

Kawamoto's *Dojoji Temple*: Puppetry, Gesture and Myth

Kawamoto del *Templo Dojoji*: Títeres, Gesto y Mito

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Abstract

Dojoji Temple (*Dōjōji*, 1976) is a short puppet animation directed by Kihachirō Kawamoto. Influenced by *Bunraku* (Japanese puppet plays), *emaki* (painted scroll), Noh theatre and Japanese myth, *Dojoji Temple* tells of a woman's unrequited love for a young priest. Heartbroken, she then transforms into a sea serpent and goes after the priest for revenge. While Kawamoto's animation is rich with Japanese aesthetics and tragedy, his animation is peopled by puppets who do not speak. Limited and restrained though the puppets may be, their animated gestures speak volumes of powerful emotions. For our article, we will select several scenes from the animation, and interpret their actions so that we can further understand the mythical world of *Dojoji Temple* and the essential *being* of puppetry. Our gesture analysis will take into account cinematographic compositions, sound and bodily attires, among other elements.

Keywords: Kihachirō Kawamoto, puppet animation, gesture aesthetics, myth.

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Resumen

Dojoji Templo (*Dōjōji*, 1976) es una animación de marionetas corto dirigido por Kihachirō Kawamoto. Influenciado por *Bunraku* (marionetas japonés juega), *emaki* (scroll pintado), teatro Noh y el mito japonés, *Templo Dojoji* habla de un amor no correspondido de una mujer por un joven sacerdote. Con el corazón roto, que luego se transforma en una serpiente de mar y va tras el sacerdote de venganza. Mientras que la animación de Kawamoto es rica con la estética y la tragedia de Japón, su animación está poblada por marionetas que no hablan. Limitada y contenida, aunque los títeres pueden ser, sus gestos animados dicen mucho de las emociones fuertes. Para nuestro artículo, vamos a seleccionar varias escenas de la animación, e interpretar sus acciones para que podamos entender mejor el mundo mítico de *Templo Dojoji* y el ser esencial de los títeres. Nuestro análisis gesto tendrá en cuenta composiciones cinematográficas, sonido y trajes corporales, entre otros elementos.

Palabras clave: Kihachirō Kawamoto, animación de marionetas, la estética del gesto, el mito.

Summary: 1. Preface, 2. Puppet and Gesture: Definition and Appreciation, 3. Analysis of Gesture in *Dōjōji Temple*, 4. Summary. References.

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1. Preface

The form of Japanese animation today is very much influenced by Japanese folklore and ancient painted scrolls. Brigitte Koyama-Richard in her book *Japanese Animation: From Painted Scrolls to Pokémon* (2010) argues that today's popular anime such as *Pokémon*, Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*, Akira Toriyama's *Dragon Ball*, Masashi Kishimoto's *Naruto* and many others are influenced by painted scrolls like *The Night Parade of One Hundred Demons* (*Hyakki Yagyō emaki*, late Edo period, 1800-1867). Clearly in the painted scroll (Fig. 1) we can see various types of supernatural beings and monsters (or *yokai* in Japanese) with humanoid bodies and ragged limbs. Their bodies are not facing directly toward the audience but are depicted moving to the left and right. These *yokai* look joyful, as if finding happiness in their simple movement. The ways they seem to interact with each other suggest a classical mode of sequential arts that influenced Japanese history of storytelling in manga and anime.



Figure 1. A part of *Hyakki Yagyō emaki*, late Edo period. 38.9 x 1,109 xm. Kumon Institute of Education (image taken from <http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/百鬼夜行絵巻>).

The richness of Japanese art and folklore has become a deep mine for many past and modern artists to tap into, to excavate the wealth of artistic resources and cultural artifacts. One such artist is Kihachirō Kawamoto (1925-2010), a Japanese animator who was both influenced by Japanese medieval arts and Czech stop-motion techniques. Motivated by the art of Bunraku, *Ningyō jōruri*, painted scroll, Nō and Kabuki theatre, he produced a wealth of animated projects that include *The Demon* (*Oni*, 1972, 8 min), *A Poet's Life* (*Shijin no Shōgai*, 1974, 19 min), *House of Flame* (*Kataku*, 1979, 19 min), *To Shoot without Shooting* (*Fusha no Sha*, 1988, 25 min), among others. While he produced feature films like *The Book of the Dead* (*Shisha no Sho*, 2005, 70 min), it is in the form of short animations that we can see the strength of his artistic vision. Earlier in his life, Kawamoto studied architecture and then spent

four years working for Toho Studios, which is renowned for the *kaiju* (monster) genre, such as Godzilla. His interest in the medium of animation thrust him to Czechoslovakia where he explored stop-motion methods under the mentor of Jiří Trnka (renowned director of *Ruka*, 1965). Czech, like Japan, has a strong tradition of puppet theatre and more so than Japan, its puppet animation studios. Other than the legendary Trnka, there are other important Czech filmmakers such as Jirí Barta, Jan Svankmajer, Karel Zeman and Břetislav Pojar. Kawamoto in an interview says: “The reason why I was so into Trnka’s animation was that he was able to tell a story in a poetic style through the use of puppets” (Sharp, 2004). As fans of puppet animations, we clearly understand the power puppets have in holding our attention to the screen, particularly when they move; as if alive, to connect us to its story and grief. The limitation of a puppet’s movement is not its weakness; it is its own forte and enchantment.

This essay comes to fore as a small contribution to the growth of the aesthetic appreciation of Kawamoto’s puppet animation. Specifically, we will focus on the forms of gesture that are apparent in his puppets under the context of cinematography and narrativity. To do this, we have selected *Dōjōji Temple* (1976) as a case for our descriptive and interpretive demonstration. *Dōjōji Temple*, which runs at 18 min 50 seconds, takes its tale from the Heian period (c. 794-1185). Kawamoto was acutely influenced by a painted version, called *Dōjōji engi emaki*, which currently resides in Dōjōji Temple, Wakayama Prefecture, Japan, that dates back to the Muromachi period in the late fifteenth century (Koyama-Richard, 2010: 212). Please see Figure 5. In its essence, *Dōjōji Temple* is a tale of sorrow. Kawamoto’s *Dōjōji* narrates a young monk’s pilgrimage to Kumano Temple with an elder monk. They stop at an inn, and as the story would have it, a young woman there falls in love with the young monk. At night, she slips into his room, confesses her love and asks for them to be together. The monk rejects her. Exasperated by her insistence, he makes a promise: if she waits for him, he will return back to her from a distant mountain where he is travelling to. To this, a statue of Buddha is put in her safe keeping. The promise is a lie, of course. What he doesn’t realize yet is how intense her desire is to possess him, and how this turn of events will become a tragic downfall for both him and her. *Dōjōji* is one of Kawamoto’s critical successes. In 1976, he won the Émile the Renault Prize and the Audience Prize at Annecy. Kawamoto also won the Noburo Ofuji Award for innovation in animation at the Mainichi Film Awards (Hotes, 2011).

2. Puppet and gesture: Definition and appreciation

According to Marjorie Batchelder, the puppet “is an actor participating in some kind of theatrical performance” (1992, p. 22). Penny Francis defines puppetry as an act of “bringing to imagined life inert figures and forms (representational or abstract) for a ritual or theatrical purpose – for a performance” (2012, p. 5). Jane Marie Law, in the context of *ningyō* (dolls) tradition, sees the puppet as “an inanimate object moved by a human agent before an audience with the intention of communicating something through the process of representation” (1997, p. 32). The three definitions above create the impression of the performative aura that resonates in the crafting of puppetry. In performing movement, the puppet is brought to life. “Coming alive,” says Law,

“is the key analogical event giving these puppet rituals their force” (1997, p. 47). Kawamoto declares a distinction between dolls and puppets: “Dolls are children’s toys, or things you dress up and display. Puppets, or marionettes, are things that act. This is a crucial difference. There’s no such thing as doll animation” (Sharp, 2004).



Figure 2. Bunraku performance. Photography by author.

The makings of puppets are of themselves an intricate business. A seven-second sequence for animation can take up to a week and maybe more to film. Their body structures, heads and faces have to be designed properly so as to distinguish their appearances among other characters. A puppet has joints in each of its limbs, making it easier to move and detach. This is especially important in animated productions since most of the limbs – particularly the head – are removable at will. In high-end productions like Henry Selick’s *Coraline* (2009), the production of puppets or marionettes has become such a meticulous affair that important characters will usually have various, different heads for different situations. The lead character Jack in *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993) alone has 400 different removable heads! (Rauf & Vescia, 2008, p. 14). One face to smile, one face to say ‘aa,’ one to frown, the other to sulk, one to say “ooh” and hundreds of different expressions for different occasions. This is different in Kawamoto’s puppet animated films like *Dōjōji Temple* since:

1. The puppet- figure never speaks. There are only subtitles and voice-over narration.

2. These mean that the facial expressions of the figures are very, very limited. The supporting cast only sport one-type of expression. Whatever is engraved onto the face stays permanently throughout the film.

A puppet’s face, while it resembles a real human’s expression, is only a reduced copy of human objects. Economically, the fabrication of ‘silent-faces’ can help to

lower production costs. But significantly, by making them silent, the being-ness – *the essence* – of impassiveness which puppetry radiates, creates a paradoxical resemblance and tension to our humanism; they can walk, dance and jump but cannot talk. It is as if their voices are chained to the body, creating an aura of pathos even before a film starts its course. This muted expression in Kawamoto's play has its own influence from Czech puppetry and most importantly, from the tradition of Japanese Bunraku (or 'puppet theatre'). *Ningyō jōruri* is another name for the art of puppet-making in Japan, which can be defined too as 'puppet recitation.' In Bunraku art, the puppeteers can be clearly seen on the stage albeit wearing black robes. The black clothes are part of a stage illusion to enhance even more the already colorful texture of *ningyō*. Sometimes, the puppeteers wear black hoods. Different schools have different way of fashioning hoods. Nearby a Bunraku performance, we can see a *samisen* (a person who plays a three-stringed musical instrument) and a chanter (the one who recites the character's piece).

Since the facial expressions in Kawamoto's marionettes remain the same, this entails that it is *within* the bodily gesture of the characters that we can find a path to understand their concealed emotions. It is on this that we will concentrate next. But what is gesture? Gesture is a bodily act of sending non-verbal messages. Gesture is a mute expression, an eloquent silence. Adam Kendon defines it as a "label of actions that have the features of manifest deliberate expressiveness" (2005, p. 15). Giovanni Bonifacio in *Of the Art of Signs* (1616) thinks that since "one knows the will of the master through the activities of the servants, so from bodily actions one can comprehend the inclinations of the soul, and from the acts, gestures and bearing of bodily members our internal feelings can be conjectured" (Kendon, 2005, p. 23). The body gestures, and in gesturing, sends forth ripples of information of its soul. It is up to us to open ourselves to the texture of gesture that we perceive across the screen.

Unlike the performance of Bunraku's *ningyō* with seen manipulators, Kawamoto's puppet is an animated entity without a nearby manipulator. Under modern contraption and recording processes, its manipulators have long gone from our sight, and what is left is a trace of their handiworks. Thus, the gesture of Kawamoto's puppets pulsates with a dynamic intensity that goes beyond a Bunraku's performance. Clearly the urgency of a 'live performance' is gone along with a visceral presence of *samisen* and the chanter, yet in the wake of their disappearance, the animation and its flat screen of representation makes us even closer to the gesture presented by the puppets. Without the ambiguity of space between the stages, the performers and spectator's seat, the world where the puppets exist becomes more 'believable' inside the thin, transparent, glowing screen. The screen has become our magic window that permits us into a world where puppets rule and move according to their strange and staggering rhythms. Let us take a closer inspection of the gestures made available to us by the characters in Kawamoto's tragic world.

3. Analysis of Gesture in *Dōjōji Temple*

After the young monk has left the maiden for the mountain, she waits for him patiently. She holds the Buddha statue that he has left her (as a token of his promise) with her always. She just can't wait for the both of them to be together again. Herein, in

Figure 3, we have arrived at this particular scene as she stares towards the mountain, far away. Upon chancing two passing men, she asks whether they have seen a monk in their wandering. We must understand first that the mountain in the first frame is nothing to her but a sign of where the monk resides. It is a peak where her love has gone to, and from where he will return. The last four frames of Figure 3 are the images taken of her gesture while inquiring for her monk. Four things must be noticed:

- 1 The asking for the monk.
2. The point of a finger as a location to where the monk would be; the far-away mountain.
3. As she looks down, this same hand that points, withdraws into her sleeve, and...
4. ...surreptitiously, is used to cover half her face. She is shy of making apparent her longing for the young monk to the outsiders. It is normal for a woman of this period to cover half of her face as a status of self-respect.



Figure 3. *Dōjōji Temple*. DVD image © Kimstim, Inc.

Alas, things do not abide well for her. Not only do the passersby make 'derisive remarks' on her stupidity (for falling for a monk), but one ridicules her passion as such. Notice how his face is designed in such a way that he looks like he is in a perpetual state of jeering. Yes, the passerby knows of the young monk, but he is not going to the mountain, but is somewhere nearby in the *opposite* direction of the

mountain. We ask the readers to take a look again at the gesture of the maiden: In Figure 3, she half-covers her face as if in embarrassment, but by now, Figure 4, she closes her face altogether. This same hand that motions towards the mountain is now being used to block her façade; hoping to shut down an emerging fear! Fear of what? Of being left alone. Of being deprived of the physical nearness to the one she loves. Inside, she is hurt. But there is more transformation to behold: In the last frame, she stares at the camera, her right hand drops lower, and we see her full face – through a sudden splash of light on her cheeks – in the shape of a different, darker reaction. Does her physical face actually *change*? Using a diverse function of gesticulations and contrivance, Kawamoto changes our readings through gradual alteration of our perceptual awareness of the image. There is a subtle drawing of ‘pointed eye-brow’ on her forehead that is not seen in Figure 3.



Figure 4. *Dōjōji Temple*. DVD image © Kimstim, Inc.

The light that suddenly falls on her face, which is let in by the lowering of her hand, indicates two different accents. First, it gives an impression as if a ‘new idea’ comes to her mind. This is like a sparkling bulb that suddenly appears out of nowhere on top of a cartoon that we see in a newspaper or elsewhere, implying an unexpected inspiration that is advantageous to the cartoon’s situation. The second impression is created by carefully placing a different angle of light on a character’s face, here different shadows can be shown with distinctive results. In the young woman’s face, a light is shone on her face in such a way that her eyes shine back with a darkening rage. It is a realization that she might have (or has) been betrayed.

So she runs away from the scene and tries to catch up with the young monk who has stolen her heart. In her rush, we see close-ups of her running legs. First, one foot loses a shoe. Next, her feet, battered by the earth, are smeared with blood. Not once does she seem to care. Her heart is not where her legs are. Her heart is where her destination lies. The legs are just... mere equipment for her to bear her body – *her heart* – near to her man. The pain of treachery that throbs within masks her to the

agony of her body just as it shelters her from the mockery of bystanders.

Figure 5 is akin to a calm sea before a wild storm. This is in contrast to the adrenalin-rushed scene of what happened before. The site is captured in a long shot, giving a better outline of the watercolored surroundings. In the quietness of a movement, a young monk scoops water into a bowl, and politely offers it to an elderly monk, whom we find seated under the shade of twigs, branches and leaves. In offering, the younger monk lowers his head respectfully, knees bended and settled to the ground in appeasement. His hat is somewhere on the ground, lying beside the monk, rendering his hatless head-bow a humble tint. It is not just water – sustenance! – he is offering, but his actual body and spirit to a cause bigger than both of them. This is the meaning of his courteous gesture: Readiness, Willingness, Sacrifice. The seated senior monk is there only as a *bearer* of the Temple the young monk dedicates his life to. In this moment of quietness, the image of the young woman whom he has made a promise to is far away from his mind. This is what his body gesture speaks of. Now, imagine if the maiden sees this event. Imagine her face. Thus, we have arrived at the final frame of Figure 5: An image of a scornful, young woman, for she has seen the young man's offering and comes to know its implication.

If in previous images we still see a shawl on her head (signifying that her dignity is still in place), now, the shawl is missing. In its place, her thick dark hair swells and trembles from the blows of the wind, and yes, from the wafts of her raging heart. She must think: What incredulity is this event that is transpiring in front of her? What happens to his Pledge? Japanese Bunraku is an art of grief. According to one of Japan's foremost theatre critics, Kawatake Toshio, we can find five patterns in a *jōruri* piece (1990, p. 132). This pattern was earlier articulated by Takemoto Gidayū (1651-1715) – the founder of *gidayū* music used in Bunraku – in the preface of *Jōkyō Yonen Gidayū Danmono-shu*. He argues that a *jōruri* piece should cover five situations: love, bloodshed, grief, travel passage, and dialogue. Notice how 'grief' is situated in the middle, as if it is the peak of a mountain from which the other 'four-signs' have to climb to. This five-section pattern can clearly be seen in the narrative structure of Kawamoto's *Dōjōji*. A woman finds love, travels to her love but finds herself tricked and rejected. In grief, she transforms into a serpent, tracks and kills her man, and finally finds peace by drowning herself, after changing back to her human self, in a river. Please see Figure 6 for a visual depiction of the serpent. Rather than ensemble another of Kawamoto's images, perhaps it would be good to see the actual painted scroll Kawamoto derived his ideas from.



Figure 5. *Dōjōji Temple*. DVD image © Kimstim, Inc.

The ‘dialogue’ in Gidayū’s configuration above means that every story has its own ending. Amidst the dialectic of pain, blood and sacrifice, things become well again. We need to understand that *someone* has to die so that the narrative can be stitched again from the rupture of agony and bloodshed. Thus, the woman-devil-serpent tracks down the monk and locates his smell inside a huge bell in a temple. She encircles the bell and engulfs it with flames from her mouth. The flames are the climax of her seething wrath. After the serpent goes away, feeling satisfied by a vengeance fulfilled (to die away silently), the monks in the temple rush out to help the young man trapped within. But what are left are charred remains of a sitting skeleton. The young monk whose gesture offers dedication to Buddha, is dead. The young woman, who sees his offering, too, is dead. These are the essential ‘dialogues’ which Gidayū requires as a sacrifice to entertain the spectator. Clearly the concept of ‘happy-ever-after’ is not reachable – not necessary, even – in Gidayū’s theatre. The entertainment of Bunraku is not about ‘true happiness’ but of reaching into the spectator’s well of emotions to bring forth one – sadism – in watching a play of ‘enlivened objects’ thrown into strands of despair.



Figure 6. A part of *Dōjō-ji engi emaki* (reading starts from right to left). Color and ink on paper. Muromachi period (image is taken from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dojoji_engi_emaki_-_p4.png).

The transformation of the young woman into a serpent is sudden at first, and secondly, perplexing. Where does she find the power to *will* the transformation? One is brought back to the idea of goddesses (or demons) who masquerade as humans and live among us. In Greek or Indian mythologies, we can find many examples of gods who become human either to test the human spirit or simply to taste the possibilities of being mortal. But there is more to Japanese mythic literature, and as Joseph M. Kitagawa explains it, the conception of man and his universe works like a ‘unitary meaning structure,’ a kind of ‘seamlessness.’ According to Kitagawa: “Everybody and everything in the early Japanese monistic universe, including physical elements such as fire, water, wood and stone, as well as animals and celestial bodies, were believed to be endowed with *kami* nature ” (cited in Law, 1997, p. 15). *Kami* is a Japanese term which refers to ‘sacredness’ or ‘spirit.’ In Malay language, ‘*kami*’ refers to ‘we’ or ‘us.’ The seamlessness in Japanese myths is symbolized in the idea of spiritual connectedness between man and his surroundings, to such an extent that man can tap into this connectedness since the cosmos is already inside his being. When the young woman offers herself to the monk, what she is offering is more than her physical body or emotional needs, but to be cosmically together, united as one. The deception and rejection of her pledge is akin to a rejection of the shared cosmos. Desire, anger, hurt and regret accumulate together in her being, until her body becomes a sound to call forth *kami* to come through and enact her vengeance! The question is not about her ability to metamorphose into a serpent, but that the serpent already resides in the beingness of Kawamoto’s puppetry, waiting for a call to reign over the form. The British playwright E. Gordon Craig, in an essay ‘*The Actor and the Ubermarionette*,’ declares:

But let me tell them a few things about these Puppets. Let me repeat again that they are the descendants of a great and noble family of Images, Images which were made in the likeness of God; and that many centuries ago these figures had a rhythmical movement and not a jerky one; had no need for wires to support them, nor did they speak through the nose of the hidden manipulator (cited in Law, 1997, p. 20).

If we are to take Craig's words seriously, there seems to be a "noble family of Images" in the history of myth, the kind where puppets sit high on its altar. After many centuries, puppets no longer reside there – they have lost their "likeness of God." What we have as puppets nowadays are mere downgraded replicas of the Perfect Beings. Ōe no Masafusa (1041-1111) thinks that puppets, which he refers to as *kugutsu*, "are one of the things under heaven" (Law, 1997, p. 96)¹. This can only mean that puppets were earlier wrought in heaven, and fell down to earth. They have lost their sacredness. How does this speak of puppet animation? Would it be safe to say that as animation, puppets regain their vital movement, since they now look like they move without anyone visible controlling them? Or has the relationship between animators and puppetry reduced their likeness to something baser, as *mere* emotions built as virtual objects? "Puppets," Law says, "represent an awareness of the relationship between the material and spiritual realms and are able to become vessels for visiting spiritual force" (1997, p. 23). It is possible to see puppet animation not only as a vessel for visiting spirits or cosmic seamlessness, but as both receptacle and spectacle for human discourse, an urgent need to represent ourselves as discourse with our hidden essence – a gratitude to God for our likeness in His image.

In Bunraku, a chanter is a very important person to bring wooden figures to life, which is why he sits on the stage, sharing an elevated position with the puppets. Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1725), a leading Japanese playwright, in observing the problem of bringing life to puppets, reflects: "the author must impart to lifeless wooden puppets a variety of emotions, and attempt in this way to capture the interest of the audience" (Gerstle, 2001, p. 25). So when a chanter pitches his voice high or sobs in exaggeration, what he wants to create is a dramatic texture for a puppet's emotion. The music and the sound of chanting bring a certain 'light' from the cold façade of the performed dolls. The sound in Kawamoto's animated films is just as important as a Bunraku's performance. In puppet animation, the samisen and the chanter are there, but are set as a background from where the puppet's gestures are on display; they are not seen. Chikamatsu's idea bears a Japanese term, *jō*, meaning 'feeling' or 'passion' (Gerstle, 2001, p. 26). By this, the *jō* submits a place for the puppets to be seen in the light of human's subjectivity – obsessions and irrationality. Thus, in placing sadness in the form of wooden figures of dolls, words are expressed in the high notes of the music, so as to reverberate to our heart. This reverberation is very important since it helps to create and temper the tonality of our act of perceiving. According to Chikamatsu: "Art is something which lies in the slender margin between the real and the unreal. (...) It is unreal, and yet it is not unreal; it is real, and yet it is not real. Entertainment (*nagusami*) lies between the two" (Gerstle, 2001, p. 26).

In the aesthetics of Kawamoto's animation, we can see the vague lines between real and unreal in the movement and desire of the puppets. We know that the puppets are tangible, their humanistic tendencies are not real, and yet through their design – film shots, clothes and architectural settings – and their bodily gesture, the puppets come to reside as real. It is not just the animator (who works unseen, behind a past background) that works hard to create the life-ness of the puppets; it is us, the viewers, who permeate these wooden figures with life. In experiencing their irrationality and grief, they speak too of our own humanity. Our sight *fills up* the configuration of the

puppets, and thus embodies the figures so as to become our extension in understanding the world and ground where they live in.

4. Summary

Puppet animation promotes our perception of a world being brought to life in our imagination. Around the 19th century, Louis Duranty says, “what the puppets do entirely dominates what they say” (Tillis, 1992, p. 24). The puppets’ movement creates a voice into a discourse between us and the puppets. The better we observe their gesture, the better we will understand our own strange body. If our inner conscious is revealed through our bodily movements then surely the movements of the puppets can reveal to us their concealed desire; which is also our innermost desire. Clearly not all puppets are able to posit their ‘inner life,’ but in the hands of a great aesthete like Kawamoto, the workings of the body can stage nuances that go beyond what their artificial gesture seems to display. Richness in bodily movement is not only in the domain of real human activity that we see everyday; we can see its richness just as well in painting, film, animation, sculpture or even architecture. There is just something about the way we perceive an object of art that transforms its texture just as much as it transforms our way of looking. Puppets, which are already imbued with the sense of cosmic ‘sacredness’ – gods and demons, trees and rivers – transform our way of looking right into our soul. The wooden puppets which are crafted in a studio are already ‘alive’ through their imitative guise of human resemblance but more so, when they are animated. Here, the puppet – in its alive-ness – brings its body to touch the objects around it and create relations, rapports, until the world where it moves is transformed to its concerns and yearnings. If it suddenly transforms into a different guise, a monster – a *yokai* – it is *only* its way of receiving a call brought forth from the internal logic of its world, and to that extent, of our material world. Its life, in a materialist relationship between its world and ours, we must understand, borrows its delay from our gaze. Perhaps, this ‘delay’ must be the truest form of ‘travel passage’ which Chikamatsu speaks of above.

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Notes

1. According to Jane Marie Law, there are two terms connected to *kugutsu*. The first is puppet while the later, as the puppeteer (which is also called as *kugutsu-mawashi*). See Law (1997, p. 96).