“The Commodification of Sentiment: A Veneer of *Ga*, but *Zoku* at Heart”

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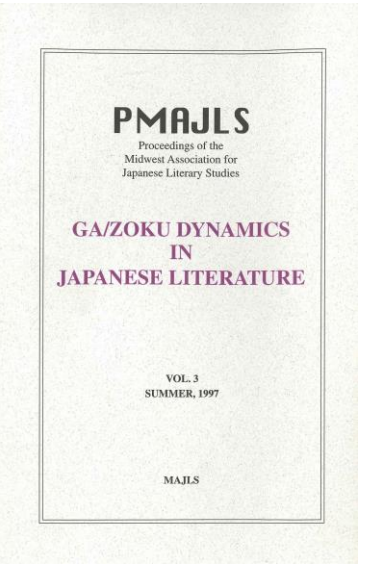

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The Commodification of Sentiment: A Veneer of *Ga*, but *Zoku* at Heart

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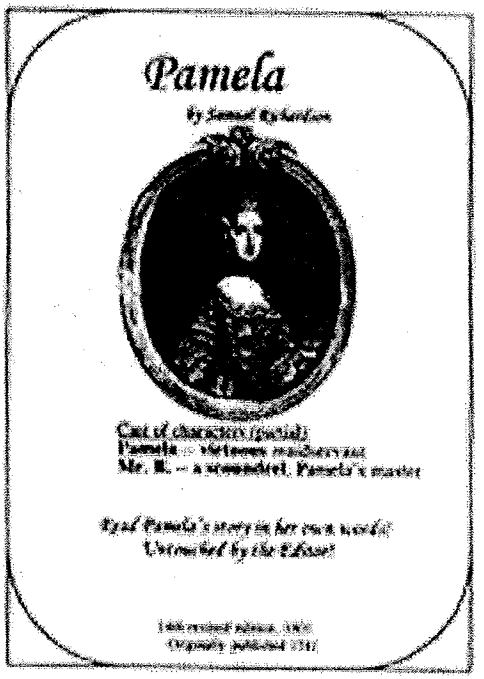
"Step right up, step right up--have I got a tear-jerker for you!" In such a way might a writer of sentimental fiction advertise the latest outpouring from his or her pen. In the west, Samuel Richardson's Pamela, Or Virtue Rewarded (1801) is one of the most well-known examples of sentimental fiction; while in Edo-period Japan, *ninjōbon* (human emotion books) and *ninjōbon*-like works cornered the market on sentimental literature. Hana Sanjin's "*Seirō onna teikin* (House rules for women of the brothel, 1823)" is a late *sharebon* (witty book) which bears the stamp of *ninjōbon* sentimentality despite its *sharebon* label: the author delves into the hearts and minds of his characters to describe their every feeling with the utmost pathos and--of course--sincerity. In the following pages, in order to sell my reader on the idea of sentiment as a commodity, I discuss the ways in which these two authors, Richardson and Hana Sanjin, make use of such emotions in Pamela and "House Rules," respectively. For reference purposes, I begin with brief infomercials of the two works in question, follow those with a few observations on the sentimental tradition in the west, and then turn to the "heart" of the issue: a comparison of sentiment as a commodity in these two works.

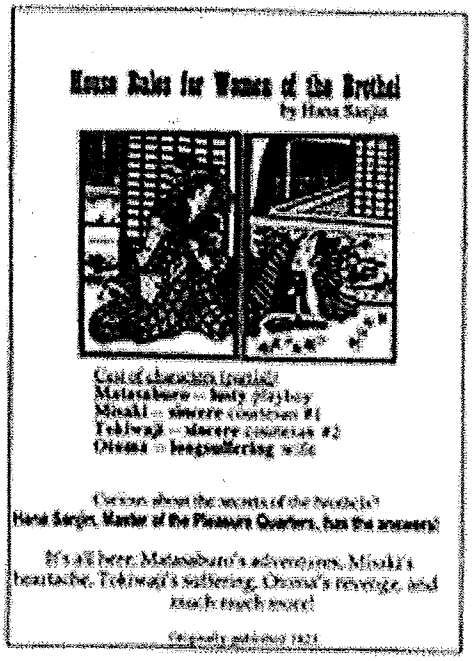
The emotional roller coaster entitled Pamela swings through the trials and tribulations of a young maidservant, the title character, as she tries to preserve her virtue in the face of escalating attacks against it on the part of her master, the rakish

Mr. B. The reader is privy to these trials and tribulations on account of the letters Pamela writes "to the moment" to send back home to her equally virtuous parents.[1] The reader of the work is thus acquainted with Pamela's innermost thoughts about each and every incident only moments after it occurs.



Picture reprinted from The Life of Pamela, Richardsonian, II. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1974. Frontispiece.

[1] Brophy, 38.



"House Rules of the Brothel" is an involved story of a young playboy named Matasaburō and the two rival courtesans, Misaki and Tokiwaji, with whom he dallies. Like Pamela, Matasaburo is the child of virtuous parents, but unlike Richardson's heroine, this lusty young man did not inherit his parents' rigid moral code. Matasaburō thinks nothing of deceiving his mother and father and slipping off to the licensed quarter; nor, once there, does he balk at violating the customs of the quarter. Thus, he soon becomes intimate with two proud beauties (Misaki and Tokiwaji) instead of only one. Naturally, the situation is complicated still further by the presence of

Matasaburō's official wife, Otoma. ("House Rules" was published in Bunsei 6 (1823), as a continuation of Jippensha Ikku's *Shōkaku Anagakumon* (An expert's inquiry into the lives of courtesans and clients, 1802).)

To turn now to a discussion of our commodity, sentiment, it behooves us to get a perspective on what is being bought and sold. In Virtue in Distress, R.F. Brissenden traces the evolution of the family of "sense" words in English ("sentiment," "sensibility," and so forth). According to his explanation, sentimental ideas all derive from one fundamental assumption:

> [that] the source of all knowledge and values is the individual human experience.... It is from this experience (an experience conditioned both by the nature of man and by the nature of the world in which he exists) that he will derive not only his notions of the physical universe, but also his moral notions--or, as they were almost universally called during this period, his moral *sentiments*.[2]

During the Age of Sentiment (the 18th century), then, "experience"--meaning that information gained through the senses--was regarded as the root of all knowledge. Yet another fundamental tenet of sentimentalism was a belief in the innate goodness and benevolence of human beings. Sympathy, stemming from benevolence, was regarded as one of the most powerful sentiments a person could have--indeed, as the foundation upon which society was built. For a person to be able to exhibit sympathetic behavior to another, of course, he or she must be made aware of--that is to say, must be made "sensible" to--the distresses of that other.[3]

The early meanings of the "sense" words, then, had physical as well as mental connotations: people gained knowledge of the

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[2] Brissenden, 22-24.

[3] Brissenden, 30.

world through their physical senses and made judgments about such knowledge according to their mental (i.e. moral) sentiments. In questions of morality, it was customary to rely on instantaneous *feelings* of right or wrong rather than on considered study or reasoning; those feelings themselves were considered rational.

The early understanding of sentiment, sentimentality and so forth are thus considerably different than the meanings of "self-indulgent emotional excess" or "mawkishness" which we tend to ascribe to such words today. Noting that those "modern" definitions had taken over by the end of the 18th century, Brissenden offers a possible explanation for the shift in meaning. He argues, for instance, that the belief in the innate goodness of individual human beings was accompanied by a growing fear of the impersonal, evil abstract of society *en masse*--a feeling of powerlessness or inability to rectify the ills of society despite one's most benevolent intentions. In other words, people were keenly aware of (sensible to) the gap between the "ideal" and the "real." In addition to the woes of increased population and growing urbanization (persistent poverty, etc.), the widespread disillusionment in the wake of the French Revolution is listed as another factor contributing to such feelings of impotence. Stemming at least in part from these conditions, there was a shift from viewing emotion as a *reaction* to a given situation to viewing it as the *focus* of the particular situation. This shift points to "the basic weakness of the whole sentimental attitude--the weakness which, especially in literature, led to the decline and decay of sentimentalism into sentimentality. The man--or woman--of sentiment was always open to the charge that he [or she] was, in general, too aware of his [or her] own goodness, and much too complacent about it."[4]

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[4] Brissenden, 94.

In order to distinguish between the earlier and later meanings of "sentiment," Brissenden makes a distinction between novels of "sentiment" and novels of "sensibility." The emphasis in both genres is on the characters' emotions rather than on their actions, but in the former (novels of sentiment), the characters' emotions contribute to the resolution of a moral difficulty; whereas in the latter (novels of sensibility), the characters--and presumably the reader, and perhaps even the author as well--indulge in emotion for the sake of emotion.

There is, of course, yet another way to view emotion: as a commodity, as we take it to be in the present study. In both works under consideration, Pamela and House Rules, the commodification of sentiment takes place on at least two fronts: in the "external" world of the editor/narrator; and in the "internal" world of character interaction. Although useful up to a point, the internal/external dichotomy can also be somewhat problematic, especially when the reader of the work is taken into consideration. I return to this topic below.

With regard to the packaging of sentiment in these two novels, we find evidence that the *ga/zoku* dynamic functions in "House Rules", but that a somewhat different framework--one based largely on ideas of morality and class--is at work within Pamela. A comparison of these two novels sheds light on the *ga/zoku* dichotomy by indicating areas of consideration which apparently fall outside its sphere. For the purposes of this essay, I adopt broad definitions of *ga* and *zoku*: *ga* points to "high culture," with the emphasis on the aesthetic, the elegant; and *zoku* refers to "popular culture," with the emphasis on the everyday, and (in this case) the seamier side of life. By these definitions, then, the *ga/zoku* framework does not concern itself with issues of morality. (As we see below, this is not to imply that "House Rules" is entirely devoid of moral considerations.)

Let us turn now to the editorial/narratorial level to discuss the use of sentiment as a commodity "outside" the world of the tale. In general, Richardson's Pamela belongs to the category of "novels of sentiment" mentioned above. Descriptions of the heroine's sentiments form the core of the story, but a moral dilemma lies at the heart of her emotional distresses: in the light of her own attraction to Mr. B. will she be able to withstand his attacks on her virtue? Richardson himself claims that the primary purpose of his writings is to instruct: "...Instruction is my main End and if I can Entertain at the same time my view will be complete."[5] The Editor who appears in the preface to Pamela echoes this interest in instruction. He claims to have put together a collection of "authentic" letters, and he spells out precisely what those letters are supposed to do:

> If to *divert* and *entertain*, and at the same time to *instruct* and *improve* the minds of the YOUTH of *both sexes*:
> If to inculcate *religion* and *morality* in so easy and agreeable a manner, as shall render them equally *delightful* and *profitable*:
> If to set forth in the most exemplary lights, the *parental*, the *filial*, and the *social* duties:
> If to paint VICE in its proper colours, to make it *deservedly odious*; and to set VIRTUE in its own amiable light, to make it look *lovely*...
> If to teach the man of *fortune* how to *use* it; the man of *passion* how to *subdue* it; and the man of *intrigue*, how, gracefully, and with honour to himself, to *reclaim*:
> If to give *practical* examples, worthy to be followed in the most *critical* and *affecting* cases, by the *virgin*, the *bride*, and the *wife*...
> If these be laudable or worthy recommendations, the *Editor* of the following Letters, which have their foundation

[5] Brophy, 16.

> both in *Truth* and *Nature*, ventures to assert that all these ends are obtained here, together....[6]

The Editor's intentions to "instruct and improve" his readers are all well and good, one is tempted to say, but with what does follow through on them? With didactic tales and moral lessons? No, no, with a recital far more worldly, more "entertaining" than that--with a story of the seduction of a virtuous lower-class maid by her lascivious, aristocratic master. (Here, we see another possible overlap of author and "Editor;" with regard to Pamela, Richardson himself commented, "I am endeavoring to...catch young and airy Minds...if I were to be too spiritual I doubt I should catch none but Grandmothers."[7])

What does this bit of salesmanship tell us about the "Editor"--that he was a man after his own virtuous heart? Perhaps, but at the same time he seems to have had a certain fascination with the seamier side of life as well. He uses Pamela's misfortunes and her highly sentimental reactions to them in order to catch the reader's eye and sell him/her on a particular kind of "virtuous" behavior. Looking from the opposite angle, we see that the Editor is using the sentimental model to market a certain identity of himself--as some sort of tongue-in-cheek Keeper of the Public Morals. One way to judge the success of his sales pitch is to determine the degree to which his story is convincing, a subject which reemerges below in the discussion of commodification in the "internal" world of the tale. In one final note on "external" commodification in Pamela, I point out that the Editor's preface (taken in conjunction with Richardson's comments) frame the reader, too, as an aficionado of sentiment: as one who is attracted to moralistic ideas only to the extent that his or her sensibilities are aroused, for example;

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[6] Richardson, Pamela, v. Italics, etc. in original.

[7] Brophy, 19.

or, as one for whom a moral façade provides the necessary excuse for wallowing in risqué anecdotes.

To turn now to "external" commodification in Hana Sanjin's "House Rules", I once again emphasize a difference between these two works: whereas Pamela may be considered a novel of "sentiment," "House Rules", by comparison, might fall more neatly into the category of novels of "sensibility." The requisite emotions are present, but as far as the narrator (at least) is concerned, any kind of serious moralistic considerations are largely absent. One might argue that Hana Sanjin's narrator and Richardson's Editor resemble one another in that both are interested in educating their reading public. Nevertheless, Hana Sanjin's "products"--fluffy snippets of knowledge about the brothel world--do not carry the same moral overtones found in the Editor's preface.

In some respects, there are similarities between the external packaging of Pamela and that of Hana Sanjin's "House Rules". For example, where Richardson's Editor adopts a lofty tone in his preface, Hana Sanjin heads his chapters with allusions to classical Chinese and Japanese works (e.g. the *Man'yōshū*). The difference, of course, lies in the fact that the preface is highly moral in content, whereas the quotations are highly aesthetic (*ga*), although they do serve to weed out the uneducated reader. A conventionalized literary pretension, the quotations seem to add a note of seriousness and respectability to what is essentially an investigation into a *zoku* domain (i.e. the sentimental psychology of brothel goings-on). If in fact the juxtaposition of such classical tidbits with the tale of the so-called pleasure quarters comes across as comical, then that is all the more to the purpose of a *sharebon* (witty book) author. It is in this respect that the phrase "a veneer of *ga* but *zoku* at heart" seems to sum up the situation succinctly.

In contrast to Richardson's Editor, who removes all traces of his presence from his work except in the preface and in the notes attesting to the "authenticity" of the letters, Hana Sanjin figures unabashedly in his own tale. At several instances in the work, he, as "author," speaks directly to the reader of the tale. That is to say, instead of constructing a separate narrator figure, he constructs an identity of "author" by using the word *sakusha* (author) when referring to himself.

One of the moments where he employs this technique is of particular interest to us here. It is the scene where Tokiwaji, one of the two rival courtesans, has gotten hold of the secret marriage pledge which Matasaburō signed with his other flame, Misaki. (Incidentally, this marriage predates the young man's reluctant tie to his "official" wife, Otoma.) In the midst of the (externally-focalized) narration of this scene, Hana Sanjin suddenly stops short and, as *sakusha*, addresses the reader directly with a referenceto something Jippensha Ikku had hinted at in the prequel to "House Rules". Ikku, also speaking as author, had told his audience that he would come forth with secret information about brothel-district marriage licenses, but then he had failed to follow up on the promise. Hana Sanjin takes it upon himself to fill in the gap, and he writes: "A certain high-ranking lady of the pleasure quarters has revealed to this author that important instructions regarding the writing of such pledges have been handed down over the years."[8] Since Hana Sanjin is about to tell us this top-secret information, he is openly framing himself as being "in-the-know." He is showing off to the reader by letting him/her know that he is well versed in the ways of Yoshiwara and well acquainted with "certain high-ranking ladies" therein. To put it bluntly, he is engaged in an overt advertising campaign, and one of the products for sale

[8] Hana Sanjin "*Seirō onna teikin,*" 170.

is a carefully constructed image of himself as a fountain of information. Taking the argument yet another step further, one sees that the "real" product for sale in this case is the information itself: that is to say, the narrator ends up using knowledge *about* commodities (courtesans, brothels, etc.) *as* a commodity in its own right. In the process, of course, he sketches the reader as being interested in, but ignorant of, the intricacies of brothel affairs.

Hana Sanjin, then, openly flaunts his link to the *zoku* world of his tale. Here and there he sprinkles that world with a light dusting of literary allusion (*ga*), but such sprinklings actually serve to enhance the *sakusha*'s image as a clever and fashionable young playboy--in part, because he can dash them off with such apparent ease; and in part, because he rarely misses an opportunity to work a pun into the given classical reference. Elevated sentiments, as well as "authorial" advertisements, are interspersed throughout this tale of sentimental melodrama. I argue that it is by means of such melodrama that the author plays on his readers' sympathies, engages their interest in the tale, and creates space for his *sakusha* to act out his part. That is to say, far more overtly than Richardson's Editor, Hana Sanjin's *sakusha* sells sentiment in order to sell a certain identity of himself.

Moving from "external" commodification to "internal," the performative aspects of the marketing of sentiment become even more pronounced. Here it is no longer simply a case of a narrator using a third party's sentimental hoopla in order to sell to a limited audience (the reader of the work) a certain image of himself. It now has a more "personal" touch: individual characters work to sell sentimental identities of themselves to a much broader audience, one which includes fellow characters as well as the "external" reader. As noted above, inclusion of the

reader problematizes the distinction between "external" and "internal." It is not the case that characters play only to other characters; they may play to the "external" reader as well. After all, in the words of Richardson's Editor, a character's role in sentimental fiction is to "engage the passions of every sensible reader, and attach their regard to the story."[9] (Whether or not the reader is actually convinced by the bid for sympathy is another matter, of course.)

In addition to capturing the reader's regard, however, a sentimental figure also wishes to capture the regard of the other characters. That is to say, a sentimental hero or heroine requires "witnesses" to confirm his/her sensitive nature. From the perspective of the external reader, these witnesses act as a kind of "supporting cast" for the principle figure, and the interplay between sentimental figure and supporting cast highlights the function of sentiment as a commodity. For example, Mr. and Mrs. Andrews are part of Pamela's supporting cast; they enable her to carry out her role as young woman of excessive sensibility. In Misaki's case, the teahouse man Yoroku and the attendant Mifune are essential elements of her supporting cast.

It goes without saying that the members of the supporting cast are in a position to reap the benefits of their labors. In recognizing and reaffirming the sentimental natures of their fellow characters, they are able (to a greater or lesser degree depending on their billing in the narration) to show off their own sensitivity and discriminating taste. For someone like Otoma, who has no supporting cast, the situation is indeed bleak. As a poor relation and an unwanted bride, there is no one to whom she can bemoan her sad fate--except the "external" reader. With this opportunity for the reader of the work to

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[9] See note 6

display his/her own sensibilities, the boundary between "external" and "internal" is blurred.

It is clear, then, that the sale of sentiment is a highly performative operation. The idea of "performance" is perhaps more applicable to "House Rules" than to Pamela, where the pretense of the letter is always maintained. Nevertheless, since Pamela's letters are instrumental in forwarding the action of the plot and are not simply a means of telling the story, they too might be considered a kind of performance. How successful is Pamela in persuading the other characters of her virtue? in persuading the reader of the work? The answers to these questions are tied to our earlier query regarding the Editor's bid for educational clout: namely, how convincing is his model? To attempt to answer these questions requires close inspection of the principal exemplar, Pamela. In order to learn from Pamela and understand why she behaves as she does, the reader (whether external or internal to the work) must have knowledge of her character and temperament. Pamela's letters are designed to feed the reader(s) a constant stream of such information.

As a source of information, however, a letter is not entirely problem-free. Richardson scholar Tom Keymer points out that even during the period when the epistolary novel came into being, there were at least two conflicting views regarding the fundamental nature of the "familiar" letter (a letter between friends or intimates). On one hand lay the belief that familiar letters may be taken at face value, as "pure," unadulterated outpourings of the heart, apparently free from any hidden agenda. On the other hand lay the argument that letters may be as riddled with ulterior motives as speech itself--which line of reasoning puts our heroine in an entirely different light. Nonetheless, regardless of which view one prefers, sentiment plays a crucial role in the marketing of Pamela's identity. By the

former interpretation, she is exactly what she claims to be, a paragon of virtue, and the proof of that lies in her extreme sensibility. By the latter interpretation, the apparent artlessness of her sentiments is subject to doubt--in part because of the excess of her emotions, and in part because it is only she who can vouch for their sincerity.

Due to changed attitudes toward sentiment (as reflected in the semantic transition noted earlier) the latter view may carry more weight in the present day and age: methinks, muses the skeptical reader, the lady doth protest her virtue a wee bit too much. Although this interpretation clearly damages the Editor's position as a successful Keeper of the Public Morals, it nevertheless draws attention to the use of sentiment as a commodity. Absorbed in her own advertising campaign, Pamela makes assertions of morality just like our friend the Editor. Rather than persuading the reader of her virtue, however, her object is to persuade Mr. B (and perhaps herself into the bargain?). Ultimately she is successful in this end.

The sale of sentiment plays a significant role in the identities of various characters in "House Rules" as well as in Pamela; and, as noted above, one might argue that the performative aspect is stronger in Hana Sanjin's work because of the more "dramatic" dialog format. Maeda Ai comments on such stylistic differences in his comparison of Pamela and Umegoyomi [Plum blossoms: promise of spring], a *ninjōbon* by Tamenaga Shunsui:

> Shunsui's garrulous style is, so to speak, language as gesture. It takes as its model the art borne in the unique and special moments which arise in the convergence of audience below and speaker on-stage. When restored to such moments, the language of lovers' talk--which performs only a vague, informational function when conveyed by the written word--takes on subtle nuances. It displays latent

> expressive powers, enabling it to suggest the gestures and poses of the characters in the work. Shunsui, envisioning a variety of audiences, delights in using "gesture language" freely to create different characters.[10]

As with Shunsui's novel, Hana Sanjin's story is a kind of "written performance," complete with dialogue, vivid description, interior monologue, and the works. The fact that it may have been the custom to read aloud in Hana Sanjin's (or Shunsui's) day simply enhances the presentational aspect of the works.[11]

It is not only the dialogue that is dramatic, however. Prose descriptions of actions are often equally effective in conveying a character's sensitive nature. For example, part of being convincing in the role of fashionable playboy is having the ability to shed sentimental tears when duty calls. Matasaburō is well able to perform this function. His parents put him under house arrest at one point in the story, and the scene where he reads the letters of longing from his two lady loves is illustrative of his sentimental theatrics:

> Matasaburō first took up Tokiwaji's letter, softly broke the seal, and glanced at the first six or seven inches quickly. After reading two or three lines, he collapsed face-down on the quilt and lay still for awhile, with large teardrops rolling down his cheeks. Reading a little more, he sat for a moment in shocked reverie. Once again taking a look at the letter, he folded his arms and tilted his head to one side in a posture of thought. Finally continuing through to the end of the letter, gently rubbing his chest all the while, he simply sat, lost in contemplation, as he repeatedly folded and unfolded the letter. Next breaking the seal on Misaki's note, he read that missive in the same manner as before. From time to time he cast his eyes upward and heavedgreat

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[10] Maeda, 317.
[11] Smith, 348.

> sighs as he stared at the ceiling; and from time to time he cast them downward as great tears spilled down his cheeks. 'Oh dear, oh dear,' he repeated under his breath, lost in distraction as he tossed and turned right and left.[12]

"Theatrics" is indeed an appropriate word for such a performance; it is as if the young man were on-stage right before the reader's very eyes.

As we have seen, Misaki is another character whose identity and status hinge on her ability to project an image of great sensibility. She is a high-ranking courtesan who faces the mortifying prospect of having her man stolen away by a rival. In order to protect her interests as well as her reputation, she must carry out the necessary melodrama to persuade Matasaburō of his folly in casting her aside for another--especially when she herself is so sublimely sincere. This melodrama reaches its peak in the continuation to "House Rules", a work entitled "Cherry Blossoms of the Brothel," where, all in one scene (and accompanied by an appropriate supporting cast), Misaki plays the blameless, much-misused lover; the fragile, sensitive flower; and the tender-but-trickysweetheart.[13]

It is interesting to note that, for the most part, one cannot accuse Matasaburō.

In determining who is or is not a sentimental figure, we see once again how the distinction between "external" (reader) and "internal" (character) can be problematic. Not only does a sentimental figure rely on a supporting cast of fellow characters, s/he also depends on the reader's indulgence. A sentimental novel necessarily revolves around its sentimental hero or heroine, but it goes without saying that the reader's broad-minded reception of that character is crucial. In Pamela, it is

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[12] Hana Sanjin, "*Seirō.*"

[13] Hana Sanjin, "*Seirō akebonogusa*," 242-247.

clear that the realm of sentimentality--the space opened by the reader's indulgence--belongs almost exclusively to the young, virtuous, virginal (or figuratively so) girl. Our heroine relies on the reader's indulgent support of her emotional outbursts, her somewhat confused claims to moral superiority, and so forth.

The connection between sensibility and virtue in Pamela is critical. As previously noted, within the sentimental model, excessive sensibility is a sign of moral virtue. Such virtue is also tied, to a significant degree, to matters of social class. In contrast to the lasciviousness of the aristocracy, the middle class (if we are to believe Pamela) is highly moral. Although some members of the aristocracy are eventually persuaded of Pamela's worth as a moral equal or better (e.g. Mr. B's sister, Lady Davers), no one comes close to rivaling her sentimental passion for virtue.

Even among members of her own class, however, age, gender, or position may prevent a character from working to convince the reader that s/he is truly "sentimental." Mr. Longman is sympathetic to the young lady's plight, for example; but his position as trusted servant to Mr. B (as well as his limited role in the novel) makes it impossible for him to do much more than hint at such sympathies. Also, gender and age apparently keep him from indulging in the emotional excesses of the sentimental nature. Old motherly Mrs. Jervis has potential as a sentimental figure, given her compassionate response to Pamela's troubles. She winds up betraying her unsuspecting charge in the end, however; as with Mr. Longman, the call of job security proves to have greater force than the call of her own sense of morality. In short, then, a "sentimental" figure in Pamela's world almost invariably has to be: female, young, virtuous, "virginal," middle class, and entirely at the mercy of her more powerful connections, especially those in the

aristocracy. (Actually, one might make the argument that Pamela is less at Mr. B's mercy than Mr. Longman or Mrs. Jervis, since they depend on him for their livelihood whereas Pamela is free to follow her own conscience. As is the case with Otoma, Pamela's situation is all the more moving because she is seemingly all alone--even her potential allies are powerless to help her.)

In contrast to the rather stringent requirements for sentimentality in 18th-century England, the field is much more open in the world of Hana Sanjin's *sharebon.* Almost anyone--even the hero's rather humdrum parents--can project an image of sentimentality. One explanation for this greater flexibility lies in the fluid relationship between "sentimental" behavior and "moral" behavior within this world. Earlier, we noted that questions of morality seem to have no bearing on the *ga/zoku* dichotomy operating in Hana Sanjin's work. That was not to imply, however, that moral issues are completely divorced from this tale or from *sharebon* sentimentality in general. In fact, there are two distinct moral codes operating within Hana Sanjin's world: one for the "outside" world, with its social norms and rigid Confucian expectations; and one for the fashionable world of the brothels, with its own standards of behavior and its own stratified society.

For instance, within the confines of their own moral code, Matasaburō's parents can appeal to the reader's indulgence. From their point of view, their son is a highly immoral young man. In addition to being guilty of embezzlement and fraud, he flouts the Confucian precept of filial piety and dashes off to the pleasure quarters at the slightest opportunity. As upright citizens, his parents (especially his father) are painfully "sensible" to the young man's scandalous behavior. Yet viewed through the lens of the brothel code, Matasaburō is nearly

unbeatable as a fashionable playboy: he has money (who cares where he got it); he clearly appeals to the ladies (thus he has two); and above all, at the drop of a hat he can display a properly sensitive nature (as shown in the scene with the letters). Thus, he too enlists the reader as a member of his own indulgent supporting cast; as hero of the story, he assumes center stage.

There is no need to comment further on Misaki as a sentimental figure. By following the rules of the brothel code (which include making proper use of her supporting cast), she is ensured of presenting herself as a quintessential sentimental heroine. In contrast, Tokiwaji's decision to ignore the rules of the quarter (i.e. to behave "immorally") deny her the "sentimental" label. She violates the trust of her supporting cast by refusing to return Matasaburō by the designated time, and she even has the audacity to parade the young man past her rival's front door. By going against the customs and practices of the quarter--that is, by infringing on the reader's (and other characters') indulgent acceptance of the hero--she shakes the very foundations of that world.

Thus, unlike in Pamela, we see that just about anyone can sell an image of sentimentality in "House Rules". There are no firm constraints on age, gender, or position; nor does class seem to play a role. It certainly helps if one is clever (since one can then maximize the sentimental effect), but the only real restriction is on forceful, assertive behavior--behavior that is "immoral" because it upsets the delicate balance of interpersonal relationships. In the end, however, even this question of morality is subject to interpretation: the fact that Tokiwaji (& co.) breaks the rules of the quarter has tremendous consequences for her image and reputation as a high-ranking courtesan; but Matasaburō for his equally serious violations of the parental "rules." By the end of the tale he has been completely

exonerated, and all complications have worked out splendidly in his favor. Perhaps, then, the conclusion of Hana Sanjin's tale marks another of the *sakusha*'s plugs for the life of the playboy.

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