolic capital. During the Muromachi period, noh drama started to function, for the first time, as a mechanism for the acquisition, circulation, and display of cultural authority. But it is worth recalling that noh had not always been considered an "aristocratic" drama, nor had it always appealed to an "aristocratic" audience. In response to the popular origins of noh drama, as well as to the low-ranking status of most noh actors, playwrights, and musicians, court aristocrats initially sought to dissociate themselves from what they regarded as a lowly art form practiced by a disreputable "band of beggars."[8]

After a few years of shogunal patronage, even the snobbiest of court aristocrats could no longer ignore the fashionable new "aristocratic" dramatic form that noh had become. By 1383, more and more court aristocrats began to attend noh performances, both at private residences and at subscription festivals. Though some courtiers continued to denounce Yoshimitsu's patronage of noh, many more came to recognize that they were no longer in a

"profound elegance," which they associated with the rituals, manners, fashions, and language of court aristocrats (see Omote and Katō, 20). Zeami's son-in-law Konparu Zenchiku (金春禅竹, 1405-1470) informs us in *Kabu zuinōki* 歌舞髄脳記 (*An Account of the Essentials of Song and Dance*, 1456) that the art of noh flourished once Ashikaga Yoshimitsu came into power, insofar as the shogun and his circle demanded performances exemplifying the aristocratic ideal of *yūgen* (Omote and Katō, 351).

[8] Palace Minister Sanjō Kintada criticized *sarugaku* noh actors as exhibiting the "conduct of beggars" (*kotsujiki no shogyō* 乞食の所行). See *Gogumaiki*, 267; Kobayashi Shizuo, 9; and Hayashiya Tatsusaburō, 491-92.

position to turn down an invitation from Yoshimitsu or to openly reject or disapprove of Yoshimitsu's cultural investments without incurring his disfavor.[9] Soon even imperial sovereigns--both reigning and retired--were attending special noh performances at the imperial palace, the retired sovereign's palace, and the shogun's mansion.[10] Through their patronage of architecture, painting, poetry, music, dance, drama, and tea ceremony, military aristocrats such as Ashikaga Yoshimitsu and other shoguns in the Ashikaga dynasty and after were able to acquire the cultural prestige and authority they had long sought.[11]

Of all the rulers who patronized noh, the only one who surpassed even Yoshimitsu in largesse was Toyotomi Hideyoshi, one of the three great unifiers of premodern Japan. Although some scholars consider the second most important turning point in the patronage history of noh to be the year 1609, when the Tokugawa shogunate established official patronage for all four major noh troupes of the Yamato Sarugaku line, such a shogunal patronage policy would probably never have been instituted had it not been for the unique precedent set by Hideyoshi during the late Azuchi-Momoyama period. Hideyoshi's patronage and involvement with noh helped create a cultural space within which noh drama could eventually be designated the official ceremonial music and entertainment (*shikigaku* 式楽) under the Tokugawa shogunate.

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9 See *Yoshida nikki*, in Morisue Yoshiaki (1971), 238.

10 See Nose Asaji, 716-17; Morisue (1971), 239-40; Nishino Haruo, 2:345.

11 See Morisue (1979-80), 198-235; H. Paul Varley; and Kenneth A. Grossberg, 30-8.

Staging Hideyoshi

Although Hideyoshi was never officially designated shogun, he was clearly the *de facto* ruler of Japan between 1590 and 1598, governing with as much, if not more, power than Ashikaga Yoshimitsu two hundred years earlier, but lacking Yoshimitsu's cultural authority and legitimacy because of his obscure family background. Although it is often said that Hideyoshi followed the political example of Minamoto Yoritomo (源頼朝, 1147-1199),[12] the founder of the Kamakura shogunate, it should also be recognized that in an effort to increase his symbolic capital and legitimize the cultural authority of his regime, Hideyoshi seems to have emulated the example set by Yoshimitsu during the cultural efflorescence of the Kitayama era. Like Yoshimitsu, Hideyoshi actively acquired the distinguishing symbols of imperial rank and office, arranging for his own self-promotion to the offices of *kanpaku* 関白 in 1585, *daijō daijin* 太政大臣 in 1587, and *taikō* 太閤 in 1592.[13] Moreover, like Yoshimitsu, Hideyoshi patronized art and artists in order to increase his own culturo-political prestige: artistic pursuits such as *waka* poetry, tea ceremony, and noh drama were all means towards the "aristocratization" of Hideyoshi, as George Elison puts it,[14] means towards the transformation of Hideyoshi from an uncultured upstart into a highly refined hegemon. Hideyoshi's patronage of noh seems also to have led to an entirely new

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12 Mary Elizabeth Berry, 6 and 177.

13 Tenshō 13/7/11, 14/12/19, and 19/12/27, respectively. On the historical precedent of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, see Elison (1981), 19; and Berry, 184-87.

14 Elison (1981), 239 and 243. On Yoshimitsu's cultural dominance in the world of Kitayama, see H. Paul Varley, 183-84.

configuration of relations between politics and theatricality during the late Momoyama era.

Of all the rulers who patronized noh, Hideyoshi stands out not only because he was the first one to establish regular stipends for all four troupes of the Yamato Sarugaku line,[15] but also because he was the first to perform the role of himself on the noh stage. Hideyoshi's earliest recorded contact with the world of noh dates back to 1571, when--under the surname Kinoshita 木下--he made inquiries to the Kanze *iemoto* 家元 about taking up the study of noh song and dance. But Hideyoshi's preliminary contacts with noh did not develop into a full-fledged relationship until he was appointed *kanpaku* in the 7th month of 1585.[16] Two days after assuming his duties as *kanpaku*, Hideyoshi sponsored his first program of five noh plays at the imperial palace.[17] After regularly attending and sponsoring noh productions for the better part of a decade, Hideyoshi commenced formal study of noh song and dance at the Nagoya center of operations during the Korean campaign, making his stage debut in 1593.[18]

Perhaps because of the close association between the Konparu school of noh and the Yagyū school (柳生流) of martial arts, Hideyoshi studied under the direction of the Konparu teacher Kurematsu Shinkurō 暮松新九郎. During this period, Hideyoshi became so obsessed with noh that he even had a portable noh

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15 Bunroku 2 (1593)/9/16. See Omote and Amano, 84-6.

16 Omote and Amano, 81.

17 Tenshō 13/7/13. See Omote and Amano, 81; and Elison (1981), 241.

18 See Ose Hoan, 372-73; Elison (1981), 242; and Adriana Boscaro, 51.

stage constructed so that he could take it with him whenever he went to battle "in order not to get out of practice."[19] If noh could serve as "a prayer for peace to reign over the entire country [*tenka no onkitō tarubeki* 天下の御祈祷たるべき]," [20] as Zeami claimed, then it could also improve the morale of his troops in Kyūshū. Therefore, Hideyoshi summoned all four troupes of the Yamato Sarugaku line and had them perform for his soldiers at the Nagoya headquarters. Hideyoshi also encouraged his *daimyō* to study noh in order to discipline their bodies and make their ignoble demeanor noble: i.e., to aristocratize themselves as he had himself.[21]

Members of the military elite had been studying noh recitation and dance at the amateur level of *tesarugaku* 手猿楽 since at least the middle of the fifteenth century, but Hideyoshi became the first ruler of Japan ever to perform in a noh play as himself. In the early 1590s Hideyoshi appeared in god plays such as *Takasago* 高砂 and *Yumi Yawata* 弓八幡, warrior plays such as *Tamura* 田村 and *Yorimasa* 頼政, woman plays such as *Matsukaze* 松風, *Izutsu* 井筒, and *Sekidera Komachi* 関寺小町, mad person plays such as *Tōsen* 唐船 and *Kantan* 邯鄲, and

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19 Nakamura Yasuo, 126-27.

20 Zeami, *Fūshikaden*, in Omote and Katō, 40 (translation mine).

21 As Elison so aptly puts it, "In the historical play composed by Hideyoshi, the leading *bushi* actors were cast in the roles of *kuge*." See Elison (1981), 229. Cf. the following statement attributed to Hideyoshi: "These days many military men have ascended to high posts, but their appearance in court dress is utterly ignoble, so that they must all practice Nō." See *Akumabarai* (1787) and *Kitaryū hijisho*, quoted in Elison (1981), 243.

demon plays such as *Daie* 大会 and others.[22] But Hideyoshi also commissioned the writing of ten special noh plays that celebrated his numerous accomplishments and virtues. Indeed, in the third year of Bunroku (1594), Hideyoshi may have starred as himself in at least five of the ten plays, performing the role of "Hideyoshi" in play after play at the Ōsaka Castle. These so-called "new noh plays" (*shinsaku nō* 新作能), or "Taikō noh" (太閤能) as they came to be called, were composed by an *otogishū* 御伽衆 named Ōmura Yūko (大村由己, 1536?-1596),[23] Hideyoshi's officially appointed chronicler and an accomplished poet in his own right. Konparu Anshō (金春安照, 1549-1621), a renowned actor six generations removed from Konparu Zenchiku (金春禅竹, 1405-1470?), provided the music. The Taikō noh celebrated and memorialized Hideyoshi's power, family genealogy, and political, military, and cultural achievements.

Five of the ten plays originally commissioned by Hideyoshi are still extant: the god play *Yoshino mōde* (吉野詣), the warrior plays *Shibata* (柴田), *Hōjō* (北条), and *Akechi uchi* (明智討), and the woman play *Kōya sankei* (高野参詣).[24] Taken together, the Taikō noh present a highly selective version of Hideyoshi's "greatest hits." As with the *Tenshōki* 天正記,[25]

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[22] For a chronological chart of Hideyoshi's involvement with noh, see Hata, 302-03. For individual performance records and programs, see *Zoku gunsho ruijū*, 240-41.

[23] For brief biographical essays on Ōmura Yūko, see *Nihon koten bungaku daijiten*, 63-70.

[24] See Nonomura Kaizō, 675-76, 684-89, and 704-06. Although the plays were not originally designated according to the taxonomy of *gobandate*, I have followed the categorization of Nonomura.

[25] On the revisionist history of the *Tenshōki*, see Berry, 222.

Hideyoshi's official chronicles, no mention is made of Hideyoshi's military failures in Korea or elsewhere. Indeed, in *Yoshino mōde*, playwright Ōmura Yūko engages in the most blatant historical revisionism by having the *waki*, an imperial retainer, describe the "brave deeds" (*buyūkō* 武勇功)[26] accomplished by Taikō Hideyoshi, who "subdues the three kingdoms of Korea, as well as granting petitions from China [*Sankan wo tairage, amassae Morokoshi yori mo konkwan wo iruru ni yori* 三韓を平げ、剰へ唐土よりも懇款を入るるにより]."[27] Of course, even to hint at Hideyoshi's failures in Korea would not only have been regarded as inauspicious, it would also have compromised the symbolic efficacy of Hideyoshi's self-staging. Let us look more closely at the plays themselves.

Although *Yoshino mōde* (*Pilgrimage to Yoshino*) was written in the style of a commemoration of Hideyoshi's journey to the hills of Yoshino to view cherry blossoms around the end of the second month of 1594, in fact, it was commissioned before Hideyoshi made the trip. *Yoshino mōde* was first performed in Yoshino on the first day of the third month in front of the Yoshino Shrine.[28] It was as if Hideyoshi's flower viewing trip had already

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[26] See Nonomura, 675.

[27] Translation mine. See Nonomura, 675.

[28] After the trip, the play was performed again during the third month of 1594 (Bunroku 3/3/15) at Ōsaka Castle and perhaps later at the imperial palace. See Omote and Amano, 84; Hata, 303; and Araki, 389. Hideyoshi probably reprised his role as Zaō Gongen at the imperial palace: see Elison (1981), 243-44. Hideyoshi also commissioned a pair of screens by Kanō Mitsunobu to commemorate the event. A detail from the Kanō screens, entitled "Yoshino no hanami," is reproduced in Michael Cooper (1971), 83. The original screens are contained in the Hosomi collection in Osaka.

been scripted in advance. Insofar as the writing of the play preceded the actual trip, the dramatic text cannot be said to have simply reflected the historical event it supposedly commemorated.

In addition to turning mimeticist theories of literature on their head, *Yoshino mōde* also foregrounds the theatricality operative in such a flower viewing procession by drawing attention to the multiple levels of performer-spectator reflexivity at work. First, Hideyoshi commissioned the play to be written about his upcoming trip to Yoshino. Next, Hideyoshi made the trip, dressed in his usual costume of "false whiskers" (*tsukurihige* 作り髭), "false eyebrows" (*mayu tsukarase* 眉作らせ), and "blackened teeth" (*kaneguro* 鉄黒).[29] Indeed, Hideyoshi's entire entourage proceeded with such pageantry that crowds quickly assembled to observe. Once Hideyoshi and his entourage arrived in Yoshino, the most distinguished poets in Hideyoshi's retinue--including Satomura Jōha (里村紹巴, 1527-1602) and Ōmura Yūko--gathered to compose *waka* poetry. Finally, after paying respects to Zaō Gongen 蔵王権現, chief *kami* of Yoshino Shrine, Hideyoshi ordered the performance of *Yoshino mōde* in front of Yoshino Shrine and compelled his entourage to observe again as "Hideyoshi" (the character in the play) took in the beauty of the cherry blossoms on the stage of Yoshino.

Members of the audience who observed the drama of Hideyoshi's *hanami* 花見 excursion as it was reperformed before Yoshino Shrine were thus placed in the interesting position of twice playing the role of audience to Hideyoshi's displays of cultural refinement. In the highly self-reflexive theatrical space of *Yoshino mōde,* the boundaries between performers and spectators became blurred as spectators turned into performers

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[29] See Ose, 437: 「秀吉公例之作り髭眉作らせ鉄黒なり。」

and performers turned into spectators. As with all of the "new noh plays" commissioned by Hideyoshi, such "commemorative" scenes were designed not merely to entertain Hideyoshi and his retinue, but more importantly, to compel his audience to witness twice over the edifying example of his life (once during the actual event and then again during the reperformance of that event on stage). In effect, Hideyoshi continually staged and restaged his life.

In the initial production of *Yoshino mōde* Hideyoshi played the role not of himself but rather of Zaō Gongen. In the syncretistic world of Momoyama Japan, Zaō Gongen was revered not only as the chief *kami* of Yoshino Shrine, but also as the fierce bodhisattva encountered by Shugendō founder En no Gyōja 役行者 on Mt. Kinpu in Yoshino after engaging in religious austerities for a thousand days. According to the cult of Zaō Gongen, his fierceness was merely an expedient device to frighten the unenlightened into embracing the teachings of the Buddha,[30] but as enacted by Hideyoshi, the fierceness of Zaō Gongen more likely served the purpose of reminding the audience of Hideyoshi's unparalleled power. *Yoshino mōde* closes with Zaō Gongen vowing to protect Hideyoshi and his entourage on their way back to the capital: "*Miyako ni kwangyo no michi wo mamori, Miyako ni kwangyo no michi wo mamori* 都に還御の道を守り、都に還御の道を守り."[31] At the end of his life, Hideyoshi made arrangements to play the role of a god again in his next life by being awarded the posthumous title of Shin Hachiman 新八幡,[32]

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30 See Alicia Matsunaga and Daigan Matsunaga, vol. 1, 245.

31 Nonomura, 676.

32 See Michael Cooper (1974), 185; and James Murdoch, 378-80.

the new Hachiman god of war. Although Hideyoshi's wish of apotheosis was granted soon after his death, it was a role he would only be allowed to play until 1619,[33] when the Shin Hachiman Shrine was destroyed, probably by Itakura Katsushige (板倉勝重,1545-1624), then the shogunal deputy (*shoshidai* 所司代) of Kyoto. Despite his most fervent wishes, the run of Hideyoshi's performance as a god was less than eternal.

Kōya sankei (*Pilgrimage to Kōya*), another play commissioned before Hideyoshi made the actual trip, picks up where *Yoshino mōde* left off, depicting Hideyoshi's journey from Yoshino to Mt. Kōya to visit his mother's mortuary temple. According to performance records, *Kōya sankei* was first performed on Mt. Kōya during Hideyoshi's visit. As with *Yoshino mōde,* the highly self-reflexive theatrical space of *Kōya sankei* blurs the boundaries between performers and spectators, theatrical fiction and historical fact. During the play, the character of Hideyoshi, performed on stage by a *kokata* 子方, or child actor, encounters the spirit of his mother played by the *shite.* In the first half of the play, Hideyoshi's mother appears disguised as an old nun, but in the second half, she discloses her identity not only as the mother of Hideyoshi but also as a bodhisattva of song and dance. Hideyoshi's mother celebrates her present state of enlightenment, attributing her ascendance to bodhisattvahood to the prayers of her devoted son, that paragon of filial piety.

It is interesting to note that in the debut performances of both *Yoshino mōde* and *Kōya sankei* the character of Hideyoshi was represented on stage by means of a *kokata,* or child actor. Why wasn't Hideyoshi portrayed by one of the leading actors of the day? The use of such a device is instructive insofar as it was

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[33] Genna 5/9. See Kyōtoshi, ed., 42-43.

the accepted theatrical convention to employ unmasked *kokata* when depicting emperors or high-ranking political or military figures. This usage is thought to suggest the impossibility of adequately representing such figures of authority on stage. The convention of employing *kokata* in the representation of powerful figures has been followed in the stage portrayal of Emperor Keitai (継体, 450-531) in the play *Hanagatami* 花筐, Minister Fujiwara Fusasaki (藤原房前, 681-737) in *Ama* 海士, Minamoto Yoritomo (源頼朝, 1147-1199) in *Funa Benkei* 船弁慶 and *Daibutsu Kuyō* 大仏供養, Minamoto Yoshitsune (源義経, 1159-1189) in *Ataka* 安宅, and so forth. But what sharply distinguishes the *kokata* portrayal of such renowned figures from that of Hideyoshi is that the former were long dead by the time they were dramatized on stage, whereas Hideyoshi was still alive. What starts out as a means of showing respect towards the power of the dead ends up in the hands of playwright Ōmura Yūko as a technique for increasing the symbolic capital of the living.[34]

Shibata, based on Ōmura Yūko's historical chronicle of the subjugation of Shibata Katsuie (柴田勝家, 1522-1583) in *Shibata taijiki* 柴田退治記, eulogizes Hideyoshi's military victory over Shibata in the battle of Shizugatake in 1583. The ghost of Shibata appears on stage as *shite* to recount his army's march into Ōmi province, where they fought with great skill and valor. According to Shibata, as his army was on the verge of achieving victory, Hideyoshi rode up on his horse and singlehandedly challenged tens of thousands of Shibata's men, many of whom

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[34] Berry argues persuasively that "the growing emphasis on status and its requirements" in the late sixteenth-century world of Momoyama Japan led to a socio-political order that "was increasingly associated with the clarification of roles and their symbols" (146).

fled the field in fear, unable to withstand the overwhelming force of Hideyoshi.[35]

Hōjō, based on Ōmura Yūko's historical account in *Tenshōki* of the siege of Odawara Castle, extols Hideyoshi's military prowess in his victory over Hōjō Ujimasa (北条氏政, 1538-1590) in 1590. Appearing on stage as the *shite*, the ghost of Hōjō Ujimasa recounts to the *waki*, a Gozan Zen priest, the events surrounding his death. Ujimasa describes how Hideyoshi's relentless siege of the castle at Odawara eventually forced both himself and his brother Ujinao to commit suicide in defeat. But rather than having the ghost of Ujimasa vent his *ressentment* at Hideyoshi, the play ends with Ujimasa's prayer for Hideyoshi's continued success.

The Taikō plays stretch the historicity of traditional noh theatricality by dealing with the very recent past or even the still current present, rather than the distant, remote past represented in the canonized classics by Zeami and others, which typically deal with topics set in the Heian or Kamakura periods.[36] In the late sixteenth century, Christian missionaries also experimented with noh on contemporary topics as an ideological vehicle for the propagation of Christianity,[37] but "*Kirishitan* noh" never attained the level of self-reflexivity exemplified by Taikō noh: St. Francis Xavier never took the stage à la Hideyoshi.[38]

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35 Nonomura, 687.

36 Donald Keene (1973), 41.

37 Nakamura Yasuo, 127.

38 Whether Hideyoshi's self-staging owes anything to contemporaneous Jesuit productions of Christian mystery plays (*autos sacramentales*) remains unclear. Cf. Thomas F. Leims' investigation of cross-cultural linkages between Jesuit forms of theatricality and the

Hideyoshi's most outrageous break with theatrical tradition came with his performance of himself, Hashiba Chikuzen no Kami Hideyoshi 羽柴筑前守秀吉, in *Akechi uchi* (*Conquest of Akechi*), a play that celebrates Hideyoshi's military victory over Akechi Mitsuhide (明智光秀, 1528-1582) in the battle of Yamazaki in 1582. Although Hideyoshi made plans to perform all five of the extant Taikō noh during the third month of 1594 at Ōsaka Castle,[39] *Akechi uchi* is the only documented example in which we know for certain that Hideyoshi actually performed the role of himself.

In *Akechi uchi* Hideyoshi plays the role of the loyal vassal who avenges the death of his lord, Oda Nobunaga (織田信長, 1534-1582), who had been treacherously slain by one of his own generals, Akechi Mitsuhide. Hideyoshi manages both to kill the traitor and to fill the power vacuum left after Nobunaga's death. By the end of the play, rather than coming off as a Machiavellian opportunist, the character "Hideyoshi" epitomizes the refined military leader who, by combining the arts of both the brush and the sword (*bunbu no michi* 文武の道), is able to calm the four seas through the Mandate from Heaven (*Tenmei* 天命),[40] that ultimate seal of ideological legitimation deployed by

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early history of Kabuki in *Die Entstehung des Kabuki: Transkulturation Europa-Japan im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* . Also see C. R. Boxer's description of *autos* performances in Japan during the mid-sixteenth century: 58-59.

[39] Bunroku 3/3/15. See Hata, 303. That Hideyoshi actually performed in all five plays as he clearly intended to is likely though uncertain. See Elison (1981), 338 n. 84.

[40] See Nonomura, 684: 「四海を静め給ふ事。これ天命にあらずや。」 Cf. Hideyoshi's remarks to the Jesuits in 1593 at Nagoya: "When I was born, a sunbeam fell on my chest, and when the diviners were

so many politicians during the Sengoku and Tokugawa periods. This calming of the "four seas" (*shikai* 四海) not only hearkens back to Hideyoshi's unification of the entire country after more than a century of civil war, but also looks ahead to Hideyoshi's imperialistic ambition to conquer China and expand the empire of Japan--goals which would elude even Hideyoshi.

Additional plays, such as *Toyokuni mōde* (豊国詣), which elevates Hideyoshi to the level of a god worshipped both in Japan and China, were written and produced after Hideyoshi's death in order to contribute to his myth-making, but such dramatizations lack the self-reflexive theatricality that only Hideyoshi could bring to a performance of himself on the noh stage.

"Falseness with a good conscience; the delight in simulation exploding as a power that pushes aside one's so-called 'character,' flooding it and at times extinguishing it; the inner craving for a role and mask, for *appearance*"[41]--this quotation by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche on "the problem of the actor" sounds like an apt description of the actor-hegemon Hideyoshi. If Hideyoshi pushed the envelope of theatrical self-reflexivity far beyond that of any Japanese ruler before or after, perhaps it had something to do with the calculated role-playing he had engaged in throughout his career.[42]

Given the level of Hideyoshi's histrionics, which enabled him to cross class boundaries and attain the highest ranks and

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asked about this, they told me that I was to be the ruler of all that lies between east and west." See Michael Cooper (1965), 111. On the politics of "Heaven's Mandate," see George Elison (1988), 5-6.

41 Friedrich Nietzsche, aph. 361.

42 As Elison remarks: "Theatricality marked his person--perhaps justly so, for his career was dramatic." See Elison (1981), 241.

titles imaginable, it is certainly ironic that he chose towards the end of his life to prohibit others from making similar histrionic leaps across social divisions. Hideyoshi the actor, who played the role of cultured military aristocrat so well that he eventually became one, refused to allow others to change their social standing. Farmers were not allowed to be anything else but farmers, warriors nothing else but warriors. Soon after Hideyoshi's death, such measures of class segregation would be applied to the world of noh acting as well: in its attempt to standardize the shogunate's official ceremonial music and entertainment, the Tokugawa government expressly prohibited the interclass mixing of aristocrats, warriors, priests, and townspeople that had come to characterize the performance of amateur noh, or *tesarugaku*.[43] Amateurs were now forbidden to play the role of actors. In turn, professional actors were also forbidden to take up the military arts, as so many had done during the Azuchi-Momoyama period when a close association existed between the Konparu school of noh and the Yagyū school of martial arts. Such official admonitions may not have been followed in every case, but the very fact that they were issued correlates with the increasing ideological stratification of Tokugawa society.

Hideyoshi's theatrical self-glorification was obviously political propaganda of the most ambitious sort, but what makes the Taikō noh more interesting than merely propagandistic exercises in self-aggrandizement is that in drawing attention to the fact that the hegemon was actually an actor, Hideyoshi's performances also seemed to disclose the very mechanisms of self-fabrication and image-making upon which they relied.

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[43] See Raz, 129. Cf. Conrad Totman on "the mingling of elite and commoner culture" in Momoyama Japan: 88.

Yoshino Mōde and *Kōya sankei* brought Hideyoshi's pilgrimages to Yoshino and Kōya literally onto the noh stage, and thereby set in relief the theatricality of such pilgrimages. Likewise, *Shibata, Hōjō,* and *Akechi uchi* restaged Hideyoshi's military conquests over Shibata Katsuie, Hōjō Ujimasa, and Akechi Mitsuhide, respectively, drawing our attention to the mechanisms of theatricalization that enframed military leadership in the Sengoku theaters of war. By disclosing the self-reflexive staging of Hideyoshi's political power, both on stage and off, the Taikō noh unmasked the theatricality of politics operative in the Momoyama era.

Halfway around the world, in the theater of Elizabethan England, similar engagements with the theatricality of power were also being performed around the end of the sixteenth century in the plays of William Shakespeare. In Shakespeare's historical plays, such as *Richard II, Henry IV,* and *Henry V,* the complex interrelations between politics and theatrical forms of visibility are brought to the fore: "O for a muse of fire, that would ascend/The brightest heaven of invention,/A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,/And monarchs to behold the swelling scene," proclaims the chorus in the prologue to *Henry V.*[44] Such a theatricalization of politics was not merely the fanciful invention of disempowered playwrights dreaming about the privileges of an Actor-King, but seems to have been part and parcel of the sovereign's own self-conception. Before a delegation of Lords and Commons in 1586, Queen Elizabeth I remarked: "We princes are set on stages in the sight and view of all the world."[45] Numerous Elizabethan

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[44] *Henry V* Prologue 1-4; also cf. 1.2.105-10.

[45] Quoted in Christopher Pye, 43. For an interesting discussion of the theatricality of royal progresses by the British monarchy, see

playwrights explored the theatricality of politics and the politics of theatricality, but for all her pageantry and histrionics, not even Elizabeth ever literally took the stage as an actor playing the role of herself in a drama about herself. The Taikō noh plays written for Hideyoshi are, so far as I am aware, unique in the history of world drama by virtue of the unprecedented role played by Hideyoshi in his own self-staging, thus blurring the boundaries between theatricality and politics to a degree unimaginable even on the Shakespearean stage.

One question that must be posed is whether, in so explicitly drawing attention to the theatrical mechanisms upon which his production of symbolic capital was based, Hideyoshi did not effectively delegitimize the cultural authority and prestige he worked so hard to foster? In other words, if Pierre Bourdieu is correct in arguing that the arbitrary constructedness of symbolic capital[46] must be "misrecognized "in order for it to be effective and received as legitimate, then how effective was Hideyoshi's self-staging in accruing symbolic capital? Did any spectators,

David Cannadine.

[46] Here I am following the usage of Pierre Bourdieu, who employs the term "symbolic capital" to refer to "the idea that struggles for recognition are a fundamental dimension of social life and that what is at stake in them is the accumulation of a particular form of capital, honour in the sense of reputation and prestige, and that there is, therefore, a specific logic behind the accumulation of symbolic capital, as capital founded on cognition [*connaissance*] and recognition [*reconnaissance*]." See Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 22; cf. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 112-21. Symbolic capital, as Bourdieu conceives it, is relatively unstable, difficult to transmit, obectify, or quantify, and not easily convertible (see Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 93). Moreover, the specific efficacy of symbolic capital works only when "it is *misrecognized* in its arbitrary [and contingent] truth as capital and *recognized* as legitimate"(Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 111-12).

upon witnessing Hideyoshi's unabashed self-glorification, respond to it as if it were a parody of self-legitimation? Given Hideyoshi's ruthless execution of his son Toyotomi Hidetsugu (豊臣秀次, 1568-1595), the tea master Sen no Rikyū (千利休, 1522-1591), and others, who in the audience would have dared to laugh at such an unwitting self-parody?[47] Although contemporaneous accounts seem to indicate that Hideyoshi's audience responded positively to his theatrical performances, Hideyoshi's employment of special court critics to praise his accomplishments after every performance make it difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish the genuine responses of Hideyoshi's audience from the strategic responses designed to please "the Bountiful Minister."[48] But if the caustic remarks of Kōfukuji monk Tamon'in Eishun 多聞院英俊 in *Tamon'in nikki* 多聞院日記 are at all representative, not everyone approved of Hideyoshi's unabashed self-promotion and spectacles of self-aggrandizement. Tamon'in Eishun criticizes Hideyoshi's boundless self-glorification as an example of "*bushi* madness" (*bukegurui* 武家狂い) that was "unheard of in previous ages."[49] The fact that Hideyoshi's spectacle of authority and prestige was largely fabricated by means of various genealogical and theatrical manipulations did not escape the notice of the most discerning of Hideyoshi's contemporaries, even if it was impossible for them to raise such objections in public.

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47 According to a contemporaneous account by Pedro Bautista Blanquez, "It is said that people only dare tell him [Hideyoshi] what he wants to hear." See Cooper (1965), 112.

48 On audience response, see Boscaro, 67; *Tokiyoshikyō ki*, Naikaku Bunko ms. *washo* 35402/72 (6), box no. 159-211; entries for Bunroku 2/10/5-7, cited in Elison (1981), 242.

49 *Tamon'in nikki*, 3, 431, quoted in Elison (1981), 229.

Hideyoshi, the ultimate political impresario, sought to turn himself into myth. Indeed, this seems to have been his purpose from early on. In 1586, during a conversation with Portuguese Jesuit Luis Frois, Hideyoshi remarked that, having already subjugated all of Japan, he was less interested in acquiring additional kingdoms than he was in "immortalizing himself with the name and fame of his power."[50] Hideyoshi's wish was nothing less than that his "name be known throughout the three countries [of Japan, China, and India],"[51] as he asserted in a message to the Korean king in 1590. By bringing the ruler literally onto the stage, the plays written for Hideyoshi not only raised self-aggrandizement to an art form but also transformed noh drama during the Momoyama era into an explicitly political spectacle, with special performances by Hideyoshi playing the role of himself in front of foreign diplomats,[52] powerful *daimyō*, the imperial family, and high-ranking court aristocrats, whose very attendance served to legitimize such aristocratic myth-making. Subsequent rulers such as Tokugawa Ieyasu (徳川家康, 1542-1616) tried to emulate Hideyoshi's theatrical accomplishments by performing in more traditional noh plays, but no one ever equalled Hideyoshi's megalomaniacal fabrication and celebration of himself on the noh stage.

The Promise of New Historicism

Although the Hideyoshi plays obviously lend themselves

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50 Quoted in Murdoch, 305.

51 Quoted in Berry, 208.

52 In a letter dated Bunroku 2/5/27, Hideyoshi relates to his wife his interest in performing noh for the Ming envoys. See Boscaro, 57.

to New Historicist analysis, the ruler himself does not necessarily have to step on stage in order to make New Historicist strategies worthwhile for the study of noh. I do not assume that every noh play lends itself to a New Historicist reading, nor do I possess a snappy formula for how to New Historicize every play in the repertoire, but I do have some ideas about the uses and disadvantages of New Historicism for the life of noh scholarship. In this final section, I outline the theoretical positions and strategies presupposed by New Historicist interventions.[53]

New Historicist readings of noh drama attempt to ferret out the power relations and tensions at play between different forms of theatricality and their institutions of support. New Historicism undertakes to break the study of noh drama out of the prison house of aesthetic autonomy, which ignores the social, political, and economic contingencies surrounding its production, performance, and reception. A New Historicist approach to noh would not cast a contemptuous glance on more traditional approaches so much as it would set out to analyze critically the complex linkages and interchanges between different discursive zones without privileging one zone over the other, or, alternatively, it would attempt to unpack the power plays and techniques involved when one of those discursive zones is privileged over another by particular performers, patrons, audiences, or scholars.[54]

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[53] For representative samples of New Historicist readings, see the essays collected in Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *Representing the English Renaissance*; H. Aram Veeser (1989); and H. Aram Veeser (1994).

[54] Of course, it goes without saying that so much invaluable work has been done on the poetic (Itō, Goff), stylistic (Yokomichi, Kitagawa, Hare), performative (Yokomichi, Brazell, Bethe), aesthetic (Omote, Katō, Takemoto, Thornhill), biographical (Kobayashi, Omote, Dōmoto, Nishino), and historical (Nose, Gotō, Omote, Amano) aspects

Rather than confining one to a hermetically sealed internal reading of the dramatic text, New Historicism opens the dramatic text to extra-dramatic linkages, whether intertextual, institutional, or merely circumstantial. New Historicism is not concerned with the "truth" or "meaning" of a sociocultural artifact, but rather with the strategic force-values or effects of power produced by a particular sociocultural artifact as it is contingently traversed by the discourses, institutions, and practices of a certain discourse network. "Discourse network"[55] is being deployed here as a shorthand abbreviation for the historically specific, differential web of power relations linking sociocultural, economicopolitical, and onto-epistemological codes, discourses, and institutions, along with their associated procedures, rituals, and practices. Although few noh plays lend themselves to an explicitly political treatment--"political" understood in this instance in the restricted sense of relating to affairs of government--the "politics" of noh begins to make more sense once one conceives of the "political" in a more generalized sense to refer to the power relations and effects associated with figurations of authority, gender, subjectivity, naming, patronage, etc.

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of noh, that it would be foolhardy to ignore such scholarly riches, no matter how traditional the approach. New Historicist readers of noh necessarily stand on the shoulders of more traditional scholars, even while questioning the discursive boundaries of such scholarship.

[55] "Discourse networks" is an English translation of Friedrich Kittler's "*Aufschreibesysteme*": a reticulated web of discursive systems and technologies of notation and inscription, which "allow a given culture to select, store, and process relevant data." See Friedrich A. Kittler, 369. Cf. Foucault's usage of "*dispositif*": a historically specific apparatus, arrangement, or system of institutions, discourses, and practices (including instruments, procedures, techniques, mechanisms, strategies, tactics, exercises, and modalities). See Gilles Deleuze, 159-68.

In addition to analyzing the contingencies inscribing the development and mutation of sociocultural artifacts within a certain discourse network, New Historicism also examines the mechanisms of legitimation and naturalization used to efface such contingencies. By historicizing sociocultural artifacts, New Historicism attempts to de-naturalize and de-essentialize the grip of discursively constructed "necessities," bringing into focus the contingencies of "necessity" and the constructedness of sociocultural authority.

In an effort to avoid reducing the interrelations between sociocultural artifacts and their discourse networks to a unidirectional cause-effect relationship with sociocultural artifacts in the subordinate position, New Historicism gives attention to the multidirectional and mutually constitutive exchanges and "refashionings" structuring their relations. To ignore this constitutive reciprocity by reducing the sociocultural artifact to a mere product of historical influence or the ideological reflection of economic infrastructure is to efface the active, constructive force of the sociocultural artifact. New Historicism endeavors to situate sociocultural artifacts within their historical matrices without effacing their potential for artifice or reducing them to a passive mimetic or allegorical reflection of such totalizing, universalist hypostatizations as "Reality," "History," "Society," "Culture," or "Man." Even when New Historicism stresses the importance of "power" and "discourse," it attempts to avoid the vacuity of Power and Discourse by investigating the particular micropolitical mechanisms and strategies, the meticulous rituals and infinitesimal techniques, operating in a historically specific field of shifting discourse-power relations.

Though New Historicism neither erects metaphysical monoliths nor makes any pretense of empathetically recovering

(or reliving) the full plenitude and presence of some self-evident "authentic" past, it does, nevertheless, presume to map out the contingent relations and linkages between sociocultural artifacts and their discourse networks, which have survived in the form of documentary and institutional traces. Perhaps the most difficult question for any New Historicist reader of noh has to do with the historiographical status of such "linkages" and "traces."

In the case of Hideyoshi and his Taikō noh, the linkages between theatricality and politics seem relatively well-defined, but one will look in vain for official policy decrees issued by the Hideyoshi regime that explicitly disclose the political strategies and objectives of Hideyoshi's forays into the world of noh. Indeed, all the archival research in the world will not make up for the fact that what a typical New Historicist reader regards as "evidence" is rarely unambiguous. What makes New Historicist approaches to literature so challenging is that linkages between the cultural, the political, and the historical are rarely, if ever, straightforward.

Given the evidentiary indeterminacy of New Historicist linkages, one might well ask whether New Historicism is not an "unacknowledged branch of fiction"[56]? To this I would respond that New Historicist readings are neither more nor less prone to the writing of "academic fiction" than other literary critical approaches. Indeed, a Foucauldian cynic might respond that all academic writing is "an unacknowledged branch of fiction" to the extent that interpretive links are always in some sense "fictioned," to borrow a neologism from Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe.[57] Or perhaps more to the point, I would suggest that

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[56] Personal communication from Royall Tyler, October 4, 1995.

[57] With a nod to its Latin etymology in the verb "*fingere*" (to

even if New Historicism's questioning of the academic boundaries partitioning the study of culture, politics, and history into separate compartments is itself a fiction, then New Historicist discourse should at least be viewed as a counter-fiction to the prevailing fiction of aesthetic autonomy to which many readers of noh drama continue to subscribe.

New Historicism may go beyond the reductiveness of linear, teleological, and meta-narratival explanations, but it cannot go beyond the imposition of power enacted by its own contingent descriptions, which occupy the status of interpretive interventions and selective engagements: i.e., power-maneuvers operating within a specific discourse network, contingently performing the past rather than actually restoring it. This is not to authorize the abuse of the text, or the fabrication of evidence, it is merely to own up to the interpretive force enacted by every act of reading in the process of engaging a text. But just because New Historicist analysis acknowledges its status as a form of power/knowledge, does not mean that its analyses are uncritical or uninformed. On the contrary, such performative self-reflexivity effectively positions New Historicist analysis in a post-hermeneutic critical space, since it does not seek a "true" or "deep" meaning hidden within, behind, or below the text. Instead of appealing to such metaphysical supports, New Historicism demonstrates its efficacy, in its meticulous mapping of the power relations and materialities that traverse both sociocultural artifacts and discourse networks, by rendering visible contingent events which have been concealed by various discursive mechanisms, strategies, and techniques of power.

The New Historicist venture requires both the courage

shape, fashion, form, represent, conceive, invent). See Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, 218.

and the competency to venture across disciplinary boundaries in search of linkages that are at best oblique and refracted--not the "smoking gun" that would provide indisputable support for New Historicist claims. But the fact that one rarely finds a "smoking gun" to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that cultural artifacts inscribe and are inscribed by the historically specific power relations across which they circulate does not mean that the New Historicist project is doomed from the start. Indeed, I would argue that it is both the promise and the challenge of New Historicism to explore what Derrida has described as "the indecision as to the limit" between literature and its other.[58] It is not enough for New Historicism merely to engage in "interdisciplinary" gestures: in order for it to live up to its promise, the New Historicist project must also investigate how contextual limits, borders, and frames are constituted, traversed, resisted, and displaced.

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[58] Jacques Derrida (1995), 372. On the problem of "context," see Derrida (1982), 307-30; and Derrida (1990), 92-3.

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