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Jeffrey Johnson

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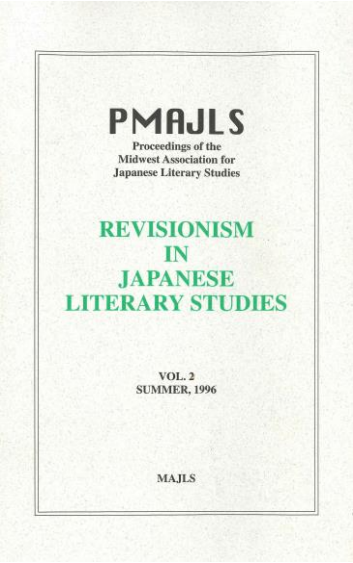

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LITERARY THEORY AND CLASSICAL JAPANESE LITERATURE: IHARA SAIKAKU'S PROSE AND A COMPARATIVE APPROACH TO COMEDY

JEFFREY JOHNSON
University of Utah

In his study of comedy Michael Silk writes "There will never be civilization where comedy is not possible. That is, comedy is present and popular in all ages" (Silk, 24). It is probable that comedy has been a part of all cultures throughout the world, and one need look no further than nightly television to see that comedy is indeed present in Japan. Yet, the cult of comedy in the Edo period is probably unparalleled, and truly a remarkable example of humor pervading the arts. One finds many of the comical elements of *gesaku* literary production and the *ukiyo-e* genre in embryonic form in Ihara Saikaku's (1642 - 1693) texts. In this essay I would like to explore the comedy in Saikaku, and through this exploration, propose a means of approaching Japanese comedy, both previous and subsequent to Saikaku's literary production.[1]

Ihara Saikaku's position in Japanese literary history, at present, is quite firm in spite of critical comments which still dog his work, such as: "[Saikaku] has taken longer to attract appreciation, and there may still be some unwilling to give up

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1 There is nothing written on Saikaku pertaining to his position in the world of Japanese comedy to my knowledge. The impetus to write this article comes first of all from Teruoka's "Saikaku ni okeru warai" in *Saikaku shinron*. Important conceptually in this connection are the works by the following authors (see "work cited" for more bibliographical details): Earl Miner, Robert Leutner, and Haruko Iwasaki.

the conception of naughty Saikaku, or of a writer who is important only for his style" (*Princeton Companion,* 66). Despite this comment's withholding anything really positive, it is a vast improvement over Marleigh Ryan's position on all Tokugawa literature: "It is this very question of intelligence or, more specifically, intellectuality, that marks the great gulf between writers of traditional and modern fiction in Japan. . . . This would never be a literature of the mind. . . . the fiction was frivolous, superficial, and completely lacking in significant understanding or insight. . . . a truly dismal literature" (Ryan, 5-7). There is no doubt that such comments are due to an emphasis on the comical. Nevertheless, in Meiji, Saikaku was viewed as a model, both for those seeking reform and for those holding on to tradition.[2] Today his work is almost exclusively referred to as "*shōsetsu*" in Japanese criticism,[3] placing him retrospectively in the *shōsetsu* tradition. In conjunction with this, his work is cited as "realism," mostly because of the merchant works with their accountant-like penchant for facts and figures of daily life.[4] But in fact, Saikaku wrote many tales in many styles,[5] and perhaps the greatest consistency among them are his propensity for word play, and eye to comical effects.

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2 For example see, Peter Kornicki (1981) and (1982) and Etō Jun's "Meiji ni okeru Saikaku" in *Kindai izen.*

3 While the operative notions of *shōsetsu* are far from monolithic, the term is a constant in Saikaku criticism. See for example, Hirosue Tamotsu and Noda Hisao.

4 See, Howard Hibbett (1952), and there is a lot of continuity between this thought on realism and Kanai Toranosuke's thesis in Kanai (1969).

5 As for the question of styles, the working critical assumption seems to be that *haibun* is Saikaku's style. And while this is true of *Kōshoku ichidai otoko,* the very next narrative, *Shōen ōkagami,* like a number of other texts, has significant *kanbun* elements.

Noting Saikaku's tendency to comedy and the lack of critical attention to it, Teruoka Yasutaka, the elder statesman of Saikaku criticism, writes, "there has been a tendency in Saikaku research to neglect laughter" (Teruoka, 119). The critical lacuna Teruoka points out is not just due to the lack of prioritizing of rhetorical tropes in Japan's literary history. Comedy is quite protean. It is also structurally close to, and therefore construed as, irony, parody, satire, etc. [6] Indeed, in a typical blending of terminology Teruoka states that the parody of Danrin *haikai* "operates satirically" (Teruoka, 123). Dilwyn Knox, writing a theory of irony, formulates the structuring as such: "The pretense in wit and jokes is, of course, only notional. If it were genuine, the audience would be deceived rather than amused. And since the speaker does not mean what he is saying literally and intends his audience to realize this, there is an opposition of the same kind as in *ironia*" (Knox, 33). Pirandello also defines comedy as oppositional: "a perception of the opposite" (Pirandello, 113). Silk, on the other hand, observes that comedy is the "celebration of coincidence" (Silk, 24). Combining these observations brings us toward an understanding of the structure with which we are dealing: an artificial coincidence which creates opposition.

The fact that the structuring of irony, parody, satire, and comedy is fundamentally the same (what I will call "doubling" for simplicity's sake), complicates the task of sorting one out from the others. This complexity is compounded by the near

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6 A brief survey of the body of literature considered satire, for example, reveals that the majority of the same texts appear in discussions of irony, parody, and comedy. The distinguishing factor seems to be the priorities of the critic, rather than the features of a given text. This observation holds for Saikaku also; and applies not only to Saikaku's western translators, but a good number of Japanese critics.

constant interaction of these modes. The structural similarity of these modes of discourse has been acknowledged by critics and constitutes the "double structure" (Iwasaki, 51) that Haruko Iwasaki notes in the arts of the Edo period which she relates to humor, wit, irony, parody, and satire. However, there are some areas of distinction: satire has a "real world" target and parody has a literary target.[7] Irony is most often formulated as saying one thing and meaning the opposite.[8] Comedy, according to Silk, "tends to amuse," "offer, projections of survival," and "tends toward the material" (Silk, 27-8).[9] Yet, even having defined some degree of distinction, a text "coded" in these modes can be interpreted as the opposite of what is intended, as is inherent in the oppositional structure. These various modes are properly interpreted (some times not) on a semantic level, and authorial intended interpretation is highly dependent upon audience sensitivity to rhetorical cues. However, the semantic aspects have not received so thorough a critical discussion. The dependence on audience indicates the importance of the degree of informedness, since these modes all rely on an "in-the-know" audience.

Audience must also be considered as something other than "the reader," the idealized notion of some perfect entity who reads perfectly. In Saikaku's time, while literacy was expanding it had not yet reached the breadth that it would by the time of

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7 On parody see, Rose, Hutcheon (1985), and Morson. Also focusing on concerns of Edo, Japan is Sakai. On satire see, Elliott, Highet, Paulson, and Hutcheon (1981).

8 Of course irony is a much discussed and very complicated topic. For a sampling see, Behler, Booth, Knox, and Muecke.

9 For references other than Silk, see, Charney, and in the Japanese context see, Blyth, although this text is comedy by example rather than a framework for understanding.

gesaku. In the case of *Ichidai otoko,* it is known that Saikaku wrote for the members of his *haikai* group. Only after its relative success could he conceive of a broader audience. Teruoka writes that broader audience would be of samurai and well-off merchants, but he also observes that Saikaku's comedy is a composite of *haikai* and *rakugo,* and that *rakugo,* or *otoshibanashi,* was "entertainment for the masses" (Teruoka, 128). This could indicate that Saikaku perceived his audience to potentially contain a much broader spectrum of the population. Historically we cannot recover whether or not the Genroku audience had the same reading experience as subsequent readers seem to have had. Unless one idealizes Saikaku's contemporaries, one must assume similar problems in reading: "Saikaku's intention in *Tales of Samurai Honor* has often been regrettably misunderstood and as a result the work has come in for unfair criticism. . . . anyone who imagines that *Tales of Samurai Honor* is a didactic work misses its humor and parody" (Callahan, 17-18). Nonetheless, comedy has been ignored and didacticism prioritized. What one can fairly safely assume about his audience is that Saikaku had an audience of varying degrees of informedness reading various levels of his texts. There were the readers in-the-know, readers after information on the quarters, readers looking for didactic messages, among others.

The intention here is not to disregard centuries of readers for this "correct" reading, but to partially recover that which Teruoka has observed as neglected, Saikaku's comedy. In addition to the lack of priority given to rhetorical tropes in the Japanese critical tradition, the prioritizing of seriousness by Meiji reformers in the literary realm bears partial responsibility for this tendency. But in recognizing the oppositional structure of comedy we cannot lose sight of the fact that comedy is

mutually dependent upon seriousness; this is inherent in the oppositional structure. As has probably too often been observed, comedy is serious business. With this in mind, I would like to examine some passages from Saikaku, their structures, their semantic operations, and the humor generated from them.

Parodic Comedy, *Parodii* , and *Naimaze*

The rhetorical trope of *naimaze*,[10] is a transposition of classical textual elements to another text which treats the contemporary world. This is a staple of Japanese literature but, rather than a simple *honkadori*, allusive operation, [11] a common device in Saikaku is that the element taken from the classical, parodied text is implanted in the parodying text resulting in anachronism, incongruity, etc. This is indeed one of the uses of *naimaze* to create parody in Saikaku which is also frequent in the *ukiyo-e* and subsequent fictional production. The juxtaposition of a high-minded, classical implant with the concrete concern of the contemporary context creates no small degree of incongruity.

The engagement of *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* with *Genji monogatari,* both parodic and otherwise, has long been a staple in Saikaku studies and is discussed from various perspectives by a great many critics.[12] Taniwaki Masachika outlines the development of this critical trend and argues that *Ichidai otoko* is independent.[13] What does it mean for the parodying text to have

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10 This term is properly from kabuki.

11 Yamasaki Toyama has written on intertextuality from a Japanese perspective which deals with the question of *honkadori.*

12 Taniwaki gives a thorough discussion to this trend. However, *nō* drama is a far greater target of Saikaku's parody; see Sugimoto Tsutomu.

13 See, "*Kōshoku ichidai otoko* to *Genji monogatari*" in Taniwaki (1987).

independence from the parodied text? A text like *Nise monogatari* inhabits the very structure of *Ise monogatari*, and parodies it line by line. This could be considered global parody, whereas *Ichidai otoko* parodizes locally, a twisted proverb here, a line from *nō* there. This parody is conducted from an independently structured tale which is motivated to parodize but not exclusively so.

Taniwaki Masachika's analysis of parodic passages leads him to use of the term, "concretization,"[14] which is very close to the ongoing analysis. To illustrate the operation, let us consider the scene of the 13-year-old Yonosuke in Suma:

> "It's awful to spend even one night alone. Isn't there a young shell fish diver around?" Someone went off to beckon one. Her hair hadn't even been combed. By her face one could see that she knew nothing of makeup. Her sleeves were too small and the skirt of her kimono too short. Worst of all she stank like the sea coast. Yonosuke felt ill. He took *enreitan* and other medicines and got some relief. "In the olden days Yukihira had his feet and legs massaged by someone. It relieved his despair. What kind of woman could it have been? They spent the night together. Then upon his departure she was given scent-wrap, an incense burner, a ladle, a mortar and pestle, and other utensils of his three year stay." (*Kōshoku ichidai otoko,* 53)[15]

The scene evokes the legend of Yukihira's exile in Suma, which is of course, a mainstay allusion. The scene at Suma is the basis of the *nō* drama, "Matsukaze" (Pine Winds), and the Suma

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14 See Taniwaki (1992), 63-70.

15 The edition is *Kōshoku ichidai otoko, Kōshoku gonin onna, Kōshoku ichidai onna.* Eds. Asō, Itasaka, and Tsutsumi. Translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

chapter in *Genji monogatari* both of which treat the situation reverently. In the classical texts, the material objects left behind convey gratitude and create a bond of attachment. They express spiritual and/or romantic intention, which is consistent with the idealizing tendencies of *Genji* or the spirituality of "Matsukaze." Saikaku's allusion to the exile, however, does not stem from the higher spiritual concerns of *nō* drama nor the romanticizing of the *Genji*. *Ichidai otoko* superimposes material concerns upon the spiritual concerns of the other texts. The implication of Yonosuke's listing the scent wrap and the incense burner is that they are left behind to help disguise the very earthy, earthly odors of the sea, and the rustic women. This superimposition seems to imply that Yukihira, like Yonosuke, must have suffered from the same stench. The listing of the other items adds to the image of an utterly rustic existence at Suma with none of the urbane pleasures Yonosuke seeks.

In these two monumental classical works the process of *honkadori* already forms a superimposed image. The Saikaku superimposition upon these superimpositions seems to demonstrate a full exploitation of the comical implications inherent within the process of multisignification. The Yukihira/Genji/Yonosuke image creates for the reader a multisignified wherein somber religious practice and its representation in *nō*, the sentimentality in *Genji*, and Yonosuke's suffering from the earthy stench of the sea create a high degree of incongruity. The deflation of higher concerns by means of the interjection of material or physical concerns is typical of Saikaku's comical modus operandi.

Teruoka claims that Saikaku's parody is the *haikaika* of classical Japanese literature: "classical literature which is considered sacred, is turned into a humorous expression of some

contemporary reality" (Teruoka, 122). He writes that the Danrin type of *haikai* was concerned with lowering things sacred, authoritarian, heroic, etc. From Teruoka's thought on *haikaika*/parody, we can see the interpenetration of this notion of parody with satire, which Teruoka does take note of: "[The Danrin] concept of realism was *haikai* parody and satirical methodology" (Teruoka, 123). When one sets out to ridicule a received text, there is a privileged group behind that text which is also the object of ridicule. So the entanglement of parody with satire is profound. Saikaku's treatment of numerous groups of his contemporaries including many of the merchant tales as well as the samurai tales would have to be considered satirical. But the most frequent objects of his satire are the Buddhist clergy and Confucianists. Before turning to satire proper, let us examine another example of the comic effect of parody's entanglement with satire. The posthumously published *Saikaku okimiyage* employs the phrase "reeking of Confucius" to the effect of deflating a highly esteemed classical text.

> Even a man reeking of Confucius, if he "heard the Way in the morning" could go to the Quarter at night! Bah! What's so precious about those *Kobun shinpō* anyway? . . . You don't have to send somebody after the Sages' mysterious elixirs of eternal youth and longevity. There's a shortcut to good things like that, don't you know? (Saikaku *okimiyage* 573)[16]

The opposition of "now" and "long ago" is frequent in Saikaku's texts, and he plays both sides of the argument as to which is superior. His juxtapositions of "long ago" with "now" include

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16 The edition is *Ihara Saikaku Shū 3*. Ed. Teruoka. The translation is by Robert Leutner (1975).

the decline of the present generation, the comforts of the present day, the virtues of filial piety, the comforts of religious life, among many other formulations. Opposition is implied, if not explicit. The passage above observes the balm of the pleasure quarters as the present day cure for maladies and juxtaposes that with received ancient wisdom. Of course the juxtaposition creates an incongruity that in turn is comical.

As is the case of any number of Saikaku motifs and phrases, "reeking of Confucius" appears elsewhere in his œuvre. One of these is a passage of *Ichidai otoko* in which Yonosuke attempts to convince one who supposedly has given up the ways of the world to have sex with him. In doing so he evokes the image of the quintessential hermit poet: "Even that reeking-of-Confucius Kamo no Chōmei who gave up the life of the body occasionally frolicked with his boy companion. Perhaps, it is that when he put out the oil lamp illuminating the *Hōjōki,* his heart too, fell into darkness" (*Kōshoku ichidai otoko,* 48). Of course the *Hōjōki* is a work of Buddhist influenced literature and Kamo no Chōmei a model of a Buddhist who revokes the world, so the reference to Confucianism in this context is somewhat puzzling. However, Saikaku seems to have zeroed in on Chōmei's use of *rokujū* his age and *jūroku* the boy's age as complimentary opposites and, characteristically, construed this as a sexual union. The treatment Saikaku gives this icon of medieval Japanese literature is evidently an affront to classical literature, be it Confucianist or Buddhist.

Those critics who proceed by biographical determinism most often try to impose a kind of "maturation thesis" upon the reading of passages with a moral, a tidbit of wisdom, etc., and the progression from playful to didactic is construed as Saikaku's life trajectory. The *Okimiyage* passage does not lend itself to

such a reading, since it comes late in Saikaku's life and does not reveal a repentant soul returning to the fold of Buddhism or Confucianism. And, Noda argues that biographical information on Saikaku is almost entirely speculation.[17] And after all, a collection of such passages from Saikaku would reveal no consistent pattern. The attitude in Saikaku's narratives is playful, and as is characteristic of comedy, the "moral" of a given line, paragraph, or tale is often inverted in the next line, paragraph, or tale.

Nonetheless, parody is very important in Saikaku's texts, as a structuring principle and a source of inspiration. The parodic doubling of *haikai*, then *haibun* such as *Ichidai otoko*, led Saikaku to play further with the notion of doubling. Consider the titles of some of his major works which are parodic at least in titular inspiration: *Honchō nijū fukō*; *Shin Yoshiwara tsunezunegusa*, *Saikaku zoku tsurezure*. There are also the texts that play off one another, in title, theme, motif, etc.: *Wankyū Isse no Monogatari* and *Wankyū Nise no Monogatari*; *Kōshoku Ichidai Otoko* and *Kōshoku Ichidai Onna*; *Nippon Eitaikura* and *Buke Giri Monogatari*. There are also texts with an internal structuring that doubles, or at least patterns in some fashion that could have been inspired by *haikai* parody.[18] Hinotani Teruhiko has described the structuring of *Gonin onna* as seen in this diagram:[19]

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17 See Noda, 16-27.

18 Drake makes this argument although his analysis seems to reflect rather than clarify. In the article he also refers to patterns of opposition within and between texts. Schalow's analysis of irony in *Nanshoku ōkagami* demonstrates the opposition we are concerned with.

19 Hinotani's reading of *Gonin onna* centers on this oppositional structure. See Hinotani, 95-105.

periphery:
tales One and Five take place outside the major urban centers; they take place at: Himeiji and Satsuma. One and Five also demonstrate concerns with individuals: Seijūrō and Goheibe.

center:
tales Two, Three and Four take place in the major urban centers: Ōsaka, Kyōto, and Edo respectively. Two, Three, and Four are also demonstrate concern with family businesses, or "the house" (*-ya*) as opposed to individuals.

These are among other oppositional patterns that Hinotani points out. The fact that Saikaku consciously patterned is clear in his play with numbers, the classics, didactic tracts, etc. Because of his *haikai* background the safest assumption is that he expanded *haikai* into narrative and what came about was something new. Not that Saikaku's narratives come out of nowhere, they contain something of the satire seen in Heian prints, something of the *kyōgen* vision of the cultural elite and high forms, and of course the always mentioned *haikai*, but disparate elements were recombined and brought to a narrative which does not deny orality. Noguchi emphasizes orality in Japanese literary history and places Saikaku in his canon of periods when the oral and written languages most approximated one another.[20] To engage orality is also to engage contemporaneity, and in this connection we turn to satire.

Satirical Comedy, *Fūshi*, and *Mitate*

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20 See Noguchi Tanehiko.

The critical view of satire in Japan has been a global type of satire, a *Gulliver's Travels* type of structure that maps onto the contemporary sociopolitical scene. This informs the perspective of Taniwaki in his analysis of *fūshi* in *Budō denraiki*.[21] However, Saikaku's satire, like his parody, is rarely this globally structured form. While there are abundant satirical touches and satirical episodes, there is virtually no structuring around satirical intent. His satire is local, words and phrases which generally constitute comical observations on contemporaries. The connection between Saikaku's "realism," as construed by Meiji literary reformers, and caricatures of his contemporaries is profound. On forms, Ronald Paulson observes, "Satire enjoys the episodic forms, the collection of stories or anecdotes, the list, the large dinner party or the group conversation, the legal brief, the projector's pamphlet, the encyclopedia, and the calendar" (Paulson, 5). And on the connection to realism, he writes, "[Satire] produces stories, plots, and character relationships. This is the satire it seems to me, that points the way to, and gradually merges into, the satirical novels of Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne, in which the representational qualities appear in new relationship with the rhetorical" (Paulson, 9). While satire may be related to mimetic forms -- and in retrospect may look like realism -- it is far from tenets of realism. From a broader literary perspective, that of the late twentieth century, European realism looks less and less like a standard and more and more like and anomaly. Critical, sarcastic, and satirical commentaries, however, are certainly a much broader phenomenon than a narrowly defined convention called realism. Satirical commentary is dependent upon a degree

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21 See Taniwaki's "Budō denraiki ni okeru fūshi no hōhō" in Taniwaki (1995).

of mimesis; in this, the proponents of Saikaku as a realist are accurate.[22]

Of these various modes of comedy being discussed, satire most clearly signals its intentions. Additionally, satire in the West has usually been discussed as having a will to correct. The concept needs to be altered in its application to Saikaku, and perhaps to Japan. In the western sense, one could never call Saikaku a satirist. His satire is in turn undermined by comedy and irony. Invectives are aimed at everything, the observing eyes, too, are called into question. That is not the same as saying that there is no satire in the text. That is to say that the instability of the satire in Saikaku's texts is indicative of a comedian, or ironist, the requisite will to correct of the traditional definition of a satirist is absent.

Saikaku's satire is often aimed at an individual or a representative of a given class. Their attempts at *share*, their stinginess, their foolish honor, are all frequent topics of his satire. The following passage views the way in which women imitate courtesans in every way.

> After all, women these days imitate what they see. Frequently it is the fashion of the women of the quarters that are followed. Even the women buying at Kyōto's garment district are all following the fashions of the women of the quarters. The wives of petty businessmen generally resemble the women of the bathhouses. Then the wives of the lower level businessmen, such as those from Yokochō, try to look like the tea house women. It's funny, all of them, even the upper class women are

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22 Etō Jun claims Saikaku as a forerunner to the novel in Japan, is the creation of Meiji critics, but from the perspective put forth here, his satire does indeed place him closer to contemporary western novelists and a potential protonovel form in Japan.

> trying to look like the women of the quarters. Even though at first glance, or even upon some examination, one can't tell the difference between a woman of keisei rank and a non-professional, but the non-professionals lack sensitivity, are garrulous, and, at times, base. There is a great difference in their love letters. Their manner of drinking is terrible. They can't sing songs. They wear their kimonos so clumsily that they are dangerous when they stand and wiggle too much when they walk. In bed they talk of bean paste and salt. From beginning to end, they use only a single sheet of tissue paper at a time. Incense reminds them of medicine. In any and all respects they are disgusting. Yes, one can say that their hair is done in the same fashion, but to think of them as the same is foolish. (*Sekenmunesanyō* 425-426)[23]

The extent to which quarters life leaked out of the prescribed boundaries and influenced the population at large is more than hinted at in this passage. This passage takes women as its target, but more frequent an object is the male who is *yabo* and thinks himself *tsū*, a trope which becomes a mainstay of *gesaku*.

The most frequent objects of satire, however, are Buddhists, and the most dangerous targets, in that such humor could have repercussions, Confucianists. In one of the final scenes of *Ichidaionna*, the nameless protagonist makes her way to Daiun Temple's Hall of the Buddha's Five Hundred Disciples. In a narrative technique using *mitate* the protagonist looks from face to face of the statues and says "As it should have been, I looked carefully from face to face and they came to life, they were the images of men with whom I had energetically shared a pillow" (*Kōshoku ichidai onna*, 451).[24] She goes on to

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23 The edition of this text is *Ihara Saikaku shū 3*. Ed. Teruoka.

24 The edition is *Kōshoku ichidai otoko, Kōshoku gonin onna, Kōshoku ichidai onna*.

enumerate lovers whose faces are superimposed upon the disciples' statues. The statues are symbolic objects of spiritual value within the temple. When Saikaku's protagonist views them, they are revalued in her process of remembering. The protagonist is supposed to be in a moment of deep repentance, but the effect is the opposite of repentance, it is re-indulgence. The fact that this entire scene is a remembrance within the greater remembrance of the entire story, frames the scene in a doubling technique which has a metafictional quality. More importantly, this double framed, double remembered moment creates an ironized enlightenment. Level one of the remembrance is formed by the Buddha-disciple statues which evoke the images of former lovers as she stands within the Daiun Temple. Level two is formed by the greater frame of the old woman, enlightened, living her monks existence, and tantalizing her audience with her reminiscing within her "cell of love."

Once again, the somber and its forms of representation are the objects of Saikaku's play. He overturns them to reveal their comic underside. The protagonist here, cannot escape the sexual, sensual world, which, emphasized as it is, within the cell of love, within the temple, within her moment of repentance creates a profound incongruity. The play of superimposition, the layering of spiritual representation upon sexual remembering leads to a sensual enlightenment and inverts this scene of repentance into one of humorous remembrance, a double recall.

Saikaku's satire was also present in and perhaps stemmed from his *haikai.* The following verse goes beyond his usual observations on the Buddhist practice of the populace or the non-practice of the clergy. A merchant's worship of money, and/or a godless material world can be witnessed in this satirical verse:

> Shirenu yo ya / Shaka no shi ato ni / kane ga aru
> [Human existence is ephemeral and] the things of this world are beyond knowing / after Sakyamuni died [one finds that] / [even the saintly one who had transcended desires of this worldly existence left behind material things and] money exists.

Even more so than Saikaku's prose, his verse is telescopic, and requires extrapolation and explanation when translating into English. In this verse there is the possibility of interpreting the "punch line" as either, Sakyamuni left material things, money, behind after his death, or, the importance of money has outlasted the importance of Sakyamuni. In which case the materialism in Saikaku has moved to a position somewhat akin to existentialism.[25]

As a testament to the connection between realism and satire we shall turn to the collection that is often taken as a "get rich guide," the collection *Nippon eitaikura.* Once again the objects of satire are to be found in other Saikaku texts: poor religious practice among religious leaders; and religious practice by the populace that is only concerned with personal gain. One of the characters in the collection, Gennai, goes to visit a shrine trying to insure his continued wealth. When he is at the shrine he approaches some priests and requests that they play some music and dance as a religious offering:

> But the Shintō priests were sitting in a palanquin stringing *zeni* coins and totalling the offerings. They

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25 This notion may not be as absurd as initially meets the ear. Stephen Light's research of the Kuki - Sartre connection bears this out, if one considers the extent to which Kuki uses Saikaku in his *Iki no kōzō.*

> didn't want to be bothered with a request of prayer. At last the priests saw to it that the request was granted, but they simply beat a hand-drum while sitting behind the dancing girls, finishing up the performance in a hurry. (*Nippon Eitaikura,* 138)[26]

The image of the greedy priest who is more concerned with money than anything else is frequent in Saikaku, although Buddhist priests are far more frequent than this example of Shintō priests. Religious practice in Saikaku generally seems to be motivated by personal desires, much more so than other motivations, especially religious devotion. In another passage from *Eitaikura*, the character Chūsuke goes to a shrine of Kannon to pray:

> "Even if there is a next world, it is for this one that I pray." In whatever world, he broke down and cried in his search for the bell of Mugen. He cast away his entire self, body and soul: "I beg you to make me rich once again. I care nothing about my children or subsequent generations, not even if they have no food. Please, just help ME NOW!" (*Nippon Eitaikura,* 170)

Of course the satirical commentary is on the greed of a man willing to make any sacrifice anything in order to gain whatever he desires. Within this particular passage we also witness a reversal of the filially impious son. Most frequently in Saikaku is the tale of the son squandering the fortunes built up by the father. Wealth that should last generations is spent in the quarters in a very short time. This story typical of the complications one finds in Saikaku's tales reverses that pattern and displays a father willing to mortgage his offspring's futures.

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26 The edition of this text is *Ihara Saikaku Shū 3.*

In these tales any "will to correct" is entirely read into the text by the reader. So this notion which seems central to western satire must be rethought in taking up satire outside the western tradition. There is a great sense of what numerous commentators have called, a "world-weary" Saikaku, a Saikaku who observes the world as it is and simply records human folly. This notion too requires some adjustment. There is an intentionally constructed opposition: Buddhist and Confucianist ideals of behavior are revealed to be largely inoperative. The human tendency to err when confronting a situation which tests such ideals, or the lack of human stamina to maintain the ideals over time, is brought into focus. But Saikaku does not hover above Shintō priests and condemn them, he reveals them in the manner that *kyōgen* revealed the yamabushi, so that we may laugh at life's contradictions as revealed through a comic vision. Such revelation is neither inherently reinforcing the status quo nor inherently revolutionary and disruptive. The political position of the satirical-comic effect can only be judged in its historical context -- the double structure has no essentializing features.

Irony, Extradiegesis, and *Shōshiji*

Contemporary Japanese criticism uses the term *aironii* to designate ironic play. However, this term does not appear in Saikaku criticism in Japan. A number of terms such as *chaka suru, gyakuten suru*, *hiniku* etc., do appear, but as usage seems to attest, they are not quite the same as *aironii*. Hirosue Tamotsu in writing on parody uses the term "dialectic" which critically speaking is more often associated with irony.[27] And Taniwaki,

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27 See "Koten no parodii, chōetsu to kakō" in Hirosue.

who is more concerned with satire, examines Saikaku's use of reversals.[28] Introductions to Saikaku's texts, whether by annotators or translators, at least accommodate irony.

Paul Schalow is the only one who writes of irony, in particular he writes of it as a discursive feature of *Nanshoku ōkagami*.[29] Although many studies do not contradict ironic readings, Schalow is the only critic to directly discuss irony in Saikaku. However, I would like to examine his operative notion of irony. He postulates that Saikaku's mode of operation has a historical precedent, *Dembu monogatari*. He states that the verbal battle over sophistication is won by the country bumpkin arguing the superiority of female love. The unstated, underlying sociological assumption is that the city sophisticates are in-the-know and the country bumpkin in his argumentation has proven nothing more than his lack of sophistication. Thus, the urban-rural dialectic that is important to much of Saikaku's work is the key to reading the satire on heterosexuality as a countrified, unsophisticated preference. However, this is a transcendental reading, and as such, not ironic. Of course, as in all Saikaku's texts, there is a complication. The city sophisticates have lost the argument, and in spite of having lost the argument, they, along with the "reader-in-the-know," laugh up their sleeves at the bumpkin. But, clearly, the urbanites are compromised because of having lost the argument. The supposed superiority of all things urban is suddenly precarious, doubling the question of city sophistication back onto itself. This is what ironizes Saikaku's use of the tale and is characteristic of the operation of a Saikaku text. Clearly Saikaku writes of human sexuality from numerous

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28 See "Saikaku no hōkō tenkan" in Taniwaki (1987).

29 Schalow's analyses appear in his Introduction to *Mirror of Male Love* and also Schlow (1989).

perspectives: that of the male connoisseur is the primary perspective (although not exclusive) in *Ichidai otoko*; that of the courtesan is primary in *Ichidai onna*; that of the *onnagirai* is primary, at least in part of *Nanshoku*. Much comedy is created when the primary perspective is disrupted. In comedy and irony the contradictory readings must be maintained without the censorship of reason: a single position operates within an openended dialectic. And Saikaku presents *kōshoku*, *ukiyo*, the samurai class, the merchant class, etc., all from various perspectives, this is central to his œuvre.

Inserted in his study of Higuchi Ichiyō, Robert Danly presents a brief and astute discussion of Saikaku's irony. In stating that "Saikaku embraced the contradictions in life" and "shunned idealization" (Danly, 131), Danly demonstrates that he is attuned to the difference between irony and satire. His observation of Saikaku's "cool and detached point of view" and aloofness, but his ability to "sympathize with the suffering of his characters" (Danly, 132) also demonstrate a through understanding of Saikaku's irony. He is particularly perceptive in his statements: "the practical and the ridiculous are juxtaposed; the prosaic and the elegant collide. . . . The earthy jargon of the pleasure quarter and the business world is mixed with lines from the classics. A pompous Confucianist tries to discourse with the street-wise" (Danly, 124). Nevertheless, Danly's study of Higuchi Ichiyō dedicates few pages to Saikaku.

The irony in Saikaku stems in part from a second-order narrative voice identified by Howard Hibbett. The perception of this voice on the part of the reader is very much an act of interpretation. The interpretation is cued by figures, hyperbole, parodic and satirical aspects of the text. Part of the operation of this voice is the creation of the diction-contradiction tension

within the text. This extradiegetic voice interrupts, comments, contradicts, and generally creates tension in the text between events, characters, and other voices. Hibbett in a comparative study of Saikaku's *Kōshoku ichidai onna* and Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722) refers to both as "erotic picaresque" and adds they are "similar in theme but a world apart in technique" (Hibbett 1957, 64). As far as the extradiegetic voice is concerned he comments:

> Saikaku's chief attitude is one of detached gaiety, and his complex seriocomic tone is enlivened by a great many touches of burlesque wit. Defoe, a superb illusionist, is entirely withdrawn behind his narrative, of which he mostly claims only to be the editor; while Saikaku, like Fielding, does not hesitate to destroy the continuity of his tale. (Hibbett 1957, 64)

Ironic commentary is injected into the narrative from a textual level different from that of the storyline. Although this extradiegetic commentary is close to the authorial voice, except in terms of greater construction, one must be very careful in speaking of the author as a participant in the narrative. I would speak in terms of the author only in the sense of the constructor of the situation, especially with an author like Saikaku whose "chief attitude is one of detached gaiety."

Leutner writing about Samba describes and gives some rational for this type of authorial, extradiegetic voice:

> the writer's objective was to entertain and amuse, but he was unwilling to put his reputation at risk by appearing to be simply a jester or a buffoon. The result was a form of writing that constantly forces upon the reader an awareness of its artificiality and tentativeness . . . [they made] attempts to preserve something of the distance

> between the author and his work . . . [an author reminds the reader] the world he has created in his fiction is his creation and his alone, one from which he can remove himself at will, by ceasing to be simply a narrator and taking on some wholly different persona. (Leutner 1985, 4)

Self-irony is characteristic of the narrative voice in much of Saikaku, yet has drawn relatively little critical attention. Many of Saikaku's prefaces operate in an ironic fashion, as has been observed by Caryl Callahan:

> maintain that *Tales of Samurai Honor* is meant as a tract on giri often refer to the preface, where Saikaku declares that he wTo strengthen their case, those who ill recount tales of samurai sacrificing themselves for *giri.* Some critics have apparently taken him at his word, even though the prefaces of most his other works were written tongue in cheek. (Callahan, 18).

This voice is fundamentally the same as one observed by Ryan, who while condemning, is at least accurate in the observation: "We consequently find a strong tendency for authors to moralize in works of fiction from medieval times and, in the Tokugawa, even the most licentious story was apt to end with a moral dictum" (Ryan, 7). The comment misses the mark in terms of irony, yet points out the oppositional structure in a comic extradiegeticvoice.

The German romantics placed the highest priority on irony, and in conjunction with this sought to define it precisely. Schlegel, probably the greatest proponent of irony, prioritized texts which were permeated with self-irony. He surely would have recognized this discursive characteristic as it appears in *Saikaku oritome*: This is the voice of the preface that Callahan

indicates, the attitude that Hibbett discusses, and consistent with the voice Leutner identifies in Samba.

> It is said that things which pass before one's eyes have a way of floating into one's mind. And from long ago it is said that unless one utters what is on his mind, it will expand inside his belly. Although I myself, haven't had a thought either, I have had a small belly for quite some time. . . . I have just tried to write, relying on my brush, about peoples wild adventures in this world. (*Saikaku oritome* 315)[30]

This preface to a collection of tales reveals a self-effacing quality that colors the entire collection with irony. It indicates an authorial posture vis-à-vis oneself and one's work, and a philosophical position vis-à-vis the world.

Saikaku may have been unusual in the Japanese tradition in his ironic perspective, but for premodern Japanese narrative in general, there are complications with an analysis of voice in a text. Although he does make exception for an author with an ironic perspective, one complication is raised by Earl Miner who emphasizes the author's role within the text in Japanese literature. Additionally, there is the complication that Japanese narratives before the Meiji period are generally lacking a unified narrative point of view. Miner addresses the problem surrounding point of view and postulates his "points of attention." The framework for his analysis is based on the *monogatari* tradition, and as such, it is most pertinent to that tradition. The term *shōshiji*, "narration by the book," is also from the *monogatari* tradition and Miner indicates that it

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30 The edition of this text is *Saikaku shū*. Nihon koten bungaku taikei 48.

anticipates the western notion of "the voice of the text" (Miner, 201). His analysis includes other narrative levels and their Japanese designations, and by no means excludes the possibility of extradiegesis.[31] The fluidity of Japanese narrative is perceptively examined by Miner: "the high degree of importance of the point of attention is typical of affective-expressive narrative like Japanese, as is also therefore the seemingly effortless switch from person to person attended to and voice to voice of the attenders" (Miner, 193). Additionally, he writes, "We observe the overlapping and fragmenting of various points of view. There is a great deal of disruption, of displacement, of switching from mind to mind. This volatility has its explanation in the importance of points of attention" (Miner, 199). While one must keep such complications in mind, narrative from Saikaku's brush is far more under the influence of Danrin *haikai* than the received *monogatari* tradition, and *haikai* not *monogatari* would have led him to his highly ironic posture.

Although his concerns are not at all with irony or humor, the work on Saikaku's style by Kanai Toranosuke demonstrates slippage from third person to first personnarration, and indirectly lends support to the current position on the extradiegetic voice. Kanai observes that Japanese does not require pronouns or other markers indicating who is speaking. He examines the narrative voice in passages from 1:5, 3:3, 3:5, 4:3, and 6:4 of *Ichidai otoko* and argues that they can be read as first person or third person narrations. Kanai then uses passages from 4:7, 6:2, and 7:6 to demonstrate a clear movement in the

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31 Miner discusses *shōshiji* and other narrative terminology on p. 201 of the "Narrative" chapter in *Comparative Poetics.* The entire text is concerned with building an East-West literary dialogue, and exemplary.

narrative from first person to third person and third person to first person narration. He concludes that there are three narrative types: first person, third person, and mixed first and third person. The functioning of these shifts Kanai categorizes as such:

> When Yonosuke is treated with the third person narration, that is authorial, Yonosuke's attitude and behavior or intercourse with other characters is that which is the aesthetic object; when Yonosuke, with the first person narration, treats characters other than himself, they are the aesthetic objects. (Kanai 1989, 37)

That is to say that the narrative comes to the reader through Yonosuke or "Saikaku," and the portrayal through Yonosuke lends more directness, more intimacy to the object being portrayed.

Whereas Kanai postulates the grammatical person which sometimes requires considerable speculation, the postulation of narrative levels is based on the relatively concrete observation. The question is not of a well sustained character voice, but the mobility of the "authorial voice." Kanai's analysis demonstrates that the narration is telescopic. But we are concerned with the semantics of moving from moralistic to jesting, to social commentator, to preacher, etc. The pitfall for most readers is to attach to one of these voices -- most often the one that the reader most wants to find in the narrative -- the name of the historical persona, Ihara Saikaku. Miner, too, writes, "the more extreme a fiction or ironic a situation, the more the distinction [between author and narrator] becomes useful" (Miner, 187).

Some of the dialectic in Saikaku includes play with the questions of fashionability, part and parcel of the urban-rural dialectic. This is abundantly evident in the comments on passing

fashion, and indications of what is *iki*. And yet, the abundantly detailed descriptions which constitute an articulation with contemporary reality could be taken, and are often taken, as a promotion of all things *iki*, a kind of do-it-yourself manual for that segment of the audience in pursuit of *iki*. But, this reader-position censors the contradictions in the text, which overturns questions of *iki*; And these contradictions are often created by the movement of the extradiegetic voice.

Saikaku's position seems profoundly ironical -- and his texts seem to operate with the dialectical structure of irony. As Hibbett has shown Saikaku's disruptions within his texts are intended to create comic effects. By creating a gap between the narrative and the narration considerable comedy is generated, and once again we are in the realm of doubling, an artificial coincidence that creates opposition. The opposition is between narration (telling) and narrative (storyline/showing), and at times, between narration and narration. To once again revisit the question of the reader, the pitfall of such ironic texts is to infer the authorial position, which is inferred from the reader's own, often prejudiced position. But in the case of Saikaku, where there is little biographical evidence, we do not have an implied author, only an inferred one. In such a text the cues of hyperbole, rhetorical figures, and textual/cultural spaces require greater attention.

Ukiyo, Pilgrimage, and Carnivalesque

The discussion so far has turned up low/high juxtapositions and superimpositions, and questions of ironic mask and ironic persona, which leads me to the notion of the

carnivalesque with its "logic of the turnabout."[32] H. D. Harootunian discusses the milieu of the Edo period cities as one of "spectacle and diversity" (Harootunian, 7). His analysis is admittedly Bakhtinian and his concern is with the inversion of Confucianist principles by print and narrative artists in Edo. Much of his analysis is of artistic space opened in Saikaku's texts. Indeed much of it coincides with the concerns herein: heterodoxy, the celebration of play, double perspectives, etc. The centers of play in these urban centers are *ukiyo*, and while the term was not first used by Saikaku, he certainly defined much of the sociological space. In the following passage from Saikaku, we glimpse a *ukiyo* that is also inverted, not just the "transformation of the city into a cultural space that constantly recoded vertical relationships into horizontal groupings" (Harootunian, 14).

A scene from *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* is one of the most opaque, because of the play of signs, yet most colorful scenes in the text. The play of signs in this passage exemplifies the movement of a *haikai* sequence. As *haikai* would move from one word play and ironic juxtaposition to another, this passage moves from sign to *mitate* to sign to *mitate*. There is a gesture-response movement, the response directly relating to the gesture, playing off one another dialectically. Yonosuke and a group of *massha* are in the upstairs of the Hachimonjiya, the Maruya, and the Kashiwaya. The groups in the different houses deploy sign, and countersign, sign, and countersign.

> [Yonosuke] gathered various *massha* and told them, "I have decided that today we are going to enjoy ourselves." He had them all wearing wild pink *yukata*

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32 This is of course Bakhtin's formulation.

which were decorated with Yonosuke's own crest. They all let their hair down, were without *fundoshi*, and all nine of them formed a line. They went up to the second floor of the Hachimonjiya. They created a clamor and the area fell silent. With reason, for the group included some of the most infamous people of Kyōto. Yashichi dangled *shide* from a hemp-palm broom,[33] when he suddenly put it out the window; across the way in the Maruya they put the figures of Daikoku and Ebisu out their window. Upon seeing this, those of the Kashiwaya hung out salted sea bream.[34] Shōzaemon[35] painted a black drooping mustache on a pan and put that out the window.[36] Those in the shop next door hung out the oracles from the three shrines. Again, those across the way brought out a mallet,[37] then ōmu showed the vigil lamp which he had lighted.[38] Those in the Maruya then display a hooded Buddha,[39] and those of the Kashiwaya put out a hook for fishing the bucket out of a well.[40] The Hachimonjiya displayed a chopping block[41] and

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33 The broom with *shide* is a *mitate* of the *tamagushi* used in offerings and purification rites. For more detailed information see, Maeda Kingorō and Teruoka.

34 An offering to Ebisu.

35 A historical persona who performed the sacred dances at shrines.

36 A *mitate* of the face of Daikoku.

37 Teruoka Yasutaka interprets this as threat of divine castigation, however, Daikaku is often depicted with a mallet.

38 This is a lamp which is placed before the image of the Buddha. It serves as a *mitate* in response to the apparition of the hammer, working off of a Japanese proverb: 'fire comes out the eyes of those castigated.'

39 Maeda reads the hooded Buddha as a *mitate* of the lamp.

40 Teruoka interprets this as meaning that all living things will be helped by the Buddha.

41 Maeda is the only commentator to provide an explanation for this. He writes that the associational link is to the previous image of the hook and this, in turn, links by way of kitchen utensils or cooking to the following burdock root.

> this prompted the Maruya to put out a burdock. Then a cat with long and short swords was displayed and in response a dried salmon with a toothpick dangling from its mouth was shown.[42] This prompted another house to show a pot for extinguishing coals tied with a sacred cord. From the end of a pole of bamboo others dangled out the account book of a soy sauce shop. Yashichi put on an *eboshi* and put his head out the window. From across the way they threw 12 *mon*[43] wrapped in a small packet. Those to the north put a cotton hat on a mortar which resembled an old woman and put that out.[44] Those to the south wrote on a *shōji* and displayed the sign saying, "We have the best medicines for aborting, and we have midwives on a daily basis."[45] The middle house displayed banners to hang in front of the Buddha and for funeral[46] processions. (*Kōshoku ichidai otoko* 181)

The passage closes with everyone laughing till they cry. The entertainers descend from their semi-sacred play above the crowd, down to the streets and into the crowd itself, to become part of

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42 This cat may be in response to the burdock. Maeda gives no interpretation stating that more research is required. However, the salmon with a toothpick in its mouth is certainly a reference to the *Bushi wa kuwanedo takayōji*. The salmon with a toothpick then seems a logical response to overturn the previous gesture indicating a samurai.

43 Maeda explains this as the monthly cost of keeping a vigil lamp lit to the Buddha. Teruoka estimates the cost at the equivalent of ¥90.

44 Teruoka reads this as an old woman wearing an *eboshi*, an inversion since it was a male garment. Maeda includes Takemura's interpretation of this as male genitals, but, interprets the image himself as that of a low level prostitute. This image then turns the 12 *mon* into a prostitute's fee.

45 This image is in response to the female figure/phallus just displayed.

46 Teruoka writes that this is playing off of the abortions mentioned on the sign.

the crowd gathered in the quarters. In carnivalesque fashion they blur distinctions between sacred and secular, entertainer and crowd, high and low. The owners of the tea houses, distraught with the loss of business and lack of attention to prostitution, throw money to gain the attention of the crowds. Yet, no one notices: "Such is the heart of the people of the capital." The quarters, that Tokugawa space where money reigns supreme and the libidinal economy[47] is the attraction, has its hierarchy overturned in this scene. The entertainers center the crowd's attention on visual *share* and the attraction of money, the commanding force of the *ukiyo*, is suspended. The final stroke in the reversal of reversals is that along with the street cleaners, only the monks -- those detached from this world and its material things -- scurry to pick up what they can of the money thrown by the owners of the tea houses (those who usually take in money). The monks and street cleaners, equally greedy, "parody the Church's cult" (Bakhtin, 7) in an ambivalent figure of high and low.

The images in the play above the crowd generally move from sacred to secular, from a *mitate* of a *tamagushi* to a *mitate* of a *bushi*; from Buddha to burdock. And the play of signs ends in a movement from *mitate* to the written word announcing death. Images of reversals and lowering are frequent: the figure of Daikoku is replaced with the *mitate*, a pan painted with a mustache and face; the *tamagushi* of purification is replaced with the mallet of castigation; the swords are inverted with the toothpick. This dialectic of parodies illustrates a silent play and purely visual display of *share* (both word play and fashion) -- part in the greater phenomenon of *iki*. However, the ground of

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47 This is Harootunian's term.

iki, like the play of signs in this scene constantly shifted. Stephen Light defines *iki* as, "an aesthetic and moral ideal . . . If inclined to wealth, he or she scorned attachment to money; if inclined to amorous pleasure, he or she resisted being carried away by desire. Not ignorant of the details of the everyday world, indeed living decidedly *in* the world, the person of *iki* sought to maintain a form of detachment." (Stephen Light, 29). Saikaku's play takes this formulation to its logical *haikai*-esque conclusion: there is no essence behind the changing shapes, there is only play. Harootunian describes this as "social surplus spilled over status lines and destablized fixed meanings by fostering play and plural identities" (Harootunian, 19). Word play, the ephemerality of meaning, is the basic component of Saikaku's version of the world-in-reverse, which undercuts not only Buddhist doctrine and Tokugawa ideology, but the quarter's own [dis-]order.

Another "cultural space [which] offered the possibility of fostering both play as a leisure time activity and the sanctions for transgressing fixed boundaries and blurring roles" (Harootunian, 17) was the pilgrimage.[48] In another passage from *Ichidai otoko*, Yonosuke sets off for Mt. Kurama shortly after the New Year. When preparing to return to Kyōto, he invites other pilgrims to join him in going to a temple festival in Ōhara. Yonosuke tells them, "Actually tonight is the night in Ōhara that everyone sleeps together in front of the gods in the hall of worship. There is no limit, the town elite, the lowliest, the daughters, the old and the young all sleep together. That's how it is there according to custom; that one night everything is

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48 A historical text which lends considerable support to a liminal or carnivalesque approach to pilgrimage is Constantine Nomikos Vaporis.

permitted, everyone sleeps together" (*Kōshoku ichidai otoko,* 92). This demonstrates the spirit in which pilgrimages were undertaken and is a perfect example of the carnivalesque phenomenon Bakhtin describes in both its leveling of social differences, and its lowering of spirituality to the level of the material. Of course, this is precisely the type of sociological scene one expects to find in the discursive space of that Saikaku constructs. Gary Leupp examines pilgrimage from a historical perspective with similar conclusions:

> the shrines might provide the scene for such bacchanalia such as the yearly zakone ("group sleep") at Ōhara Shrine near Kyōto where manservants might approach their masters wives. Carnivalesque activities, including free love, might also accompany the regular pilgrimages to Ise which became a craze during the Tokugawa period. (Leupp, 97)

William LaFleur writes on Asian pilgrimage in terms borrowed from Victor Turner. And as the chart below indicates these terms approximate Bakhtinian concerns:

Sphere	On Pilgrimage	At Home
geographical/ spatial	peripheral	central
relationship to socio-intellectual tradition	heterodox	orthodox
modality of social expression	egalitarian	stratified

(LaFleur, 276)

Clearly, the concerns of peripheral versus central, heterodox versus orthodox, and egalitarian versus stratified[49] are well within the concerns Bakhtin expresses in his carnivalesque theory. Additionally, the carnival milieu of *Ise mairi* is evident in Winston Davis' account, "Along the highways, pilgrims were met by jesters, bards (often priests with earthy vocations), musicians, geishas or other fair ladies waiting to entertain them with a joke, a tale, a song, or a bed" (Davis, 103). But, as Peter Stallybrass reminds us, the chaos resulting from the "transgressing the rules of hierarchy and order in any one of the domains may have major consequences in the others" (Stallybrass, 3). The pilgrims met with a combination of incredible generosity, and "thieves, kidnappers, deceitful money changers, counterfeiters, slavers, adulterers, incestuous lovers, sexual maniacs, greedy innkeepers, and bogus pilgrims . . . [and] other crimes [which] also helped to turn the world upside down" (Davis, 107). This aspect of a world upside down is also found in Saikaku who populates his texts with hustlers, tricksters, and criminals, in addition to actors, pretenders, itinerants, traveling musicians, etc.

One clearly sees operations depending upon a double structure, and the perception of the opposite in Saikaku. And similar observations have been made of subsequent Edo period works. Naoki Sakai discusses eighteenth-century Japanese literature in terms of its "earthy" and "earthly" qualities,[50] and Harootunian argues, for the same time period, that "the body [was] an instrument of consumption, play, sexuality, anatomical study, travel, pilgrimage, work, and even prayer that dominated

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49 See Lafleur.

50 See Sakai, 186.

the new culture of the cities" (Harootunian, 20). The terrain that these new cultural forms were to occupy was first extensively surveyed by Ihara Saikaku in his narrative production. In addition to exploring the spaces of the urban areas, the *ukiyo* quarters, pilgrimages, etc., which were so important to Edo literary production, Saikaku wrote in a mode that has proven influential to our own time.

Conclusion: East-West Literary Dialogue and Modality

I have not set out here to claim that all irony, parody, and satire are comical. I have tried to demonstrate the extent to which they are complicitous. I have also attempted to critically recover some of the comedy in Saikaku. Comedy being what it is, is always censored by seriousness. The prioritizing of the seriousness over comedy must be close to universal. The canon wins out over the parody of it, the contemporary realities over the satire of them, and meaning over the potential chaos of the pun. However, lost in this process of censorship is the fundamental ambiguity inherent in Saikaku and writers of his ilk.

In light of a number of western discussions of comedy and irony, Japanese critics such as Shūichi Katō raise a point that is problematical. Katō writes that Japanese culture "pays little attention to the universal nature of the abstract whole" (Kato, 25), in which case the western view of irony, in particular, is at odds with Katō's position on Japanese culture. Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Schlegel saw a kind of absolutism, a religiously determined concept of comedy and irony. This is most concisely stated by Behler: "As for irony, an essential function of humor is contrast and juxtaposition of the

finite with the infinite and vice versa, or realism with idealism" (Behler, 68). However, in the Japanese context it is possible to argue that rather than the notions of the infinite and absolute, what one observes is a question of hierarchies, and in comedy, the reversal of hierarchies. Note the vulgarization of classics, the lowering of the prioritized, and the focus on the earthy and trivial we have already discussed here. But the gaps created by incongruities, in turn, create the dialectic with the opposite pole: the classical is juxtaposed with the contemporary; the trivial and everyday are juxtaposed with the important; the earthy is juxtaposed with the transcendental. Whether or not the hierarchy involves absolutes or transcendental values is essentially unimportant, although in Saikaku, Buddhist and Confucianist universal prescriptions are very often taken to task. As to the question of a "whole," I have discussed a related question, which I have labeled global and local (in the context of parody and satire), that goes part way in resolving this problem of the notion of "whole." However, constructions of wholes do not concern us here. The domination of canonical forms does concern us, and self-parody and self-irony set Saikaku apart from the values embodied in *waka* poetry, *monogatari* fiction, and *nō* drama. The critique of these canonical forms, or Buddhism, is not the endgame in Saikaku -- the critique is turned over, and overturned. This modus operandi runs contrary to the fact that the serious is prioritized over the comical, in nearly all cultures and nearly all ages. Yet, in the Tokugawa period we witness what may be the greatest explosion of comic literature, culminating with *gesaku*.

In my discussion of pilgrimage I have already addressed the question as to whether comedy, or any other doubling, reinforces the status quo or is truly disruptive and revolutionary.

Theorists tend to idealize forms of humor. Bakhtin, for example, saw carnivalesque as utopian. It is also tempting to see manifestations of carnival as democratizing, as Harootunian saw verticals turned to horizontals in the cities of the Edo period. However, uplifting someone is nearly always at someone else's expense. Merchant men ruled the quarters. The women who reached the liberating pinnacle of the *tayū* status were very few. The quarters were equally rigid societies as the extraquarters world. They were however defined extremely differently.

One must maintain the inherent "contradictions" when examining the implications of doubling: it uplifts and it demeans. But it does not censor, and that is what is most potentiating and threatening about it. Writing on an issue relating to carnivalesque, liminality, Barbara Babcock avoids such essentializing:

> All symbolic inversions define a culture's lineaments at the same time as they question the usefulness and absoluteness of this ordering. Clown or trickster or transvestite never demands that we reject totally the orders of our sociocultural worlds; but neither do these figures simply provide us with a cautionary note as to what would happen should the "real" world turn into a perpetual circus or festival. Rather they remind us of the arbitrary condition of imposing an order on our environment and experience, even while they enable us to see certain features of that order more clearly simply because they have turned insight out.
>
> (Babcock, 29)

What Babcock calls "symbolic inversion" has broad anthropological concerns that span western and non-western cultures, industrialized and non-industrialized societies, and also cover an extended time period. This type of theory presents one

way forward in addressing the issue of theory in Asian literary studies. Theoretical approaches to modern Japanese literature abound and have some claim to legitimacy by nature of the western literary influences which flooded Japan from the Meiji period on, and of course, Japanese engagement of those influences. In dealing with classical Japanese literature however, because questions of influence have dominated literary studies, there is no such claim to legitimacy. Nevertheless, most of us subscribe to literature as a notion, literature as an entity. Otherwise, Japanese literature should be taught by historians as a sub-category of Japanese history. If literature is an entity, then a theoretical approach to Japanese literature is valid. In fact, until theoretical approaches attempt to engage Chinese and Japanese, among other literatures, literary theory itself can never lay claim to legitimacy while remaining provincial to Europe, or limited to the modern period -- that is, ignoring the majority of the world's literary production. In seeking a way forward, Miner calls for the "identification of formally identical features in the things being compared" (Miner, 232), but it is precisely the surface features, the forms of various cultural products that are sure to vary. This essay is in the vein of examining "modality" that is concerned with modes of operation, and functions, not forms. However, rather than prescribing doctrine, the applications of appropriately selected theoretical approaches to appropriately selected texts will open new approaches to Japanese literature, and alter the critical landscape. Japanese literature will survive unscathed.

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