The Expressive Dimensions of Folk Performing Arts: A Gebserian Approach to *Kagura*

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Abstract: *Kagura* is one of the oldest forms of Shinto folk performing arts in Japan. Performed as part of local religious festivals, it is considered to be a means of communicating with *kami* (deities). The existing studies tend to describe *kagura* as "a text in motion" and to explain it as a functional and purposive behavior, but without exploring the very act of "expressing." In order to explore the expressive dimensions of *kagura*, I employ a neo-Kantian Gebserian approach that focuses on multidimensional modes of expression and seek to offer the interpretive "contexts" of the very act of expressing *kami* (*kagura*), contexts of awareness that sustain and support the divine *kagura* world. The purpose of this article is to reveal *kagura* in the "deficient mode" insofar as its manifestations will have to be through another mode of awareness. Accordingly, the present article intends to challenge the singular mode of expression, which reduces *kagura* to a mere sign system. Revealing what sustains this reduction would open a means of "appreciating" the multiple modes of expression.

Keywords: Shinto; *kagura*; folk performing arts; Gebserian approach; space and time

1. Introduction

Japan is often viewed as a nonreligious country. This is reasonable to some extent because most Japanese tend to deny belief in a particular religious doctrine when they are asked (Ama, 2005; Kasulis, 2004). Paradoxically, many Japanese regularly engage in Shinto activities and rituals. An explanation of this paradox is that the Western term "religion" is inadequate to describe the Shinto culture because the term is too alien and institutional to the Japanese (Averbuch, 1995; Plutschow, 1996). The Japanese word *shukyou* (religion) is a relatively new term added to the vernacular after the 1868 Meiji Restoration. The word first appeared in the Commerce Treaty between Germany and Japan in 1869, and was used as an equivalent term in translation of the German *subung* (religion) (Ueda, 1996). While the term "religion" has hardly been accepted by the majority of the Japanese, *kami* (神) are recognized as a more common articulation of religiousness, beyond simpler Western religious notions. Although the term *kami* has no equivalent term in English, it has been technically translated into the word "deities" by English scholars (Bernstein, 2006).

Another explanation, which is a focus of this study, is that the Western term "religion" connotes a concept or belief rather than a ritual or custom. Reader and Tanabe Jr. (1998) claim that Japanese religion is "less a matter of belief than it is of activity, ritual, and custom" (p. 7). Shinto, indeed, is full of acts of praying to *kami*, commonly manifested in religious rituals and folk performing arts. The Japanese have developed their own ways of expressing *kami*

in order to engage in Shinto rituals. Accordingly, Shinto is often recognized as "a religion of symbols" (Moriarty, 1972, p. 137). Among the Shinto rituals, *kagura* is a ubiquitous religious symbol even in contemporary Japan (Honda, 1966; Nishitsunoi, 1990). *Kagura* is generally considered a prototype of Shinto rituals and is acknowledged as originating from shamanic possession-trance (*kamigakari*) (Iwata, 1988; Yamaji, 1987). By its nature, *kagura* is a shamanic performance in which *kami* are manifested on stage. Performing *kagura* includes such religious acts as summoning and welcoming kami, worshipping them, and receiving their blessings and oracles (*takusen*) (e.g., Honda, 1974; Nishitsunoi, 1934). As a *chinkon* (spirit-pacification) rite, the original divine *kagura* is believed to be not only performed in the heavenly plane (Honda, 1969), but also is the origin of all earthly rituals as well as performing arts in Japan (Yamaji, 1987). To this day, a great variety of folk performing arts in Japan combine artistic and spiritual dimensions into Shinto ritual events.

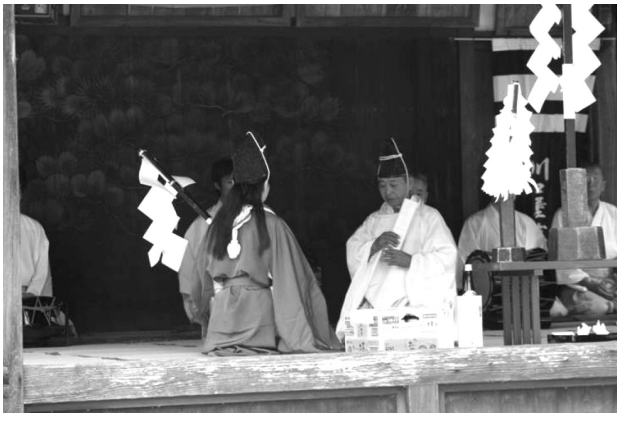

Figure 1. Washinomiya Saibara Kagura (New Year 2009, Saitama)

Figure 2. Washinomiya Saibara Kagura (New Year 2009, Saitama)

Figure 3. Washinomiya Saibara Kagura (New Year 2009, Saitama)

The vast majority of intercultural communication studies employ a social scientific (functionalist) approach to demonstrate how culture influences communication. These studies generally assume culture as "a variable that can be measured" (Martin & Nakayama, 2003, p. 48), without taking account of its spiritual aspects. Although critical approaches to the study of intercultural communication have also gained popularity in recent years, the spiritual aspects of culture remain largely overlooked in the field (e.g. Nakayama & Halualani, 2010). However, if we are to understand a culture, we must know a people's values, beliefs, motives, and expectations in order to understand and predict their behavior — behavior that is rooted in culture defined as a particular set of shared beliefs, values, motives, and expectations. Thus, the present study explicates the spiritual dimension of Japanese culture, helping us understand why the people behave as they do. Moreover, folk culture or folk tradition is deeply embedded in the history of a culture, and its perpetuation can be extremely important to members of that cultural group. Unfortunately, intercultural communication studies are less concerned with the folk cultural aspect of religion (Martin & Nakayama, 2003). The article hence explores the expressive dimensions of *kagura* and seeks to add an East Asian insight into the intercultural communication scholarship.

In the article I recognize such a spiritual dimension of culture at the level of awareness, more specifically, in the context of the Gebserian term "civilizational awareness." Consciousness and awareness need to be considered within the context of what is civilizational, since civilizational phenomena are basic ways in which we express and make sense of ourselves. Mickunas (2000) contends that civilizational awareness can be considered to be the most basic level of awareness that refers to phenomena that encompass everything, which are neither derivable from nor reducible to particular outside variables (and operationalizations). Each civilization has its own ways to experience and articulate universality under its own logic, within which individuals tend to interpret and locate other cultures. This logic produces behaviors described as "traditions." Mickunas (2006) explains that civilizational awareness is "[a] tradition that provides an interpretation of events that allows human reality to have sense, value, ethics, and purpose — indeed a final and ultimate purpose" (p. 21).

2. The Background of the Study

2.1. Shinto, *Kami*, and *Kagura*: An Overview

Shinto is shamanic in nature (Kitagawa, 1987). Until recently Shinto practices tended to reflect, at various levels, social, political, and economic realities in Japan. Since the Japanese typically assume that they live in a "seamless world" infused with the *kami* spirit (Earhart, 1984), the Western dichotomy between the sacred and the profane (*sei* and *zoku*) leads us to misunderstand when we approach *kami* in a dualistic manner. Averbuch (1995) notes that there is no word for "sacred" in the Japanese vernacular, and the meaning of "sacred" translates best to *kami* themselves. Therefore, the sacred (*kami*) often means great fun in Japan, and is used as a description of the divine nature and celebratory quality of a ritual event and *kami*'s existence itself. Ama (2005) also argues that it is impossible to simply apply the Western dichotomy of the scared/profane particularly to pre-modern Japan because the sacred dominated and guided their daily lives and activities.

In the articulation of *kami* in Shinto, any terms referring to "teachings" are not employed because *kami* are not something that can be taught with canons or doctrines (Uno, 2002). Rather the Japanese easily find *kami* dwelling in all things in the universe and accept the natural world as an expression of *kami*. To varying degrees of intensity, mountain and water (watersheds, rivers, rain, etc.) are the most sacred (Origuchi, 2002; Yanagita, 1942). The sun, moon, and storm deities, all closely related to agriculture, are also highly ranked (Honda, 1966). Kitagawa (1987) explains what *kami* are as follows:

> [The term's] usual translation as "sprit" or "god" is quite unsatisfactory and misleading. Leaving aside the etymological origin of the term *kami*, we must bear in mind that it is used both to designate an impersonal quality, that is, the *kami* nature, somewhat analogous to the *numinous* or sacred, and as the other designation for specific beings endowed with the *kami* nature, be they human, divine, or other animate or inanimate beings. (p. 36)

The word "Shinto" first appeared in the *Nihonshoki*, compiled in the year 720. The word is originally from the Chinese term *Shentao*, which is made up of two *kanji* or Chinese characters: *shin* "神" (gods or spirits) and *tou* "道" (a philosophical way or path). As such, Shinto is commonly translated into "the way of *kami*" in English, which literally means the way of being with *kami*, the way in which the Japanese accept the kami's will. The word *inori* (prayer for *kami*) is derived from the Chinese character "祈," which originally referred to "accept the *kami*'s will" (Origuchi, 2002). Furthermore, Shinto is neither a fixed nor independent religious form. There is no singular idea of Shinto except in political (especially modern) and metaphysical ideologies. Instead, Shinto is a collective term used to refer to local *kami* with which the Japanese live in their everyday lives. *Kami* are local first, before they are identified as an ideological, singular religious form of Shinto. Shinto indeed became identifiable when Buddhism was introduced to Japan from China in the sixth century (Ama, 2007; Tanigawa, 1999), and became recognized as a folk or indigenous religion (Averbuch, 1995).

Rather than Western forms of logic and conceptualization, Japanese religious beliefs were exercised in the annual cycle of seasonal *matsuri* (Iwata, 1988; Moriarty, 1972). While *matsuri* means "festival" or "divine worship," the term implies gathering and having fun with *kami*. During *matsuri*, *kami* are invited to a celebratory communal feast with human worshippers. The religious belief in ancient Japan was formed, shared, and transferred as the experiences of *kami* on the *matsuri* days. *Matsuri* has three purposes: (1) to entertain *kami*, (2) to make known the *kami*'s will, and (3) to serve that will (Honda, 1966). As the term *Shinto* (ways of *kami*) implies, what was important in ancient Japanese religion was following the way of *kami*, that is, to live according to the *kami*'s wills. This does not mean that the Japanese surrendered to *kami*; rather, they hoped to be *with kami*, and could thereby purify themselves and gain magical powers.

During *matsuri*, the Japanese sing, dance, and recite the *norito* (oracles) as ways of effectuating and strengthening their relationships with *kami*. These forms of communication that summon *kami* to effectuate the shamanic and magical power are known as *kagura*. At the climax of Shinto *matsuri*, *kagura* is offered to *kami*. *Kagura* is a performance through which the Japanese can become *kami* in order to show their sacredness to *kami*. Nishitsunoi (1990) argues that *kagura* is a *chinkon* (spirit-pacification) rite that effectuates the magical power beyond human control, by giving *kami* a human face and personality and by forcing them to behave according to human desire and interest. Some folklore scholars claim that *matsuri* is synonymous to folk performing arts in general (e.g., Kawano, 2005; Plutschow, 1996; Yanagita, 1942) and to *kagura* in particular (e.g., Fukushima, 2003; Honda, 1966, 1969; Ishizuka, 1979; Nishitsunoi, 1934). *Kagura* is discussed as a ceremonial ritual that brings together humans and deities. Thus, *kagura* is the original ancient shamanic ritual in Japan, and simply itself a ceremony (Honda, 1969), and the original divine *kagura* is believed to have been performed in the Heavenly Plain, an imaginary place in Japanese mythologies (Nishitsunoi, 1934).

Kagura is as ancient as the deities in the mythologies, and preserves the most ancient shamanic aspects of native religion (Honda, 1990; Nishitsunoi, 1934). The term *kagura* (神樂) was labeled relatively late for the ancient imperial ritual of the *chinkon* or *tamashizume* "鎮魂," both of which literally refer to the spirit-pacification rite. The term is a contracted form of the *kamukura* (the seat for *kami*); it is also sometimes called "the house of *kami*" (Honda, 1966, 1969; Kurabayashi, 1970). It implies the presence of *kami* in the *kagura* performance, or the performance itself as the dwelling place of *kami*. Although most *kagura* performances today seem to have lost their original association with shamanic trance, they are still performed as a part of religious and efficacious rites. Japanese traditional dances such as *kabuki* and *nō* resulted from the same source: the original *kagura* performance in heaven (Averbuch, 1995; Gorai, 1995; Nishitsunoi, 1934).

2.2. Kagura in Contemporary View: From Functionalism to Structuralism

Kagura attracts interdisciplinary and other researchers; it has been studied frequently in anthropology (e.g., Averbuch, 1995, 1998; Thornbury, 1997), Japanese literature (e.g., Miller, 1982), the *kokugaku* or study of ancient Japanese thought and culture (e.g., Origuchi, 2002; Uno, 2002), the *minzokugaku* or study of folklore (e.g., Honda, 1969; Kuribayashi, 1970; Nishitsunoi, 1934), and theater arts including choreography (e.g., Gorai, 1995; Hoff, 1978).

Important considerations about *kagura* as a significant human phenomenon followed the advance of the functional approach (which was replaced to evolutionism) of the 1950s and 1960s (Hanna, 1979). In a functionalist account, *kagura* is discussed in terms of its functions or goals of the individual as well as community-level goals. In a group, *kagura* serves as a means of strengthening group relationships, educating the public about morals, and giving pleasure to life (Durkheim, 2001; Fukushima, 2003; Moriarty, 1972). When *kagura* is reduced to an individual, it allows the individual to feel good and motivated in life (Fukushima, 2003; Honda, 1966), and provides an identity to the individual (e.g., Fukushima, 2003; Morita, 1990). As a traditional religious function such as blessing of fertility, protection, and giving thanks to the deities, *kagura* fulfills the cultural needs by developing a sense of identity and group solidity, as well as providing them with artistic pleasure.

Another line of the studies has begun to explore the human symbolic nature in the *kagura* performance as in Hanna's (1979) book entitled *To Dance Is Human*. This is largely due to the shift in anthropology from functionalism to structuralism in the 1970s; accordingly, the domain of the study has been shifted to its system of symbols and meanings (Averbuch, 1995). Religious rituals are then viewed in terms of a sign system that conveys meanings. This approach has provided a view to see *kagura* as a societal and cultural vehicle that not only reflects but also can actually produce patterns of culture. In appreciating symbols as meaning-carriers in social action, religion is "a system of symbols" (Geertz, 1973, p. 90), and Shinto is "a religion of symbols" (Moriarty, 1972, p. 137). In this manner, *kagura* could be "a system of (nonverbal) communicative acts" (Hanna, 1979), and is acknowledged "a cultural text (in motion)" that shows how religious texts function as communicative devices aimed at representing *kami* (Aberbuch, 1995, 1998). Through its symbols, they claim, *kagura* communicates sacred ideas. What these theorists mean by the term "communication" is a medium between the Japanese and *kami*, a medium that conveys what is sacred to the people. In this view, *kami* are assumed to have an *a priori* existence, and communication is reduced to an empty carrier.

Once *kagura* is reduced to a social functional symbol, furthermore, it is considered to be "a set of symbols in motion" (e.g., Averbuch, 1995; Hoff, 1978; Plutschow, 1996). In this assumption, *kagura* is reduced to a "representation" where *kami* dwell upon religious expressions such as incantation, dance, music, poetry, drama, and so forth. However, *kami* offered by such a religious expression is not a power automatically bestowed on any activities by any persons, but something that performers must actively assert, cultivate, and guard. If not, the meanings of *kami* would be fixed in the structure of the Japanese religious sign system. In other words, since *kagura* can be considered to be a perceptible medium that "represents" invisible transcendental meaning, it is presumed as an empty carrier that convey religious meanings, whereby *kami* are accepted as the fixed texts. In this transmitting process, a dimensional distance emerges between signs and *kami*. This distinction is bound to invent all sorts of scientific explanations to see how *kagura* and its expression work together in religious symbol — the latter becomes a set of external signs to the former.

Differently put, once *kagura* as a signifier begins to function, the signified *kami* are being objectified and idealized into our dualistic understanding of a sign; the signified is prior to a signifier. In the signifying process, however, the act of expressing *kami* (*kagura*) itself constructs the meaning of *kami*. The sacredness of *kami* does not exist transcendentally or

objectively. Nor can it exist out of the religious expressions. Rather, *kagura* gains a sense of *kami* through a set of various voiced and corporeal expressions because *kagura* as an act of expressing *kami* is prior to a conceptualized (rationalized) sign (communication) system. Even if *kagura* has certain religious functions in a community and if it can be a ritual text to examine, at the outset it has to be an act of expressing. Thus, we need to argue the act of expressing *kami* (*kagura*) as a signifier.

In this paper, hence, I mainly ask the religious conditions that allow *kagura* as a religious act of expressing to be in truth from the vantage point of nonreductive awareness: What essentially constitutes the *kagura* world? I am less interested in answering the questions above in a particular way than deciphering the sacred conditions that make the question answerable. The term "sacred" here refers to a religious condition that allows the experienced world to be in truth. Accordingly, the religious conditions of *kagura* will be explicated in terms of how *kami* can be expressive and communicative.

More specifically, in the present article I seek to offer the interpretive "contexts" of *kagura*, contexts of awareness that sustain and support the divine *kagura* world. It is an attempt not only to bracket the modern functional understanding of the divine *kagura* world, but also to reveal the very act of expressing *kami* in the multiple modes of awareness. The purpose of this article is to challenge the singular mode of discourse, which reduces *kagura* to a mere signalic sign system. In other words, it is an attempt to promote appreciation of differences without any discursive "engineering" as to the *kagura* expression. Revealing what sustains this reduction would open a means of "appreciating" the multiple modes of expression.

3. A Gebserian Approach to *Kagura*

To challenge the dualistic understanding of communication, I utilize a Neo-Kantian Gebserian approach, which is based on the thought of Jean Gebser, and has been explicated and applied to human communication by such philosophers as Algis Mickunas and Eric M. Kramer. The approach breaks with the older neo-Hegelian view, a view that was influenced by the evolutionary ideas of Charles Lyell and the Hegelian notion of phases of history reflected in the notion of linear spatial history articulated as cultural "progress" and "development." By stark contrast, the Gebserian approach, with its emphasis on multidimensional forms of communication, is radically different and continues to have a profound influence on current approaches to cultural studies, most notably the Toronto School and related scholars including E. T. Hall, Edmund Carpenter, Harold Innis, Marshal McLuhan, Walter Ong, and later writers such as James Carey.

The Gebserian approach provides a means of making sense of what we express in a certain space and time. Gebser (1985) was confronted with how to deal with the linearity and rationality embedded in the modern dualistic mentality, with extreme manifestations of what he calls the "rational consciousness." This is an important aspect that becomes relevant for our explication of *kagura* because this aspect allows us to notice a previously unnoticed condition of ratio, or reason, that constitutes the pervasive understanding of *kagura* within Japanese society. Ratio, for Gebser, is a driving force that reduces thoughts to material objects. Ratio is a process through which individuals rationalize various supernatural phenomena, pushing these phenomena into a certain shape — a pre-formed form of explanation that is limited.

To challenge the modern rationality, Gebser (1985) proposed the idea of mutational awareness to cultural studies and identified the five modes of awareness in human expression and articulation across history and culture: the archaic, the magic, the mythical, the mental/rational (perspectival), and the aperspectival/integral. He assigned the new term "aperspectival" not in an antithetical but integrating manner that makes all modes of awareness presentable at the same time and in any sequence. The term "perspectival" itself reveals its dualistic orientation and mentality, but at the same time, it is a latent basis, "aperspectivity" (Gebser, 1985; Kramer, 1997). Using the Greek prefix "a" in conjunction with the Latin-derived word "perspectival," Gebser intends to articulate a sense of *alpha privativum* rather than *alpha negativum*. The prefix gives a liberating character to the term "perspectival" (*privativum* is derived from Latin *private*) (Gebser, 1985, p. 2). These modes of awareness do not follow one another, but "each appears in and through the others and thus is either efficient or deficient, but never left behind" (Mickunas, 2006, p. 2). It is important to note that Gebser's term "awareness" does not imply any metaphysical or universal notions; rather, they themselves consist of concrete modes given in various modalities of expression (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992).

The aperspectival/integral mode of expression is a multidimensional form of awareness without accepting or denying other modes of awareness, which is neither the rational nor the irrational. It is rather a means of legitimating pre-rational and irrational expressions. This means that even the pre-rational was not just valid at one time, but rather that its mode continues to be present in us as one of our co-constituent parts. The respective modes of awareness explain their unique forms of linguistic as well as visual expressions. The aperspectival/integral mode of expression can thus be a means to avoid problems of seeing religious expression as arising from the logic of perspectival rationality. More specifically, the mode of expressing serves as a basis of interpreting the *kagura* performance and disclosing how the modern dualistic account of *kagura* appears deficient when different modes of expression are taken into account.

Similarly, the aperspectival/integral mode of time does not occur in the following order: pre-temporality, magic timelessness, mythical temporicity, and mental-conceptual temporality (Gebser, 1985). It is rather an integrating process of unfolding each mode of awareness into a present-moment, transcending simple categorized units of time such as "beginning" and "end." It does not seek to escape from the present; rather it is rooted in the present without being fixed *on* the present or confined to a particular moment within the flow of the past to the future. The present is always immersed in a horizon of past and future without sharp boundaries between them, and our theories of knowledge and reality are merged into these horizons (Gebser, 1985). Therefore, what I am concerned with is unfolding *kagura* not as "knowledge," but as what Gebser (1985) calls "a time being in the broadest sense as wakeful presence" (p. 42). The approach is neither a mental concept, nor is it a mythical image, nor is it a magic experience, but rather is a sense of origin that is prior to all spatio-temporalization. This origin is unfolded only with and through the previous modes of awareness. The Gebserian approach circumscribes the efficacy of all acategorical elements, that is, all types of manifestations and aspects of "time" across the modes of awareness.

In sum, the Gebserian aperspectival/integral mode of expression and time offers a means of appreciating the pre-rational mode of, as well as the systematic religious nature of *kagura*. Especially, this mode helps us with explicating *kagura*, and understanding the dualistic modern

understanding as *a* mode of expression, not as the *only* mode. In particular, with its focus on how *kagura* can be a divine expression, the aperspectival view offers a means to examine how explanations of sacredness become deficient and efficient in different modes of awareness, rather than treating *kagura* as a metaphysically pre-existing property of sacredness. It also fits neatly with the mythological world in which *kami* originate, and is suited to analyzing the mythical state in which the spiritual identities of the actors are central. Finally, and most important, this viewpoint illuminates how the *kagura* performance — that is, expressing *kami* — actually constitutes the divinity of *kami*. The approach is a way of opening the black box of the divine power of expressing *kami*. Thus, the Gebserian approach offers distinct advantages over traditional frameworks found in previous studies of *kagura*, which analyze one singular story of Japanese religion and its function in conventional ways.

4. Discussion: Interpretive Contexts of *Kagura*

Kagura is organized to serve as a rite of Shinto purification; it is composed of the same ritual structure as a complete Shinto ritual (Kurabayashi, 1970). The structure of the performance itself also produces the power. *Kagura* is choreographed to express religious sentiment and execute its practice, and serves as prayer, thanksgiving, offering and magical, shamanic rite (Nishitsunoi, 1934). For these reasons, the previous studies suppose that the main source of power of *kagura* can be found in its choreography, which is cleverly structured to provide several climactic points of excitement and energizing movements to hold the interest of the audience. Accordingly, the earlier studies conclude that *kagura* is choreographed to create an entertaining as well as a spiritual performance, and the artistic quality of the performance plays a central role in generating the *kagura*'s power and affect.

The divine power is assumed to be located in the shamanic shape and movement of the performances. The current literature would suggest that some divine expressions "represent" *kami*, thereby "causing" sacredness to be felt, and in turn bring the sacred power to the audience. Within this causation explanation, however, the *kagura* performance has to be reduced either to a behavior that causes something sacred or an empty carrier that conveys the already-presumed sacredness. The reduction requires a spatial nexus. This nexus allows us to reduce *kagura* to a space and time behavior in a way that we can weigh them, measure them, and calculate their movements. But such spatiality is not given in the *kagura* performance. Reducing such divine (or spiritual) experience to physical behavior assumes that we already have divinity and its relationships in a latent form and that the components of such a reality are derived from another domain and therefore may only be viewed rather than experienced. Without the sharing of these "extra spatio-temporal" components, the *kagura* performance would, at best, be an immediate action.

This spatial reduction, furthermore, seems to support the claim that religious behavior is only a reaction to stimuli. This reductionist thinking goes, if we can decipher the stimuli, we can predict the religious behavior in advance; in our case it would imply that we can deal with *kami* scientifically, and/or through analysis texts. The only thing we do here, however, is to "infer" the presence of internal sacredness within the process. Yet in the case of *kagura*, we are importing a function that is not empirical and causal, but a logical function in our mentality/

rationality. This suggests that there must be an internal mind that can signify the external world and its objects, and is in turn capable of distinguishing the functions of causal explanation of experience from actual experience. For every expression component, following this thinking, a one-to-one causal relationship either to an external or an internal stimulus is claimed to exist. Yet such a correlation does not exist.

4.1. The Magic and Mythic Modes of Awareness and Expression

In perspectival categorical thinking, *kagura* is performed by performers for the audience, and the power is traced back to the performers themselves. Hanna (1979) argues that dance is a particularly effective mode of nonverbal communication that has an emotional impact on its speculators. The power is not solely dependent on the dancer's personal ability, however. Distinctions between *kagura* performers and audience members have emerged relatively recently. To effectuate the power, all members of a community participated in *kagura*; there was no distinction between performers and audience. *Kagura* was performed by the entire community. Individual human movements often produce collective religious impressions, and the collective sympathy and desire are the very conditions that come about through performing arts (Gorai, 1995). This collectivity and spirituality of *kagura* are manifested in the magic mode of awareness. Collective "theater," as the performers act and the audiences react, is sometimes quite unpredictable. The totality of the relationship among the Japanese and *kami* is the reflection of the magic, one-dimensional world. Man and deity are related not by symbolic reference, but by "direct participation" in *kagura* (Kitagawa, 1966). Gebser (1985) states, "The egolessness of the individual — who is not yet an individual — demands participation and communication on the basis of the collective and vital intentions" (p. 58).

In the mythic mode of awareness, both *kami* and humans are the audience and the performers of *kagura*. On stage, Averbuch (1995) explains, a performer and *kami* are both simultaneously, because *kami* themselves participate in *kagura* as performers. *Kagura* intends to entertain *kami*; at the same time, *kami* entertain people during the dance. While *kagura* performers express *kami* who are supposed to dance on the stage, *kami* themselves are also the performers and bless the people with their dance. Thus *kami* are the audience and performers at the same time. This ambivalent distinction between divine performers and divine audience may be confusing when viewed with a mental/rational, linear time and space oriented lens. The mental/rational mode of awareness is deficient to adequately explain the boundary between the divine and the human.

The ambivalent mythical mode of awareness is best described with the twofold aspect of myth — silent inner vision and audible myth making (Gebser, 1985). Myth, psyche, mouth, speaking are all connected but they are connected in a very peculiar way. *Kagura* presents *kami* as either effectuated or not effectuated; a third or subsequent possibility does not exist. These opposing expressions are not dualistically constructed. Rather these expressions appear to be meaningful only through the polar contrasts. In other words, one of the mythic polarities is not totally differentiated from the other; rather, one cannot exist without the other. Each of them exists through the other. Each contains traces of the other and of becoming the other. Similarly, people and *kami* are reflections of each other; one consists of the other.

4.2. Multidimensional Temporality

In the magic world everything is interchangeable with everything else; individuals express their magic to make the world change (e.g., Gebser, 1985; Kramer, 1997; Mickunas, 2000). *Kagura* is manifested in the magic awareness in that it is a means of making happen what is said and acted in a performance. In the *kagura* performance, the power effectuates the magical effect with the immediate impact. In the magic world, "there is practically no dissociation or detachment of emotional commitment between what expression means and its concrete presence" (Kramer, 1997, p. xiii). These magic expressions are spaceless and timeless events. *Kagura* presents what the people prey for such as good harvest and permanent peace to continue into the future. Imitating the future celebration is an essential process to gain what they pray for. The temporal structure is such that the *kagura* ritual is translatable. That is, the blessing event is so connected that it has no causal links but it has vital interchangeability. In this relationship, expression is an event where truth happens, not in a formal or absolute sense, but in an identical, unidimensional manner.

The magic dimension of *kagura* exists before time, before our consciousness of time. And, the natural time of the magic structure is a precondition for mythical man's coming to awareness of soul. Whereas the distinguishing characteristic of the magic mode is the emergent awareness of nature, the essential characteristic of the mythical mode is the emergent awareness of soul (Gebser, 1985). The mythical mode of awareness is manifested in the seasonal Shinto agricultural ritual calendar. Prior to the modern rational space and time conceptions, the people expressed *kami* in audial and visual forms. What mythological interreflectivity reveals is that *kami* are not some internal, subjective state, but audially and visually expressive (Mickunas, 2006). This was demonstrated in the expressive environment such that it is not possible to reduce *kami* to a location in perspectival space and time. The mythical awareness discovers and expresses the mythology, not in a historical linearity, but "in the natural, temporal rhythm of the circle" (Gebser, 1985, p. 66). This mythic temporality discloses that *kagura* is *present* rather than being represented. Neither inner *kami* nor outer expression is identified, but rather *kami* are all pervasive and dynamically extant in space and time. This type of temporic portrait reflects a specific need to express and shape the uncontainable, hence the emergence of concrete time. The timeless becomes temporal; there is a gradual transition from remote timelessness in the pre-rational or pre-consciousness to tangible periodicity.

Kagura serves as a purification ritual; in the performance, *kami* purify the *kegare* (polluted) world with their dance. And this is the moment when the people are purified and renewed. In the performances, music, like dance, becomes sacred when it is played in a certain order and tempo. It also creates a special time (*hare*) apart from the ordinary (*ke*) (Plutschow, 1996). Its regular drum (*taiko*) beats create a temporality that helps transcend ordinary time so that people may meet their *kami*. The beat unites people with *kami*. Music itself is a ritual means of creating and exerting powerful magic, bringing forth and sustaining divine appearance and action of *kami*. In this dimension time is not measured from outside (that is, clock time does not make any sense); rather, the renewal rite creates time.

Matsuri takes place every transitional season, and this temporality creates the life cycle. This cyclic time is quite different from the perspectival, linear concept of time that assumes

all time past is gone and future will come. In cyclical time, past time comes back again and again in the *kagura* performances during *matsuri* days. The cyclic time is not given; rather, people find and experience the time in the repetitions and imitations of the past presented in the *kagura* performance. *Kagura* makes the present live in the past as well as the past in the present. Gebser (1985) contends, "This ambivalent relation between time and timelessness, which defies our rational understanding, once finds its expression in the polarity of the mythical structure, for both forms simultaneously exist and complement each other" (p. 67).

Furthermore, *kagura* creates an appropriate spatial-temporal relationship with *kami* in the *matsuri*. Uno (2002) argues that *matsuriawase* (maintaining *ma*) is the essential meaning of *matsuri*. *Matsuri* is *the* time when the Japanese ask *kami* to come down, become aware of their will, and fraternize with them. Then, in the *kagura* performance, the Japanese are allowed to communicate with *kami*. Plutschow (1996) explains that there were two modes of time in Japan: one is in ordinary life and the other is the sacred in the *matsuri*. *Ennichi* (*matsuri* days) means the fixed dates when men are with *kami* in the *matsuri*, as seen in the word *en* (tie) that links the members of the community to *kami* (Origuchi, 2002). In the *matsuri*, Plutschow (1996) articulates, "People come face-to-face with their gods; natural and supernatural merge into a divine totality" (p. 31).

In the mythic mode of understanding, the *kagura* world is oceanic; more precisely, it is in an ocean-like, rhythmic process that is going nowhere. It has no direction or orientation, no linearity; no past-then-future assumptions. There is a breakthrough of this polarity in mental/rational utterances, however. The result is the principle of noncontradiction or antinomy that no longer allows for the possibility of polarity. In the mental/rational mode of awareness, one statement is accepted to be true while the other denied. That is, only one is true; the abstraction of a concept from an image eliminates the polar possibility — demonstrating there is more than polar opposites in play.

The term "time" can be traced back to the Indo-Germanic root *da*, which meant, in the original language of the Greek "to divide, to take apart, to lay apart, to tear apart, to lacerate" (Gebser, 1985, p. 173). Time serves as a divider of an abstraction. "Time and day are essentially the same and both are dividers of the night" (Gebser, 1985, p. 176). At the outset, day and night are not opposite; we make them antithetical by our contemporary modern way of thinking. Our linear conception of time is the divider of mythical temporal movement. When we see a *kagura* performance as a divider, expressing *kami* is already seen as a value-laden phenomenon. Gebser (1985) claims, "As long as its dividing is not an end in itself it indirectly yields valid knowledge of the undivided" (p. 292). The dividing deed leads expression to emptiness: *kagura* is reduced to a mere symbol where expression and meaning are arbitrarily connected.

In sum, *kagura* reveals itself as a temporal entity, as it includes the past and is unfolded toward the future; that is, it expresses notions of the past and the future as different from the present. By extending and limiting the realms in time and space, a *kagura* performance serves as a temporary maker of a permanent reality, that is, the seamless *kami* world pervaded and animated by the spirits of *kami* during *kagura*. Acknowledging the existence of separate human and divine realms, *kagura* places itself as the bridge between them. In integrating temporality, any differentiation between the sacred and the profane, and/or the human and the *kami*, is illusory. *Kagura* itself is an intensified temporality time.

5. Conclusion and Implications

This article adds an East Asian, especially Japanese, insight into the field of intercultural communication. Intercultural communication is one of the fields that seriously take religion into consideration and employ it as a crucial factor determining how differently people behave and communicate across cultures (Martin & Nakayama, 2003). The Western functionalist and structuralist approaches to communication in the religious contexts assume a spatialized temporality that reduces communication to a linear-time-oriented behavior. But recently some Asian scholars challenge the Western dominant perspective on communication and religion, seeking alternative views of communication that are rooted in non-Western philosophical and religious traditions (Chen, Miyahara, & Kim, 2013; Ishi, 2011; Miike, 2007; Nakayama & Halualani, 2010). Employing the Gebserian approach, this present article has demonstrated that a linear mechanical spatio-temporality is not universal, or even prevents us from better understanding religion and communication across cultures. This leads to a call for future studies to look at how different spatio-temporalities are manifested in different religious communication contexts. The contextual-awareness approach to communication and religion also could be suggestive for future research on folk rituals as well as performing arts in non-Western cultures. As seen above, *kagura* is hardly identified by any material or mental language because it is read directly and immediately. Expressions and our perception of them have a primacy of over interpretation and intellectual projections (Pilotta & Mickunas, 1990). Religious expression, thus, is not as a conveyer of its corresponding meanings but as a meaningful action itself creating the meanings. This recognition could be a starting point for any research concerning folk religious traditions in the intercultural communication discipline.

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