

The Soundscape East of the River: Sonic Icons in Nagai Kafū's Writings

Gala Maria Follaco, "L'Orientale" University of Naples, Italy

The IAFOR International Conference on the City 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

By focusing on the auditory dimension of Nagai Kafū's (1879-1959) descriptions of Tokyo in his most renowned—and admittedly most representative—novel, *Bokutō kidan* (*A Strange Tale from East of the River*, 1937), my paper attempts to provide new insights into this author's critique of the modern(ised) city. Drawing primarily on Bijsterveld's (2008) theory of the textualisation of sounds and auditory topoi, and on previous literature that defines the functions of sound within the narrative, this paper aims to examine the ways in which Kafū capitalised on the metaphorical potential of urban sounds and music in order to perform his critique of Japanese modernisation. I will address the question of how sounds mediate the experience of the city in his literature; further, I will discuss the iconic imagery associated with these sounds, to substantiate my argument that Kafū's narration of Tokyo, while building on previous sets of icons and landmarks, also played a significant role in the formation of new ones, exerting a far-reaching influence on the perception of the space of the city.

Keywords: Nagai Kafū, modern Japanese literature, Tokyo, 1930s, soundscape

iafor

The International Academic Forum

www.iafor.org

Introduction

Born in 1879 and dying in 1959, the writer Nagai Kafū witnessed a long segment of the history of modern Japan dominated by an atmosphere of perennial change; the Meiji Restoration (1867) had inaugurated a process of radical transformation which was particularly evident in the urban fabric of the city that, previously called Edo, had become Tokyo. Kafū's relationship with urban spaces is a crucial aspect of his poetics; city representation, in his work, entails a relentless, penetrating and sophisticated practice of social critique (Kawamoto, 1996; Schulz, 1997). Through writing, he performs a veritable hermeneutics of the urban space intended to define his place within the new modern society and to interpret society itself—and also the very notion of modernity (Minami, 2009). He represents the city through a variety of narrative patterns and modes of description, and does not fail to stress sounds and noises typical of the urban environment and to capitalise on their potential as metaphor.

Theoretical rationale

The fundamental premise of my study is that the ontological status of the space that we call “city” depends first and foremost on the consciousness of its inhabitants: city dwellers experience urban space through the senses, and interpret it according to a system of references and landmarks, which is based primarily on previous experiences, memories and desires (Lynch, 1960). While the visual dimension of the cityscape is widely acknowledged and was central to most considerations on urban space long before the so-called “spatial turn” of the early 1970s, the aural notion of the city as a veritable “sonic field” did not find proper application in the human sciences until 1977, when the composer Raymond Murray Schafer formulated a theory of the “soundscape” as a field of study comparable to the landscape, but characterised by a lesser degree of clarity: unlike the camera, able “to catch the salient features of a visual panorama to create an impression that is immediately evident”, the microphone only “samples details [...] gives the close-up but nothing corresponding to aerial photography”, so a soundscape demands a greater effort to be able to fully comprehend it. Schafer stressed the importance of sound as an “indicator of social conditions” and devised a nomenclature for the study of soundscapes whose basic terms are the following: *keynote sound* (the “fundamental tone” of a landscape), *signal* (a sound whose main function is to transmit a message to someone who will interpret it), and *soundmark* (a sonic landmark, recognised by the members of a community and making “the acoustic life of the community unique”) (Schafer, 1977).

A decade-and-a-half later, the influential historian Alain Corbin (1994), through analysis of the meaning of the bell in the context of the nineteenth-century French countryside, emphasised sounds' ability to structure and mark temporality, mediate information otherwise difficult to access, and contribute to spatial orientation and express symbolic powers. The work of both Schafer and Corbin represents important points of reference in Karin Bijsterveld's research, to which my study is in turn indebted. Bijsterveld (2008; 2013) applied to the theory of narrative methodologies developed in the social sciences and brought forth a set of “auditory topoi”, sounds characterised as “intrusive”, “sensational”, “comforting” or “sinister”, and that can perform specific functions within a text. Further, she focused upon the notion of

“sonic icons”, i.e., particular sounds that, over time, become iconic because of their deployment in narratives and through inter-textual references.

Sounds are pervasive and influence the perception of the space of everyday life; they are carriers of meaning and hold metaphorical potential. Thus their occurrence in literature appears nothing but natural. Textualised sounds contribute to the representation of landscapes and cityscapes, and, while being a re-enactment of real sounds, they also enrich our comprehension of them, because “literature is especially well suited for revealing such para-sonic factors as sound’s social connotations, its relationships with other senses, and—perhaps most importantly of all—the qualitative dimension that means certain sounds are actually of interest to people, things they actively seek out or shun” (Halliday, 2013). As regards Japan, mutual relationships and correspondence between sound and space, with their social implications, have been carefully examined in a recent contribution that outlines the country’s soundscape in the twentieth century while taking into account not only music, but more diverse sounds, including noise (Hankins and Stevens, 2014). Hankins and Stevens’ work does not focus on literary texts, nonetheless it emphasises the narrative and iconic potential of sounds.

Maeda Ai (1962) pointed out that in modern Japan the practice of reading changed from “aloud” (*ondoku*) to “silent” (*mokudoku*), whereas previously it had been more “aural”, more directly related to actual sounds, thus less inclined to abstraction (Shindō, 1997). Despite such a change in the readers’ attitude, however, sounds have never disappeared altogether from literary texts. Closely related to sociality and technological development, inherently “historical” (Halliday, 2013), sounds have been described, staged, problematised—in a word, textualised—in the Japanese literature of the twentieth century, also playing a significant role in many ideological representations of modern urban spaces and communities. It is indeed the interplay between sound, urban culture and ideology that I shall address in what follows.

Nagai Kafū’s Poetics of Sound

It would be no exaggeration to define Kafū’s literature as one of sound. From the inception of his career, at the turn of the twentieth century and in the works set in the United States and France,¹ sounds functioned as metaphors, icons, and catalysts of memory; his poetics is expressed through a multisensory writing that attributes great value to sound. While the “visual” aspect of Kafū’s writing of the city has been repeatedly emphasised and discussed (Minami 2007, 2009; Kawamoto, 2002), little attention has been paid so far to its aural dimension. Though his interest in traditional music and opera is considered a given fact, the textualisation of sounds in his writings, the attribution of specific narrative functions to sounds, as well as the interaction between textual rendering of sounds and urban representation, have scarcely been taken into consideration, with only a couple of notable exceptions. The first is Matsuda Ryōichi’s analysis of the significance of the radio in *Bokutō kidan* (Matsuda, 1987). The second is Shindō Masahiro’s painstaking research (Shindō, 1997) focusing on the meaning of music in Kafū’s life and literature and demonstrating that, for this author, songs and melodies were not mere

¹ The two collections of stories entitled *Amerika monogatari* (*American Stories*, 1908) and *Furansu monogatari* (*French Stories*, 1909) respectively.

embellishments, but were integrated within the narrative thanks to the metaphorical meanings they carried, the specific moods they conveyed, and even their rhythmic patterns. Another contribution worth mentioning here is Rachael Hutchinson's study of Kafū's encounter with the "American Other" as a key to the definition of the "Japanese Self", where the scholar commented on the symbolic value assigned by the I-narrator of one of the American stories to a *shamisen* tune he heard in Seattle's Japantown, arguing that the insertion of the traditional Japanese instrument in that specific point of the narrative stresses the fundamental "sense of disjunction" felt by the I-narrator himself, a wealthy émigré, vis-à-vis the miserable condition of the Japanese immigrant labourers in the United States (Hutchinson, 2011). The *shamisen*, in this short story, is thus conceived as a hallmark of "Japaneseness", and as such plays a major role in determining the position of the I-narrator within an urban context characterised by ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic diversity: in particular, the *shamisen* tune is placed in relation to both the mindset of the I-narrator and the urban fabric of Seattle, pointing out the incongruities between the symbolic meanings attached to the Japanese instrument, and the presence of the immigrant labourers in the American city (Follaco, 2016).

Both in the writings from home and abroad, music is ubiquitous in Kafū's representation of urban environments: opera and musical drama, as well as popular folk songs sung by immigrants, occupy a pre-eminent position in the descriptive sequences portraying New York. In his French stories the streets of Lyon are populated by violin players in the same way that those of the low-city of Tokyo in the returnee works (i.e. those published in the years immediately following his return to Japan in 1908) would be full of *shamisen* players. He regularly employs the latter, a veritable icon of the popular culture of the Tokugawa era (1600-1867), in order to enhance the melancholy mood of the narration and to stress the discrepancy between past and present.

Apart from music, however, the auditory dimension of Kafū's literature includes a wide range of sounds whose textualisation serves specific narrative and critical purposes. In particular, urban sounds—the sounds, noises and voices heard in the space of the city—conjure up a set of references whose relevance is not, as I contend, inferior to those pertaining to his visual approach to the urban fabric.

Kafū's Soundscapes in the 1930s

Himself an aspiring musician, at least during his youth (Akiba, 1966), Kafū always attributed great importance to sounds in his works, as we have seen. Although this has been a characteristic of his writing during his whole career, it was in the latter half of the 1930s that the soundscape of Tokyo featured in his literature with the greatest degree of complexity.

One reason is that the first decade of the Shōwa period (1926-1989), with the aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake (1923) and the massive transformation that the cultural and publishing world was undergoing (Shōji, Nakazawa and Yamanishi, 2013; Mack, 2010), the Ni-ni-roku jiken (February 26 Incident) of 1936, the pervasive presence of policemen in the streets and the spread of nationalistic propaganda, represented a critical phase in the career of the author, who even withdrew, albeit temporarily, from the public scene and wrote little. His first work after the impasse

was *Tsuyu no atosaki* (During the Rains, 1931), a novel set among the demi-monde with a geisha as its main character, where the never ending rain of the wet season provides an acoustic background to the growing critique against a former “counterworld” that had started to reflect power dynamics typical of the real world, and the mounting frustration over the waning of its comforting atmosphere. Fellow writer Tanizaki Jun’ichirō (1886-1965), always an attentive reader of Kafū’s work, partly in reaction to the tepid reception that *Tsuyu no atosaki* had received from the majority of the critics, stressed the novel’s ability to lend insights into what he termed “the popular history of the Shōwa period” and to stir a feeling of nostalgia into the Tokyo-born readers, especially because of the description of the rain, that he considered an important expression of the “local colour” of the Japanese capital (Tanizaki, [1931] 1982). Tanizaki’s keen observation paves the way for further considerations on the narrative use of the rainy season as a trope of topophilic identification. As we shall see, Kafū attributes a deep significance to rain, as well as to all those natural (but not only natural) elements that testify to a continuity between the cityscape of his days and the previous one. In an urban fabric that appeared increasingly alien to him, he valued sights and sounds which co-existed harmoniously with the modern features of the Japanese capital; this attitude, however, should not be considered as merely nostalgic, insofar as the author himself proved favourably disposed towards novelty and modernity as long as they did not appear utterly out of context, but instead maintained a congruity with the rest of the *paysage*. He had expressed such ideas since the returnee period, both in his fictional and non-fictional works, but it is in the writings of the latter half of the 1930s, against the backdrop of an extremely complex socio-political situation, that the aural aspects of his modes of city representation started taking on deeper meanings.

During these months, Kafū walks across his hometown, observes and hears, seeking traces of the past and possibilities of harmony with the present, and trying to evoke them through an auditory memory. It is no mere chance that the works he published at this time of his career reveal much better than previous ones his essentially modernist attitude (Snyder, 2000; Starrs, 2011); the more he perceives the urban fabric as cryptic, labyrinthine, and disjointed, the more his style of writing becomes fragmentary. In describing the cityscape, he abandons the aerial perspective that he had privileged in the majority of his Meiji-period works (Minami, 2009) and descends to street-level, portraying the city from the inside. Such a shift in perspective is paralleled by a growing attention to urban sounds. He now appears interested in the voices he hears in the streets, most likely because, as argued by Yoshimi (1995), he considered everyday conversations among ordinary people a more revealing channel of information and ideas than the newspapers or the radio. And indeed the radio, together with the phonograph, “familiar modernist tropes” (Picker 2003), often feature in his writings of this period and, through the fragmented nature of mechanical sound,² provide a sonic counterpart to the street-level take characterising his visual rendering of the space of the city.

² Frattarola (2010) has argued that: “there are striking similarities between the art of phonographic recording and the modernist novel. In both we find a drive to present reality without a sense of mediation; an attention drawn to the subjectivity of hearing; an aesthetics of fragmentation; an association with the repetitious workings of the mind; and, lastly, a subversion of the authority of a sound’s source that opens new possibilities in referencing”.

***Kane no koe* (The Voice of the Bell)**

Written in March 1936 and published in the June issue of the literary magazine *Chūō kōron*, the essay *Kane no koe* eloquently expresses Kafū's frustration over the new soundscape of Tokyo. There is a temple, in Azabu, whose bell he loves very much, but the noises of the city deaden its sound to such an extent that he can barely hear it: "A bell, it is well known, tolls at every hour, day and night. But this one rarely makes it all the way to my ear, impeded as it is by noises of all kinds: cars roaring, wind blowing, people's voices, radios, airplanes, phonographs" (Nagai, [1936a] 1992). Kafū imagines figures of the past from both Japan and the West (namely the poets Saigyō and Bashō, and the writers Lafcadio Hearn and Pierre Loti) listening to the "whisper" of the Azabu bell, probably summoning up courage and peace of mind thanks to its echo. He identifies the sound of the bell with the spirit of another era, endangered by the wave of progress. He seemingly blames such circumstances on the transformations due to the recent merging of the wards of Tokyo that, following those of 1920 and 1932, had contributed to the establishment of the twenty-three-ward (*nijūsan-ku*) structure of the city. He mentions some not further specified "transformations" that, since the summer of 1932, had been so pervasive that the acoustics of the city itself had changed, so the bell sound was now different, a "gentle whisper that instils endurance and acceptance" (Nagai, [1936a] 1992). It is particularly interesting that, as Matsuda (1987) has observed, 1932 is also the year when Kafū's neighbours started playing the radio on a daily basis, which would bother him enormously, as we shall see later.

In the text, Kafū identifies himself as belonging to a group of literary figures linked by bonds of aesthetic sensibility that go beyond the notions of cultural diversity and nationhood. The bell might be considered a *signal*, because its voice carries a wise, "comforting" message amid a melee of "intrusive" (Bijsterveld, 2008) sounds that mediate the author's experience of the city and determine a negative image of it. But the bell, here, is also a *soundmark*, since the author conceives it as the binding agent in the imaginary community that included Saigyō, Bashō, Hearn, Loti and himself. Thus his difficulty in hearing the tolling of the bell should be read as the textual representation of his apprehension over the risk that he might soon be excluded from the group of sensitive men of letters from East and West; the fact itself that he is still able to hear it, however, underlies the possibility of another form of exclusion: he wonders whether he is "perhaps the last man in this world who still hears the voice of the bell" (Nagai, [1936a] 1992), stressing his presumed alienation from the rest of society.

***Terajima no ki* (A Chronicle from Terajima)**

Terajima no ki was written by Kafū one month after *Kane no koe*, to be published in the same issue of *Chūō kōron*, and later included in the same collection of essays, whose title leaves little doubt regarding the author's aim in writing them: *Omokage* (Vestiges, 1936). Indeed, this short text (whose relevance lies also in its being—together with *Kane no koe* and *Hōsuiro* [The Ditch], the third text published in the June 1936 issue of the literary magazine—a sort of preliminary study for the composition of *Bokutō kidan*) is a record of Kafū's search for traces of the past in the modern city, an objective that he pursues with all available means. The title itself serves this purpose, for it refers to an area of the city by its former name, "Terajima",

whereas it was then known as Tamanoi.³ Alongside the various strategies employed by the author to emphasise the discrepancies between past and present, and thus the lack of harmony within the cityscape, a crucial role in the representation of the neighbourhood is assigned to its acoustic environment; for Kafū, the entertainment district of Terajima/Tamanoi embodied the popular culture of the past, it represented a sort of stronghold against the menacing power of modernisation and was a symbol of the resistance of memory. Such a characterisation is devised through the textualisation of the sounds of Tamanoi, two kinds in particular: women's voices and the reading of sutras.

The former are in fact the disembodied voices of the prostitutes that summon up memories of the past: while listening to them, the author recalls his first visits to the quintessential pleasure district of Tokyo: the Yoshiwara (Nagai, [1936b] 1992). This part of the city would always bear some relationship to the popular culture thriving in Edo in the Tokugawa period, thus the likeness drawn by Kafū between Yoshiwara⁴ and Tamanoi subsumes the intention to further stress the mid-way position of the latter, being as it is simultaneously “then” and “now”, representing the past in the present, hence a locus of harmony, and as such valuable. What is more, the dialogic structure of this part of the text testifies to the author's desire to represent the scene not only by narrating it, but by doing so in such a way that its aural form, its tempo and mood, are perceived by the reader as faithfully as possible.

Further, the echo of sutra reading plays a role similar to that of the bell in Azabu: it is a *soundmark* ensuring a connection with a past that, in the author's opinion, should not be forgotten. The age-old habit of reading sutras can thus be considered a symbol of continuity against the ruptures of modernisation, and this is a notion of rituals and sacred spaces that the otherwise scarcely “religious” Kafū had envisioned in a number of other writings, such as *Furansu monogatari*, *Kitsune (The Fox, 1908)*, and *Hiyori geta (Good Weather geta, 1915)*. The interplay between urban spaces, sacrality, and nostalgia is here displayed through a critical dramatisation of sounds.

Bokutō kidan (A Strange Tale from East of the River)

The main character of *Bokutō kidan*, the novelist Ōe Tadasu, resembles its creator to such an extent that the two are hardly ever considered separate from one another. A number of nonfictional writings of the previous years, as well as diary entries of the same period, provide evidence that many of the events and thoughts described in the novel had really occurred to the author. Kafū himself attached great importance to this work, which offers revealing insights into his mindset at the time. The novel was originally published in instalments in the *Tōkyō Asahi shinbun* from April 16 to June 15, 1937, although its serialisation was occasionally interrupted to allow the newspaper to provide extensive coverage of the transoceanic flight of the “Kamikaze”

³ The toponym “Tamanoi” has in turn been abandoned, and today the area is part of the neighbourhood of Ryōgoku. *Tamanoi* was also the original title of the essay, as it appeared in *Chūō kōron*.

⁴ It is perhaps worth observing that in one of the most representative novels of the Meiji era, *Nigorie (Troubled Waters, 1895)* by Higuchi Ichiyō (1872-1896), the Yoshiwara itself is introduced and characterised through the voices of its prostitutes. Although this aspect of the text has been noted and carefully analysed before, it has mainly been considered in terms of gender relations and prose style (Usami 1991), while, to the best of my knowledge, the iconic value of this acoustic element of the district has not yet been addressed.

aircraft between Tokyo and London, a project that the *Asahi* itself, among other corporations, had sponsored (Tsuchida, 1994). This sensationalistic event was only one of the many animating the life of Tokyo (and, more generally, of Japan) in the mid-1930s. After the Ni-ni-roku jiken, the radio had begun to reflect the interest of the political world (Maruyama, 2012), which paid great attention to the contents transmitted to a much broader public than only few years previously (NHK, 1977).

The new attitude displayed by both the public (the ordinary people) and the authorities (political and military) towards this medium is well described by Kafū in *Bokutō kidan*, where we read the following lines:

The rains ended, the hot weather came, and, because the windows were open, sounds not heard in other seasons began to come to my ears. The sound that disturbed me most was that of the radio next door, beyond a thin board fence.

Waiting for the cool of evening, I would turn on the light at my desk; and at exactly that moment it would begin, strident and somehow cracked, and it would not die away until after nine o' clock. I was particularly tormented by political orators with west-country accents, by singers of Naniwabushi, and by readings that made one think of amateur players, broken by snatches of Western music. And the radio alone did not seem to be enough. Morning and night there were phonographs playing popular music. In the summer I would hurry through dinner, or even dine out—I would flee the house at the signal of six o' clock. Not that there were no radios to listen to even after I went out. The clamor from houses and shops along the way was even more deafening; but it was mixed with the sounds of the city, automobiles and streetcars, and I found less to bother me when I was out walking than when I was alone in my study.

With the end of the rains, the progress of my *Whereabouts Unknown* was interrupted by the neighbors' radio. I had done no work on it for ten days and more. There seemed to be a possibility that I would quite lose interest in it. (Nagai, [1937] 1972)

In this passage, radio and phonograph play respectively the sounds of political orators with Kyūshū accents,⁵ *naniwabushi*, the readings of amateur players, and Western music as well as popular music. Each of these acoustic elements has a specific meaning, which the author approaches critically. The Kyūshū accent was typical of the powerful Satsuma Domain and it might also hint at Hirota Kōki (1878-1948), who had recently been appointed Prime Minister, although it should be kept in mind that Kafū had made clear his feeling of dislike for this particular accent as early as 1909;⁶ as for *naniwabushi*, a form of storytelling originally from Osaka, Kafū repeatedly expressed his disdain for it, going so far as to consider it a symbol of the decline of Tokyo's urban culture (Shindō, 1997); the readings of amateur players were popular with the masses at the time (Matsuda, 1987), thus they probably symbolise a lack of refinement, whereas Western music might hint at cultural subjugation to the West. Further, his mentioning popular music is of great interest, since it is a genre which cannot be considered ideologically neutral and that contributes to shaping identities and collective memories (Kenney, 1999). The I-narrator leaves his home, but is still bothered by the “clamor” coming from the radios of other houses and shops. One

⁵ Translated by Seidensticker as “west-country accents”, of course meaning the west of Japan and not any Western country (Europe, the United States).

⁶ In the short story *Fukagawa no uta* (The Song of Fukagawa). In this phase of Japan's history, the influence of the Satsuma and Chōshū domains was still very strong.

might argue that such disdain for the radio implies the non-acceptance of modernity, nonetheless the remark that the sounds of the street, those of automobiles and streetcars, are less bothersome to him partly counters such an argument. One reason might be that what he calls “the sounds of the city”, being a regular feature of the urban *paysage* of Tokyo, correspond, according to the soundscape nomenclature, to *keynote sounds*, the background “music” of what the Japanese capital had become in the first decade of the Shōwa period. In some way, the sounds of automobiles and streetcars have come to identify Tokyo’s urbanity, its being a modern city, whereas its “identity”, its level of congruity within its own history, is measured in accordance with a more persistent, thus representative, feature of the cityscape: rains. The sound of rain fades away naturally because the rainy season has ended, replaced by sounds “not heard in other seasons”: such a remark about a sort of “seasonality” of the urban sounds demonstrates that the sound of rain, existing in the city even before the city of Tokyo was born, is closer to what Schafer would define a *soundmark*, and Bijsterveld a “sonic icon”, than to any other kind of aural item; the iconic nature of the sounds of the rainy season complements Tanizaki’s observation about the “typical Tokyo weather” of *Tsuyu no atosaki*.

Further, there is a strong underlying connotation associated with the I-narrator’s decision to leave his home and go to Tamanoi, a place where phonographs and radios were prohibited after 4 p.m. (Nagai, [1937] 1972). The silence of Tamanoi is thus opposed to the “official” soundscape shaped by the repetition of songs, plays and speeches. Tamanoi represents the intimate soundscape of a writer for whom the notion of community should not be the outcome of coercion and an exercise of power and authority, symbolised in the text by the radio and the phonograph, whose sound violates the author’s privacy in his own home. The silence only broken by the voices of the women, in Tamanoi, is yet another icon of the urban, and fulfils a comforting function, providing the text of an aural dimension suitable to the representation of the principles he valued the most: those of congruity and immediacy, the same premises a community should be founded on, from his point of view. On the other hand, the tropes of radio and phonographs, being a “medium” between the natural source of sound (and noise) and the ear, and hinting at a fundamental “schizophonia” (Schafer, 1977), perfectly serve Kafū’s narrative purpose of unveiling the confusion and incoherence of modern Japan.

Conclusion

I have tried to demonstrate to what extent sounds contribute to Kafū’s urban critique in a set of writings published during a crucial phase of the history of modern Japan—and in particular of modern Tokyo.

Through the textualisation of sounds in *Kane no koe* he addressed the theme of estrangement from the rest of society and structured an idea of sharing and belonging based upon aesthetic sensitivity and challenging the principle of nationhood; in *Terajima no ki* he stressed the iconic value of the neighbourhood’s sounds and voices in order to promote a somehow “sacred” image of Tamanoi shaped by claims of both personal and collective memory; in *Bokutō kidan*, the work that epitomises Kafū’s most “Modernist” period, he made use of the modernist tropes of the phonograph and

the radio⁷ and he built on the aesthetics of fragmentation (Frattarola, 2010) that those tropes promote in order to express the feeling of alienation that imbues the entire narrative, as if to suggest that only a fragmented notion of selfhood can be conceived in such a disconnected urban space, and in such an incoherent society.

⁷ For a broader discussion on the meaning of the radio for British modernist writers, see also Avery, 2006.

References

- Akiba, T. (1966). *Kōshō Nagai Kafū*. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.
- Avery, T. (2006). *Radio Modernism: Literature, Ethics, and the BBC, 1922–1938*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Bijsterveld, K. (2008). *Mechanical Sound. Technology, Culture, and Public Problem of Noise in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Bijsterveld, K. (2013). Introduction. In K. Bijsterveld (Ed.), *Soundscapes of the Urban Past: Staged Sound as Mediated Cultural Heritage* (pp. 11-28). Bielefeld: transcript.
- Corbin, A. (1994). *Les cloches de la terre: Paysage sonore et culture sensible dans les campagnes au XIXe siècle*. Paris: Albin Michel.
- Follaco, G.M. (2016). Close yet Far: Fractured Identities in Nagai Kafū's American Writings. *AION (or)*, 75, 173-190.
- Frattarola, A. (2010). The Phonograph and the Modernist Novel. *Mosaic (Winnipeg)*, 43(1), 143-159.
- Halliday, S. (2013). *Sonic Modernity: Representing Sound in Literature, Culture and the Arts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Hankins, J. D. and Stevens, C.S. (Eds.) (2014). *Sound, Space and Sociality in Modern Japan*. London: Routledge.
- Hutchinson, R. (2011). *Nagai Kafū's Occidentalism: Defining the Japanese Self*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Kawamoto, S. (1996). *Kafū to Tōkyō*. Danchōtei nichijō shishō. Tokyo: Toshi shuppan.
- Kawamoto, S. (2002). *Kafū kōjitsu*. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.
- Kenney, W. H. (1999). *Recorded Music in American Life: The Phonograph and Popular Memory, 1890-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lynch, K. (1960). *The Image of the City*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Mack, E. (2010). *Manufacturing Modern Japanese Literature*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Maeda, A. (1962). Ondoku kara mokudoku e. *Kokugo to kokubungaku*, 39(6), 45-55.
- Maruyama, M. (2012). *Rajio no Shōwa*. Tokyo: Genki shobō.

Matsuda, R. (1987). *Bokutō kidan ron. Rajio to ka no oto. Sugiyama kokubungaku*, 12, 29-48.

Minami, A. (2007). *Nagai Kafū no Nyūyōku, Pari, Tōkyō: zōkei no kotoba*. Tokyo: Kanrin shobō.

Minami, A. (2009). *Kafū to Meiji no toshi keikan*. Tokyo: Sanseidō.

Nagai, K. ([1936a] 1992). Kane no koe. In T. Inagaki, T. Takemori and K. Nakajima (Eds.), *Kafū zenshū*, XVII (pp. 347-349). Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.

Nagai, K. ([1936b] 1992). Terajima no ki. In T. Inagaki, T. Takemori and K. Nakajima (Eds.), *Kafū zenshū*, XVII (pp. 358-367). Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.

Nagai, K. ([1937] 1992). Bokutō kidan. In T. Inagaki, T. Takemori and K. Nakajima (Eds.), *Kafū zenshū*, XVII (pp. 81-187). Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.

Nagai, K. ([1937] 1972). *A Strange Tale from East of the River and Other Stories*. Trans. Edward Seidensticker. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company.

NHK [Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai] (Ed.) (1977). *Hōsō gojūnen shi*. Tokyo: Nihon hōsō shuppan kyōkai.

Picker, J. M. (2003). *Victorian Soundscapes*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schafer, R. M. (1977). *The Tuning of the World*. Rochester: Destiny Books.

Schulz, E. (1997). *Nagai Kafū: Tagebuch eines Heimgekehrten—Der Entwurf ästhetischer Gegenwelten als Kritik an der Modernisierung Japans*. Hamburg: LIT.

Shindō, M. (1997). *Nagai Kafū: ongaku no nagareru kūkan*. Kyoto: Sekai shisōsha.

Shōji T., Nakazawa, W. and Yamanishi, I. (Eds.) 2013. *Kaizōsha no media senryaku*. Tokyo: Sōbunsha.

Snyder, S. (2000). *Fictions of Desire: Narrative Form in the Novels of Nagai Kafū*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press.

Starrs, R. (2011). *Modernism and Japanese Culture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tanizaki, J. ([1931] 1982). *Tsuyu no atosaki wo yomu. Tanizaki Jun'ichirō zenshū*, XX (pp. 297-306). Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha.

Usami, T. (1991). Higuchi Ichiyō *Nigorie*. Onnatachi no “koe”. *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō*, 56(4), 61-66.

Yoshimi, S. (1995). “Koe” no shihonshugi: denwa, rajio, chikuonki no shakaishi. Tokyo: Kōdansha.

Contact email: gfolloco@unior.it