tors and shadow sources provide. We see characters begin in the distance as a puppet, and grow into a human dancer as they approach the plane of the screen. The monstrous Caliban of the *Tempest* was appropriately bizarre and captured a particular Balinese sensibility about supernatural evil that is simultaneously frightening and comical. Musical director Carla Fabrizio drew upon a variety of Balinese musical resources, include solo *suling* (bamboo flute), *gender wayang*, *gamelan angklung*, and bamboo music, to create a rich and appropriately fantastic soundscape that referenced both Balinese and film-score musical conventions. I Made Terip provided some original music, ably performed by members of Sekar Jaya.

The decision to include only portions of the original text was a good one (the program notes point out that the abridgement is “in keeping with the Balinese storytelling approach, where long stories are streamlined or a few lines elaborated into feature-length tales”). Although Balinese *dalang* can hold an audience all night with their shadowy creations, the scale and feeling of ShadowLight’s projections are too similar to cinema—without many of the cinematographic elements that audiences have come to expect—and would wear thin after a while. The play lasted just over an hour, which I found to be just the right length. Overall, I was struck by how eloquently the shadows portrayed “the stuff dreams are made of.”

Bamboo is notoriously difficult to hybridize; not so cultures and musics. This “Gathering of Gamelans” gave the Bay Area an optimistic progress report on the state of the vigorous artistic hybrids that are thriving within its boundaries. Let’s hope that Larry Reed finds an excuse to convene another such gathering soon.

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**MEDEA.** Adapted by Miyagi Satoshi from the original play by Euripides. Directed by Miyagi Satoshi. Ku Na’uka at Biwako Hall, Shiga, Japan, 7 August 2005.

Ku Na’uka is a Japanese theater company formed in 1990 by the director Miyagi Satoshi and actors such as Mikari (she uses only one name) and Abe Kazunori. The company is known for its performance style of separating each role into what it calls a “speaker” and a “mover.” The speakers use a *bunraku*-style chanting technique, and the movers engage in *ningyō-buri*, a *kabuki* technique of having humans imitate bunraku puppets. However, unlike *kabuki*’s *ningyō-buri*, there are no black-robed actors (*kurogo*) who perform as “puppeteers.” Thus, the “movers” are self-motivated, rather than appearing as puppets manipulated by black-robed puppeteers. Although inspired by traditional theater techniques, this is a contemporary, experimental troupe that uses both male and female performers. Gender identities vary within and across plays (women can play men or vice versa), a technique that is unique to the troupe. Their performance techniques are applied to both classic and contemporary
plays from Japan and the West. In a discussion after the production of *Medea* in Biwako Hall, director Miyagi Satoshi said a reason for this performance technique was his desire to express the schizophrenic condition of postmodern people, their pain of being split into language and movement. He also explained that the technique is particularly suitable for premodern fantastic plays, such as *Medea*, which depict “exotic” characters (e.g., royalty) engaged in grand dramatic events (e.g., war). Miyagi said that realistic performance techniques put a mask of normality on such fantastic characters. By splitting speaker and mover, this performance style creates distance between the audience and the characters, leading, as Miyagi suggests, to the feeling that Hamlet is not our neighbor.

Clearly, these two motivations (the schizophrenia of postmodernity and the distancing of premodernity) are at odds with each other, but somehow they coexisted comfortably in Miyagi’s postcolonial/feminist Japanese interpretation of *Medea*. First produced in Japan in 1999, this production was revived in Japan in 2000 and 2001; in Korea, Russia, Morocco, Italy, and France in 2001; and in Vietnam, Singapore, and France in 2002. With Medea played by Mikari as a Korean woman who lived in Japan, it evoked the pain of the colonized woman, forced into division from her language and body, with the former suppressed and the latter exploited sexually. This separation is in contrast to the one female character that both moved and spoke for herself throughout the show, namely the old Nurse. This character highlighted the artificiality of the speaker/mover separation as well as the audience’s role as witnesses of exploitation taking place on stage.

In Ku Na’uka’s *Medea*, the setting is the Meiji period (1868–1912), when Japan, for the purpose of its “modernization,” began to “learn” from the West. In international affairs, what began as liberal reform became an ultra-right nationalist policy that would last until the middle of twentieth century: Japan invaded its Asian neighbors, with the stated intention of creating a “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” that would free Asia from the yoke of Western imperialism. In the production, Euripides’ *Medea* is a play-within-a-play, which is initiated for fun in a restaurant/brothel by men wearing black gowns, showing they are intellectuals. The speaker/mover dichotomy is only applied to the play-within-the-play.

The show started with a superb scene. A dark semi-transparent curtain revealed many women in traditional Japanese *kimono*. The stage had been decorated beautifully with traditional Japanese umbrellas painted with people and colorful scenes from the rapidly changing period. The center of the floor was covered with a white fabric, and in the middle of this sheet was a red circle. From the circle rose a huge pillar, which looked like a sword. The fabric obviously represented the national flag of Japan, and the sword with the “rising sun” was a symbol of its colonial ideology. The women were standing in the middle of this “flag.” Their faces were covered with brown paper bags, and each of them silently carried her black-and-white facial photo in front of her genitals, as if leading the procession at her own funeral. The image symbolized that the women were not regarded as having brains but just genitalia.
Meanwhile, from the entrance of the hall, men entered chatting cheerfully, mounted the stage, and picked out women to perform their Medea. Whenever they made a decision about casting a woman, they took away the paper bag from her face. The dynamism of the scene was generated from the dichotomy of men/women, active/passive, language/silence, rich/poor, intellect/corporeality, and colonizer/colonized. The scene even evoked the selection of women for the “comfort women” system (in which poor, often colonial women were “drafted” into sexual slavery for the military) in Japan’s colonial expansion.

Once the selection was over the men seated themselves on the wooden bench toward the rear of the stage over the “flag.” Then they started the play-within-the-play as “speakers.” While the “speakers” were all male, the female “movers” played both male and female roles within the play. The authoritative male actor Abe Kazunori spoke Medea’s lines in a manner similar to bunraku chanting that requires a trained voice that shifts freely and rhythmically from high to low pitch, from soft to powerful tone. His mellow yet passionate voice expressed Medea’s keen sadness and anger. I felt goose bumps rise as I heard him chant Medea’s lines in which she revealed her revenge plan to the audience. Mikari moved as Medea with smooth bunraku puppet–like motions but with more dynamic movement and underlying inten-

![Figure 1. A sword rose from the center of a Japanese flag that draped the stage floor. The male “speakers” sit behind the action as they deliver the dialogue in the production at Tokyo National Museum prior to the one at Biwako Hall. (Photo: Uchida Takuma, courtesy of Miyagi Satoshi)](image-url)
sity than the “movers” who played the males: Creon (Kataoka Sachiko), Jason (Eguchi Makoto), and the Son (Nohara Yumi). This acting choice effectively expressed the hidden rage in Medea that would eventually lash out at the patriarchic and colonial system. Medea’s costume, a Korean traditional dress (hanbok) hidden underneath a Japanese kimono, epitomized her status in Japan as the oppressed Other. This choice meshed well with the colonial symbolism of the sword and flag. Her kimono was stripped off and her Korean dress was revealed first when she decided to avenge herself on Creon and Jason, and second when she decided to kill her son after hearing her gift of a poisoned dress has killed both Jason’s new wife and Creon. Her Korean clothes were thus symbols of her revenge that exterminated the lineage of patriarchic colonialism.

The beautiful polyrhythmic music, which combined traditional Japanese festive melody played by the Japanese flute (shinobue) with sixteen-beat patterns of the African drums (djembe and sabar), was heard throughout the play. This music, played by female actors/musicians behind the “speakers,” together with the superb performance of “speakers” and “movers” and the gorgeous visual effects, increased my expectations for the final scene. After Medea had fulfilled her revenge, she reappeared in a red dress, reminding us of her bloody revenge. Suddenly, a large number of books fell out of the slots in the swordlike pillar. As the music became ominously louder, all “movers”

Figure 2. In moments of crisis the actress Mikari reveals her Korean dress beneath the kimono that hides it during the production at Tokyo National Museum prior to the one at Biwako Hall. (Photo: Uchida Takuma, courtesy of Miyagi Satoshi)
came forward to the stage front, wearing the same red dress as Medea, and they stabbed the “speakers” with swords and killed them. The books, which came tumbling out of the pillar, were a symbol of masculinist/colonial language, which deprived the colonized of the means of speaking of their oppression. I recalled that Jason and the Son often used the pillar as their bookshelves. With the books removed, the pillar, together with the flag it pierced, was now a symbol of the revenge of the colonized women. As Miyagi told me in the e-mails we exchanged after the production, the flag is not only a symbol of masculinist colonial ideology, but also the one of femininity. Amaterasu, from whom the Japanese royal family members claim they are descended, is the goddess of the sun. In this context, the rising sun with the sword could also represent female revenge, as when the female movers covered in red stabbed the male speakers that embodied their oppression. After this stunning last scene, only the old Nurse remained on stage until she was finally taken away by an actor after the company received a round of applause. Actually, when I entered the hall approximately ten minutes before the show started, she was in rags and sitting at the edge of the stage, eating and playing with something that looked like a telephone handset. In my view, because the Nurse existed outside the play and moved and spoke for herself, she represented the ordinary audience, who saw this history of subjugation and revenge with her. Her existence on stage suggested that, although the play ended with the revenge of the colonized women, our life outside of the theater was still ongoing, with nothing resolved. And the real drama begins once we leave the theater.

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