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*Performing Kamishibai: An Emerging New Literacy for a Global Audience* by Tara M. McGowan (review)

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efficacy of theatre and the differences between writing and style as they are made manifest in writing and directing. For Abe, “the age speaks thought people’s hearts and mouths. Artists just happen to be the receiver and transmitter” (p. 166). Anyone interested in Abe’s themes of alienation and urbanization (as seen, for example, in his 1966 play *Tomodachi* [Friends]) or in the questions of the *shōgekijō* movement about national identity and theatre will find this essay fascinating reading.

While all of these essays were compelling reading and a true addition to the Abe canon, one does wish that each one had a larger individual introduction. The essays translated here span 25 tumultuous years of Japanese history, covering the end of the Pacific War through Occupation, the post war boom, and the rise of 1960s activism. Moreover, these essays span a large amount of Abe’s professional career, from before he was a published author, through his successes as novelist and playwright, to the establishment of his own acting studio. Given the broad historical and personal time frames involved, a nine-page introduction and glossary of names in the back of the text do not give the reader enough background to appreciate the intersections of Abe’s intellectual discourse and the world he was writing about in these texts.

Nonetheless, these essays, especially for the individuals familiar with Abe’s work or with post-war Japanese theatre and literature, are an invaluable contribution to the scholarly canon. Calichman is to be commended for publishing these essays and allowing a new audience access to the philosophical, intellectual, and artistic accomplishments of one of Japan’s leading playwrights.

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**PERFORMING KAMISHIBAI: AN EMERGING NEW LITERACY FOR A GLOBAL AUDIENCE.** By Tara M. McGowan. New York: Routledge, 2015. 214 pp. Hardcover, \$175.00.

Written by Tara M. McGowan, *Performing Kamishibai: An Emerging New Literacy for a Global Audience* explores the potential of the Japanese performance tradition of *kamishibai* in an educational setting. The study analyzes McGowan’s experiences introducing *kamishibai* in two different classrooms; it also discusses its potential to upend traditional

educational hierarchies and to offer students a multimodal form of communication. *Performing Kamishibai* is the result of meticulous and dedicated research and analysis and gives a unique perspective on the opportunities *kamishibai* offers in an educational environment.

McGowan clarifies in her introduction that her book is not a study of *kamishibai* performance in Japan but rather the implementation of the art form in the classroom. Throughout the book, she discusses the dominance of text-based learning and writing in the American school system. Her main argument is that text-based work is only one mode of communication. *Kamishibai* offers students multiple modes with which to communicate: drawing, oral storytelling, writing, reading, and performance.

The book's first chapter features an introduction to *kamishibai*'s performance history. McGowan touches on several topics relevant to Japanese studies, including *kamishibai*'s roots as street performance and its history with propaganda, the military, and the government before, during, and after World War II. In the context of the entire work, this chapter is quite brief. Rather than launching into a detailed history lesson, McGowan chooses to focus on the performative aspects of the oral storytelling medium. She discusses several different regional performance traditions; she later ties these traditions with her students' performances. Surprisingly, the chapter does not include a detailed analysis of any one performance of *kamishibai* in Japan. Such a discussion could have provided a foundation with which to compare and contrast students' performances. However, McGowan restates her overall goal: "Rather than attempt to engage in the debates around what might constitute 'authentic' or traditional performance in Japan, I am much more interested in discovering what potential *kamishibai* may have as it moves into formal and informal contexts of learning worldwide" (p. 25). Her focus is on the classroom, and it is there where she turns her analytical lens on the students' processes and performances.

The strongest and most compelling element of McGowan's work is her analysis of how specific students respond to the multimodal opportunities provided by *kamishibai*. She describes her experiences bringing the project into two very different classrooms. She dedicates several chapters to each classroom experience, first introducing the existing educational environment and then discussing the process of the *kamishibai* project. The accounts of the different and varied reactions from the teachers, administrators, and staff involved is a fascinating study in classroom rigidity and fluidity. While the primary focus of the overall study is on the students, the responses from the authority figures involved shed light on many of the inherent power structures and hierarchies in the American school system.

McGowan details the different stages of each project, as she first introduces *kamishibai* to the students and then collaborates with them to develop their own stories and performances. She provides multiple case studies focusing on specific students, tracking the challenges and successes each face throughout the process. She focuses on both struggling and thriving students (especially in writing curricula) and describes how each handles the transition to a new form of expression and communication.

One of her key conclusions reveals that *kamishibai* embraces the “emerging” qualities of live performance. In a traditional text-based literacy program, there is a drive towards a final product. This product, once revised and edited, is seen as concrete once it reaches the final draft. McGowan argues that *kamishibai* stories constantly evolve and develop over the course of multiple performances. She includes comparisons between the students’ performances at different points throughout the process, and how many of the students incorporate live feedback from their audiences into their next performances. The students gain confidence over time, and their interactions with audiences become bolder and more creative. Having the opportunity to perform in front of multiple audiences not only gives the students a unique outlet for self-expression, it also provides a chance for artistic voices to grow and evolve.

The case studies focusing on students who have been labeled with learning difficulties in the traditional school system are particularly inspiring. McGowan reveals how these students often flourish when introduced to the new forms of communication provided by *kamishibai*. Several of the students discuss how drawing is often relegated to nonwork times of the school day and is often discouraged even during free time. The project elevated the status of drawing in the classroom; that shift opened pathways for students who learn and create visually. The examples of these students speak to the change in educational discourse and study towards individualized learning: not every student learns in the same way. McGowan’s study supports this concept, and demonstrates how *kamishibai* provides multiple pathways for learning in the classroom.

Some of the most insightful sections of the study feature interviews with students and teachers after *kamishibai* performances. While several initially viewed the project as daunting, foreign, and disconnected from the rest of the curriculum, the process allowed the students to think and express themselves in truly unique ways. Some of the most shy and reclusive students became incredibly inspired by the project and engaged with their audiences through oral storytelling techniques. McGowan’s commitment to offering different modes of

expression clearly affected several of these students' lives in impactful ways, and reading about those personal transformations layers *Performing Kamishibai* with a meaningful human element.

Though its usefulness for Asian theatre scholars may be somewhat limited, *Performing Kamishibai* is a revealing and thought-provoking work for those working in education. Though the study involved students in elementary schools, the potential opportunities provided by *kamishibai* could benefit students at all educational levels. McGowan's writing is clear, to the point, and readable, and the work's structure reveals how much change occurred due to the introduction of *kamishibai* into these classrooms. Though it confronts and dialogues with several challenges and issues in the current educational system, it is also a work full of hope and positive change.

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## Korea

**SALPURI-CHUM, A KOREAN DANCE FOR EXPELLING EVIL SPIRITS: A PSYCHOANALYTIC INTERPRETATION OF ITS ARTISTIC CHARACTERISTICS.** By Eun-Joo Lee and Yong-Shin Kim. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth, UK: Hamilton Books, 2017. 94 pp. 26 B/W photographs. Paperback, \$26.99 (£17.95); e-book \$25.50 (£16.95).

This slim volume is densely packed with information and analysis concerning *Salpuri-Chum*, a secular entertainment derived from a traditional shamanic ritual. The authors set out to discuss the nature of the dance form (its history, characteristics, and various styles) as well as its meaning and significance in relation to the "emotional dynamics of the Korean people" (p. 11), using Freudian psychoanalytic theory as an interpretive tool. Although its focus is clearly rather specialized, the book appears to be aimed at a more-or-less general audience, inviting the reader into the world of *Salpuri-Chum* and the spiritual and psychological traits of the Korean people. It should be of particular interest to Korean performance specialists and dance scholars.