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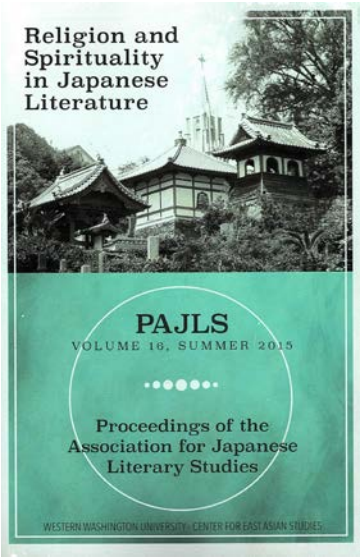

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Two Views of Saikaku in the Underworld

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Well into the eighteenth century, the medieval notion that writers of fiction were bound after death to suffer the karmic consequences of retailing in "crazy words and fancy language" (*kyōgen kigyo*狂言綺語) still maintained a certain currency in discourses about literary aesthetics, even as it had increasingly become co-opted as a rhetorical trope for praising, rather than criticizing, writers of the classical tradition. In his preface to *Ugetsu monogatari* 雨月物語 (*Tales of Rain and Moon*, 1774), for example, Ueda Akinari上田秋成 (1734-1809) famously lauds Murasaki Shikibu by way of alluding to the consequences she suffered for writing *Tale of Genji*; as popular legend held it, Murasaki was cast into hell for fabricating fictitious lies, and even, according to one iteration, for blasphemously writing the first manuscript copy of the tale on the backs of Buddhist scriptures housed at Ishiyama Temple. Only a writer as masterful as Murasaki, Akinari's preface implies, would have accrued such a heavy burden of sin for enchanting readers and distracting them from the quest for enlightenment.[2]

We find few examples of contemporary Edo period authors being lauded in this way, perhaps because at least initially—that is, until the emergence of commercially successful writers like Asai Ryōi浅井了意 (c.1612-1691) during the middle decades of the seventeenth century—it was rare for an author's name (or literary handles) to be cited in booksellers' trade catalogues (*shojaku mokuroku* 書籍目録), to say nothing of the printed book itself.[3] By and large, this remained the case until the time of Ihara Saikaku井原西鶴 (1642-1693), whose unprecedented commercial success occasioned a

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[2] Preface to *Ugetsu monogatari*, SNKBZ Vol. 78 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1995): 74.

[3] Many literary historians follow Hamada Keisuke's claim that Asai Ryōi was the first professional writer in Japan, although there is no solid evidence of the income he earned through his writings. See Hamada Keisuke, "Kanazōshi no sakusha to dokusha," in Ichiko Tenji and Noma Kōshin, ed., Otogizōshi kanazōshi, in *Nihon koten kanshō kōza* 16, 287-288.

break with the prevailing practice of authorial anonymity. Saikaku became a literary celebrity in his own time, even as his legacy came to be complicated by his works of prose fiction, so salacious by contemporary standards that it eventually compelled the Tokugawa bakufu to issue an edict, under the auspices of the Kyōhō Reforms, that prohibited the publication of *kōshokubon*好色本—the very genre that Saikaku had been credited with establishing through works like *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* 好色一代男 (*Life of a Sensuous Man*, 1682) and *Kōshoku gonin onna* 好色五人女 (*Five Sensuous Women*, 1686). After Saikaku's death, his disciples sought to highlight his career as a poet and to affirm the authenticity of unfinished manuscript collections of prose fiction he left behind. At the same time, some outside his circle debated his literary legacy and even revived the trope of karmic punishment—albeit in a playful way—to project the spiritual consequences of writing of *kōshokubon* for the commercial market.

This paper examines two works of comic fiction that present afterlife scenarios of Saikaku as he suffers karmic retribution for his writings. The first, Miyako no Nishiki's 都の錦 (b. 1675) *Genroku Taiheiki* 元禄太平記 (*Record of Great Peace During the Genroku Period*, 1710), depicts Saikaku as a commercially minded hack who spends the advance payment for a commissioned work over the course of five nights of drunken revelry, and then suddenly drops dead before he can begin work on the manuscript. Saikaku meets up with his publisher in hell, where he is forced to make profuse apologies for his prodigality. The second, Rakka Ho'ei's 洛下泡影 *Saikaku meido monogatari* 西鶴冥途物語 (*Tales of Saikaku in Hell*, 1697), depicts Saikaku in a far less critical light, as a reformed saint of poetry who rails against the spirit of commercialism that prevails in the contemporary world of Kamigata *haikai* poetry. Taken together, these works attest to the complex negotiations that Saikaku's admirers and critics needed to make in the course of assessing his literary legacy. In the first half of this paper, I will detail the discursive context that informs these works, referring to a body of posthumously published texts that establish certain parameters of Saikaku's literary legacy—both as a poet and a writer of prose fiction. In the second half of the paper, I will establish how these two works redefine, and in some ways refute, the legacy that Saikaku's disciples and publishers sought to perpetuate.

Saikaku—Defining a Posthumous Legacy

In the tenth month of Genroku 6 (1693), at the age of fifty-two, Ihara Saikaku

passed away at his atelier, the Saikaku-an, in Suzuya-machi, Osaka. News of his death spread quickly, and it was not long before a number of friends and disciples, among them such luminaries of the world of Osaka *haikai* as Inoguchi Jotei 井口如貞 (dates unknown), Ikenishi Gonsui 池西言水(1650-1722), and Shiinomoto Saimaro椎本才麿(1656-1738), convened at Seiganji Temple in Osaka, where the remains were to be interred.[4] Saikaku's closest literary disciple, Hōjō Dansui 北条団水 (1663-1711), was among the first on the scene, having travelled in haste from Kyoto to organize the funeral arrangements. It was but the first of many responsibilities that he would need to assume in order to honor his late master.

Shortly after the funeral, purportedly at the behest of Osaka publisher Yao Jizaemon八尾甚尾左衛門, Dansui was commissioned to compile some of the unfinished manuscripts that Saikaku had left behind at the Saikaku-an, editing them for publication.[5] These efforts eventually resulted in five collections of stories published over the course of six years: *Saikaku okimiyage* 西鶴置土産 (*Saikaku's Parting Gift*, 1693), *Saikaku oridome* 西鶴織留 (*Saikaku Weaves His Last Yarns*, 1694), *Saikaku zoku tsurezure*西鶴俗つれづれ (*Saikaku's Lowbrow Essays in Idleness*, 1695), *Yorozu no fumi hōgu* よろずの文反故 (*Myriad Scraps of Writing*, 1696) and *Saikaku nagori no tomo*西鶴名残の友 (*Saikaku's Remaining Friends*, 1699). In addition, Dansui oversaw the compilation of a commemorative poetry collection, *Kokoroba* こゝろ葉 (*Leaves of the Heart*, 1706), arranged in honor of the thirteenth anniversary of Saikaku's death.

Taken as a whole, this body of posthumously published work offers us glimpses into how Saikaku's editors and publishers sought to formulate his literary legacy—if not also a view into editorial strategies for "resurrecting" the late Saikaku in these texts in order to affirm their authenticity and ensure their marketability. It can be argued that during his lifetime, no figure had been more instrumental in changing the longstanding tradition of authorial anonymity in

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[4] Saikaku's grave is located in the Seiganji Temple compound, Osaka.

[5] According to Dansui's colophon to *Saikaku okimiyage* 西鶴置土産 (*Saikaku's Parting Gift*, 1693), the first of Saikaku's posthumously published works, Dansui was approached by a certain, unnamed publisher about the prospect of preparing some of Saikaku's manuscripts for publication. The publisher in question is conjectured to be Yao Jizaemon, who in addition to *Saikaku okimiyage* also published *Saikaku zoku tsurezure* 西鶴俗つれづれ (*Saikaku's Lowbrow Essays in Idleness*, 1695).

Japanese commercial printing than Saikaku; after the emergence of *aiban* 相版 as the standard industry practice during the Jōkyō (1684-1688) era, whereby books came to be produced from woodblocks owned jointly by publishers operating in different markets, Saikaku demonstrated that an authorial attribution could serve as an effective alternative to the publisher's trademark—a guarantor, as it were, of the authenticity and literary value of a work across markets. After producing twenty works of prose fiction in just under eleven years, many of which are conjectured to have sold in the thousands, Saikaku demonstrated by his commercial success that writers could be marketable entities in their own right. For the publishers who suddenly found themselves with access to several additional collections of stories after Saikaku's death, albeit unfinished or in rough form, the motive behind commissioning Dansui to collate and edit them for publication was clearly commercial. This much is evident from the decision to include the name Saikaku in four of the five posthumous works—perhaps the clearest indication of the marketability of the Saikaku brand, even years after his death.

But for Hōjō Dansui, Saikaku's devoted literary disciple and the appointed custodian of his manuscripts, the motivations for bringing his master's posthumous work to print were surely more complex. On the one hand, there was the need to convince prospective readers of the authenticity of these manuscripts—in other words, that they had indeed been written by Saikaku. But then there was also the obligation to honor his late master's legacy, and enshrine his memory as a writer of both poetry and prose fiction. The full range of strategies that Dansui employed for these purposes can be found in *Saikaku's Parting Gift,* the first of Saikaku's posthumously published works. It appeared on the market in the winter of Genroku 6 (1693), just months after Saikaku's death.

A reader perusing the first volume of this collection for the first time would note the name Saikaku prominently displayed on the *daisen* 題簽 ("title piece") label pasted to the front cover before opening to a frontispiece portrait of the late Saikaku seated at his writing desk, with brush in hand as if poised to write his last line of verse.[6] Dansui is conjectured to have commissioned none other than Makieshi Genzaburō蒔絵師源三郎 (fl. 1688-1704) to create the illustration; this was the same artist who had produced the illustrations for many of the Osaka editions of Saikaku's works after Genroku 1 (1688), and inclusion

[6] Reprinted in *Saikaku okimiyage*, SNKBZ Vol. 68 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1996): 479.

of his work would have created a stylistic continuity with earlier works.[7] After reading Saikaku's death poem, inscribed above the portrait, the reader would then turn to a sequence of seven *tsuizen hokku*追善発句 (commemorative verses to express condolence) solicited from among a select group of Saikaku's disciples and friends. All the poems adhere to the seasonal setting introduced in Saikaku's verse, autumn, and two reincorporate the image of the moon. Jotei's verse poignantly notes that every time he looks at the moon, he will be reminded of Saikaku's celebrated *yakazu haikai* poetry performance on the grounds of Sumiyoshi Shrine in Osaka in the sixth month of Jōkyō 1 (1684), when he dazzled the world of *haikai* by rapidly composing 23,500 *haikai* verses in a single, twenty-four hour sitting.[8] This feat, which stood the test of time as the most prolific *yakazu* 矢数 ("countless arrow") performance in recorded history, earned Saikaku the new nickname of *Niman ō* 二万翁, or "Old Master of Twenty Thousand Verses".

Next, our reader would turn the page to a brief preface by Dansui, describing the provenance of the text and how it was intended by the publisher Yao Jizaemon to be a *katami*, or memento, from Saikaku that would stand the test of time.[9] Lastly, there is the preface by Saikaku himself, which offers a thematic reflection on the nature of sincerity and falsehood, and how the latter seems to prevail among the denizens of the pleasure quarters.[10] No previous work of Saikaku's makes such demands on the conscientious reader—it is only after perusing four full pages of front matter that one is able to move on to the table of contents. This impressive marshaling of poetry, portraiture, and prefatorial commentary can be seen to serve dual purposes—first, to do homage to the late Saikaku through a complex deployment of devices commonly seen only in the front matter of commemorative *haikai* collections; and second, to validate the authenticity of the work's authorship by fixing the late Saikaku's

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[7] Although this attribution is commonly accepted in the Japanese scholarship, Richard Lane has argued, on the basis of comparative analysis of signed works with the illustrations that appear in the Osaka editions of Saikaku's works after 1688, that these are the work of unnamed disciples of Yoshida Hanbei 吉田半兵衛 (fl. 1681-1692), rather than Makieshi Genzaburō 蒔絵師源三郎 (fl.1688-1704). If true, this would complicate the attribution of the frontispiece illustration of Saikaku in *Saikaku okimiyage*, but not necessarily the issue of stylistic continuity between the illustrations of this work with earlier ones, since Yoshida Hanbei also created illustrations for Saikaku's works.

[8] *Saikaku okimiyage*, SNKBZ Vol. 68: 479.

[9] Ibid., 480.

[10] Ibid., 481.

presence to the front matter via portraiture and poetry. But perhaps no device of authentication is more impressive than that which is noted in Dansui's hagiographic postscript: namely, that the calligraphic text of four stories—a sequence from the first story of volume three to the first story of volume four—are reproduced from Saikaku's own manuscripts, that is, through a woodblock transfer of his own handwriting.[11]

One last issue I would like to highlight, since it relates closely to the texts I will examine in the second half of this paper, is the manipulation of Saikaku's authorial image to highlight his monkish appearance and to contrive a *mitate*-like association with classical literary figures. In point of fact, Saikaku did become a lay monk in Enpō 5 (1677), two years after the death of wife; it is believed that his main motive was to release himself from his domestic affairs—including the care of his three children—so that he could devote himself without distraction to *haikai* poetry. Images that circulated during his lifetime regularly depict him in this guise, such as the portrait that appears in the *haikai* collection *Haikai hyakunin ikku Naniwa shikishi* 俳諧百人一句・難波色紙 (1682) and Haga Isshō's 芳賀一晶 (d. 1707) famous hanging scroll portrait, painted when Saikaku was in his late forties. The frontispiece portrait in *Saikaku's Parting Gift* presents us with the same image of Saikaku as a lay monk, replete with shaven pate and austere black robes, albeit somewhat younger in appearance. But a key addition here is his collocation with objects that bespeak his status as a poet—his ink brush, a box containing his ink stone and other supplies, a folded sheet of Mino paper, and a *buntai* 文台lectern for transcribing verses. A second frontispiece portrait that warrants mention is the one from *Saikaku's Lowbrow Essays in Idleness*, where the author is depicted in a rustic mountain hut, writing at his table in the feeble light of an oil lamp, surrounded by piles of books.[12] The scene evokes the famous frontispiece portraits of medieval essayist and poet Yoshida Kenkō吉田兼好 (1283?-1350?) that graced many early Edo reprints of *Essays in Idleness*. While partaking in the same mode of light-hearted homage to *Essays in Idleness* that characterizes the work as a whole, this image also serves to situate Saikaku, by association, within the same esteemed literary lineage as its author. Saikaku, the image seems to imply, is the Kenkō of his time.

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[11] Ibid., 597.

[12] *Saikaku zoku tsurezure* (Tokyo: Meijishoin, 1984): 7.

Two Views of Saikaku in Hell

Genroku Taiheiki (1710)

Miyako no Nishiki's *Genroku Taiheki* (*Record of Great Peace During the Genroku Period*, 1710) is a rollicking satire of the Genroku era (1688-1704) publishing industry, filled with allusions to booksellers, illustrators, and writers. Plotted on a grander scale than Genmu's work, discussed below, it is conceived as a series of journeys through the various transmigratory paths of the underworld, recounted in mock religious tone by a sermonizing narrator. Saikaku is not the central figure in this story, but the subject of one of many cautionary tales about the sins of writing popular fiction for payment. When we first encounter Saikaku, we find him in *Abi jigoku* 阿鼻地獄, the lowest region of hell, where he has undergone excruciating torture, howling in agony as his tongue is pried out of his mouth with iron calipers. When King Enma grants him a reprieve from further punishments, the now contrite Saikaku resolves to travel to other regions of the underworld in search of his parents, only to find that reminders of his past haunt him at every turn.

During his travels, he encounters former acquaintances from the world of publishing, including a bookseller named Ten'oji Yon'emon 天王寺四右衛門, with whom he tearfully shares a drink and composes a pair of linked stanzas addressed to crickets who cry plaintively in the infernal underbush. Later in the same episode, Saikaku meets up with another former publisher, Ikenoya Jirōzaemon (a playful corruption of the name of an actual publisher in Osaka, Ikedaya Saburozaemon), who explains that until he was given a reprieve from further punishments, he had been roasting in a fiery hearth in order to expiate the sin of publishing Saikaku's work. Bristling with indignation, he goes on to remind Saikaku of a contractual agreement that he failed to uphold before his death. It seems that Saikaku, after requesting an advance payment of 300 monme in silver to write a six-volume collection of stories entitled *Kōshoku ukiyo odori* 好色浮世踊 (*Sensual Dances in the Floating World*), promptly spent all the money over the course of five consecutive nights of drunken revelry in the Shinmachi *iro-chaya* 色茶屋, and then dropped dead before he could begin work on the first page of the manuscript. Saikaku apologizes profusely for his prodigality and breach of contract, and offers to pay Ikenoya back, even if it means hiring a courier to retrieve some of his estate from the world of the living. In response, Ikenoya protests that there would be little profit in haggling over 300 monme in silver when their real priority should be rebirth

in the Western Paradise, where gold is as plentiful as grains of sand. Ikenoya's notion of spiritual paradise is a materialistic one, to be sure, but one that still makes Saikaku seem quibbling and unenlightened by comparison.

In reference to this scene, Suzuki Toshio speculates that Miyako no Nishiki may have been referring to an actual incident.[13] However, not only is there no record of a planned work entitled *Kōshoku ukiyo odori*, but also no proof that Saikaku was ever given advances for his work. This calls into question Miyako no Nishiki's motives for depicting Saikaku in such an unflattering manner. At very least, it can be said that *Genroku Taiheki* homes its criticisms on the commercial context of Saikaku's career as a prose fiction writer, saying little about the aesthetic merits or faults of the works themselves, and all but ignoring Saikaku's career as a *haikai* poet. In its suggestion that Saikaku was motivated to write simply out of pecuniary concerns, it suggests other failings in his character—drunkenness, lustfulness, inconstancy—that seem more like a description of one of the characters in Saikaku's works than an informed assessment of the author himself.

Saikaku meido monogatari (1697)

Rakka Ho'ei's 洛下泡影 *Saikaku meido monogatari* 西鶴冥途物語 (*Tales of Saikaku in Hell*, 1697), published in the fifth month of Genroku 10 (1697), less than four years after Saikaku's death, is a key text for examining assessments of Saikaku's legacy as a *haikai* poet. As anticipated by the title, the work recounts the adventures of Genmu 幻夢, a middle-aged Kyoto *haikai* poet, who is transported to the underworld after drinking himself into an out-of-body stupor during a flower-viewing outing to Higashiyama. His spirit travels to the border of the yellow springs, where he meets up with the late Saikaku. Against a backdrop of infernal horrors, Saikaku proceeds to enlighten Genmu about matters far more pressing than the dangers of gluttonous indulgence—namely, the punishments that await *haikai* poets who ply the sinful paths of self-promotion and uninspired hackwork. Drawing heavily on late medieval Buddhist narrative and pictorial depictions of hell, the work recounts the journey of these two characters through the various *narakas* of Buddhist hell, where they witness Kyoto and Osaka *haikai* poets being subjected to the grisliest tortures imaginable. In the Tōkatsu 等活 (Sañjīva) region of hell, for example, Osaka

[13] Suzuki Toshio, *Edo no hon'ya*, v. 1 (Tokyo: Chūkō shinsho, 1980): 94-95.

haikai masters who had berated their students are bound to boulders and flailed with iron rods by demons until their flesh is torn to shreds. In the Kokujō 黒縄 (Kālasūtra) region, Kyoto poets who stole from the works of others are impaled with iron spears and spiked forks by demons, then driven into dead-end crevices where their bodies are crushed by heavy boulders tumbling down from cliffs overhead. As if these punishments are not sufficiently severe for the sin of composing derivative *haikai*, the crushed bodies of the offending poets, still alive and writhing in agony, are then gathered into huge iron mortars, where they are pulverized into ground meat and thrown to ravenous lions, tigers, wolves, and other wild beasts. Despite the gratuitously gruesome detail of these scenes, even bordering on the absurd, we find no trace of irony in these descriptions—far from it, Saikaku is described as being moved to tears by the sight of the tortured Kyoto poets and bids Genmu to do all he can to avoid this horrific fate.

It quickly becomes apparent upon reading this work that the character of Saikaku is merely a mouthpiece for the author's own polemic about the propriety of certain styles and schools of *haikai* poetry over others. Missing from the gruesome punishments suffered by *haikai* poets from Osaka and Kyoto—that is, those belonging to the Danrin and Teitoku schools—is any mention of Bashō and his school. It is only when Saikaku, accompanied by a host of bodhisattvas, sees Genmu off on his journey back to the world of the living, that the name Bashō appears for the first time—and this in the context of an injunction to compose poetry after the style of Bashō, and not in the frivolous, comic style that currently prevails in the Kamigata region. In this manner, the text subverts a common topos of late medieval *otogizoshi* hell narratives to dispense sectarian religious advice on how to avoid its punishments. In this case, the advice is articulated in terms of poetic style and practice, not religious belief or moral conduct, and tied to a broader message about the soteriological power of *haikai* poetry.

Conclusion

Ihara Saikaku represents a compelling case study for examining attempts to assess published writers posthumously during the Genroku era—in many ways a time when the author was emerging as the most prominent index of a work's literary value. In the front and back matter to Saikaku's five posthumously published collections, all edited by his former disciple, Hōjō Dansui, we find ample evidence of strategies to authenticate their authorship and enhance their

marketability through references to the late author. Perhaps most importantly, we find these works used as vehicles for scripting the basic narrative of the Saikaku's literary legacy—as a prolific *haikai* poet first and foremost, whose record of 23,500 verses at Sumiyoshi Shrine ultimately went unmatched, and secondly as a masterful writer and editor of prose fiction collections. This rendition of Saikaku's accomplishments did not go unchallenged by his contemporaries, however. Making hell a site for interrogating the late author, Rakka Ho'ei's *Saikaku meido monogatari* and Miyako no Nishiki's *Genroku Taiheiki* offer us two very different views of Saikaku, depicting him as a reformed soul compelled to disown the very legacy his disciples and publishers were seeking to perpetuate, and to reject his entire corpus of *haikai* poetry and prose fiction writing as no more than sinful indulgence in "crazy words and fancy language."

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