The expression of masculinity and femininity in *yosakoi* dance

Affirming or resisting gender stereotypes?

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Introduction

Over the years, considerable literature has been written about the features of traditional Japanese dance. A prominent aspect of traditional Japanese dance is that it contains parts or dances that are called "male" or "female". Dances where this gendering is present are for example kabuki, *nihon buyô,* and *noh* theatre.[1] What makes these gendered parts interesting is that the gender of the body of the dancer does not necessarily need to be the same as the gender of the dance. For example, male dancers exclusively performed the *onnagata* or "female form" role within kabuki theatre after it became forbidden for women to do so.[2] It is however not the case that dances or parts called "male" or "female" are exclusively restricted to Japanese traditional dances. In this thesis I will focus on gendered parts within a modern Japanese dance: *yosakoi* (よさこい), a hybrid modern style of Japanese folk dance that has come forth out of forth out of *Awa-odori* in the 1950's.[3] Its features are the use of *naruko,* a wooden clapper, the highly energetic performance, and the large amount of people of which the dancing teams consist.[4] Over the last years, *yosakoi* has spread around Japan; more and more teams are being founded every day. *Yosakoi* has even spread around the world.[5] Currently there are teams in Europe, America and Australia as well.

Even though this form of dance has become so widespread, the academic works that have been written about *yosakoi* are scarce and limited, and the gendered parts within *yosakoi* dance have not been covered at all.[6] What makes a *yosakoi* part "male" or "female"? What are

[1] Ho 1996; Lanki 2010; Moore 2013

[2] Ho 1996, 23

[3] Yosakoi Toyama website

[4] Nakamura 1996, 24

[5] Uchida 2013, 22

[6] Although gendered parts within a dancing style similar to *yosakoi* have been briefly covered by Nadine Korebrits. Korebrits 2013

the features? Is role reversal taking place and how? This thesis will explore the features of *otoko-furi* or 'male choreography' and *onna-furi* or 'female choreography' within *yosakoi* dance, as well as the practise of this division during regular trainings and festivals. This will provide an insight in how a student-lead team is coping with gender-related divisions and stereotypes within a modern style of dance.

Based upon the results of my research I will provide an answer to the following research question: What are the features of *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi* within *yosakoi* dance, and do these parts resist or affirm gender stereotypes?

Through the literature review, I will firstly answer the following questions: How do gender stereotypes come into being? How are dance and gender connected? How do the gender mechanisms within Japanese traditional theatre work and for what purpose? Next, I will give an explanation of the features of *yosakoi*, and how this dancing style copes with gendered parts, answering the following question: What are the features of yosakoi? In the following part I introduce my methodology. Then I Analyse what features are considered "male" and "female" by dancers. After this I move on to a case study, and analyse how masculinity and femininity are concretely being expressed within a specific dance of the team I belonged to. Then, I move to the position gendered parts hold within the team itself, showing how the team copes with gender stereotyping and how it puts restrictions on dancers based on their gender.

This thesis will base itself largely on my experiences within Kobe Student Yosakoi Team Minato, which is the team where I danced for about one year. In addition I will refer to my experience with other *yosakoi* teams I have danced with in my four years experience with this dance. I base my research on my field notes, conversations I had with dancers, interviews and questionnaires I handed out.

I. State of the Research Field

This chapter reviews the relevant literature that has been written concerning my research subject. The first part concerns gender theory, and how gender theory is applicable to dance. The second part concerns gendering within traditional Japanese dances. The third part concerns the history and features of *yosakoi* dance.

1.1 Dance and gender

In order to understand what kind of gender related stereotypes I am referring to in my research question, it is important to firstly give my definition of sex and gender, as well as to explain under what mechanism gender stereotypes come to exist. Therefore I will firstly introduce the gender theory relevant for my research question. I will then specifically connect this to (Japanese) dance performance.

Gender and sex are two separate things that have a relative autonomy from each other. A key author in this respect is Judith Butler (1986). In *Gender Trouble* she argues that while gender and sex are not connected, one still continues to assume the binary opposition of male/female when one thinks of gender. "The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it."[7] In other words, it is assumed that the gender of someone automatically emerges from a person's sex. An example of this presumption is that masculinity (gender) is assumed to be an extension of the male body (sex). However, Butler argues that there is no ontological substance about gender acts; these acts are based on

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[7] Butler 1986, 6

nothing. In short, if you let go of the assumption that sex and gender are causally connected, words like *man* or *masculine* can be connected to a female body as well, and vice versa.

Then how do these assumptions originate? According to Butler, the phenomenon we call "gender" is "a stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being."[8] It is merely because people "act like" or "perform" a gender that it seems that there is something fixed like gender. When the actions are repeated long enough it will appear as if it is "natural" for example for women to walk on the tip of their toes in high-heeled shoes. However, as Butler states: "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results."[9] In short, it is not because the dancer is a woman that she has come to walk on the tip of her toes naturally. She is doing that because she merely imitates what is considered to be female. That she is copying the act considered specific for women is what makes her gender identity – which is based on a performance that is based on nothing, and what makes its existence thus questionable – "female". Even though Butler has received critics on this idea, with scholars like Benhabib (2000) claiming that this notion fails to give an explanation of the structural and developmental processes which are involved in individual socialisation and thus in the construction of gendered identity[10], I argue that even though this may be the case for gender, the theory still remains highly applicable and useful, especially when it comes to gender within performing arts.

An additional theorist on performance, who was inspired by Butler, is Laurence Senelick (1992). According to him "gender is performance. (…)As a cultural construct, made

8 Butler 1986, 33

9 Ibid 22-34, 25

10 Benhabib in Webster 2000, 4-6

up of learned values and beliefs, gender identity (…) has no ontological status."[11] Because

gender is a mere performance it is thus possible to perform the opposite gender even though

the body that performs the role is biologically of the opposite sex. This is a so-called "parody"

according to Butler.[12]

This phenomenon can be highlighted further by cross-dressing or drag. "As much as

drag creates a unified picture of 'woman' (what its critics often oppose), it also reveals the

distinctness of those aspects of gendered experience which are falsely naturalized as a unity

through the regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence. In imitating gender, drag implicitly

reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as its contingency."[13] Concretely this

means that for example, we assume a humans gender to be female if it acts and dresses – or

performs – what we consider to be "female", even though the sex of the body is classified as

male. This shows all the more that the gender performance does not originate naturally, and

that it is something that can be copied since the body performing the acts is not female.

Furthermore, it highlights all the more that sex and gender are not connected.

Ever since these theories were published, they have been applied numerous times to

performative arts. Butler and Senelick's theories have been widely used in dance theory.[14]

So what about "male" and "female" in dance? According to Hanna (2010), we first of

all have to accept that even though dance might not intend to be sexually expressional, it is.

Both dance and sex make use of the body and involve the language of the body's orientation

towards pleasure. "Thus, dance and sex may be conceived as inseparable even when the

sexual expression is unintended".[15] Concretely this means, that even folk dances like *yosakoi*

11 Senelick 1992, 9

12 Butler 1988, 146

13 Ibid 137

14 Ho 1996; Hanna 2010; Lanki 2010

15 Hanna 2010, 212

are sexual. Dance is purposeful, intentionally rhythmical, culturally patterned, a nonverbal body movement communication in time and space, wherein each genre has its own criteria for excellence. Dance conveys meaning through the use of space, touch, and proximity to another dancer or to an observer, nudity, stillness and specific body postures and movements.[16] Traditional dance is herein usually examined in the context of cultural settings, with an emphasis on how dances mirror social organisation. In addition they provide models for the enactment of gendered identities; usually reinforcing the unequal position of women.[17] For example, being dominant and active is considered masculine, while being submissive and passive is considered feminine.[18] This is reflected for example within ballet, wherein female dancers surrender their body to the leading male dancers.[19]

Contrary to this, modern dance is often lauded for its ability to resist gender and racial stereotyping by representing men and women in ways, which counter to social expectations.[20] An example would be to let the female dancer take the lead in a dance between a male and a female dancer. Since it is a modern dance, the assumption would thus be that *yosakoi* as a modern dance shall resist gender related stereotypes, for example in regard to passive/active, while traditional Japanese dance will affirm gender stereotypes.

In short, gender and sex are two completely separate things: the first does not automatically emerge from the latter. In addition, gender is a performance that has no ontological basis. Through naturalisation of certain performances gender stereotypes emerge, the most important being masculine = active and being feminine = passive. These stereotypes also

16 Ibid 213

17 Hanna, 1998; 1993 Polhemus, 1993

18 Bourdieu 2001

19 Hanna 2010, 213

20 Albright 1995, Desmond 1997

appear within dance, which is always connected to sexuality. Let us now look at how femininity and masculinity is being expressed within traditional Japanese theatre dance. Does it affirm or resist gender stereotyping?

1.2 Japanese dance

Like other traditional dances, Japanese traditional dance also contains links with sexuality and providing models for enacting gendered identities. In addition it holds strong links with the notion gender as a performance.

First of all, in traditional Japanese theatre femininity and masculinity are expressed very subtly, through *kata* (方), literally, "form". This means a specific set of choreography movements that define the gender of a dance. A concrete example of a dance that is making use of *kata* is kabuki. In its early years kabuki had deep ties to female prostitution, and then to male prostitution. Kabuki's sexuality was significant in the evolution of the form and in the gender and age of its performers.[21] Soon dancers from both sexes started to dance the role of the opposite, at least until it became forbidden for women to dance kabuki in 1629.[22]

 Lanki (2010) argues that because ever since this forbidding, the form creators have been male; male performers were forced to develop a set of highly refined performative gender signifiers, in order to effectively play the female role.[23] The *onnagata* (女方) or female form within the all-male kabuki became famous for its highly feminised performance. In a similar way male signifiers were "masculinised", as Lanki describes it.[24] The main target of

21 Hanna 1988, 67

22 Ibid 2010, 214

23 Lanki 2010, 97

24 Ibid

kabuki was to delight elite men.[25] Men performed this role of the perfect woman, to the extent that the *onnagata* even became a model of femininity for Japanese women. The *onnagata* even held up the performance outside the theatre.[26] This is why the *onnagata* is unique when it comes to "becoming" the role he plays.

This does not account for other Japanese dances. For example, *noh* actor Uzawa Hisa explained: "Sexual difference does not matter to *noh* expression."[27] Even when women perform a female form, they do not focus on the fact that they *are* women themselves: they try to *represent* the role only through the formal *kata.*[28] This means that whenever the performance ends, the enacting of the other gender also stops. In short, the gender of the body that dances the role holds close to no importance to the dance performance at all.

This is something that Lanki (2010) also highlights within her article concerning *nihon buyô* (日本舞踊), or literally "Japanese dance". In *nihon buyô* – as in kabuki – each dance is gendered as either *onnagata* or *otokogata* (男方)the latter being the word that refers to "male form". Similar to the *onnagata* in kabuki, the gender of the dancer and the dance are not necessarily the same. A prime definer of the gender of the dance within *nihon buyô*, is the amount of space that is being used. The body position of the *onnagata* is turned more inward, with sloping shoulders, and soft and lightly cupped hands. In *otokogata* the movements are bigger and more expansive; the body uses a lot more space and the legs are turned outwards.[29] This is again an illustration of femininity being considered passive and masculinity being considered active. Lanki emphasises however that these gender signifiers are not natural to

25 Hanna 2010, 214

26 Ho 1996, 23

27 in Aoki 2012, 6

28 Moore 2013, 269

29 Lanki 2010, 91-95

perform.[30] An illustration is a quote of Bandô Tamasaburô, a most famous *onnagata* actor: "There is nothing natural about performing *onnagata*… It is extremely difficult. There is no letting down, you must perform the finest detail, moment to moment."[31] Lanki believes that these contrasting movements provide a clear distinction in the signifiers for male and female.[32] This aligns with the thought of gender studies, which believes that male and female are often acted out as opposites of each other.[33] Then again, the gender of the dancer is of lesser importance. Within *otokogata* dances it even occurs that the gender switches from male to female within a story. This however only happens within *otokogata*, presumably because the illusion of femininity would be shattered if the male dancer suddenly would show his masculinity.[34] Kabuki, *noh* and *nihonbuyô* dances are all dancing forms that have been presented and dominated by an all-male population. Then what about all-female dance? Often mentioned as the reverse of kabuki, there is a Japanese form of musical theatre that has enjoyed vast popularity. Founded in 1913 by a railroad baron, the Takarazuka Revue Company is a large theatre group in Japan, where women play both male and female roles. Like in other Japanese dances there are two types of roles. *Musume-yaku* (娘役) or "young woman/daughter-role" and *onna-yaku* (女役) or "female role" refer to the female roles. *Otoko-yaku* (男役) or "male role" refers to the male roles. Once a dancer decides on one of the two, they usually do not switch to the opposite role.[35] Again, parallels can be seen with the enactment of gender within a dancing role. Takarazuka playwright Ogita Kochi explains: "I

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30 Lanki 2010, 91-97

31 in Mezur 2005, 239

32 Lanki 2010, 96

33 Butler 1986, Bourdieu 2001

34 Lanki 2010, 97

35 Nakamura & Matsuo 2003, 61

have never written a play with the intention of portraying [real] men. That is because (…) both the *otoko-yaku* and the *onna-yaku* are constructs that exist within a particular fantasy. I do not equate them at all with the raw bodies of [actual] women."[36] Like with *nihon buyô*, the performance ends as soon as the stage is left. For example, *otoko-yaku* impersonator Shizuki Asato was famous for sewing teddy bears together during show intermissions, which contrasts greatly with her strong masculine stage performance.[37] Again there is a difference in the way the roles dance. *Otoko-yaku* actors have sharper movements and are more dashing. They also have shorter hairstyles than the *musume-yaku.* In addition the *musume-yaku* often wears a long skirt or dress over her dancing spats. Dancers "must eradicate any notion of 'male' or 'female' – as actors they exist only as empty figures", so that they can become the frame for the roles of the *otoko-yaku* or *onna-yaku*."[38] In this sense we see that with Tarakazuka dance as well, the performance is in no way natural.

Then why is it that these forms of dance are so popular in Japan? As Lanki mentions about *onnagata* performed by male dancers: "If these forms are successfully embodied, the audience will recognize the dance or character as female, and what gender layer lies underneath simply adds to the enjoyment or appreciation of the dancer's skill. When the stakes of the gender-play are higher, the enjoyment of the audience is greater"[39]. Even though it is less impressive than reverse, a female dancer dancing *otokogata* is more appreciated than a female dancer dancing her own gender. Lanki illustrates this by stating that whenever she would dance *otokogata*, the enthusiasm of her colleagues and audience was much greater, rather when she was dancing *onnagata.*[40]

36 Matsuo 2000, 120 in Nakamura & Matsuo 2003, 65

37 Ibid 70

38 Ibid 68

39 Lanki 2010, 98

40 Ibid 98-99

Another contributing factor to why these gendered dances are popular is that it lets the audience escape from reality. As a Takarazuka critic describes within Nakamura & Matsuo's paper concerning Takarazuka fans: "(…)when I see the *otoko-yaku* actors in their endless struggle to distance themselves from [their] femaleness, I enjoy the refreshing thrill of seeing the delicate balancing act between possibility and impossibility."[41] One fan suggests that it did not fit together. "It was that disparity and her extraordinary beauty that caught my eye."[42] It is thus evident that an extra gendered layer on the performance within Japanese dancing styles has the power to bring extra enjoyment to an audience. However it should be noted that aside from the *onnagata* in kabuki in the early days, a dancer does not *become* the gender he or she dances. It is only the embodiment of a certain style of acts that lets the audience know the gender of the dance, which in itself is a space of fantasy.

In this sense, can Japanese traditional dance be considered stereotyping on a gender basis? Letting dancers perform the role of an opposite sex provides an escape from one's gender, which can be considered as liberation from stereotypes. However, as we have seen, the gender of the dance contains movements that are stereotyping in themselves, with female roles dancing more inward, while male roles dance outward. In this sense traditional Japanese dance fits in with other traditional dances: it affirms gender stereotypes, while role reversal is taking place. The dancers are however well aware that these postures and performances are not natural: dancers within Japanese theatre 'perform' a gender consciously.

The next step is to see if this is the case for a modern dance: *yosakoi*. However, in order to be able to analyse the movements of *yosakoi* dance, I first give a more detailed definition of *yosakoi*, as well as an overview of its history.

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41 Tadashi 66-67 in Nakamura & Matsuo 2003

42 Ibid

1.3 *Yosakoi*'s history and development

As I mentioned in the introduction, *yosakoi* is a hybrid modern style of Japanese folk dance.[43] Its main features are the use of *naruko* (鳴子), a wooden clapper, the energetic movements and the large amount of people of which the dancing teams consist.[44] The first mention of *yosakoi* as a dance was with the birth of the Yosakoi Matsuri, a local festival that began in 1954 in the Kôchi prefecture at Tokushima, in order to compete with the annual *Awa-odori* (阿波踊り) festival nearby.[45] *Awa-odori* is a style of traditional Japanese festival dance that has come forth out of *bon-odori* (盆踊り) from Tokushima. *Awa-odori* is danced by large groups of people and the dance contains parts that are exclusively danced by male or female dancers.[46] These are aspects that later found its way into *yosakoi* dance. It is said that for *yosakoi*, in order to compete with empty-handed *Awa-odori*, it was decided to use a wooden clapper that was used in Kôchi at that time to chase away birds: *naruko*. It is for this reason that *naruko* usage is an essential part of *yosakoi* dance.[47] Since a dance can be called *yosakoi* as long as these props are being used, the term *yosakoi* does not say a lot about the style of dance that is being used concretely, even though *yosakoi* has been heavily influenced by *nihon buyô*.[48] Around the 1980's there was a great diversification within music and dance styles, incorporating themes such as rock and samba. In 1992, Hasegawa Gaku, who was a student at Hokkaido University, organised a student-led Yosakoi Soran festival, which then sparked the spread of *yosakoi* dance throughout all of Japan.[49]

43 Yosakoi Toyama website

44 Nakamura 1996, 24

45 Uchida 2013, 22

46 Nakamura 1996, 24

47 Yosakoi Toyama website

48 Uchida 2013, 22

49 Uchida 2013, 23

Hirata (2010), who has analysed ten years of winning contestants of this same festival, identifies four aspects to a *yosakoi* performance. First of all there is the *ishô* (衣装) or costuming. Every year teams think up their own costume, fitting the team's image or the dance's theme. While it at first consisted mostly of yukata, the costuming has now diversified, and easy movable costuming like *happi* (法被) coats have become popular. However recently about every type of costuming has become acceptable. The second aspect is the dance by the *odoriko* (踊り子), which is the word that refers to the dancers. As mentioned before, various styles are incorporated in the dance, such as jazz dance, aerobics, modern dance, kabuki, *nihon buyô* and hip-hop. It is mainstream for the dance to be strong and have impact.[50] The third aspect is the music. For specific festivals a phrase from a local folk song has to be incorporated within the music, such as *yosakoi fushi* (よさこい節) for Yosakoi Matsuri in Kôchi and *soran bushi* (ソーラン節) for the Hokkaido Soran Festival.[51] The fourth aspect is a *jikatasha* (地方車). This is a large decorated truck equipped with sound speakers that is used during parades.[52]

While I do think Hirata has certainly grasped several aspects of *yosakoi* dance, I want to point out two more aspects, that are may be less obvious to an average audience watching a *yosakoi* performance. Based upon my observation and participation I identify two more aspects to a *yosakoi* performance in addition to Hirata's aspects. First of all I identify *ôdôgu* (大道具) or stage setting/scenery. This consists of props such as curtains and parasols. The person waving the flag, called *kishu* (旗手) is also part of this category. The dancers in charge of the *ôdôgu* often have different choreography, or only dance part of the dance.

50 Hirata 2010, 122-123

51 Hirata 2010, 123; Uchida 2013, 23

52 Hirata 2010, 123

The second additional aspect I identify is the *aori* (煽り) or literally translated "influence", which usually consists of one or two persons being the Master of Ceremony (MC). They give the introduction to the audience and say studied phrases during the dance that express the story that is behind it. They usually ride on the *jikatasha* during parades.[53]

Yosakoi is still progressing as we speak.[54] There are still more and more *yosakoi* teams created all over the country, as well as new festivals. While the amount of company-sponsored teams is also on the rise, there is an even greater increase in the amount of student teams. *Yosakoi* in itself has even come to influence newer dancing styles, such as the Kyoto based *Kyôen sodefure!* (京炎そでふれ！) of which Korebrits (2014) has given a detailed analysis.[55] In 2013 Uchida estimated that around 2 million people are dancing *yosakoi* in Japan.[56]

As long as *naruko* are being used, a dance can be called *yosakoi*, however there are some common aspects that performances have, such as the costuming, music, dance, MC, stage-setting and *jikatasha*. Now we can move on to my case study and start to connect *yosakoi* performance and gender. How are masculinity and femininity expressed within *yosakoi*? Is role-reversing taking place and why? Before my analysis, I firstly introduce my research method.

[53] Ibid

[54] Iwai 2003

[55] Korebrits 2014

[56] Uchida 2013, 23

II. Methodology

This chapter consists of three parts. First I explain the research method I used as well as how I entered the field. In the second part I elaborate on the structure of Minato and what activities are being organised through one year. In the third part I give a brief introduction to the questionnaires I used.

2.1 Entering the field

To research how *yosakoi* dance expresses masculinity and femininity and how it deals with gender stereotypes I chose to use participant observation, in order to understand the daily practises of the dance, as well as to get a good grasp of the structure of the team, and become familiar with the movements specific to masculinity and femininity. Because at the time of

joining I already had one year of experience in Japan, and three years of experience in *yosakoi* – of again, one year in Japan – it was relatively easy for me to enter the field as a participant-observer. I joined Kobe student Yosakoi team Minato (神戸学生よさこいチーム 湊) in April 2014. Even though I had been told that I was not required to use honorific language to seniors since I was either their age or older I did so anyway and requested to be treated the same as either other first year. It is for this reason that except for my foreign background, I have experienced the team as a typical Japanese student. I went to university and had a part-time job like most of my fellow teammates. Even though I am European, I do not believe that I have been treated differently from how my Japanese teammates were treated. The only time I felt like I was treated like an exception was when I was allowed to keep my blonde hair – all the other members were forbidden to dye their hair any lighter than dark-brown because the colours the *ishô-han* (衣装班) or costuming-division were planning to order for faux hair where only in these three colours. The reason for doing so is because they thought it would be "kind of wrong" (*nanka chigau*) if I would have to dye my hair brown.

During my eleven-month stay I participated in almost all trainings, performed on festivals, attended the open practices at Kobe University, went on summer camp, participated in festival organisation and became part of the *kikaku-han* (企画班) or planning division. During this time I exchanged experiences and had conversations with various team members. While I did not tape most of these casual conversations, I did keep field notes whenever I found something significant concerning my research question.

2.2 One year with Minato

Kobe Student Yosakoi team Minato is a student-run *yosakoi* team that has been around for five years. It has come forth out of the fellow *yosakoi* team Kobe University Yosakoi Team

Yamabiko (神戸大学よさこいチーム山美鼓). The occasion was that five people of Yamabiko decided they wanted to create a more "serious" team, a team that aims to win prizes at festivals. Contrary to Yamabiko, which is Kobe University student restricted, students from all universities in Kobe can join Minato. It is for this reason that the kanji that is used for Minato, 湊 is "place where people gather". When I entered, I was part of the *godaime* (五代目) or "fifth generation". With the entering of the new first years, the team consisted of about 170 members, of which about one-third was male.

The structure of Minato is similar to that of *Kyôensodefure!* teams that Korebrits describes in her research[57]. Three members represent the team, although within Minato the team-captains and vice-captains are called *daihyô* (代表) and *fuku-daihyô* (副代表). In addition there are *han* (班): divisions that organise the training, create the choreography, concern themselves with music and audio, concern themselves with costuming and props and organise (local) events. The team's motto is to "Deeply move the venue [emotionally]" (会場に感動を). This is a theme that is thoroughly repeated during practice. It was also stipulated in the rule booklet that we received upon our joining, explaining the rules attached to membership of Minato. The dancer's main target is to deeply move the audience who are watching the performance of people dancing with all one's strength.

With the start of the new academic year in April, the members start recruiting new members through organising *shinkan* (新歓) or welcoming activities, such as dinner parties, playing games and open trainings. The aspirant members are also invited to watch Minato perform at a festival. The first-year students formally join in April and have their dance debut in June. This also marks the end of the last year's original performance. For the next two months there are no performances. During this break, the *sakusei-han* (作成班) which is the creating division, creates the new dance. The new dance is firstly performed by the *sakusei-*

57 Korebrits 2014

han within the team around June. Then, the new dance is taught to the other members and debuted in August, after which it is danced until June the following year. During the debut of the new first-year students it will then be danced for the last time.

2.3 Introduction to the questionnaires

My research consists of three parts, each having their own questionnaire attached to them. The first questionnaire concerns what male and female choreography is, as well as gender stereotype related statements. I distributed this questionnaire to *yosakoi* dancers on an exchange event during the Hamamatsu Ganko Yosakoi Matsuri – or HamaYosa, an abbreviation frequently used by *yosakoi* dancers. This festival is held in the Shizuoka prefecture on the main island. The questions I put central in this questionnaire were "what are the gender-specific features of *yosakoi* dance" and "to what extent do *yosakoi* dancers agree to gender related stereotypes". To answer the first question I asked my respondents to fill in three features of what they thought to be typical for male choreography and female choreography. I did not include any ready-made keywords, to be sure to not direct the thoughts of my respondents. To answer the second question I gave a series of statements containing gender stereotypes and opinions about the male/female division of *yosakoi*. I then let my respondents pick a number from 1 (to not agree at all) to 5 (to agree completely) to see to what extent they agreed to stereotypes, or to see what they thought of the division. In addition I let my respondents write their sex (性別), age, to what team they belonged and what part they danced, as well as if they had switched it once.

The second questionnaire I made specifically for the creators of the choreography of the original dance of 2014 for Minato: the *furi-han* (振り班) or choreography division, which is the division responsible for creating new choreography. In the questionnaire I asked what gendered parts they contributed to, and what they wished to express with the gendered parts.

In addition I asked if they thought the choreography they created was "typical" in order to see if there is a 'typical' dancing style for the genders.

The third questionnaire I gave out specifically to female dancers of Minato who had experience in dancing male choreography. What I wanted to find out were the feelings of the dancers while dancing the part, as well as how they felt dancing amongst the male dancers. First of all I let them tick keywords they acquired to their own dancing. The list of keyword contained all the features that were mentioned in the first questionnaire concerning male choreography. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of a series of statements concerning their comfort in dancing the part. Like with the first questionnaire, the respondents had to give a number from 1-5 to state to what extent they agreed.

For the actual questionnaires, please see attached in the appendix.

III. Analysis

This chapter consists of three parts. First of all I will give an explanation concerning the gendered parts within *yosakoi* dance, which is based on my participant observation and the first questionnaire I handed out to members of teams from Honshu, as well as what types of division exist within *yosakoi* teams. The second and third part will talk about these same two subjects but then for my case study. In the second part give a detailed analysis of the movements of the gendered parts within Minato's original dance *yomihana*, where I base myself on the results of my second questionnaire as well. The third part will look at the concrete gendered division and the restrictions, present or absent on dancers based on their gender within Minato, as well as the effects of these restrictions. I base myself here on my third questionnaire, as well as first questionnaire.

The words *otoko-furi* (男振り) and *onna-furi* (女振り) refer to gendered parts within *yosakoi* dance. The word *furi* means as much as "move" or "posture". *Otoko-furi* means "male movements" and refers to choreography of a male gender, while *onna-furi* does the same for female choreography. Since there are no rules for *yosakoi* dance, there are also no fixed requirements for *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi*: some team's dances do not even contain *otoko-furi* or *onna-furi*. However, when present, there are some tendencies that can be indicated when you ask what features *odoriko* acquire to *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi*.

During an exchange event on the first night of Hama Yosa yosakoi festival in Shizuoka, I distributed the first questionnaire concerning the features of *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi*, as well as some additional questions. I managed to get 32 responses. Of the people that responded to my questionnaire, 12 were female while 20 were male. Out of these 3 respondents were international students from Europe and Asia. My respondents were from 8 different teams, of which 6 from Kansai and 2 from Kanto. All of the teams were student teams; my respondents' age varied from 19-25 years old. In the questionnaire I asked them to give three features of what they thought to be specifics for either *otoko-furi* or *onna-furi*. To ... ould fill in their own ... rected by keywords, these ... questionnaire.

... he features of **otoko-furi** *... ged by the number of ... tions.*

Feature: *Otoko-furi*	Number of mentions	Feature: *Onna-furi*	Number of mentions
Strong		Beautiful	22
Cool		Supple	14
Sharp		Cute	13
Prompt		Glamorous	6
Fast		Sex-appeal	5
Wild		Soft	5
Vigour		Slow	3
Impact		Smile	3
Light (rhythm)		Feminine	3
Hard		Finger tips	2
Muscles		Bewitching	2
Voice		Elegant	2
Masculine		Warm	1
Endurance		Round	1
Big		Fun	1
Wide		Sharp	1
Cold		Courteous	1
Low		Female voice	1
Massive		Loose	1
		Sad	1

A first thing that stands out is that the features given by the dancers for *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi* show great contrasts. With the responses for *otoko-furi*, words like "strong", "cool" and "sharp" stand out. Furthermore, the movements are described as "hard", "wild" and "fast". Compared to this *onna-furi* is being categorised as "beautiful", "supple" and "cute". In addition the movements are "glamorous", they contain "sex-appeal" and are "soft" and "slow". Similar to traditional Japanese dancers, there exists great contrast within the features that are deemed to be masculine or feminine, which according to Lanki provide a clear distinction in the signifiers for male and female.[58] However, contrary to traditional Japanese dance, *yosakoi* has not been dominated by a male population. Especially nowadays it is largely women that create *onna-furi* and men that create *otoko-furi*, sometimes with the help of women who have specialised in *otoko-furi* as well. Furthermore, there is one more essential difference between earlier Japanese dances and *yosakoi*: contrary to Japanese theatre dance, the gender of the dancing body plays a role in the part divisions.

Let me elaborate on this. I experienced *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi* for the first time when I spent an exchange year in Nagasaki, where I joined the local *yosakoi* team of the university. The first time I was confronted with the division was around two months after I had joined the team. Since we had no festivals planned for a while, we were instructed with the movements for the original dance of two years ago. While original dance of my exchange year did not contain any *otoko-furi* or *onna-furi*, the two-year old choreography did contain these gendered parts. It was the first time I heard these terms, and I soon found out that this *furi* was gender-specific: it was only learned by and for persons holding the same gender.[59] For the first time,

58 (Lanki 2010, 96).

59 Since gender is being assumed to derive from a person's sex, it would be more correct to use sex-specific. I chose to stick to "gender specific" however, in order to not confuse the reader, since I am talking about the gender of a dance almost continously.

the training group was split up between male dancers and female dancers. I had a hard time learning *onna-furi*, since it was radically different from the strong choreography that was part of the team's dance of that year. I had to let go of the usual strength within my limbs and make smooth movements. I felt it would be easier for me to study *otoko-furi*, which did not require dancers to dance without strength. Further more we were told to show our neck and be charming, which was the last feature I would acquire to myself at that time.

But this division did not mean it was impossible to learn the choreography of the opposite sex. A female member of my generation had studied all the movements of the *otoko-furi*. Similarly a male senior showed he was well capable of dancing *onna-furi*. However, both of them were not allowed to perform this; the local team required their members to conform their dancing part to their gender. In short, it was impossible for me as a female dancer to dance *otoko-furi* at a festival. In teams holding this division, the opposite sex can perform these parts only in high exception.

Sometimes teams who restrict *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi* similar to this team, only insert this division in the form of a *senbatsu* (選抜) or selection. This concretely means that only a select group of dancers is dancing these solo-like performances. Again, it is highly exceptional for someone of the opposite sex to perform this gendered choreography. During my exchange in Kobe I only once witnessed a female dancer dancing the *senbatsu* part of *otoko-furi* amongst other male dancers. She was however already a senior, and part of the division that had created the choreography. In addition this festival was not for a general public, but for other *odoriko*. In all the other performances I witnessed of that same team I never saw another structural exception to this rule, except for the Basara Carnival, of which I will talk later.

Generally the gender of the dancing body is the same as the gender of the performance. In this respect, *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi* within *yosakoi* dance differ radically

from *otokogata* and *onnagata* in *nihon buyô* or *otoko-yaku* and *onna-yaku* in Takarazuka, where the gender of the body does not provide a basis for the part that a dancer has to dance. It shows more similarity to the division of dance within *Awa odori*, the folk dance where *yosakoi* originally intended to compete with: this dance contains *otoko-odori* (男踊り): male dance) and *onna-odori* (女踊り): female dance.[60] Within *yosakoi* dance there is a common exception to this sex conforming rule however. In teams hat have significantly more female members than male members, it is sometimes permitted for female dancers to dance *otoko-furi*, in order to not interrupt the balance of the performance. Since a lot of teams cope with this unbalance it is a fairly common sight to see female dancers performing *otoko-furi* alongside male dancers. However, the opposite is not the case. It is an unwritten rule that male dancers do not perform *onna-furi*, unless for comedic purposes, of which I will give an example when we move into my case study.

Aside from contrasting moves within the choreography we see that *yosakoi* is more rigid when it comes to switching parts. How come male dancers are not allowed to dance *onna-furi*? Is it because there are enough females within a team, or is there an additional reason? Next, I will move into my case study.

3.2 Case study: original dance *yomihana*

In this case study I focus on the *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi* of Minato's original dance of 2014, *yomihana*. I chose this dance because this is the dance that I performed the most during my exchange year. In addition, I have experienced the dance from the first version until the last version. Similar to past performances, female dancers within Minato were permitted to dance *otoko-furi* in *yomihana*, which is why all female dancers including me had to inform the *furi-han* what part they would like to dance after the first presentation. Male dancers

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60 Kawauchi 2007, 145-146

automatically dance *otoko-furi*. Only once a year, during the Basara carnival they are provided the opportunity to perform *onna-furi*.

From my dancing debut I chose to dance *otoko-furi* because the movements appealed to me the most. Out of my thirty-five[61] performances I performed *onna-furi* only twice.

With the first presentation of the first version of *yomihana*, all dancers received a booklet wherein the thoughts of the people who had come up with this year's costume, music and dance expressed their feelings behind it. The dance *yomihana* is about spirits crossing over to the other world. The dance consists of four parts. The first part is called *yamiyo* (闇夜): dark night. In this part all dancers are dressed in black, except for the dancers dancing the *shironosuke*[62], who are spirits. According to the dance booklet the black was inspired by "deep darkness". The white costume expresses the spirits. At the end of the part rice paper doors are being closed and the front dancers put their hands through the holes. When the screens open, everyone has become a white spirit. This is the start of the second *tawamure* (戯れ) or joking part, which is the part where the spirits decide to prank everyone before crossing over to the other world, or the realm of the dead. It is within this part that there is a division between *otoko-* and *onna-furi*. These groups join in the third part called *sanzu no kawa* (三途の川), which is the river where the dead spirits definitely cross over. In this part there is a *senbatsu* part for *onna-furi* dancers. This means that not all *onna-furi* dancers dance this part, but just a select group. The *onna-furi* dancers, who dance with a blue veil, express spirits that make the hard decision to leave their earthly life behind. Meanwhile the other dancers act out the scenery. After the veil dancers draw back, the spirits make a prayer and then continue into the last part called *gokuraku* (極楽) meaning paradise. The costume

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61 This is a rough estimation

62 This part had long and difficult kanji I unfortunately forgot.

changes to blue and gold, as the creators of the costume associated this with paradise. The dance ends with the spirits who have crossed over expressing their joy to be in the paradise.

Next I will analyse how masculinity and femininity are being expressed in the movements by zooming in on the *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi* within this dance. In addition to the movements, I also analyse the lines of the *aori*, since the lines uttered give meaning to the dance. As Batson, who investigated *nihon buyô* puts it: "[the song text] holds the key to understanding the dance, so that the dancers are able to convey the meaning in a performance."[63] The section *onna-furi* consists of an extra *senbatsu* part: the veil choreography. This section makes use of my second questionnaire I distributed to members of the *furi-han*, to understand their creating intentions, as well as that what they wanted to express with the movements.

3.2.1 *Otoko-furi*

Movements

Minato's *otoko-furi* contains three different parts within the choreography. There are a main part and two side parts. For my analysis I will focus on the main part. I have captured three representative moves for *otoko-furi*. The first movement is that of the opening. The second is the movement that is taking place in the middle of the part. The last movement is the closing move. The description I give is the "correct" one, as it is in line with what the *furi-han* explained to us when we first studied the dance. On some pictures there are some dancers visible that do not match the description; these are mistakes on the dancer's part.

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63 Batson 2005, 66

Figure 1.1: The opening move of yomihana's otoko-furi. *Courtesy of Minato OneDrive*

In the first picture the opening move is visible. From the moment it starts the dancer pulls in his limbs and then strikes this pose. The dancer has his weight on his left foot while the right foot is stretched. The right arm is bent and stuck out in front of the upper body. The left arm is in the same position in the side. The upper body is slightly tilting towards the front. The chin is lowered and the eyes are glaring towards the audience.

Figure 1.2: The middle-move of otoko-furi. *Courtesy of Minato OneDrive*

The pose in the second picture is part of a movement where the arms are first held out in the front, after which they are stretched open. The dancer holds again his or her legs in a spread position with the weight on left. The left arms are stretched vertically as high as possible, while the lower arm is stretched as low as possible. There is strength in both arms and hands. The dancers face is looking at the audience, with the mouth opened uttering the phrase "Do-rya", a common call during *yosakoi* dance.

In the third the finishing move is pictured. The dancer jumps in the air and then lands on this position. The body weight is again put on the left leg. The hips are lowered. Both arms have strength within them, and the feet are flat. The hands are balled to fists. In addition the dancer's jaw is aggressively heightened while looking with the face held straight towards the audience.

Figure 1.3: The finishing move of otoko-furi. *Courtesy of Minato OneDrive*

Aori-*lines*

いざ、幕開け！

Now, the curtain rises!

さあさあ見さらせ！

Come on show it!

どーりゃ！

Do-rya!

これぞ男の花道よ

This is a male's way to the stage

The *aori* part accompanying the *otoko-furi* contains a lot of commanding language. Furthermore, the text contains a lot of shouts and exclamations, such as "*dorya!*" "*Iza*!" and "*Saa, saa*!". It also contains the particle "*zo*" which is considered to be masculine language. In addition the word "male" is explicitly mentioned. The words are pronounced hard and shouting. This part is usually spoken by a male *aori*. However in the cases that the *aori* is done by a female dancer, she pitches her voice low and hard in a similar way to a male's voice.

Overall

In the questionnaire the words "strong", "cool" and "sharp" were the features that were granted to *otoko-furi* the most. Members of the *furi-han* explained that with this part, they wanted to express "manly strength", especially within the main part of the choreography. Within Minato's *otoko-furi* this "strength" is expressed through wide movements strength in the arms. In all of the three movements, the legs are wide apart, which aligns with the word

"wide" that has been used to describe *otoko-furi* as well. "Cool" is a hard concept to objectively acquire to something but during the dance we were told we had to look as if we were going to kill the audience (殺すぞ - *korosu zo!*). The word "sharp" that my respondents gave comes to expression in the fast movements of *otoko-furi*. In order to get a view of what "typical" *otoko-furi* looks like, I asked two male members who created the *otoko-furi* if they felt like they created typical choreography. The first respondent did not feel like they made typical *otoko-furi*, rather he felt as if they had created traditional *minato-furi* (湊振り) – choreography that is typical to Minato's dancing style, since he felt Minato's choreography is not as "macho" (男臭い *otokokusai*) as other teams. However, the other male member did feel like it was typical for *otoko-furi*. That these answers do not align illustrates once again the difficulty to concretely define *otoko-furi* movements.
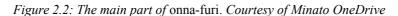
3.2.2 *Onna-furi*

Movements

Like the *otoko-furi* part, Minato's *onna-furi* consists of a main part and two side-parts. Again, I focus on the main part, whereof I have taken three representative moves. The first is part of the starting move, which is a skipping step towards the front. The second move comes right into the middle. The third is the closing move of the part.

Figure 2.1: The opening move of onna-furi. *Courtesy of Minato OneDrive*

With the first move, all dancers skip to the front while dancing on the tip on their toes. Both arms are curved and the dancers upper body makes a circular movement, while the left leg is lifted. The head sways alongside the upper body. The body is kept supple. The face is kept towards the audience and the mouth is smiling. The hands are kept loose.

Figure 2.2: The main part of onna-furi. *Courtesy of Minato OneDrive*

During the second move the part splits in a main and side part. With the main part the dancer stretches out her arms while standing on the tip of her toes after which she slowly falls in the position depicted here. Her feet are crossed and the knees bend, with the toes facing the

outside. The dancer holds her elbows facing outside in the length and in front of her face. Her fingers are clutched. The face looks at the audience, and the mouth is curved in a smile

Figure 2.3: The finishing move of onna-furi. *Courtesy of Minato OneDrive*

The last move is part of the finishing move. The dancer puts her weight on her front feet and then jumps backwards, as if being pulled by something. This requires the dancer to dance on the tip of her toes. All the bodyweight is placed on the right leg, while the left leg is bent, with the knee held outward. The right arm is stretched in front of the body with the index finger slightly pointing outward. The left arm is held diagonally backward, with the fingers in the same position.

Aori *lines*

The *aori* part under the *onnafuri* is as following:

可愛く乙女は一声を合わせて

Maidens cutely align their voices

時に可憐に、時に怪しく

Sometimes sweet, sometimes bewitching

舞いて咲かすのは、女の花道

Dancing and flowering is a woman's way to the stage

Compared to the *aori* for the *otoko-furi*, that of the *onna-furi* is much more calm, and the wording is more polite. The female dancers are described as "maidens". In addition the words "sweet" and "bewitching" mark the dance, aligning with the idea behind the choreography. Furthermore the word "flowering" is used, implying that females are like flowers. This part is almost always spoken by a female *aori*, who pitches her voice a little bit higher to make it sound cute (可愛い *kawaii*).

Overall

According to two members of the *sakusei-han*, the *onnafuri* was created with two images in mind. The first one is "cuteness" (可愛いさ *kawaiisa*), which mostly comes to expression within the side part. The second is "charming" (怪しさ *ayashisa*) and "bewitching" (妖艶 *yôen*). These are expressed within the centre part of the *onna-furi*. A female dancer of the *furi-han* elaborated that it was the "kind of bewitching with eroticism in it. If you would express it with a colour, it would be something sexy, like purple." This same colour is also part of the make-up pallet for *onna-furi*. In addition she said they wanted the image of Mine Fujiko, a character from Lupin III who uses her attractiveness to fool her targets. During the main *furi* you stretch out your hands from your neck, and walk. She told the female dancers that they should walk and feel like Elsa from the movie "Frozen". Adapting to that it was decided that the side part would be referred to as Anna. In addition, the side part has been

created to "appeal to the audience" as much as possible. Another female member commented that the choreography gradually moves from cute to bewitching, beautiful *onna-furi*. This aligns with the words "beautiful", "supple" and "cute" mentioned the most as features of *onna-furi*.

3.2.3 Selection: Veil

Movements

Within *yomihana* there is an extra selection part for *onna-furi*. This is a part that not all dancers dance. For every performance a new selection is being chosen. Again, I have isolated three different movements.

Figure 3.1: Opening move of the veil part. Courtesy of Minato OneDrive

The first movement is part of the opening. While the rest of the dancers pull back and regroup in the back, the veil dancers rise to their feet and slowly start to dance to the front of the stage. The dancers have their weight on their right leg on the front of their foot. The right arm is bend, and their fingers are cupped, even though the index finger is slightly tilted. The left arm is stretched, with the fingers in the same position. The left leg is bend backwards, and leaves a little space between the thighs. The face is looking away from the audience in the
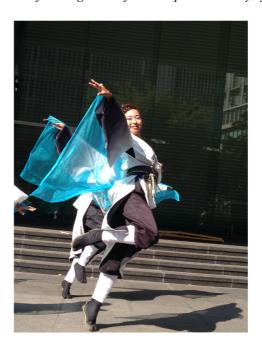
direction of the right hand, exposing the neck to the audience. The expression of the face is
one of sadness.

Figure 3.2: Veil part. Courtesy of Minato OneDrive

In the second movement the dancers back is turned towards the audience. The arm
closest to the centre is bend, and the face is also looking in this direction. The other arm is
held in this same length. The bodyweight is placed on the inner leg, the other leg is stretched
towards the ground. The head of the dancers is turned towards their hand. The movements are
slow.

Figure 3.3: The finishing move of the veil part. Courtesy of Minato OneDrive

The third movement marks the end of the veil part, and expresses the last part for the crossover. The dancers spin on the tip of outer foot while letting their inner arm come up. The upper body is tilted towards the front and the shoulders are drawn back, the bust stuck to the front. The inner leg is lifted. The face smiles for the first time.

Aori-*lines*

広がる水面、佇む影
A water surface is spreading out, the silhouettes loiter
離れがたきと振り向けど
They turn around, finding it hard to leave
戻りて交わることはなし
They will not go back and meet [again]
さだめを知りて、別れを決める
They know their destiny, and decide their farewell

This part is calmly and emotionally spoken by the female *aori*. Contrary to the *aori* part during the *onna-furi* part, the voice is not pitched higher, and the words are spoken slower. Contrary to the earlier parts these lines contain not as much information concerning femininity. Rather, they tell the story that is being expressed within the dance.

Overall

According to members of the *furi-han*, this part had to stand in contrast to the earlier *onna-furi*. The image for the veil part was that of the *sanzu no kawa* [River of Three-Crossings] that the dead must cross before they can arrive within the afterlife. For this part the image they created was "heartrending". The choreography had to be "calm" (静か *shizuka)* and beautiful to express the calmly streaming river. This is in line with the lines of text that can be heard in the music. One girl remarked that she wanted the audience to be overcome by the dancers "bewitchingness" and "elegance" during this part. The dancers are required to have a look of sadness on their face, except for the last move. In addition, the neck – which is considered erotic in Japanese culture, is being shown explicitly. The movements in the veil-*furi* are slow and show influences of rhythmical gymnastics and ballet.

Again, when I asked if they thought the *furi* they created was typical for *onna-furi*, the answers were mixed. Of the *furi-han members* one of them thought they created typical *onna-furi* because they used influences of ballet and rhythmic gymnastics. Another member thought, exactly because they used these influences, that she had not created typical *onna-furi*. These responses once again underline that there are no fixed movements for *onna-furi*.

3.2.4 Contrasting moves

Looking at the movements and MC it is safe to say that the distinction within the *furi* is largely based upon contrast. *Onna-furi* has rounder movements and "lighter" movements; there are more curves within arms and bodies, and for the larger part the dance is danced on the tip of the toes. *Otoko-furi* has more abrupt movements and is danced with flat feet. In addition there is more strength and tension in the body compared to *onna-furi*, and the expression is more aggressive; *otoko-furi* is not supposed to smile once during their part, contrary to the non-veil *onna-furi*. What furthermore strikes is that except for the veil part none of the *otoko-furi* or *onna-furi* parts really plays an essential part in the overall story that

is being told in the dance. As the creators have elaborated, they sought to either express "manly strength" or "cuteness" and "charm". In short, within *yosakoi* dance "strength" is attributed to be a male property, while "cuteness" and "charm" are deemed to be female properties. Especially in the *onna-furi* it is clear that the creators explicitly seek to charm the audience, which I interpret as a form of the "sex-appeal" that was mentioned in the questionnaire results. We can say that the movements that are being defined as male and female are highly stereotypical. *Otoko-furi* keeps strength in their limbs, contains fast, strong movements and is danced on flat feet, being active. *Onna-furi* is danced supple, contains round movements and is danced on tipped toes, keeping the body more passive. Leaving the movements aside, next I will look at how *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi* works during Minato training. How are these parts concretely divided? What does the execution of these stereotyped movements of the opposite choreography mean to the position of dancers?

3.3 *Furi* and role reversal

Minato knows two types of training. First of all there are the official trainings that take place twice a week, with all members. Secondly there are free campus practises, meaning dancers can come and go whenever they want. No instruction is being given, however usually seniors help their juniors whenever they are being asked.

In the weekly trainings, when *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi* are being studied or explained, the group is split according to the part that dancers dance. The *onna-furi* group consists of only female dancers, while the *otoko-furi* group is mixed, in both instructing members and dancing members. During my stay I identified rivalry between the groups during practice. For example, when the *otoko-* and *onna-furi* training part was announced, the groups would get together, form a circle and yell their own part, for example "*Onna! Onna!*" Once, during training our male *furi-han* member told us we should not lose to the *onna-furi*. He then let us

turn around and scream as hard as we could towards the *onna-furi* group, who happily

accepted the challenge and did the same to us later during the practise.

3.3.1 Females dancing *otoko-furi*

In this way, the female dancers dancing *otoko-furi* have a double role; their "rivals"

consist entirely of members of their own sex. Because of this double role I asked the female

otoko-furi dancers in a questionnaire how they felt dancing *otoko-furi*. I gave a series of

statements of which they had to indicate to what extent they agreed by giving a number from

1 – not agreeing at all, to 5 –fully agreeing. The number 3 indicates neutral. I received a

response from 15 members. 9 of my respondents danced *otoko-furi* as a basis. The other 6

consists of dancers dancing *onna-furi* who have experienced dancing *otoko-furi* a few times.

In order to get an image of how they felt themselves within the *otoko-furi* group I asked to

what extent they agreed to the following statements.

Table 2: The extent to which female dancers performing otoko-furi *agree to statements concerning*

otoko-furi *ranking from 1-5*

Statement	*Otoko-furi*	*Onna-furi*	Average
Otoko-furi is difficult	3,56	3,83	3,67
I can come along with the team's men just fine.	2,87	2,00	2,47
Otoko-furi suits me	3,33	1,83	2,73
When I dance *otoko-furi* I can forget that I am female	1,56	1,33	1,47
I am being accepted by the team's men	3,22	3,67	3,40
Even though I dance *otoko-furi*, I still think I'm female	3,44	3,33	3,40
My *otoko-furi* does not lose to that of the men	2,11	1,67	1,93

From these results I conclude that the majority of my fifteen respondents feel *otoko-*

furi is difficult, and that they face difficulties when it comes to coming along with the team's

men. The group that is normally dancing *onna-furi* feels it is more difficulty than dancers

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dancing *otoko-furi* as a basis: the same *onna-furi* group also indicates that they do not think

that *otoko-furi* suits them. Then again, this group feels slightly stronger that the team's male

dancers accept them. Aligning with the not "becoming" the gender that one dances, the group

does not agree that dancing *otoko-furi* makes her forget that she is female. Then again, the

group as a whole does not think their dancing can be measured alongside those of the men,

indicating that female dancers dancing *otoko-furi* feel inferior to male dancers dancing male

parts.

This does not mean that all Minato's female dancers have a lack of confidence in their

otoko-furi. On the contrary, once after training I walked to the station with a third-year female

dancer, who had danced *otoko-furi* for years. She expressed that she had confidence in her

otoko-furi, as well as that she would dance *otoko-furi* to the very last moment she would be in

the team, in reaction to the idea that Minato might forbid female dancers to dance *otoko-furi*.

She said that she lost in no way to the dancing of male dancers. In addition she expressed her

frustration concerning the required hairstyle for females dancing *otoko-furi*. With *yomihana*, it

was the case that even though they dance *otoko-furi*, female dancers were required to use faux

hair, just like the dancers of *onna-furi*. My *senpai* expressed her frustration over this. First of

all because she had to wear it, even though she had short hair. Secondly because she felt as if

this requirement served to further distinguish the female *otoko-furi* dancers from the male

dancers, as if they did not belong in there. As she said: "Isn't it the work of *ishô* to make all

dancers look the same?"

This is an illustration of the most important difference between *yosakoi* and traditional

Japanese theatre: the notion that the display of the opposite gender on a body is not desirable

to look at. In this case, female dancers dancing *otoko-furi* are not aesthetically desirable

within *yosakoi*. In an interview I had with a member of Yamabiko, a team without *otoko-* or

onna-furi, the interviewee said that she thought it "looked better" if all the *otoko-furi* parts

were done by male dancers. "It looks cool when only male dancers dance *otoko-furi*, because they have impact", thus implying that *otoko-furi* looks less good when females dance it along male dancers. In addition, this statement implies that male dancers are "naturally better" at *otoko-furi*. Earlier I had heard similar opinions. When I asked a male first-year, who was applying for a position in the *furi-han*, what he would like to do with Minato's current *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi* division, he said that he thought it was undesirable that female dancers dance along with *otoko-furi*. This because this would give an overall "kind" (優しい *yasashii*) and "soft" (柔らかい *yawarakai*) impression, which is the opposite of the strong and manly image that is being strived for when dancing *otoko-furi*. This statement implies that female dancers simply do not fit in, because their femaleness gives them a "kind" and "soft" impression. A few months earlier I had asked the aspirant head *furi-han* "J" what he would like to do with the current *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi* division as well. He did not go as far as saying it was undesirable that female dancers dance *otoko-furi*, but he said that he would like to make a *senbatsu* part which would be only be danced by male dancers. When I further inquired if it would be completely impossible for female dancers to dance it he said that "she would have to be very good" in order to participate. When I further inquired if male dancers would also have to be very good in order to dance this part he hesitated, but in the end did not provide an answer. I interpreted this as that only the "very good" female dancers, who have to make 'unnatural' movements, can get to the level of average male dancers, who are 'naturally' good in the movements they dance. From these accounts I conclude that especially male dancers rather have *otoko-furi* exclusively danced by male dancers, than female dancers. This is underscored by my questionnaire I gave out during the Hama Yosa exchange event. To the statement "*Otoko-furi* should only be danced by males", the average male agreement[64] (2,63) was 0,86 higher than the female response (1,77).

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[64] 1 to not agree at all, 5 to completely agree

We have seen that even though the female dancers in Minato's *otoko-furi* are being accepted to a certain extent, the role holds a certain ambiguity. The gendered dance parts holds on to stereotypes and gives female dancers dancing *otoko-furi* the feeling that they are inferior next to male dancers. Next I will focus on the reverse, the position of *onna-furi* within the team, and especially in regard to male dancers.

3.3.2 Males dancing *onna-furi*

Not being provided with a choice, without exception all male dancers dance *otoko-furi* within Minato. Again, it is not impossible to learn *onna-furi* as a male dancer; on the contrary. Some male dancers occasionally dance along when the *onna-furi* part comes by in the music before or after practise. The first year dancers mostly parody *onna-furi*. Whenever this happened surroundings would exclaim words as gross (キモい *kimoi*), eww (嫌だ *iyada*), or stop it (止めて *yamete*). This implies that it is weird or "unappealing" for men to dance with charm or cuteness, or at least attempt it. Older-year male members usually dance it more serious. In most cases they have already performed *onna-furi* once during the Basara Carnival. In this case surroundings do not provide commentary, unless it is to improve their dancing. Female dancers dancing *onna-furi* almost exclusively do this commentary. However, this learning and giving commentary only takes place outside of regular practice. Within official trainings *onna-furi* is not being taught to male dancers.

That it is not yet accepted for males to dance *onna-furi* is underscored by the results of my Hama Yosa questionnaire. On average, all my respondents gave the statement "It is weird for a man to dance *onna-furi*" a 2,88 out of 5(to completely agree). This weirdness is probably what makes it acceptable for male dancers to dance *onna-furi* at the Basara Carnival event, where everything is reversed or performed for comedic purposes. Male dancers were encouraged to perform the veil choreography with attributes other than a veil, such as scarves,

plastic bags, coats etc. In addition the dancers had not been provided the opportunity to learn *onna-furi* during the training.

Male dancers from Minato said they wanted to dance *onna-furi* since it provided them with the opportunity to make movements that were absent within *otoko-furi*. By practising movements that are the complete opposite, they thought it enabled them to become better dancers. All dancers admired the near-perfectly executed *onna-furi* dance of the former head of the *furi-han* called "Z". This contrasts with limited admiration for perfectly executed *otoko-furi* by female dancers. This aligns with Lanki's preposition that the harder it is for a body to become the opposite, the more enjoyment an audience has[65], even though with *yosakoi* there is less appreciation for gender reversed dancing. What dancers probably respected was that *onna-furi* is considerably harder to do than *otoko-furi* because of the more advanced technique and details, of which dancers earlier commented they had to put in details until the fingertips.

Then again, male dancers are not allowed perform *onna-furi* as part of a regular performance. In addition, that the opportunity is there does not mean that all male dancers have tried *onna-furi*. A lot of male dancers have never danced *onna-furi*, either having no interest, or feeling ashamed. In the same conversation I had with "J", I asked about men dancing *onna-furi*. I was of the opinion that if male dancers would practise, they could dance *onna-furi* as good as the female dancers. He however rejected this; the idea that there would be big sturdy male dancers dancing amongst the female dancers was visually unappealing to him. "Can you imagine what it would look like if "B" and "P" would dance amongst the female dancers?" (B and P referring to two specific broad first year male dancers.)

Contrary to the position of the female dancers dancing *otoko-furi*, male dancers dancing *onna-furi* have a more difficult position. They are not provided the opportunities that

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65 Lanki 2010, 98

female dancers are provided, and cannot perform unless for comedic purposes. Then again I did once witness a first year male dancer who refused to learn *otoko-furi* and chose to learn *onna-furi* instead during training, called "W". It happened when we were taught Minato's original dances from earlier years. "W" earlier had told us that he thought *otoko-furi* was difficult, which I also judged from the expression on his face whenever he practised the choreography. "W" also was one of the few who often tried to dance along the female dancers outside of practice. Initially, he danced *onna-furi* as a parody, just like the other first years, but later more serious, to the extent that his surroundings would try and help him improve his movements. "W" said he did not have the opportunity to dance the past performance anyway, so it would not matter if he would learn *onna-furi* instead of *otoko-furi* anyway. While there was some initial protest, the team left him be. "W" was regarded as a special case. Whenever I asked other dancers, everyone agreed that his love for *onna-furi* was enormous (すごい *sugoi*). During Basara Carnival he even went as far as performing with a *yosakoi* team of an all-female university, famous for its cute and feminine choreographies. When I asked "J", who had become head of the *furi-han* by that time, about "W" learning *onna-furi* during practise later, "J" said that it would be fine for him for now, but that "W" would have to learn *otoko-furi* if he were to perform the dance. Thus, despite "W" having a preference for *onna-furi* he was denied dancing his favourite part.

3.3.3 Discussion

At this point we see a radical difference concerning gender and the execution of the dance with Japanese theatre forms in my literature review. Even though both the theatre

dances and *yosakoi* contain stereotyped movements, it is considered visually unappealing to have dancers of a mixed gender in gendered dancing parts of *yosakoi*. Reflecting on the position of female *otoko-furi* dancers as well as the stereotypes are concerned, *yosakoi* dance contains a lot of assumptions and stereotypes based on a dancer's sex. I once had a discussion with "Z" about the reason why there was such a thing called *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi*, even though female dancers often danced along with *otoko-furi*. He told me he felt it was weird to name choreography based on gender, and that he would not mind if Minato's next year dance would not have any *otoko-furi* or *onna-furi* at all. However with a new *furi-han* head willing to create a *senbatsu* just for male dancers, and a *furi-han* member feeling female dancers dancing *otoko-furi* undesirable, this former head's opinion stood on his own. That this opinion is minor is again illustrated by my Hama Yosa questionnaire.

Statement	Male	Female	Overall
Otoko-furi should only be danced by males	2,63	1,77	2,28
It's weird to let *onna-furi* be danced by males	2,84	2,92	2,88
I want to get rid of *otoko-furi & onna-furi*	1,42	1,31	1,38
Onna-furi is more difficult	2,68	3,31	2,94
Dancers should dance the part they think that suits them the best	3,21	4,31	3,66
In order to make a good performance, it is necessary to divide in *otoko-furi & onna-furi*	3,74	3,46	3,63

on a

Table 3: Sexism statements agreement scale from 1-5 by 32 odori-ko

The statement "I want to get rid of *otoko-furi* & *onna-furi*" received a low percentage of 1,38. This contradicts with the high 3,66 average of dancers agreeing that a dancer should dance the part that he or she thinks suits him- or herself. Regarding this statement, the average of female dancers lies significantly higher than the male dancers at 4,31. However both parties agreed with 3,63 that in order to make a good performance, it is necessary to divide choreography in to *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi*. This shows that the majority of *yosakoi* dancers stands positive concerning this division. There is also quite a difference between male and female dancers when it comes to *onna-furi* being more difficult, though this could have to do with the fact that most female dancers have tried both dancing styles. What at least remains clear, is that *yosakoi* dance requires their dancers to conform to the gender of their body.

Conclusion

In my thesis I have elaborated on gender related stereotypes existing within *yosakoi* dance. Gender stereotypes exist through countless imitation of so-called 'acts', which are copied and then naturalised, even though these performances are based on nothing. This enables a body that holds the opposite sex to perform the opposite gender. Within Japanese traditional dance this phenomenon is also present, where the dancing of specific postures Japanese theatre provides stereotypes to how specific genders should act. Through the dancing of postures specific for a gender, the audience recognises the gender of the dance, regardless of the body of the dancer, which brings a high level of enjoyment to the audience. Even though there is a less specific regulation in determining if a certain posture is male or female, like traditional Japanese theatre, *yosakoi* is making use of these gender stereotypes, by characterising certain movements or atmospheres as typical for *otoko-furi* or *onna-furi*. While words like "cool" are attributed to *otoko-furi*, words like "cute" and "beautiful" are associated with *onna-furi*. Concretely expressed in the dance of my case study this means that *otoko-furi* contains sharp and wide movements, expressing strength and aggression, while *onna-furi* contains slower and round movements, expressing sex appeal and beauty. However contrary to traditional Japanese theatre it is undesirable for someone to perform the opposite gendered part; dancers are to conform their part to their gender as much as possible. If the opposite is the case it is either because there are not enough male dancers – in the case of female dancers dancing *otoko-furi* – or because it is deemed comic – in the case male dancers dance *onna-furi*. Having a gender specific dance part danced by dancers of that same gender is considered to be most ideal and visually appealing.

The team of my case study forced male members to conform their dance to their gender, as they were not to be taught *onna-furi* during practise. At the same time female dancers dancing *otoko-furi* are being accepted, even though there have been individuals who have voiced their opinion against this division because female dancers amongst male dancers

gives a "soft" non-masculine impression. Female dancers dancing *otoko-furi* feel insecure and inferior to their male counterparts, because they do not feel like they can come along with the male dancers, who are naturally better at their performance. Male dancers dancing *onna-furi* are regarded as a "special case" or as "gross" when they try to dance with cuteness and sex-appeal, since these are features exclusively reserved to female dancers.

Thus, based on my research, if you answer the question "is *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi yosakoi* dance affirming or resisting gender stereotypes" the answer is affirming. Not only do moves of *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi* categorise a genders as passive and active, it also assumes that the holders of the same gender of the dance are better at the execution. While performers of traditional Japanese theatre are aware that either of the movements are unnatural, *yosakoi* dancers are not, thus continuing to put dancers in a category based on their gender.

I do have to note that my research is limited. First of all comparative research between different teams from different regions would be necessary to see if my findings are region specific; it could be possible that teams from Japan's other islands, Shikoku, Kyushu, Hokkaido or Okinawa have different opinions on what movements are male or female. It could also be the case that non-student teams have different divisions and opinions. In addition, since dance is often researched within a cultural context, additional research will have to be conducted on a global scale to see if the opinions concerning *otoko-furi* and *onna-furi* are Japan specific.

That the result can be different in a different region and culture, I will illustrate with the following anecdote. Once, the *yosakoi* team I joined in the Netherlands discussed with its members if they would make a calm part, danced with a fan, only restricted for female dancers. While the members who had created the part strongly were in favour of this, part of the other members were not. It sparked a big discussion concerning gender and the freedom to dance what everyone wants. Our male team-captain's opinion became the overriding factor.

He stated he thought the part looked awesome and that he wanted to have the chance to dance it as well. In his opinion, refusing male dancers the chance to dance this part was plain gender discrimination.

Glossary of terms

Awa-odori 阿波踊り– "Awa dance" traditional Japanese folk dance from Tokushima.

Aori 煽り – "influence" person in charge of the MC during a yosakoi performance

Bon-odori 盆踊り– folk dance danced during the O-bon, a Japanese summer festival where the dead come temporarily back to the living.

Daihyô 代表– "Representative" Team-captain

Fuku- 副一 – "vice"

Furi 振り – "movement" "posture" refers to choreography

Fushi 節– "melody"

Han 班 – "division" *ishô-[*costuming] *furi-* [choreography] *sakusei- [*creating]

Happi 法被 – Traditional Japanese coat

Ishô 衣装 – Costume, costuming

Jikatasha 地方車 – Decorated truck carrying sound equipment, usually used during *yosakoi* parades

Kata 方– "form"

Kabuki theatre – form of traditional Japanese theatre were all roles are played and danced by male actors.

Kikaku 企画 – Planning

Naruko 鳴子– wooden clapper used in *yosakoi* dance

Nihon buyô 日本舞踊– (Traditional) "Japanese dance"

Ôdôgu 大道具 – stage setting or props used during *yosakoi* performances

Odoriko 踊り子– "dancing child" refers to *yosakoi* dancers.

Onna-furi 女振り– "Female movements" refers to parts danced by female dancers in *yosakoi* dance

Onnagata 女方– 1. Gendered set of movements expressing the female in *kabuki, noh* or

nihon buyô 2. Male *kabuki* actor dancing the female role

Onna-yaku 女役– Female role in Takarazuka theatre 2. Actress playing a female role in Takarazuka theatre.

Otoko-furi 男振り– "Male movements" refers to parts danced by male dancers in yosakoi dance

Otokogata 男方– 1. Gendered set of movements expressing the male in *kabuki, noh* or *nihon buyô*.

Otoko-yaku 男役– 1. Male role in Takarazuka theatre 2. Actress dancing the male role in Takarazuka theatre.

Senbatsu 選抜– "selection" -

Shôji 障子–[rice paper doors]

Takarazuka Revue – form of Japanese theatre where all roles are played and danced by female actors.

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Appendix: Questionnaires

1. 男・女振りアンケート

Ｑ１何性別ですか　男／女／中

Ｑ２年齢＿＿＿

Ｑ３チーム名を教えてください＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

Ｑ４チームの今年の曲に男・女振りがありますか。有　　無＝Ｑ８に進んでください

Ｑ５チームで何振りを踊ることが選択できますか。
ア．できる　イ．できない　ウ．女性しかできない　工．他＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

Ｑ６基本何パートを踊っていますか。　男　女

Ｑ７パートを変えたことありますか。その理由も教えてください。

　＿＿＿

Ｑ８過去演舞に男・女振りありましたか。なかった場合、どうして入れたか教えてください。現在なしが前あった場合、どうしてなくなったか教えてください。

　　　有　無　＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

Ｑ９別のチームで男・女振りを踊ったことがありますか。ありましたらそのチーム名を教えてください。

　　　有＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿　－
　　　無＝Ｑ１１に進んでください

Ｑ１０これは自分の基本パートと異なりましたか。　ア．はい　イ．いいえ

Ｑ１１自分が思っている男・女振りの特徴を三つあげてください

男振り	1.	2.	3.
女振り	1.	2.	3.

Ｑ１２最後に数字で下の意見にどの程度同意することを書いてください。

1	2	3	4	5
全く不同意				全く同意

1男振りを男性だけに踊らせるべき。（　）
2女振りを男性に踊らせたらおかしい。（　）
3男・女振りをなくしたい。（　）
4女振りの方は難しい。（　）
5性別に関係なく、踊り子は自分が一番合っていると思っているパートを踊らせるべき（　）
6良い演舞を作るため、男・女振りのパート分けが必要。（　）

ご協力ありがとうございました！

２．2014年振り斑男／女振りアンケート
協力頂きまして、誠にありがとうございます。
＊具体例をあげるために、表2014はみは使い、どのよう
に男振り、女振りは構成されているか及び何がブリーが作られているは集中しています。

＊次の次の段階は踊り子、及び斑長さんが男、女振りはどのよう
に認識するかに対いに調査することです。

＊最も知りたいのは合宿振り編までにの変化です。

1. 何性別ですか

O 男
O 女
O その他

2. 基本的に何パートを踊りますか。

O 男
O 女

3. パートを変えたことがありますか。その理由も教えてください

O あります
O ありません
理由＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

4. ２０１４年のオリジンル演舞に何パート作りに貢献したことがありますか。

□ 男振りメイン

□ 男振りサイド

□ 女振りエルサ

□ 女振りアナ

□ □れ後半　男振り

□ □れ後半　女振り

□ ベイル

5.
次の質問は振り作りについてです。貢献した振り作りで、各パートで何をイメージして作りましたか。出来るだけ詳しく説明してください。

6. 自分が貢献した振りは典型的な男・女振りだと思いますか。理由も教えてください。

O はい
O いいえ
理由＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

7.
踊り子は何気分・感情で貢献した格パートを踊ると思いますか。それとも、どのような気分・感情で踊って欲しいと思いますか。

8.
お客さんは貢献したパートを見て、各パートでどのように思って欲しいですか。どのように感動して欲しいですか。

9. ご協力いただき、誠にありがとうございます！何か質問／コメントがありましたら書いてください。

3. ２０１４年男振り踊ったある女子踊り子

1. 男振りはいつから踊りましたか。

○ 一回生のデビュ□□か□
○ 一回生の年のオリジナル演舞から
○ 二回生のオリジナル演舞から

2. 男振りは何回位踊りましたか。

○ 1 回〜3 回位
○ 3 回〜10 回位
○ 基本男振りを踊っています

3. どうして男振りを踊ろうとしましたか。

4. 次に、どれくらい同意するか〇を付けてください。

	1 全く同意	2	3	4	5 全く不同意
男振りは難しい					
平気にチームの男性について来られます					
男振りの方は自分に合っています					
男振りを踊ると、女だということが忘れられる					
チームの男性に受け入られています					
男振りを踊っても私は女らしいと思います					
女振りに憧れています					
私の男振りは男子に負けていません					

5.
以下の言葉のどちらは、男振りを踊る自分の気分を表現していますか。
例：男振りを踊ると私は ＿＿＿ と思う。私の男振りに ＿＿＿ がある。

□ 力強い
□ 勢い
□ たくましい
□ 奇麗
□ カッコいい
□ 色気
□ 男らしい
□ 暖かい
□ 妖艶
□ 伸び伸び
□ 美しい
□ 迫力
□ 激しい
□ 冷たい
□ 柔らかい
□ その他 (具体的に)

6. これから基本として男振りを踊りたいと思いますか。

O はい→男振りでそのままでいいです
O はい→女振りが、男振りに☐☐☐☐☐です
O いいえ→男振りが、女振りに☐☐☐☐☐です
O いいえ→女振りでそのままでいいです
O その他 (具☐☐☐)

7. ご協力ありがとうございました。何か以上にコメント、追加ありましたら教えて
ください。