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Yūjo in the Off Hours: Female Intimacy in Chikamatsu's Contemporary Life Plays

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In the second scene of *Sonezaki shinjū* 曾根崎心中 (1703, translated as *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*, 1961) by Chikamatsu Monzaemon 近松門左衛門 (1653–1725), Ohatsu, the female heroine, feels at odds with her surroundings.¹ She sits in the bustling brothel but cannot join in the liveliness around her as she worries about her lover, Tokubei. Then, she sees him in the garden. The narrator recites: “Her heart leaps, and she wants to run to him, but in the sitting room are the master and his wife, and by the entrance stands the cook, while in the kitchen a maid is hovering: with so many sharp eyes watching, she cannot do as she pleases.”² Ohatsu senses all the eyes on her and refrains from acting on her real feelings. In this moment, Chikamatsu dramatizes the intense scrutiny that characterized the life of the *yūjo* (遊女).

Yūjo worked in the brothel districts in a role that blended sex work and entertainment. In the early seventeenth century, the term *yūjo* referred to female entertainers skilled in various arts and known for their morals and depth of feeling. The concept of *yūjo* set these women apart from *baita* (売女 prostitutes), who sold sex.³ By the early eighteenth century when Chikamatsu was writing *Sonezaki*, the distinction between *yūjo* and *baita* had blurred, and the term *yūjo* came to refer to women working in the licensed and unlicensed brothel districts.⁴ Their training regimes encompassed entertainment, performance, and sex work, including lessons in reading, writing, dancing, flirting, and keeping their vaginas firm.⁵ Confined to the brothel districts and under surveillance by the brothel proprietors, they sold sex along with a fantasy of elegance, love, and desire. Despite strict rules and schedules that allowed little time for sleep or nourishment, the fantasies spun by the brothels demanded *yūjo* cultivate a feeling of connection with their clients and perform their role to perfection



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whether alone with a client, at a gathering in the brothel, or on a rare excursion outside the brothel districts.⁶ *Yūjo* were ranked according to their “attainments, artistic skills, and appearance” and their pricing corresponded to their rank.⁷ While their living and working conditions varied by location, rank, and the specific brothel, all *yūjo*, whether licensed or unlicensed, lived under constant monitoring of their popularity, behavior, skills, and health.

Client spending was critical for the brothel’s economic success, so instruction books for *yūjo* emphasized how to please clients, and printed materials produced by commercial printing nurtured the fantasies clients desired. Historian of the Edo’s licensed district, the Yoshiwara, Cecilia Segawa Seigle has described the key to a *yūjo*’s success “her adeptness as an actress.”⁸ She illustrates this with a seventeenth-century instruction book that coaches a *yūjo* on how to say good-bye to a client. The book provides sample dialogue for bidding farewell and stresses the importance of tears to complete the illusion. To bring tears, the book directs the *yūjo* to remember sad moments from her past, pluck one or two eyelashes, gaze on something small without blinking, and so on. Above all, she must “put on an air of grief.”⁹ The *yūjo*’s acting cultivated a world of tenderness and desire which was reinforced by the many representations of the brothel districts in illustrated books and woodblock prints (浮世絵 *ukiyo-e*). For example, *Yoshiwara koi no michibiki* 吉原恋の道引 (Guide to love in the Yoshiwara, 1678) takes a reader on a journey to the Yoshiwara from the client’s perspective including traveling to the quarter and meeting *yūjo* of differing ranks.¹⁰ The book both instructs the future visitor and stokes his desire. Nagai Yoshio has concluded that the representations of *yūjo* focus on the bright sides and conceal the darker aspects of the *yūjo*’s lived reality.¹¹

Chikamatsu diverged from the representations of *yūjo* produced by his contemporaries. As in the moment from *Sonezaki* described above, he shows the audience the contrast between what others see and the real feelings of the *yūjo*. While many eyes watch Ohatsu, no one seems to see her. None are aware of the depth of her suffering and that she is on the brink of deciding to die. By dramatizing this moment, Chikamatsu gives the audience a glimpse of Ohatsu, the woman who is desperate for her lover. He draws a clear contrast between her internal emotional response to seeing Tokubei, which the audience is privy to, and her outward appearance, which she controls so as not to betray her feelings to the many eyes watching her. In rendering this moment, Chikamatsu creates an

opening for the audience to see Ohatsu in a way that the other characters cannot and thus cultivates an intimacy between the audience and the character.

Chikamatsu's ability to craft the scene in order to bring the audience into a close relationship with the protagonists is a central technique in his playwriting, particularly in his *sewamono* (世話物 contemporary life plays), which dramatize recent events in quotidian environments. Scholars have shown how Chikamatsu fosters identification with his protagonists through his revisions of the source material, his incorporation of moments of reflection, and his adaptations of theatrical techniques from other performance forms. In *Sonezaki*, for example, Chikamatsu made adjustments to the story, notably by adding the villain Kuheiji to make the lovers' actions more sympathetic, especially for the character of Tokubei, who abandons his apprenticeship when he commits suicide.¹² Chikamatsu brought audiences closer to Ohatsu in *Sonezaki* during the opening scene in which she visits the sites of the Kannon Pilgrimage in Osaka. At many of the sites, she takes a moment to reflect, and Michael Brownstein has demonstrated how these moments develop the character's subjective perspective, such as when Ohatsu pauses at the fifth stop on the pilgrimage, Hōkaiji, to wonder if the other young women present are also praying for a happy future with their lovers.¹³ Later in the play, when the lovers escape Ohatsu's brothel to commit suicide, Chikamatsu crafted a suspenseful scene in which they must coordinate opening a door to the sounds of a servant in the interior striking flint. Hara Michio has argued that the theatrical device of opening a door at a climactic moment would have been familiar to the audience through its use in kabuki, but Chikamatsu deftly adapted the motif so that those escaping were the protagonists of the story not the villains. Hara has suggested that this shift would have made the audience hope along with the characters for their success.¹⁴ There are many similar examples in *Sonezaki* and across Chikamatsu's *sewamono*, but there has not yet been an examination of how and why Chikamatsu cultivated a feeling of intimacy in his audiences toward *yūjo*.

Previous studies of Chikamatsu's female characters, including *yūjo* characters, have focused primarily on the traits and motivations of the individual characters. *Sonezaki*'s Ohatsu has received much attention as a feminine ideal.¹⁵ Analyses of the female characters over Chikamatsu's *sewamono* have illustrated the development of his characters over time and delved into how the female characters represent key themes, such as shame (恥 *haji*).¹⁶ Torii Fumiko has shown that Chikamatsu placed his female

characters in increasingly complicated relationships over the course of his *sewamono*.¹⁷ Yet, few scholars have explored the relationships between the female characters, aside from the relationship between Koharu, a *yūjo*, and Osan, Koharu's lover's wife, in *Shinjū ten no Amijima* 心中天の網島 (1720, translated as *The Love Suicide at Amijima*, 1953).¹⁸ The relationship between Koharu and Osan is moving in its depiction of the care and consideration extended from one woman to another, but their relationship unfolds only through the letters they exchange and the actions they take on behalf of each other. The two characters never meet in the play. In contrast, plays with scenes set in the brothels depict female characters interacting together. The examination of *yūjo* characters in some of Chikamatsu's lesser-studied plays reveals how he represented *yūjo*, their relationships with their clients, and their relationships with each other.

Chikamatsu develops his portrayal of the *yūjo* across his *sewamono* by dramatizing the moments when *yūjo* have to be “on” in their professional role and moments when they are able to be themselves. He does this by creating “onstage” and “offstage” spaces in the plays. He shows *yūjo* performing their roles as lovers and entertainers in the “onstage” spaces of the brothels, city streets, pleasure boats, and scenic temples. His plays also represent “offstage” settings. The upper floors of the brothels appear as female-only spaces in which the *yūjo* can drop the facade of performance and communicate more freely. To map how Chikamatsu uses the on- and offstage spaces of the bothels to reveal two sides of the *yūjo* figure, I analyze three of his *sewamono* plays: *Shinjū nimai ezōshi* 心中二枚絵草紙 (Love suicide and the two illustrated books, 1706), *Shinjū kasane izutsu* 心中重井筒 (Love suicides at the sunken well, 1707) and *Meido no hikyaku* 冥土の飛脚 (1711, translated as *The Courier for Hell*, 1961).¹⁹ Each of these plays dramatizes a scene that gives the audience an opportunity to see the inner life of the *yūjo*. In *Shinjū nimai ezōshi*, Chikamatsu depicts the requirement of prostitutes to perform in the “onstage” spaces of everyday life and also shows how the female protagonist struggles with this requirement, which gives the audience a view of the woman within the role. In contrast, *Shinjū kasane izutsu* and *Meido no hikyaku* open the curtain on the female-only spaces of the brothel to reveal the interactions between women when they are alone. These scenes highlight the opportunities for female intimacy afforded by such spaces and the way in which performance can build rapport rather than hinder communication when women are both performer and spectator

“offstage.” I argue that by dramatizing the “onstage” and “offstage” spaces in the *yūjo*’s lives, Chikamatsu invites the audience into an intimate relationship with these women that showcases the possibilities for human connection through performance.

Performance and Prostitution in Early Modern Osaka

Chikamatsu wrote his *sewamono* for the Takemoto-za, a theatre specializing in *ningyō jōruri* (人形浄瑠璃), a form of puppet theatre, in Dōtonbori. Dōtonbori was a relatively new neighborhood in Osaka that became the theatre district in 1665.²⁰ Situated between two unlicensed prostitution districts, Dōtonbori had strong connections with the brothels even though there were no brothels within Dōtonbori proper. The teahouses that abutted the canal to the south catered to theatregoers and provided prostitutes for patrons upon request. The municipal government tacitly allowed these teahouses to summon prostitutes from brothels in other districts, such as nearby Fushimi Sakamachi and Naniwa New Quarter.²¹ This tight relationship between brothels and theatres was likely one reason *yūjo* became such a popular topic on stage.

The years of Chikamatsu’s exploration of *yūjo* characters corresponded to a time of unprecedented growth in the city’s prostitution industry. Prostitution expanded along with the city’s economy and topography with many newly developed land areas first established as brothel districts before becoming business districts. One myth of the early modern period (1600–1868) perpetuated by the concept of the “floating world” (浮世 *ukiyo*) is that the brothels were cut off from the rest of daily life—by physical walls, by customs, and by laws. However, this perceived separation belies the economic links between the two sectors of the city and the sheer number of people involved in prostitution in the early modern period. Historian Amy Stanley has written: “The sex trade was ubiquitous and deeply embedded in everyday life. By the end of the Tokugawa period, it is unlikely that there were many adults on the archipelago, whether they were male or female, rich or poor, urban or rural, who had never encountered a woman who worked, had worked, or would someday work in the sex trade.”²²

Legal prostitution began in Osaka around 1610 with the creation of Shinmachi, the only officially sanctioned pleasure district in the city.²³ In the same fashion as the licensed district in Kyoto, the Shimabara, and the famous Yoshiwara of Edo, the quarter was set apart from the rest of the city.²⁴ At first, authorities surrounded it with a bamboo fence, which they

later replaced with a wooden fence and a moat to isolate the district from ordinary citizens.²⁵ Accounts indicate that 1,752 prostitutes, including girls and young women who would become prostitutes upon maturity, resided in Shinmachi in the early and mid-seventeenth century.²⁶

Shinmachi was the only licensed brothel district in Osaka, but it was far from the only brothel district in the city. Unlicensed brothel districts were booming business at the turn of the eighteenth century as the city was rapidly expanding. It is difficult to ascertain how many unlicensed districts were in operation, but many of the major ones appeared in Chikamatsu's *sewamono*: Shimanouchi, also called Minami ("South Quarter"), the largest unlicensed quarter located just north of Dōtonbori; Fushimi Sakamachi, founded in 1698 and just south of Dōtonbori; and Kita-Shinchi, the northern districts, which included the Dōjima-Shinchi and the Sonezaki-Shinchi.²⁷

For the *yūjo*, the men in their lives dictated their working conditions: they were sold into prostitution by a male family member, they worked for a male brothel owner, and they served male clients. The patriarchal family structure, justified through the ideology of filial piety, emphasized loyalty to the male head of household and served as the foundation for female labor in the brothels. William Lindsey has demonstrated how filial piety was employed to exact female compliance in both marriage and prostitution: "Whether acted on freely or as a result of parental coercion, duty to parents and to the household were viewed as expressions of returning the benefits one had received as a daughter, which in part enabled opposing forms of sexual practices and relationships to exist on the same moral grounds."²⁸ If a young woman's family chose a bridegroom, the young woman was expected to shift her obedience to her husband and his family, engage in sexual intercourse only with her husband, and bear children. Prostitution operated through a similar transfer of obedience. If a young woman's family chose to sell her into prostitution, the young woman was expected to transfer her obedience to the brothel owners, engage in sexual intercourse with many partners, and not bear children. Whether working as a high-ranking *yūjo* or a serving girl in a teahouse, these young women toiled to support their families. Amy Stanley has summarized the ideology embedded in this economic practice when she stated: "As girls who sacrificed their chastity to benefit their parents, they fulfilled the shogunate's conception of the appropriate place of women in the realm."²⁹

Brothel owners expected the *yūjo* to cultivate clients by creating an

illusion of deep feeling for them. The need to perform their feelings for clients led to the development of *shinjū* (心中), a series of codified behaviors for a *yūjo* to express the sincerity of her feelings. When the term first came into usage in the seventeenth century, it referred to the tokens of love a prostitute gave to her client. Chronicler Fujimoto Kizan articulated these steps in his 1678 book *Shikidō ōkagami* 色道大鏡 (The great mirror of love), which described the etiquette of the pleasure quarters in detail.³⁰ According to Kizan, *shinjū* began with the *yūjo* sending a fragment torn from her fingernail and then transitioned to sending a written vow of love, giving a lock of hair, tattooing her lover's name somewhere on her body, and later giving the gift of one of her fingers. In the most extreme case, the *yūjo* would pierce her flesh with a sharp blade. In actual practice, these gestures were often symbolic and without the permanence they implied.³¹ Over time, *shinjū* became increasingly synonymous with “love suicide.” Stories of love suicide became popular topics for plays, illustrated books, and ballads.³² Many of Chikamatsu's *sewamono* dramatized recent *shinjū* incidents. This subset of plays came to be known as *shinjūmono* (心中物 love suicide plays) and told the stories of lovers who could not be together in life due to financial or social reasons and chose to die so they could be reborn together in paradise.³³

Men and women flocked to see Chikamatsu's *sewamono* plays at the Takemoto-za. Unlike the clientele for the licensed and unlicensed brothel districts, who were exclusively male, Osaka's theatre patrons included both men and women. The kabuki and puppet theatres of Dōtonbori generally drew from the same audience, composed predominantly of Osaka commoners with some tourists from nearby areas.³⁴ After the 1680s, women—particularly wives of merchants and ladies-in-waiting who served samurai households—began to attend the theatre in greater numbers.³⁵ By the eighteenth century the theatres catered to male and female spectators. The presence of men and women in the theatre created a different audience for Chikamatsu's plays about *yūjo* compared to the guidebooks, woodblock prints, and other media produced primarily for male readers described above. The necessity to craft plays for women as well as men perhaps was one reason why Chikamatsu developed such nuanced portrayals of the *yūjo* figure.

The Constraints on Self-Expression in *Shinjū nimai ezōshi*

Before examining the female-only spaces and the “offstage” lives of *yūjo* depicted in *Shinjū kasane izutsu* and *Meido no hikyaku*, first I will discuss

how Chikamatsu represents the requirement for *yūjo* to “perform” within everyday life situations. In *Shinjū nimai ezōshi*, Chikamatsu shows how prostitutes were constrained by the conventions of their profession and required to hew to the expectations of *yūjo* when working even if they chafed against their own inner desires.

Shinjū nimai ezōshi recounts an event that took place in 1705 in Osaka. Two lovers, Oshima and Ichirōbei, decide to commit suicide together when Ichirōbei is falsely accused of theft and subsequently disinherited. However, the proprietors of Oshima’s brothel, the Tenma-ya, lock her inside the brothel on the night in question. Ohatsu, whose love suicide with Tokubei was immortalized in Chikamatsu’s *Sonezaki*, was also from the Tenma-ya, and the proprietors have no desire to repeat the scandal of losing an employee in a love suicide. Oshima and Ichirōbei communicate through the window from the second floor of the brothel and make a plan to ensure they are able to die at the same time even if they are unable to die side by side. Oshima kills herself in her locked room in the brothel. Ichirōbei kills himself on a riverbank, but his younger brother finds him and hides his body to protect him from the shame of dying in a love suicide. Chikamatsu’s play ends with an acknowledgment that since Ichirōbei’s body was never found, two conflicting accounts emerged: one in which he committed suicide and completed the love suicide pact and another in which he ran away.

Chikamatsu deftly negotiates the ambiguities of “performance” in the opening scene when the female protagonist, Oshima, is required to perform in two different ways: as an amateur *jōruri* chanter and in her role as a prostitute. Chikamatsu presents three layers of Oshima in the scene: Oshima the person, Oshima in her professional role as *yūjo*, and Oshima as an amateur performer. Between each of these layers is a gap. Oshima’s inner feelings of herself as a woman are not the same as the behaviors she must enact in her *yūjo* role. Likewise, her amateur performance is not a seamless manifestation of her inner feelings. Although there is a separation between these different layers of identity, they are not completely discreet either. The male observers, however, refuse to acknowledge the separation between “performer” and “performance.” They collapse the differences, completely overlaying the person and the performance, which makes it impossible for them to see Oshima on her own terms and for her to communicate her true feelings.

The opening scene of the play depicts the double-bind facing prostitutes who had to feign emotions for their livelihood and thus had the

sincerity of their feelings questioned. In this scene, Oshima tries to appease both her lover, Ichirōbei, and her client from the countryside, Sada, who vie for her affections. Oshima and Sada have attended the theatre together and are now riding on a pleasure boat on the river in Osaka near Dōtonbori, the theatre district. To entertain her customer, Oshima and one of the attendants perform the travel scene from one of Chikamatsu's recent hits, the period play *Yōmei tennō shokunin kagami* 用明天皇職人鑑 (Models of the craftsmen of Emperor Yōmei, 1705). They sing from a book of travel scenes (道行本 *michiyuki-bon*), a publication that included the most musical and most affecting travel scenes from recent productions.³⁶

The performance captures the attention of Ichirōbei, Oshima's lover who happens to be walking along the shore. Sada catches Ichirōbei eyeing the pleasure boat and adjusting his progress on shore by quickening or slowing his steps so that he can keep the boat within his sights. When Sada confronts Ichirōbei about his intense interest in the activities on the boat, Ichirōbei hides his feelings for Oshima by criticizing her performance. He claims that love is woven into the melodies and phrases of the scene Oshima just recited but was absent in her rendition. He tells Sada: "Not a thing was out of place, but whether it's because she's never known love or because her heart is insincere, the performance lacked conviction and felt frivolous."³⁷

Ichirōbei's criticism of Oshima attacks both her performance and her love for him by conflating the two. He argues that she sang the correct notes and rhythm but that her performance lacked the feeling of love due to her own lack of experience with true love. By attributing her inability to communicate the appropriate feeling in the passage to her lack of experience in real love, Ichirōbei points to a classic criticism of the *yūjo*: that she fakes affection only to advance her economic interests. In his criticism of her performance, he questions whether her love for him is real.

Oshima cannot defend herself because Sada is watching closely. Since she is working, she must keep Sada feeling that he is her main focus. Through the commentary of the narrator, Chikamatsu dramatizes how Oshima is caught between her obligation to feign affection for her client and her desire to demonstrate to Ichirōbei the depth of her love for him. At the first moment she notices him on shore, the narrator informs the audience that the man is her lover. In the next instant, Oshima is already trying to communicate to both men without the other catching on. In other words, she is trying to simultaneously be herself in her behavior toward Ichirōbei and perform her professional role in relationship to Sada. She

restrains herself from calling out to Ichirōbei and winks at him instead. Then she turns to her client, tells him the man on shore must just be someone from the countryside, and asks him not to escalate the conflict. As the men trade verbal barbs for blows, the narrator describes the changes that overcome Oshima. First, she breaks into a sweat and wrings her hands; by the end of the scene, she is imploring the boatman through her tears to get the boat moving. Through his description of the progression of Oshima's reactions, Chikamatsu invites the audience to see the scene not through the eyes of the male rivals but through the eyes of the woman at the center of the conflict. Although Ichirōbei doubts her love, the audience can see her true feelings and the emotional anguish caused by being caught between the obligation to feign affection for one man and the desire to show affection for another.

Chikamatsu demonstrates how obligations for social performance create misunderstandings and disrupt communication. On the one hand, the male characters view the amateur performance of the *michiyuki* scene as a way to evaluate the life experience and depth of feeling of the performer, Oshima. On the other hand, Ichirōbei so completely sees Oshima as performing her role as a *yūjo* that he cannot see the extent to which her true feelings are at odds with the professional role she is playing. Since Oshima is out in the city with her client, she finds herself trapped between maintaining her professional role and expressing her true feelings. Since the male characters cannot distinguish between performer and performance in either instance, Oshima's self and inner life become completely obscured to them. But Chikamatsu's careful construction of the scene does enable her inner life to come through to the play's audience. The audience witnesses her struggle to express herself and the limitations of the male characters who are unable to separate her role from her real feelings.

For Chikamatsu, the plays' ability to reveal to the audience that which is obscured to the men around Oshima is a special feature of the art of playwriting for *ningyō jōruri*. In *Naniwa miyage* (1738, translated as *Souvenirs of Naniwa*, 2002), Chikamatsu's friend Hozumi Ikan shares Chikamatsu's theories on the art of *jōruri*.³⁸ In order to describe the necessity of portraying characters on stage slightly differently than they would have appeared in life, Chikamatsu says: "In recent plays many things have been said by female characters which real women could not utter. Such things fall under the heading of art; it is because they say what could not come from a real woman's lips that their true emotions are

disclosed. If in such cases the author were to model his character on the ways of a real woman and conceal her feelings, such realism, far from being admired, would permit no pleasure in the work.”³⁹ In the scene from *Shinjū nimai ezōshi*, Chikamatsu does not allow a character to express what the real-life equivalent person would be unable to express due to social constraints in real life. Instead, the play lays bare the gaps between the inner self the character desires to express and the external behaviors, gestures, vocal timbres, and other outward aspects that the male characters take at face value.

Later in the play, back at the brothel, Chikamatsu again dramatizes the difficulty for a *yūjo* to convey her feelings. After the brothel is closed for the evening, only the proprietor, his wife, and a smattering of employees remain. Oshima, preoccupied with her impending suicide, desires to communicate her feelings with the others present since “those who die cannot return and explain their reasons.”⁴⁰ However, she cannot speak about herself directly, so instead she reflects on Ohatsu’s suicide two years before. She hastens to explain that she herself does not plan to commit a love suicide, she simply wishes for others to understand the kind of hardships a prostitute must have endured before choosing to end her life. She takes pains to acknowledge that a prostitute’s suicide causes problems for the brothel owner. She concludes that a prostitute would only make such a choice when there is no other choice. Because suicide only comes after an experience of compounded hardships, she concludes that suicide is “not something to be detested.”⁴¹ Chikamatsu does not go into greater detail here about the particular hardships that the prostitute must have endured to consider suicide. The others in the scene interpret Oshima’s words as the ramblings of someone who has had too much to drink. But since Chikamatsu has already made clear Oshima’s resolve to die, the audience can interpret her words as the best way she can express her own feelings given the constraints on her self-expression.

Once alone in her room upstairs, despite the lock on the door that prevents her physical body from joining her lover, Oshima’s soul departs the brothel and joins Ichirōbei on his road to death on the Nagara embankment. Here, finally she can fully express her love and feel connected to her lover. The narrator describes that “although they are one *ri* apart, they see each other as though reflected in a mirror.”⁴² Now that Oshima is communicating directly with him without the layer of performance, Ichirōbei accepts her true feelings and does not doubt her. The men around her could not see the gap between her as a person and the

role she was required to play professionally when she communicated with them in the everyday spaces of the pleasure boats and the brothel. It takes her death, the ultimate *shinjū*, to prove the sincerity of her feelings.

In *Shinjū nimai ezōshi*, Chikamatsu explores the emotional anguish of the *yūjo* who must conceal her true feelings and perform her role as entertainer to her client or dutiful employee to the proprietor even in everyday spaces, such as a pleasure boat or the interior of the brothel. Since her performance overlaps with the spaces of everyday life, others, including her lover and her co-workers, cannot see the feelings she seeks to express. Chikamatsu deftly reveals her innermost feelings and her struggle with the onstage/offstage dichotomy to the audience through the commentary of the narrator and the gestures of the character. In so doing, he humanizes the *yūjo*, a figure often viewed only as a performer. Unlike Oshima, who is onstage in the everyday spaces of Osaka in *Shinjū nimai ezōshi*, in the following two plays I will discuss, Chikamatsu develops the “offstage” spaces in which the *yūjo* has the license to drop her role for a moment and be present as herself.

Offstage Intimacy in *Shinjū kasane izutsu*

In *Shinjū nimai ezōshi*, the brothel owner and his wife both treat Oshima with callousness. However, with *Shinjū kasane izutsu*, Chikamatsu dramatizes contrasting relationships through two scenes at the brothel within the second act to create a differentiation between the *yūjo*'s relationship with the male brothel owner and her relationship with his wife, a former *yūjo*. The play provides space for female-female interaction and intimacy between the two women and juxtaposes it with a scene between two men where the prostitute is compelled to perform her own absence.

Shinjū kasane izutsu tells the story of the star-crossed love affair of Tokubei, a young merchant, and Ofusa, a *yūjo*. Tokubei runs a dye shop in Osaka with his wife, Otatsu. When they married, he became the adopted heir to the dye shop, which was originally owned by his father-in-law. However, Tokubei loves Ofusa of the Izutsu-ya, the brothel where Tokubei grew up and which is now run by Tokubei's brother and his wife. As with many of the love suicide plays, a financial crisis precipitates the action: Ofusa's father used her body as collateral on a loan so Ofusa must raise 400 *monme* of silver or go to a brothel in Kyoto. Ofusa anxiously awaits Tokubei, who has promised to bring the money to the brothel. Tokubei finally arrives just as Ofusa is called away to meet a client at another teahouse. The proprietors of the brothel, worried that Tokubei and Ofusa

might be plotting a love suicide, make excuses to keep Tokubei at the brothel so the two will be separated. However, Ofusa finds her way back to the brothel and into Tokubei's room where they vow to die together. Tokubei's brother, who is also the proprietor of the brothel, hears their voices and enters the room. Ofusa hides under a *kotatsu* (炬燵), a table frame covered by a futon and heated underneath with coals. Tokubei's brother, angry with Ofusa and surmising she is under the *kotatsu*, asks for more and more embers to be added to the brazier under the *kotatsu*, which causes Ofusa extreme pain. After he leaves, she and Tokubei sneak out a window. As they near the temple where they hope to die, they hear the voices of Otatsu and members of Tokubei's household. Tokubei kills Ofusa in a field. Before he can kill himself, he hears the voices again and runs away. Once the voices die out in the distance, Tokubei, confused and unable to find his way back to Ofusa, trips, falls into a well, and drowns.

Chikamatsu develops the scene of Ofusa waiting for Tokubei in the second act to elaborate on the familial bonds between the *yūjo* and a former *yūjo*, the wife of the brothel proprietor. In this scene, Ofusa goes upstairs bent on committing suicide alone when Tokubei has not come through with the money needed to prevent her from being moved to a Kyoto brothel. She is sharpening a razor when the wife of the proprietor appears after having intuited Ofusa's intentions. She finds a pretext to take the razor and asks Ofusa to massage her stiff shoulders. The tone of the scene shifts as the narrator tells us: "As when women who work receiving clients in a teahouse find themselves alone, they softly slip into talk about their lives."⁴³ She references her own past as a *yūjo* and hints at the difficulty of constantly performing one's enjoyment when she says: "In the quarter, here in this place, if you aren't enjoying yourself you can't work. It's not that you can't form a deep relationship with a client, but you need to be strategic about it."⁴⁴ In other words, there must be a real foundation for the performance of pleasure. And to be strategic means avoiding men with wives and children, such as Ofusa's lover Tokubei.

As they talk, the proprietress repeatedly emphasizes to Ofusa that her concern stems from feelings of affection. She stresses that the relationship between them is special since Ofusa was so young when she arrived at the brothel. While she does not approve of Tokubei as a match since he is already married, she expresses her hope that Ofusa will find someone to marry and tells her she will release her from her contract and send her off with a maid if she does. She explains that her willingness to part with Ofusa should a good match come along stems from her parental feelings.

“I feel for you as if you were my own child,” she says.⁴⁵ She cautions Ofusa not to do anything foolish, and adds that such an act would be cruel. She reiterates her hope that things will turn out well for Ofusa: “If something good comes your way, please ask to be released from your contract right away. This is proof that what I’m saying isn’t about greed.”⁴⁶ In case there is any confusion about the proprietress’s true intentions, the narrator tells the audience: “There is no greater benevolence.”⁴⁷ In this scene, the proprietress treats Ofusa as her own child, someone she has raised since Ofusa was just a girl. As she gives Ofusa advice, she accentuates her hope for a happy future for Ofusa. Over the course of the conversation, Ofusa relaxes into the intimacy with her mother-figure and loses the desire to die. By the end, she is sobbing, moved by the proprietress’s words.

While the ideology of filial piety encouraged women who entered into prostitution to transfer the loyalty due to their parents to the proprietor of the brothel, Chikamatsu demonstrates a different kind of familial bond in this scene. The feelings of familial connection meant to be shifted to brothel owner fail to materialize, and instead it is the proprietress and Ofusa who share an intimate connection that resembles a mother-daughter relationship. Representations of this kind of closeness among the women in the brothels arise in other of Chikamatsu’s *sewamono* as well. In *Ikudama shinjū* 生玉心中 (Love suicides at Ikudama, 1715), for instance, as the female protagonist’s coworkers search for her just before the suicide scene, one of them says: “She’s called a colleague, but she’s a sister. We made a pledge to be just like real sisters, the two of us. I worked relying on her, so if she dies in a love suicide, I will be like a monkey who has fallen from a tree.”⁴⁸ Before she dies in *Amijima*, Koharu shares her wish that if she becomes a Buddha, “I want to protect women of my profession, so that never again will there be love suicides.”⁴⁹ The close relationship between Ofusa and the brothel owner’s wife is therefore not unusual, and it functions to create a stark contrast with Ofusa’s treatment at the hands of the brothel owner.

Later in the same act, the male proprietor tortures Ofusa, who has entered a space where she is not supposed to be. The proprietor has arranged for Tokubei to stay at the brothel but grows suspicious that Ofusa might attempt to visit Tokubei, so he checks on him. In a hurry, Tokubei hides Ofusa under the *kotatsu*. Tokubei’s brother then calls to his wife for more coals to heat the *kotatsu*. Tokubei protests that excessive heat would be bad for his brother’s ill health. But his brother, the proprietor, will not

be deterred. As in the scene with the proprietress discussed above, the narrator clarifies the character's intentions for the spectators. The narrator introduces the proprietor's motivations and immediately segues into speaking in the proprietor's voice: "The older brother plans to punish Ofusa. Maliciously he urges, 'Bring the fire quickly!'"⁵⁰ Most likely, the proprietor blames Ofusa for ruining his brother's marriage and thus his business by not ending the affair. As it progresses, the text emphasizes the potential pain of the hot embers on Ofusa under the *kotatsu*. When they arrive, the embers are so hot they look like fall leaves. The narrator describes: "Just by looking at them from the side, Tokubei has the feeling that his own body is burning."⁵¹ The narrator also recounts Ofusa's pain. He says:

Ofusa is submerged in tears. The anguish of her body being burned by the embers causes her to reach her hand out from under the futon and grab the hem of Tokubei's robe in order to endure. But the pain is difficult to withstand. Is this what the heat of hell is like? It is truly pitiful.⁵²

This passage underscores Ofusa's suffering at the hands of the proprietor. It also demonstrates how far she must go to remain invisible in the scene. Since she is not supposed to be present, she must endure the unendurable to have her presence go undetected despite all members of the room knowing that she is there. As soon as his brother leaves, Tokubei rips the futon and wooden frame off the *kotatsu* to reveal Ofusa. She lies amid the smoke that wafts upward, gasping for breath with her face, arms, and legs completely red. Ofusa's performance of her absence goes so far as to put her life in jeopardy.

Chikamatsu constructs the second act of this play to juxtapose the loving female-female relationship of Ofusa and the proprietor's wife that takes place in a female-only space with a male-female relationship in which Ofusa must put her body through intense pain in order to perform her own erasure. The *kotatsu* scene puts the previous scene into relief, particularly the moment in which the brothel owner's wife takes the razor out of Ofusa's hand in an attempt to save her life. Chikamatsu uses these scenes to distinguish between the *yūjo*'s ability to relax her performance of her role as prostitute when she communicates with another woman and the necessity to discipline herself and her body when in the presence of men. Similarly to the scenes in *Shinjū nimai ezōshi* in which Chikamatsu makes Oshima's feelings clear to the audience, in *Shinjū kasane izutsu*, even when Ofusa is concealing her presence and her pain, Chikamatsu crafts the scene so that the audience can see what she is hiding.

Offstage Performance in *Meido no hikyaku*

Meido no hikyaku also uses female-only spaces to show the intimacy between women in the brothels and offers a role for performance within an “offstage” space. As in *Shinjū kasane izutsu*, the play provides a view of the female protagonist in her “off hours” when she is not at work and thus without the same pressures to ensure her behavior conforms with social expectations. In this play, performance becomes a means to create a shared affective environment and sense of community between women working in the brothels.

Meido no hikyaku tells the story of Chūbei, an employee of a courier shop in Osaka, and his lover, the *yūjo* Umegawa, who works in the Shinmachi licensed quarter. The play opens with Chūbei at the courier shop. He is in trouble because he has been using money from the business to make installment payments to ransom Umegawa from her brothel. Hachiemon, a customer and friend, confronts him in fury that his delivery is late. Chūbei’s confession moves him, and he agrees to accept a pomade jar wrapped as if it were a packet of gold so as to keep the others in the dark about Chūbei’s embezzlement. Hachiemon willingly participates in this ruse to protect his friend. In act two, Hachiemon visits Umegawa’s brothel. Despite his promise to keep Chūbei’s secret, Hachiemon gathers the *yūjo* around him, tells them of Chūbei’s theft, and reveals the jar of pomade carefully wrapped like gold. Chūbei, who was on his way to the brothel to see Umegawa, overhears Hachiemon’s words. In order to defend himself and regain his honor, Chūbei storms in, upbraids Hachiemon, and breaks the seal on a packet of gold belonging to a samurai client to demonstrate his wealth. He uses this gold to ransom Umegawa to the delight of the other *yūjo* who are ignorant of the money’s origin. However, stealing money from his employer was a capital offense for a courier, so Chūbei and Umegawa must run away. In act three, the two flee to his home village where they are hunted down by the authorities and condemned to execution. Unlike the previous two plays under discussion, *Meido no hikyaku* does not end in love suicide. However, in this play, too, the heroine dies as the ultimate proof of her love.

The scene in which Umegawa performs a *jōruri* ballad comes at the beginning of the second act when Umegawa visits the Echigo-ya in search of solace from her worries that Chūbei will not secure the funds to redeem her. As she enters, the narrator recites: “The owner here is a woman; no doubt this is the reason why the girls who call feel so at home and open

their hearts' deepest secrets of love."⁵³ These lines establish the Echigo-ya as a potential space for female connection even as it earns its revenue by participating in the sex industry. Umegawa heads to the second floor to join the other *yūjo* and confess her worries. To cheer her up, one of the women suggests they listen to some *jōruri* music. Umegawa, a student of the chanter Takemoto Tanomo, volunteers to sing herself and asks for a shamisen. She decides to sing a song about Yūgiri 夕霧 (d. 1678), a *tayū* 太夫 (a *yūjo* of the highest rank in the licensed quarters) from the Shinmachi district in Osaka who was known for her beauty and charm and who died suddenly from illness at the height of her popularity.⁵⁴ She became a favorite subject of ballads and *sewamono* in the kabuki and puppet theatres. The narrator chants that Umegawa will “use Yūgiri’s story from long ago to tell her story from today.”⁵⁵ Umegawa stands in for this idealized version of a *yūjo* more well-known and with more agency than herself. The other *yūjo* can also see themselves in Yūgiri’s place through the performance.

In this scene, the performance becomes a vehicle to transmit the performer’s feelings. Umegawa sings of the difficulties of a *yūjo* who is so often misunderstood by her lover despite her deep devotion. These lyrics echo the difficulties Oshima faced in *Shinjū nimai ezōshi* when her lover Ichirōbei was unable to understand her love for him when he saw her with her client Sada. Umegawa sings: “The very courtesan who lies awake, sleepless at night with longing for the lover she cannot meet, may be cursed by him for her cruelty, if he knows not her grief.”⁵⁶ In addition to the content of the song, the singing was likely meant to have a particularly potent expression of feeling since Umegawa is a student of the Takemoto school of *jōruri*.⁵⁷

The passage Umegawa sings comes from the Chikamatsu play *Yūgiri sanzesō* 夕霧三世相 (Yūgiri’s fortune), which was written in 1686 to pacify Yūgiri’s spirit. She sings of the difficult fate of a *yūjo* who must profess love she does not feel as part of her profession. And if she does love someone and has sworn her love to him, she may still have to see other clients thus breaking her vow. The bind the *yūjo* feels of being caught between her personal feelings and requirements of her profession recalls the difficult position of Oshima that Chikamatsu dramatized in *Shinjū nimai ezōshi*. Here, it resonates with the other women in the room.

After she sings, Umegawa muses on the shared suffering of women who work in the brothels and a feeling of melancholy settles over the group. Umegawa reflects on how the misinterpretations of a *yūjo*’s true feelings

can lead to misunderstandings where the lover will feel bitter toward the *yūjo*. She says: “If he blames me then let him. I wonder if all women of our profession have the same chronic condition of loving?”⁵⁸ The narrator recounts how “the story of one who all for love abandoned the world induces melancholy reveries, and even the effects of the saké wear off.”⁵⁹ The performance and the particular feelings it conjures create a shared feeling among the women that permeates the room.

This example of amateur performance is quite different from the scene in *Shinjū nimai ezōshi* in which the performance of the *jōruri* by the *yūjo* was criticized as insufficient due to the performer’s lack of experience with true feeling and her performance of her role as entertainer to her client was unfairly construed as an expression of her real feelings. Instead, here, Umegawa’s performance creates a shared bond between the female performer and her female audience, as both share the same fate as the figure in the song. The women are able to take a moment away from the forced liveliness of the brothel to be comforted by the common feeling that circulates through melody, lyric, expressive voice, and attentive ear.

Performance’s role as a balm is often the role Chikamatsu ascribes to live, professional performance. In his depictions of performances within his plays, he describes how the performance “comforts” (慰める *nagusameru*) its audience.⁶⁰ In other representations of performance, Chikamatsu implies a common feeling among the audience that comes from the experience of watching the performance. For instance, *Shinjū nimai ezōshi* begins with a depiction of the opening day of a new theatre season in Dōtonbori. As the audience leaves the theatre, the narrator says: “Although it’s winter, the hearts of the high and low of the crowd feel like it’s spring,” which implies a shared sentiment among the spectators regardless of their different social positions.⁶¹ In *Meido no hikyaku*, during the performance, the *yūjo* can temporarily suspend their performance of their professional role for a moment of collective intimacy.

For Umegawa and the other *yūjo*, the illusion of a female-only space is shattered when Hachiemon bursts into the brothel. Unbeknownst to the women, Hachiemon had heard the singing from downstairs. He bangs on the ceiling with a broom handle and calls out laughing: “What kind of man do you miss so much? If it makes you lonely without a man, there’s one available here, though I don’t suppose he’s to your taste.”⁶² The women have to turn their attention away from Umegawa and toward the male client. But this interlude demonstrates the possibilities for connection in the absence of the client with performance as the critical link that fosters

intimacy between the women. It also demonstrates that even in their “off hours,” women in the brothels might be observed and suddenly interrupted. The male client, who does not share the perspective of the women nor the bodily proximity to the performance, misreads the tone and destroys the women’s temporary moment of stillness and connection.

Conclusion

In the *sewamono* examined here, *Shinjū nimai ezōshi*, *Shinjū kasane izutsu*, and *Meido no hikyaku*, Chikamatsu creates scenes that offer the audience a view of the inner lives of *yūjo*. Since *yūjo* had to perform their roles in professional settings, which included spaces such as the city streets of Osaka that were everyday life spaces for others, their clients and other people they encountered assumed their words and actions were calculated to earn money rather than expressions of their real feelings. The male clients’ desire to be assured of a *yūjo*’s sincerity led to the practice of *shinjū*, in which the ultimate proof of love was death. The general male public also craved a glimpse of the inner lives of *yūjo*, which spawned depictions of *yūjo* on stage, in song, and in print. Chikamatsu’s *sewamono* also responded to this desire, although Chikamatsu wove the anguish and hardships of the *yūjo* into his plays unlike many of his contemporaries. He crafted scenes that enabled the audience to see the *yūjo*’s true feelings even when the men around her could not, as in *Shinjū nimai ezōshi*, and invited the audience to identify with the *yūjo* and her desperation to simultaneously please her client and show her sincerity to her lover. Other scenes show the suffering of *yūjo* more directly, such as the scene in *Shinjū kasane izutsu*, in which Ofusa is tortured under the *kotatsu*. Chikamatsu thus brought forward a darker side of *yūjo* life that was often obscured in representations of *yūjo* by his contemporaries.

While acknowledging the hardships of life in the brothels, Chikamatsu also depicts the possibility for *yūjo* to find intimacy and comfort in shared experiences and feelings with other *yūjo* and former *yūjo* in the brothels. In *Shinjū kasane izutsu* and *Meido no hikyaku*, Chikamatsu places the *yūjo* characters in “offstage” spaces away from clients and brothel owners where they can find solace and community in female-only spaces. Did *yūjo* have such opportunities for mutual support in real life or were these representations just another fantasy of brothel life spun by Chikamatsu? *Yūjo* began their days early as they sent their overnight clients off around six in the morning. Once their clients had left, they had a small amount of time to themselves to sleep or rest before beginning the day’s preparations

around ten o'clock.⁶³ Their schedules left few moments for socializing or relaxing and permitted only two meals.⁶⁴ Life in the brothels revolved around the clients, and *yūjo* were so tightly trapped in their circumstances that Nakano Eizō has argued that their adherence to the rules became self-imposed and self-disciplined.⁶⁵

While it is difficult to ascertain the accuracy of Chikamatsu's portrayal of female-female closeness among *yūjo* that even approaches new kinship bonds in some cases, his scenes of *yūjo* intimacy in the "offstage" spaces of the brothels illustrates the role that performance can play in facilitating identification and connection. He stages a moment of shared feeling through performance in *Meido no hikyaku*, and his other works, too, use a range of techniques to foster connection between the audience and the *yūjo* characters. As he expresses in *Naniwa miyage*, the realism of concealing a female character's feelings takes away the pleasure that comes from art. The possibility of seeing something more real than what can be seen in everyday life is one of the draws of watching a Chikamatsu play in the puppet theatre. *Yūjo* were especially intriguing since they had to maintain their professional roles so strictly. Chikamatsu's audience included many women, so by inviting the audience into an intimate relationship with the *yūjo* characters, he created the possibility for women in the audience to feel a connection with the *yūjo* who shared their city but whose lives were often cut off from women outside the brothel districts. Through these plays, Chikamatsu presents performance as a means to nurture emotional connection whether in an offstage space in everyday life or within the theatre.

NOTES

¹ Chikamatsu Monzaemon, *Sonezaki shinjū* in *Chikamatsu Monzaemon shū 1*, ed. by Torigoe Bunzō, Yamane Tameo, Nagatomo Chiyoji, Ōhashi Tadayoshi, and Sakuguchi Hiroyuki *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 74. Fourth printing (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2012), 13–43; and Donald Keene, trans., *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki in Major Plays of Chikamatsu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 39–57. For female names that begin with the honorific おお, such as Ohatsu おはつ, I have followed the romanization used by Keene and subsequent translators and scholars writing in English.

² Keene, *Major Plays of Chikamatsu*, 48.

³ Sone Hiromi, *Shōfu to kinseishakai* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2003), 26.

⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁵ Nagai Yoshio, “Riaru Yoshiwara: kuroi hōkokusho,” *Geijutsu shinchō* 68.6 (2017): 68.

⁶ The Yoshiwara, the licensed quarter in Edo, had strict rules that forbade a *yūjo* to leave the quarter or take time off except in exceptional circumstances and not for more than two days. See Nakano Eizō, *Yūjo no seikatsu* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1981), 60. The unlicensed quarters in Osaka, which employ Ohatsu and many other protagonists of Chikamatsu’s *sewamono*, however, were less regulated than the licensed quarters even though they were tacitly authorized by the state. See Sone Hiromi, “Prostitution and Public Authority in Early Modern Japan,” trans. by Akiko Terashima and Anne Walthall in *Women and Class in Japanese History*, ed. by Hitomi Tonomura, Anne Walthall, and Wakita Haruko (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Center for Japanese Studies, 1999), 170.

⁷ Sone, “Prostitution and Public Authority in Early Modern Japan,” 172.

⁸ Cecilia Segawa Seigle, *Yoshiwara: The Glittering World of the Japanese Courtesan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1993), 190.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ The illustrated book *Yoshiwara koi no michibiki* is in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. A description of this work appears in David Waterhouse, “Hishikawa Moronobu: Tracking Down an Elusive Master” in *Designed for Pleasure: The World of Edo Japan in Prints and Paintings, 1680–1860*, ed. Julia Meech and Jane Oliver (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 33–55.

¹¹ Nagai, “Riaru Yoshiwara: kuroi hōkokusho,” 68.

¹² Koyama Issei, *Chikamatsu jōruri no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sōbunsha shuppan, 2000), 50.

¹³ Michael Brownstein, “The Osaka Kannon Pilgrimage and Chikamatsu’s ‘The Love Suicides at Sonezaki,’” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 66.1 (2006): 14.

¹⁴ Hara Michio, *Chikamatsu jōruri no sakugekihō* (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 2013), 515.

¹⁵ A summary of this scholarship appears in Koyama, *Chikamatsu jōruri no kenkyū*, 53.

¹⁶ See Yokoyama Tadashi, “Chikamatsu shinjū jōruri no tenkai,” *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 35.5 (1958): 50–59 and Hirata Sumiko, *Chikamatsu jōruri no seiritsu to tenkai* (Tokyo: Shintensha, 2010), respectively.

¹⁷ Torii Fumiko, *Chikamatsu no joseitachi* (Tokyo: Musashino shoin, 1999), 218.

- ¹⁸ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 75, 383–432. There are two English-language translations: Keene, *Major Plays of Chikamatsu*, 387–425 and Donald H. Shively, *The Love Suicide at Amijima: A Study of a Japanese Domestic Tragedy by Chikamatsu Monzaemon* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953). Analyses of the relationship between Koharu and Osan appear in Shively, *The Love Suicide at Amijima: A Study of a Japanese Domestic Tragedy by Chikamatsu Monzaemon*, 33–35; Suwa Haruo, *Shinjū—sono shi to shinjitsu* (Tokyo: Mainichi shinbunsha, 1977), 176–181; and Torii, *Chikamatsu no joseitachi*, 181–195, among others.
- ¹⁹ Chikamatsu’s *sewamono* are published in *Chikamatsu Monzaemon shū 1 & 2*, ed. by Torigoe Bunzō, Yamane Tameo, Nagatomo Chiyoji, Ōhashi Tadayoshi, and Sakuguchi Hiroyuki *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 74 & 75. Fourth printing (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2012). An English-language translation of *Meido no hikyaku* appears in Keene, *Major Plays of Chikamatsu*, 161–194.
- ²⁰ For more on the development of Dōtonbori, see Tsukada Takashi, “Kinsei Ōsaka no shibaichi,” in *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami*, ed. Ōsaka shiritsu daigaku kenkyūka “Kamigata bunka kōza” kikaku iinkai (Osaka: Izumi shoin, 2009), 179.
- ²¹ Gunji Masakatsu, “Kabuki and Its Social Background,” trans. Andrew L. Markus in *Tokugawa Japan: The Social and Economic Antecedents of Modern Japan*, ed. Chie Nakane and Shinzaburō Ōishi, translations ed. by Conrad Totman (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1990), 178.
- ²² Amy Stanley, *Selling Women: Prostitution, Markets, and the Household in Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2012), 2.
- ²³ Sone, “Prostitution and Public Authority in Early Modern Japan,” 170.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 170–171.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 170.
- ²⁷ Donald H. Shively, *The Love Suicide at Amijima*, 22. Ofusa in *Shinjū kasane izutsu* works in Shimanouchi. Saga in *Ikudama shinjū* (Love suicides at Ikudama, 1715) works in Fushimi Sakamachi. Ohatsu in *Sonezaki*, Oshima in *Shinjū nimai ezōshi*, and Kokan in *Shinjū yaiba wa kōri no tsuitachi* 心中刃は氷の朔日 (Love suicides in midsummer with an icy blade, 1709) work in Dōjima-Shinchi. Koharu in *Amijima* works in Sonezaki-Shinchi. Umegawa from *Meido no hikyaku* is an outlier in Chikamatsu’s *sewamono* since she works in Shinmachi, the licensed quarter.

- ²⁸ William Lindsey, *Fertility and Pleasure: Ritual and Sexual Values in Tokugawa Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 66.
- ²⁹ Stanley, *Selling Women*, 62.
- ³⁰ Lawrence Rogers, “She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not. *Shinjū* and *Shikido Okagami*,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 49.1 (Spring 1994): 40–60.
- ³¹ Hair and fingernails could grow back. As for the tattoos, while the exact techniques are unknown, contemporary sources imply that it was possible to remove them. The pleasure district’s common location near execution grounds enabled a painless solution to the cutting of the fingers and nails: beggars sold prostitutes the fingernails and fingers procured from corpses. Some prostitutes sent their clients fingers made from rice flour dough. See Seigel, *Yoshiwara*, 193–194.
- ³² In addition to Chikamatsu, Nishiki Bunryū 錦文流 (1688–1736) and Ki no Kaion 紀海音 (1663–1742) also wrote love suicide plays for the puppet theatre. For a treatment of all three playwrights see Iguchi Hiroshi, “Sewa jōruri no seiritsu to tenkai,” in *Chikamatsu no jidai*, ed. Torigoe Bunzō, Uchiyama Mikiko, and Watanabe Tamotsu (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1998), 117–41. Kabuki theatres also staged love suicide plays. See Suwa Haruo, *Genroku kabuki no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kasama shoin, 1983). The most well-known illustrated book featuring love suicide stories is *Shinjū ōkagami* 心中大鑑 (The mirror of love suicides, 1704), which appears in *Shōsetsu chūkan* (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1910), 181–233. For a summary of *shinjū* as a popular subject for ballads, see Koyama, *Chikamatsu jōruri no kenkyū*, 126–128.
- ³³ For more on *shinjūmono* see C. Andrew Gerstle, *Circles of Fantasy: Convention in the Plays of Chikamatsu* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986); Hara, *Chikamatsu jōruri no sakugekihō*; and Iguchi, “Sewa jōruri no seiritsu to tenkai,” 117–141.
- ³⁴ Mori Shū, *Chikamatsu Monzaemon* (Kyoto: San’ichi shobō, 1959), 209–212.
- ³⁵ Jacob Raz, *Audience and Actors: A Study of their Interaction in the Japanese Traditional Theatre* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983), 161.
- ³⁶ Kōzu Takeo, “Jōruribon no besutoseraa,” *Bungaku* 12 (2011): 91.
- ³⁷ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 75, 53. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Japanese to English are mine.
- ³⁸ Translations appear in Michael Brownstein, trans. “Souvenirs of Naniwa,” in *Early Modern Japanese Literature*, ed. Haruo Shirane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 347–351, and in Donald Keene, trans. “Chikamatsu on the Art of the Puppet Stage,” *Anthology of Japanese Literature from the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, ed. Donald Keene (New York: Grove Press, 1960), 386–390.

- ³⁹ Brownstein, “Souvenirs of Naniwa,” 349.
- ⁴⁰ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 75, 73.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Ibid., 77.
- ⁴³ Ibid., 176.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 177. The term *oyakata* could refer to a number of different relationships including that of a parent or a master. I have chosen to translate it as “parents” here to best represent the relationship between Ofusa and the proprietress. *Oyakata*, (n.d.) in *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, accessed May 5, 2017, <http://japanknowledge.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/lib/display/?lid=200200ad34ea27uXP6Wh>.
- ⁴⁶ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* vol. 75, 177.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 378.
- ⁴⁹ Donald Keene, *Major Plays of Chikamatsu*, 420.
- ⁵⁰ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 75, 185.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Ibid., 185–186.
- ⁵³ Keene, *Major Plays of Chikamatsu*, 172–173.
- ⁵⁴ Laurence R. Kominz has written that her death was on the level of that of Marilyn Monroe in the United States in *The Stars Who Created Kabuki: Their Lives, Loves and Legacy* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1997), 112.
- ⁵⁵ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 74, 125.
- ⁵⁶ Keene, *Major Plays of Chikamatsu*, 175.
- ⁵⁷ The Takemoto school was founded by Takemoto Gidayū 竹本義太夫 (1651–1714), Chikamatsu’s close collaborator and the chanter for his plays from *Sonezaki* in 1703 until his death. Gidayū was trained in a *jōruri* lineage that developed the expression of human emotion over spectacle. See Charles James Dunn, *The Early Japanese Puppet Drama* (London: Luzac and Company, Ltd., 1966), 98–103.
- ⁵⁸ Adapted from Keene, *Major Plays of Chikamatsu*, 175. *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 74, 126.

⁵⁹ Keene, *Major Plays of Chikamatsu*, 175. *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 74, 126.

⁶⁰ Examples can be found in the opening scene of *Shinjū nimai ezōshi* (*Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 7, 48) and in the *michiyuki* scene of *Shinjū kasane izutsu* (*Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 75, 190).

⁶¹ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 75, 48.

⁶² Keene, *Major Plays of Chikamatsu*, 175. *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 74, 127.

⁶³ Nakano, *Yūjo no seikatsu*, 65–66.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 55–56.