

ECHOES OF HONOR: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BLOOD, HONOR, AND  
REVENGE FROM SPANISH AND JAPANESE DRAMA TO THE DIGITAL AGE

Laurel Foote-Hudson

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Approved by:

Marsha Collins

Inger Brodey

Morgan Pitelka

María DeGuzmán

Rick Warner

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## ABSTRACT

Laurel Ashlyn Foote-Hudson: Echoes of Honor: A Comparative Analysis of Blood, Honor, and Revenge from Spanish and Japanese Drama to the Digital Age.  
(Under the direction of Marsha Collins)

Linda Hutcheon famously stated that with adaptations, audiences seem to “desire the repetition as much as the change”, and she notes that the relationship between an adaptation and its originating text is one which remains contentious. Although previous literary and historical scholars have documented the enduring popularity of adaptations through archival methods, the literature to date lacks a robust comparative textual approach. I use national plays such as *Fuenteovejuna* (1612-1614), *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* (1630), *The Treasury of Loyal Retainers* (*Kanadehon Chūshingura* 仮名手本忠臣蔵 c1748), and “Yotsuya Ghost Stories” (*Tōkaidō Yotsuya Kaidan* 東海道四谷怪談 1825) as models of classical Spanish and Japanese national media that foreground and debate the honor theme. Through this theme, I argue that comparative examinations of the motifs of spectacle, gender, and honor among media adaptations of the popular dramatic theatre of Golden Age (1492-1681) Spain and Edo Period (1603-1868) Japan can help to delineate current adaptation paradigms.

The promotion and maintenance of a complex system of “honor” in both Japan and Spain is a major point of contention through the plot and exposition of these dramatic works. In this context, my use of the term national play encompasses what J. Tompkins refers to as the heterotopias of theater, and is a designation to denote plays which appear to be part of a canon of works deemed representative of their respective countries on and off stage. Despite these shifts

and movements to new formats, these plays and their “echoes” continue to captivate audiences around the world and reinforce conversations related to modern motifs related to honor, society, and the human condition. While the motivations behind the actions of the characters, especially those who are marginalized, are repurposed and remain a source of contention, the effects of their iconic debates continue to live on in an increasingly global and technically expansive imagination.

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## INTRODUCTION: ADAPTATION, HONOR, AND HOMAGE

On September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015 a merry group of graduate students representing a blend of disciplines and nationalities came together to celebrate my birthday. That year, the newly renovated Carolina Theatre showed Akira Kurosawa's *Ran* (1985) as a part of its "Retrospective" festival. *Ran* is one of Kurosawa's last works and is a visually striking adaptation of William Shakespeare's *King Lear* set in sixteenth-century Japan. Earlier, we had explored the newly renovated downtown of my hometown, sampling the new ramen restaurant that stood in a space that an old tobacco warehouse had once occupied. Ending the night with a film by Kurosawa seemed to fit into the "theme" of the night and we walked to the small box-office desk, purchased tickets and entered the gleaming 1920s-style theater. After the film ended, and a chorus of wooden seats creaked, my mind wandered to the previous conversation among the group about the film while waiting in the lobby. The rest of the group had not heard of the film, nor were they familiar with the period Kurosawa had set his work in, yet the most baffling element for them was that Kurosawa had developed an interest in Shakespeare. Speaking up and somewhat baffled by their incredulous comments, I reminded them that plenty of countries had exchanged all manner of works, academic as well as popular; it should not be considered odd that two nations with a lengthy history of contact would share a mutual fascination with the popular artists and artistic media of the past.

The year I completed my comprehensive exams, two films representing this blending of cultures and narratives appeared in American cinemas. The first, *47 Ronin*, distributed by Universal Pictures (2013), featured the popular movie star Keanu Reeves as a young man who

aids the now legendary forty-seven ronin in their quest for revenge.<sup>1</sup> The second was *Don Jon* (2013), produced by actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt, as an adaptation of Tirso de Molina's *El burlador de Sevilla y el convidado de piedra* (c1630). These movies, featuring two of the most popular stars of the time in American film adaptations of works of classical Spanish and Japanese theater generate a set of larger questions about the adaptation of and participation with the media produced by other nations. For instance, after *Ran* ended the night of my birthday, I noted the reaction of the audience around me, eagerly listening to the opinions revealed by the flurry of conversation that occurs after viewing a film with friends, and silently wondering if I was the only one noticing the latent significance of this event. These adaptations are where the most intriguing conversations and responses occur, and with the rise of the internet, domestic and international audiences have unprecedented levels of *immediate* contact and consumption of these materials. Those engrossing responses and conversations about adaptations, and the complex, contentious cultural interactions they spark, have informed and inspired me to write this dissertation. In the pages that follow, I explore how the concerns often linked to the honor theme in the classical theater of Spain and Japan respectively may be called into question through comparative examinations of adaptations and their reinterpretations in different cultures, in different epochs, and through different media-formats, as depicted in modern popular culture. Of course, to what extent, and in what way honor, as represented in Spanish and Japanese national theater, corresponded to a proto-nationalist sense of identity, is still hotly debated in

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Keene cites the dramatized events of January 30<sup>th</sup> 1703 (14日12月15年元禄時代) in which “forty-six former retainers of the late Lord Asano Naganori of Akō burst into the mansion of Lord Kira Yoshinaka in Edo and killed him. They immediately carried his head to Sengaku-ji, the Buddhist temple where Asano was buried, and offer it before his grave”. The temple still exists in Tokyo today and is the site of several celebrations of the original forty-six retainers and an additional forty-seventh: [http://www.sengakuji.or.jp/about\\_sengakuji\\_en/](http://www.sengakuji.or.jp/about_sengakuji_en/)

both political as well as literary circles. For the purpose of this dissertation, however, I use national plays such as *Fuenteovejuna* (1612-1614), *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* (1630), *The Treasury of Loyal Retainers* (Kanadehon Chūshingura 仮名手本忠臣蔵 c1748), and “Yotsuya Ghost Stories” (Tōkaidō Yotsuya Kaidan 東海道四谷怪談 1825) as models of classical Spanish and Japanese national media that foreground and debate the honor theme. In this context, my use of the term national play encompasses what J. Tompkins refers to as the heterotopias of theater, and is a designation to denote plays which appear to be part of a canon of works deemed representative of their respective countries. Specifically, I view the adaptations of these plays as vessels for the exploration of various heterotopias, which are defined as “space generated via performance that enables us to better understand the theatrical experience; it may comprise the concrete space of the theatre venue, the imagined locations depicted in that venue, and/or the social context for the performance” (Tompkins 16). The term national play captures the many layers of the term “national” which is not just a formal designation, but also one which can be formed by imaginary boundaries and denotes fantastic assumptions about its cultural context and the layers of spatiality and performance contained both within, as well as outside, of the boundaries of the theatrical space. Though there are myriad homages within the theater and film sources of these adaptations, this project instead investigates and catalogues these plays and their adaptations in a holistic manner. I argue that it is the long-view examination of the change in format, time, and socio-political context which reveals the messaging around honor and loyalty within these works despite the shifts in time, content creator, and format. This dissertation focuses on these aspects of the theme of honor's development: the latent, manifest, and cumulative messages about honor, and the manner in which several adaptations engage with

each of these aspects, while acknowledging that due to the number of adaptations, there is a need to be conscientiously limited and selective.

To narrow this focus, it is important to state that there is a difference in the payment of homage and the creation of an adaptation. In an homage, especially those in which the resulting adaptation is a film, there is an explicit connection to the preceding media being honored. I argue that this overt imitation, often in the form of narrative or visual reference, is explicit because the creator is often demonstrating a direct imitation of a “higher” status work. The praise for an homage is the result of a clear and consistent imitation of the target media. Sachiko Shikoda notes that director Francois Truffaut considers his film adaptations of various novels to be “filmed homages”, which hints at the concern of preserving the connection between the homage and source material, a novel in this case. While adaptation does involve imitation or allusion to its source material, the connection to maintaining fidelity to the work for the purpose of “honoring” the predecessor is not as explicit or always given. In fact, part of the allure of adaptation is for the audience to witness the re-imagining of the source material, often removed from its original medium or format. This independent act, to rework usually a narrative in their own voice, can at times lead to competition between adaptations and source materials. However, both terms suffer from the perception of being “lesser” than original content, though adaptation faces much stronger condemnation for its lack of adherence to fidelity. Robert Stam highlights these concerns around fidelity, describing a hidden language of “morality” surrounding the film adaptation of novels.<sup>2</sup> Stam discusses a resulting “disappointment that occurs when we, as

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<sup>2</sup> Stam also refers to fidelity as a chimera, noting the difficulties adaptors encounter when shifting and attempting to clarify details which resist or many never be present, in the novels they use as source material. The concept of fidelity is plagued with different facets and interpretations which may not be explored due to differences in format or lack of translation to the cinematic space (an issue most often seen with novel to film adaptations).

viewers, are confronted with someone else's phantasy" (Stam 54). In some ways, this frustration is an inherent part of the adaptation process faced by content adaptors -- while an homage already sets up a clear relationship between itself and its source, the creation of an adaptation leaves the content creator with much more leeway, for better or for worse, to recreate their vision of this source material in their own artistic realm. Mirroring later discussions of honor and loyalty reflected in these adaptations, Stam even asks viewers to consider what faithfulness means for the adaptation's creator (Stam 57). Despite these questions, this dissertation is most interested in how debates of honor and loyalty manifest in "transmutations of plot and character" through adaptations of these plays (Stam 71). Specifically, I trace how the debate of honor manifests through different points of view and the focalization of honor through the point of view of women and other marginalized groups within the heterotopias of these four plays.

In addition, I choose to highlight the parallel development of popular theater in both nations by focusing on the messages around honor contained in these plays as national plays. Politically, Spain and Japan were once imperial powers in which points of contact between cultures may have occurred in physically contentious spaces, in which the cultural hegemony of one nation could be brutally inflicted on another and vice versa. Yet my dissertation instead focuses on conversations around specific adaptations that occur across various media formats, to create what I call *contact "media"*—media which provide an imaginative and powerful cultural space for cross-cultural creation and contention. In these new spaces, traditional national archetypes and conventions related to honor are undermined and confounded, metamorphosing into new alternatives perhaps only loosely tied to their predecessors or in the Digital Age,

repurposed into something altogether different.<sup>3</sup> This focus on adaptation also offers space for the examination of the language of “honor” often used within the adaptation process. Here, national playwrights, as well as directors and content creators, form their own canon of adaptations and build a system of cultural conversations and aesthetic references for their domestic audiences. The language used to describe these conventions and reference often reveals concerns about maintaining “fidelity” to the source material, to the playwright and even to one’s nation. Through each new iteration of these plays, the need to “honor” one’s narrative predecessors, while asserting one’s own merit as a content creator, is an inherent part of the adaptation process for national plays.

### **Adaptations and Unifying Bodies of Work: a Methodology**

This dissertation identifies several original plays, and then juxtaposes the early conventions and imagery to the modern use of these figures, by arguing that there is a need to trace, but to also reposition the “lineage” of specific icons and stock characters from these plays and to unpack the tropes and practices that cluster around honor that shift from one of several adaptations to the next. I delineate this process by using the often studied concept of honor as the major issue to be examined, as well as by tracing shifts in plot and characters. In this context, I explore the complex circumstances that lead specific characters, and the iconography associated with these characters, to transmute between source material and adaptation, as well as differentiate among socio-cultural developments affecting these changes in other adaptations. I examine the cultural preoccupations around honor and role-modeling that appear in the original

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<sup>3</sup> For examples of scholars who have focused heavily on archiving instances of adaptations, see works by the following scholars who have undertaken this Herculean task of archiving various English-language adaptations of *Chūshingura*: Donald Shively (1982), Tamotsu Watanabe (Japanese 1981), Aaron Cohen (2008), and Henry Smith II (2008)

text as well as the body of adaptation. I also identify the cultural messaging as these characters and pivotal plot points are repurposed during different periods of socio-political strife.

Messaging in this context refers to the identification of manifest, latent and cumulative points; the adaptations and translation of honor codes in adaptations of Spanish and Japanese plays in particular become one of the first areas through which debates on honor culture are contested and supported. Art Silverblatt and others have identified three levels of cultural messaging that social institutions, such as the theater, use to develop, cultivate, and contribute to what we recognize now as “mass media” culture. The first level, manifestation, refers to the overt imagery or plot in a piece of media (characterization, setting, visuals etc.). The next level is latent messaging, or the messaging that is expressed on a semi-conscious level, for example about “good and bad” cultural behaviors. Finally, the cumulative messaging, which represents the collective cultural discussions around a topic or preoccupation. This repeated, reified messaging from various types of media over the course of many years can also produce both positive and negative consequences for the subjects and subjected, producing stereotypes of other myths. For instance, the usage of numerous images of chivalrous knights, southern gentlemen and stoic samurai, eternally locked in battle over a prized and yet at times difficult to culturally isolate term are not created within a cultural vacuum; they are not just arbitrarily constructed “guardians of justice” meting out justice in battling perceived slights and righting wrongs. In this dissertation, cumulative messaging will be key for analysis—it is the repeated and exported messaging here about honor that is most polemical, especially when three nations may have conflicting adaptations and cumulative moral messaging about the same works.

As previously discussed, there is already a significant body of scholarship which explores the themes, in particular revenge, shared by such works as Shakespeare’s “Hamlet” as well as



“Chūshingura”. Leonard Pronko’s, “Closed and Open Societies: The Revenge Dramas of Japan, Spain, and England”, is one of the few essays in English-language scholarship to bring Spain into this conversation. Spain has a well-recognized and researched history on revenge dramas by national playwrights Lope de Vega, Pedro Calderón de la Barca and Tirso de Molina, and Pronko’s work does well by bringing in scholarship exploring these plays. Yet editor Kevin Wetmore has organized the anthology around revenge as the unifying concept, while I would change and expand this framework in several ways:

(1) I argue that honor is actually the conceptual focus as the motive for the acts of revenge.

While revenge is certainly crucial and compelling, it is just the final element in a sequence of events that reveals a cultural ideology on honor and “justice”. Often, while the act of revenge is passed on from adaptation to adaptation, the conventions about “why” the revenge is justified are contentious when adapted potentially for ideological purposes. In addition, when revisiting the concept of revenge plays, I think it is important to consider the framing of these plays as plays about honor, both lost and gained, not just as stories of revenge, because that is what I would argue is really at stake for its protagonists. In addition, other scholarly traditions such as those from Spain traditionally tend to categorize these plays as such to capture the holistic concerns around honor and its perpetuation. This is not to downplay the importance of declarations of revenge in response to lost honor, so much as to revisit what systemic concerns drive the protagonists to regain their honor, in these contexts. In viewing them as revenge plays first, the violence is often the focus and the complex cultural debates over honor can inadvertently be glossed over, pushed aside, or generalized to the point where they seem trivial in comparison to the blood spectacle.

(2) The corpus of adaptation of these plays, specifically *Chūshingura*, is discussed in later chapters, but while adaptations are categorized, and the history behind their formation/translation also recorded, there is little consistent analysis or examination of the transmutations Stam identifies as points for adaptation between adaptations. While some of this could be characterized as “artists’ preferences”, I maintain that it is worth examining the choices made in adaptation and the process involved since artistic content is not created within a cultural vacuum and is subject to various external stressors. For example, in the 1980s Henry Smith examined and collated several years’ worth of *Chūshingura* adaptations, but several adaptations and re-imaginings have occurred since this publication and his collection did not include numerous works produced in Japanese or through other formats (such as television). To remain within the scope of this project, I have restricted my exploration of shifts in honor debates to specific female and male protagonists, and specific conflicts around honor as a gendered experience during several crucial decades of cultural strife and political uncertainty. It is my hope to spark greater interest in the transformation of these specific cultural figures over time and to expand upon these categorization efforts, potentially electronically in the future.

(3) Finally, there is little to no discussion about the body of works through cross media-adaptations (i.e. games, other genres). While no one scholar can tackle this type of project in its entirety, it is worth considering the newer spaces that these works occupy and the manner in which their examination can hint at the ways in which the work’s historical canon is continuing.

The chapters of this dissertation have been organized by comparative themes, each centered on exploring the relationship between adaptation, honor and loyalty through the comparison of one Spanish and one Japanese play. Chapter one explores the nature of the adaptation and the repurposing of the space of the digital beach and explores the lengthy history

of intertextuality and adaptation. Chapter two discusses the concept of honor in adaptations of *Fuenteovejuna* (1619c) and *Kanadehon Chūshingura* (1748c) and presents honor as the primary focus for comparative investigation, shifting the paradigm from revenge to honor as the initiating concept of a process. This chapter also focuses on the differences in honor experienced by women as well as marginalized socio-economic groups, revealing a multi-layered honor system often left out of discussions of honor within both plays. Chapter three explores further links to honor and the “right” to take revenge in two popularly adapted plays, *El burlador de Sevilla o El convidado de piedra* (1630c) and *Yotsuya Kaidan* (1825). In this chapter, the links among hypocrisy, the supernatural, and gender blend to examine other popular messaging about the shifting role that honor plays, as a tool to elicit sympathy and ghostly retribution. In addition, the adaptations from these works demonstrate a shift in the notion of “immorality” and the need for social critique of shifting social strata during a period of social disillusionment. Finally, chapter four explores the rise of the digital age and its influence in the production and adaptation of these plays on a global scale, specifically into film or other dramatic adaptations. In this chapter, I examine a selection of pivotal adaptations of the four plays and further analyze the shifts in point of view, and aesthetics shared among the film and game adaptations. I also argue that adaptations into media such as games and graphic novels, but especially those in film, add to the universality of various icons from these plays and the references which have been exported to other nations as representations of the other.<sup>4</sup> Honor’s definition remains difficult to articulate

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<sup>4</sup> Cultural appropriation has made another appearance as a “hot-button” issue in various social forums, but I side with Sanders et al.’s views on this topic—it is important to make a distinction, but in this sense, appropriation is what I would liken to a willful “sanitation” and the intentional removal of the media from its socio-cultural context. This type of media is willfully ripped out of its context and removed from its origins, and unlike adaptation, the original work is intentionally viewed as inferior to the secondary culture, due to its association with the originating culture.

easily, yet the consequences of its loss, are understood and reflected in these plays (for their audiences). Ultimately, these bodies of work are not static. Their audiences are keeping the works alive and shifting/redeveloping them by reading them, and by making the decision to continue to explore the products of their themes and iconography. This is material culture that audiences are actively deciding to participate in, and profit from at times.

While I cannot explore or address each element of the performance of honor in these plays, or every adaptation of each of these canonical works, my dissertation aids in the creation of a more inclusive, comparative paradigm for analyzing the theme of honor and its connection to fidelity. This paradigm is centered on the modernization of similar dramatic techniques across cultures, but also on how from adaptation to adaptation, these national theaters repurposed the original social paradigm of honor in their dramatic works in order to continue to capture the imaginations of later domestic, and eventually, international audiences. By focusing my analysis on specific, well-known dramas in the Spanish and Japanese canon of honor plays, I hope to revitalize discussion about how these popular art forms become vehicles for social examination and catalysts for change. I am breaking new ground in comparing Spanish and Japanese honor plays, and hope my study will provide a model for other comparative studies of Spanish and Japanese theater and culture. At the same time, I am engaging with a variety of topics pertaining to adaptations of these works and the honor theme, across differences in time, media, language, and culture. My study will raise many issues regarding the criteria by which later generations adapt these works for a more international audience. And then there is a big question--why do

particular works endure, despite these changes? Is there a universal sense to ideas such as honor, and is it honor which also changes along with the culture it comes from?

## CHAPTER I: APPROACHING THE DIGITAL SHORE

Mary Louise Pratt's allegory of the beach as a point of contact, in which the creation of various zones between cultures produces not only physical but also imaginative spaces riddled with strife, has inspired and influenced my theoretical approach in this dissertation, as have recent conversations about globalization, connectivity, and popular culture. In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), Pratt presents a history of popular literary genres fueled by militaristic colonial encounters and subaltern resistances. Pratt reminds the reader that as a point of contact between cultures, the beach represents a popularized space for the modern imperial imagination, of empires exploring and conquering the "new world". The allegory gives way to other examples of works produced by indigenous authors often quite literally under siege. She designates these confrontational spaces the contact zone, which she refers to as "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (Pratt 6). In the context of this dissertation, however, I will expand the use of this term in a way that problematizes the issue of coercion in modern manifestations of such zones. I argue that these points of contact between countries have shifted not only from the beaches to economic markets and other areas, but also to the "digital beaches" provided by access to the internet, and the popular-culture consumption of Cyberculture that it facilitates.<sup>5</sup> The contemporary spaces are rarely physically combative, but

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<sup>5</sup> David Silver has worked extensively to document various trends in Cyberculture studies as an emerging discipline—the Resource Center for Cyberculture Studies and other organizations of rhetorical, historical, philosophical and literary scholars have supported the work of many researchers in this field and support the efforts to question the relationship between literacy and

do retain many of the hegemonic messaging and institutional prowess that the previous, colonial encounters established. In this sense, these contact zones (and more often media) are sustained by the cultural imagination of nations. The motifs and conventions are then replicated and sustained not only through cinema, but also through films, games and similar, creative technological industries. My new interpretation of contact zone—the world marked by internet-driven cultural exchange, has in some ways expanded the audience for these contact zones of previous generations as well as the wealth of its participants. The images and points of contact shared are advantageous, but are also susceptible to valid criticism—mirroring the difficulty of the technological tools and formats which enable their messages to be shared with international audiences.<sup>6</sup> Despite the understanding that the majority of popular media within this era is heavily marketed and consumed due to the pervasive accessibility to media driven by the internet and other forms of technological access, it is only recently that the effects of the Internet and the consumption it fosters have been discussed in the context of adaptation. In this sense, I have begun to work backwards, in part excited by the ability to contextualize this moment in the theater as more than a “coincidence”. The reassessment and expansion of the concept of adaptation also drives my desire to examine the readability of polemical archetypes and conventions that such adaptations of works by other nations can bring—these are the potential

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the digital era. I recommend his brief article “Looking Backwards, Looking Forward: Cyberculture Studies 1990-2000” as a useful survey of this field, though given the nature of its subject matter, more extensive work has emerged from other sub-fields including cyber-feminists and others.

<sup>6</sup> A reminder, similar to the warning issued by technology historian Melvin Kranzberg—that like the technology which enables this cultural exchange, these stories are “not good, nor bad; but they [certainly] are not neutral” as he states in his critical text *Technology and Culture* (1986) (Kranzberg).

dangers and creative possibilities of production while in “the zone” and realizing that one’s works will eventually “drift” to another shore, which may not always be the one intended. My exploration of these effects in my dissertation can also add to ongoing conversations about popular culture as an institution and the effects of globalization on the industries involved.

In her reading of moments of exchange, Pratt encourages us to focus on the literal and figurative need to acknowledge the vital role that the “readability” of a cultural product plays within this context, noting:

The readability of [indigenous author Guaman Poma’s] letter today is another sign of the changing intellectual dynamics through which colonial meaning-making has become a subject of critical investigation. His elaborate inter-cultural text and its tragic history exemplify the possibilities and perils of writing in what I like to call “contact zones,” social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination—like colonials, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today. (Pratt 4)

Instead of focusing on just the dualism of the colonial/non-colonial encounter, however, the reader must also examine the manner in which these points of contention were also a method of conscious national rebranding—in this context, a manner of distinguishing oneself (and by proxy one’s national culture) from those who were deemed “other”. Pratt asks, “how has travel and exploration writing *produced* ‘the rest of the world’ for European readerships at particular points in Europe’s expansionist trajectory?” (Pratt 5). This dissertation does in fact address the larger discussion of these effects on readership when we move beyond travel writing to other literary forms and media, and how they are adapted in forms of popular, imagined space.

During the evening I spent in the theater with friends, I realized that the production and distribution of the adaptations, *47 Ronin* and *Don Jon*, was not serendipitous. Rather, they represent the product of an extensive history of exchange, adaptation and reproduction shared among three nations—Spain, Japan and the United States—as a part of the production of soft-



power national branding in the modern era.<sup>7</sup> These American movies are each based on plays by well-known playwrights of the seventeenth century identified with the nations of Japan and Spain. The original works on which they are based sparked myriad discussions about the nature of honor and revenge, for an audience of Japanese and Spanish citizens respectively, in a world of rapidly growing imperialization.

### **A Brief Excursus on Adaptation**

In short, what can one make of this viewing of two films, produced by American production companies, with shared themes on honor and dignity, and produced in the same year and time? While it is tempting to classify this experience as mere coincidence, I instead regard this event as an encounter arising from centuries of cross-cultural exchange of popular media and material culture. This potential moment in time is one of many, pushed forward as well by the changing tides of digital seas, primed for consumption by not just an American audience, but also a global one which will then contribute to the proliferation and endurance of the archetypes. In this dissertation, I examine how the rise of adaptation and adaptive culture in the digital age may lead to more instances of global “material culture” serving as a type of new frontier or

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<sup>7</sup> Soft power, in this context, builds upon the term coined by Joseph Nye in the early 2000s to describe the political and cultural influences a nation has on a global scale. This is in direct opposition to the concept of hard power, which has been used to describe the military influence (through colonialism, imperialism and more) that nations have used to dominate others. In recent years, the concept has been closely linked to orientalism and occidentalism, as a way of exploring alternative modes of gaining both political and financial influences. More recent studies are interested in exploring the economic benefits of soft power maintenance. See Watanabe, McDowell, and Nye (2008) for an excellent analysis of the “Comic Book Diplomacy” speech now made famous by Japanese Foreign Minister Aso Taro in 2006. See Tsutomu Sugiura in the same collection discussing the industry that Japan developed to enhance the marketability of Japanese popular culture in foreign markets. We must keep in mind the fact that the contact genres and zone (videogames, television, film etc.) are also driven by a culture of profitability.

contact zone for national plays, once restricted to the theatrical spaces they inhabited.<sup>8</sup> No longer bound solely by linguistic or cultural barriers, the exchange of popular culture involving the US, Spain and Japan analyzed here, especially regarding the theme of honor, is part of the “culture” that is being consumed. Whether the images are of beloved *caballeros* such as Don Quijote, or images of *ronin* or Edo-period *samurai*, it is clear that the images consumed by America about honor in popular culture, draw from the images derived from these works as a way of exploring and evaluating the role honor plays in the collective imaginary of American audiences. These figures capture *morals and mayhem*, and are vehicles for transmitting and contextualizing a collective psyche. Linda Hutcheon describes this complicated relationship between the adaptation and its originating text as one which has yet to be satisfactorily delineated.<sup>9</sup> In addition, of particular interest to this project is the way in which the trans-media

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<sup>8</sup> This concept seems to be backed by soft-power researchers and translation studies scholars—Cathy Sell’s work on translation and intercultural exchange offers a potential system through which to understand conflicts between the original culture’s popular media and potential “imitations” or “pseudo-media” from intercultural exchanges in an industrial context (2011).

<sup>9</sup>In this context, Hutcheon lists many of the pejoratives lobbed at adaptations, usually film versions of texts which highlight the linear relationship between the original source material (usually the text) and the secondary, “inferior” medium of film. For example, she cites Virginia Woolf’s claims that cinema was a “parasite and literature its ‘prey’ and ‘victim’” among many similar comments by other scholars and popular writers (Hutcheon 3). However, Hutcheon is one of several people who argue that while we have culturally assumed the linear nature of the adaptation, as seen in the popular Aristotelian discussions of *imitatio* and *mimesis*, this assumption should not go unexamined. Interestingly, adaptation scholar Julie Sanders has described the hesitation to reexamine this relationship (on the part of post-modernists) as a sense that they [post-modernists] feel “as though they have arrived late to the party”, or when unpacked, that there is little to say which is unique on the topic of adaptation (Sanders 157). However, despite the underlying pessimism in this quote, this dissertation instead focuses on a different phrase as a driving-factor in its creation, that “the art of adaptation and appropriation has a potent influence and shaping effect in its own right” and that with new potential forms of intertextuality, there will be many avenues for future examination (Sanders 158).

approach has been given newly creative formulation with the rise of new digital media/narrative styles which can bring yet another “fusion” to this sense of the plays and characters.

Julie Sanders has referred to adaptation as “an exploration of intertextuality”, albeit with concerns about the manner in which “art creates art, or how literature is made by literature” (Sanders 1). However, this concern and framing of adaptation within a context that is centered on discussions of mimesis and inter-generic appropriation is part of a long tradition of scholarship in which originality and authenticity have been the major focus of the field. Scholars and theorists such as Jacques Derrida (1985), Edward Said (1983), Roland Barthes (1981) and Claude Lévi-Strauss (2001 and 1978) have investigated various aspects of this debate and traced the linear relationship and battle for “authenticity” that has traditionally been considered the backbone of the adaptive relationship between media (and at times intra-media).<sup>10</sup> However, of particular interest to this dissertation is the interpretation of the term intertextuality and the link drawn to adaptation proposed by Julia Kristeva. From this view of adaptation as “a permutation of texts” I join a critical tradition which seeks to contextualize the process behind the adaptation of a work from one format to another by expanding upon Kristeva’s view of the adaptation. In this sense, her framework was one that first broke with the aforementioned ancestral ideal. Moving from

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<sup>10</sup> See works by Jacques Derrida (1985), Edward Said (1983), Roland Barthes (1981) and Claude Lévi-Strauss (2001 and 1978) for classic discussions on the dialogic nature of intertextuality, translation, and its effects on the prestige of various media, our philosophical understanding of media literacy and the “other”. However, Simone Murray’s text on the “Adaptation Industry” (2012) is extremely useful when examining the nature of the modern adaptation in a manner which encapsulates both the dialogic nature of the adaptation, its roots in intertextuality and literary analysis, but also what she has identified as six different institutions which have a financial stake in the creation of an adaptation (for example, authors, publishers, producers and distributors among others). This financial foundation, which supports the creation of many adaptations, still remains to be as heavily investigated, though recent articles have been developed by Glenn Jellenik (2016) and others.

the long-accepted, linear framework, that adaptations share a direct and explicit link to their source material, I believe this pattern is better represented by the notion of each adaptation as a separate “node” within the literary “network” of the work. In this sense, the term localization may better illuminate this relationship. Following this relational framework model of adaptation is a need to “delineate” the beginning and end of the localization process.

Localization in this context is a term borrowed from the videogame industry and ludology specialists’ process of taking a work and “culturally” translating it to another locality. In this case, that would be a secondary culture group, region or language space demographics.<sup>11</sup> I use the term localization in part to emphasize the personal connections required of this shift in format and authorship. In addition, the term allows for exploration of a space in which cultures connect through the internet and potentially change our sense of popular culture, especially in terms of authorship and ownership of the work presented. This shift in terminology also serves as a distancing technique, to give voice to moments in which the initial content creators want to deviate from the “ancestral” relationship with the original text. In this context, these creators assert that the adaptation is desirable within itself, and that it can transcend the “inferior” relationship between the adaptation and its origin. With the rise of interest in reconsidering the ways in which humanities scholars categorize and rework previous paradigms, I argue that there is a space for the adaptation to stand on its own and be reevaluated as a space of access and imaginative work. In viewing adaptations which offer another stage for “intertextuality”, the

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<sup>11</sup> See Heather Chandler’s *The Game Localization Handbook* (2004) and Stephan Mandiberg’s recently published dissertation “Responsible Localization: Game Translation Between Japan and the United States” (2015) for both an industry perspective as well as a scholarly perspective on this process. The text *Game Localization: Translating for the Global Digital Entertainment Industry* (2013) by Carmen Mangiron and Minako O’Hagan is also an extremely useful resource that combines the concerns of both industry developers and translation studies scholars.

chapters of this dissertation examine how each culture modifies the network of works and challenges the relationship among adaptation. These conflicts are often centered on the idea of honor and reflect the socio-cultural preoccupations of the time. However, despite my interest in exploring these factors that preserve and redefine the maintenance of honor via popular culture in an era of battles for social change and exposure within the modern nation-state, it is not possible to address each and every factor. Nevertheless, my dissertation is informed by the need to initiate conversations about the process of adaptation and localization and to bring back together the concept of adaptation in a cross-cultural context.

In exploring my personal interpretation of a theory behind adaptation, I have chosen to explore and examine several elements more closely. First, I emphasize the difference between adaptation and translation as crucial to this dissertation. Translation, in the narrow sense of the technical act of exchanging the language of one work from the original into another is one aspect of adaptation, but, the relationship between localization and adaptation is stronger. The ideal adaptation may exhibit a need to cross cultural, chronological, and sociological barriers, but paradoxically still remain faithful to its original. But who dictates what a successful adaptation may represent in this context? There is already scholarship which suggests that the adaptation benefits from the explicit tie to the original material, but this dissertation complicates this relationship further by asking if the adaptation (in this model) is only successful if the tie is strong enough to be recognized, but *just* familiar enough perhaps to be unsettling for some of the audiences?

Localization in adaptation requires a strong level of cultural capital, or familiarity with other contextually relevant factors, and there are many types of audiences targeted by an adaptation. The first is an audience who is intimately familiar with the work in its original

format and context, and the second is a newer, localized audience which may be exposed to the work only via adaptation. Previous scholarship has focused intently on the issues around the ownership of intellectual property and authenticity which arises with the creations of translations of media, and the acknowledgement of the ancestral relationship formulaic media share. Yet despite this relaxed approach to questions of authenticity, the modern era's preoccupation with establishing and enforcing intellectual property rights and the rights to folk history has provided numerous court cases and industry-led responses to the battle for public and private ownership of media considered to be owned by the originating culture.<sup>12</sup> In light of this democratic interpretation of adaptation, there is evidence to support the appearance of historical periods that give rise to the production, acceptance, or even censorship of these adaptations.

Second, there could be various modes of pleasure that an adaptation can support which often hinge on the complex relationship an adaptation has to its ancestral text. Why mention pleasure in this context? As with the acknowledgement that the production of these works is in part to cultivate profit, there is a need to expose one of the foundational reasons for why authors seek these texts out, and disseminate these media. Ultimately, these works and the cumulative messaging that they contain both entertain and educate us. Such entertainment recognizes

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<sup>12</sup> For legal battles see the “Tetris” adaptation of the Russian folk song “Korobeiniki” in their game of the same name; current court case which may affect the ability of cosplay (“costume play”) fans of various franchises to engage in what has been considered Fair Use of copywritten materials (*Varsity Brands INC v Star Athletica*) <http://www.ca6.uscourts.gov/opinions.pdf/15a0194p-06.pdf> Fashion is particularly fraught with cases of major design companies **appropriating** (not adapting) the designs of indigenous cultures by removing them from their original cultural context without acknowledgement. Hence the “sanitation” of the original context from these works, to the point of disrespectful application. See clothing retailer Urban Outfitters’ use of Navajo designs as an underwear pattern or French designer Isabel Marant’s attempt to receive a patent for designs commonly found among the Oaxaca community in Mexico and others as examples of the types of legal struggles over an adaptive, folk intellectual property highlighted by Simone Murray (2012).

culturally acceptable conventions despite any "twist", and offers spaces for the artist to explore larger themes or to tie/ground the universe of the original work back to the adaptation.

Additionally, the role of recognition and relatability in the interaction between adaptation and original must be considered when determining what the audience seeks from the adaptation. Adaptations are not restricted to just one format, and remain popular among various genres. They may also cross levels of social prestige and accessibility during this movement. Comic writer Matt Fraction and artist Christian Ward's work "ODY-C" represents a popular manifestation of this recent adaptation from one "high" literary genre, the epic [Homer's] *Odyssey*, to a recent, "low" form (the comic). In this case the psychedelic, gender-bending adaptation retains the original text as dialogue and narrative, linking that which is familiar to the comic reader-audience (visuals and the type of reflective-egoism that comic-scholar Scott McCloud has highlighted in his research), with the latent conventions of the earlier epic. In considering "ODY-C", within this well-acknowledged link to the original to something that may not be as accessible lies a validation that current media, crises and more have a still visible root in the works and social questions of the past. By not reading these media as solely individual texts, but instead analyzing them as part of a larger group of adapted works, I argue that we can examine more closely the adaptive process, answering such questions about the benefits the adaptation and original text receive by mutual association. By centering this dissertation on aspects of honor as a test element for this paradigm shift, I revisit several key principles to adaptation as discussed by Deborah Cartmell (Sanders 20). This brief excursus on adaptation theory sets the stage for the main focus of my dissertation and how this code and these plays live on in popular culture in a variety of media.

## **Honor: From Theatrical Space to Cyberspace**

Honor is a much debated phenomenon with various manifestations. As the focus of this dissertation illustrates, honor was historically used as a tool to codify pro-social behavior and as a self-regulatory force. Honor is challenged in popular spaces, refined through legal and social systems and institutions, with a variety of repercussions, and is critiqued by those who share and disavow its open performance in society.<sup>13</sup> Honor contributes to the maintenance of the national image, and has tangible usefulness as a social, motivational tool. If those who will be colonized or subjugated supposedly have no honor, by extension, there is little they can do to maintain their humanity within that system. Honor can be used to motivate the populace for jingoistic purposes, or to drive consumer interests. Of particular interest to this project is the intriguing way these constructs change as they reach not just the intended audience, but become absorbed, or how they “first touch shore” on the beaches of another nation. The adaptation of works, not just by local professionals, but also by those who work in an international market, further complicates this sense of “self” and the reification of honor, providing shifts and paradigms which, at times, provide uncanny foils to their “original” works.

In 2010, philosophy scholar Whitley Kaufman expressed his frustration with what he called a “widespread” and “persistent” fallacy regarding common analytical methods applied to researching the phenomenon of honor. He states that at its core, much previous research on

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<sup>13</sup> Genre theorist Art Silverblatt’s definition of social institution is useful here, in that he and other scholars such as Amy Devitt, Anis Bawarshi, Mary Reiff and others highlight the importance of recognizing mass media, or pop culture, as a social institution, or as an organization with the purpose to socialize the public, as a key tool for social control in modern nations. In this sense, I use the term in order to emphasize the “function” of popular culture as a prominent “institution” with the purpose of both education and information.



honor manifests the “desire to demonstrate the superiority of modern values over former ones...[which consequently] has turned the honor ideal into the alien Other, on which is projected all of the vices that we would like to believe our own society has risen above” (Kaufman 557). He further asserts that “the ‘Honor as External’ thesis is an implicitly pejorative normative claim [sic] masquerading as a neutral descriptive claim. Until we move beyond it, we cannot undertake a more objective and fair assessment of the nature of the honor ideal” (Kaufman 557). José Carlos del Alma also writes of the close ties between honor and performance of public opinion, similarly exploring the division between external and internal honor, noting “[that] honor shall be regarded...as the moral and public value of an individual in any particular society. This value, although determined by the judgments of public opinion, is perceived and felt by the individual as an existential value, which is the reason why in many different times and cultures honor has been valued even over life itself” (del Alma 445).

These comments reframe the role of honor as a social phenomenon, and were made by a scholar of philosophy and communications respectively, but rejection of the “honor as external” approach for one that values cultural and temporal specificity is being embraced by scholars of a variety of disciplines, such as literature, history and social psychology. To my view, the latter approach to honor, unfolding across disciplinary boundaries, creates the perfect critical context in which to examine the modern adaptation and re-purposing of the hierarchical systems of honor which originated in Imperial Japan and Spain, and the manner in which they emerged in their respective literary traditions of national theater. Woven through many of the modern media we enjoy today are echoes and references to older performances of the conflict between our public performance of honor, and our interior battle for what may now be considered self-worth or self-esteem. As for our predecessors, the dramatized conflict arises not just between our individual,

interior goals and desires, but also from their expression when they conflict with our performance of “duty” toward our fellow citizens, our nation or other social groups. These honor systems, which were products of changing political and historical tides, also reflected a dramatization of the initial critique and cultivation of the respective citizens’ relationships with each other, their state and culture. Despite the shifts in social, temporal and cultural context, many of the performative elements of these debates on honor are familiar to contemporary audiences, despite the fact that some are divorced from their initial theatrical context.

This dissertation provides a comparative analysis of the performance of honor in the following plays: Lope de Vega’s *Fuenteovejuna* (1612-1614), Tirso de Molina’s *El burlador de Sevilla* (1630), Chikamatsu Monzaemon’s *The Treasury of Loyal Retainers* (仮名手本忠臣蔵), and Nanboku Tsuruya IV’s “Yotsuya Ghost Stories” (東海道四谷怪談 1825).<sup>14</sup> Although each play represents a slice of life from a different time period, what together they lack in chronological proximity, they exceed in providing a lasting artistic influence within their respective cultures (and in an increasingly digitalized world, well-beyond the borders of their culture). The didactic messages and dialogues they initiate about honor--how honor can be maintained, regained or lost--are all represented not just in the initial play, but in the adaptations which follow over time. This dialogue transcends the boundaries of both time and location, which reflects unease with the socio-political status quo and the general need of an empire to reaffirm its idealized social values in a changing space. Not only is each work well-studied

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<sup>14</sup> It may be of interest to the reader to describe what has historically been known (and marketed) as the “women’s version” by Yo Yodai “Mirror Mountain (*kagamiyama*)” (1783) and later versions by playwrights Takeda Izumo II, Miyoshi Shōraku, and Namiki Senryū I (1784) into this conversation. The role of women in these works has also been active within this honor paradigm, though their roles were held in different esteem from that of their male counterparts.

within the scholarship produced within the past few decades and also across various fields (and at times compared to other contemporary plays), but these plays have also been some of the most frequently adapted into other media—media I argue are currently accessible to an international audience via film, television, novels, other plays, and games. Also of interest to critics and audiences are the ways in which each play reflects the gendered differences in the maintenance of the honor codes, and the ways in which men and women were expected to work within these systems. The conversations on class, power and morality in a growing empire have persisted well past the years in which each drama was originally produced. And perhaps, in this century, also defined by new social challenges and exploration, these plays retain a special place in the social repertoire because they still speak to the distress many audience members feel as the comfort of old social systems are giving way to new conversations and conflicts about equality, loyalty and modernity.<sup>15</sup> Julie Sanders has referred to a similar idea of “stretching history”, but in the context of this dissertation, it is less historical fiction, and more so *idealized fiction* that audiences find appealing. It is honor within the boundaries of a sequence of events as the audience “wishes” they could be, and they are less concerned (or even forbidden) from representing the historical accuracy of events--this does not however, preclude the author from maintaining historical verisimilitude (Sanders 140).

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<sup>15</sup> This shift in paradigm, in examining the works in terms of their imperial context as well as in comparison to their revision from adaptation to adaptation, also challenges some of the later repurposing (romanticizing) of the honor system in contemporary periods of expansion. Although each adaptation may retain a combination of these elements from its original source [play], in comparison, the social reception of a work and its adaptations can reveal information about its social utility. It is possible and necessary to investigate the core socio-literary tropes, didactic messages and iconography of a play, which can often be exchanged from adaptation to adaptation across media.

The promotion and maintenance of a complex system of “honor” in both Japan and Spain is a major point of contention through the plot and exposition of these dramatic works. This dissertation argues that the ideology and imagery from these opposing views on honor, are often the points most readily carried over from the original work to its subsequent adaptations in the form of highlighting these issues from the perspective of certain characters or the inclusion of certain cultural “snapshots”. Not only does the direct debate of honor and critique introduced on stage tell us about the moral dilemmas facing these nations, but also for a foreign audience, this exchange contributes to a nation’s soft power as elements of mass culture are transmitted from one nation to another during times of imperial expansion. My dissertation uses this multi-faceted comparative approach to honor within these canonical works in order to highlight the similarities in how Spain and Japan modeled their respective literary and cultural histories as nations within a shifting “New World” marked by internal and external conflict. By utilizing a methodology reliant on much of the foundational structures espoused by cultural studies scholars, this dissertation should offer a helpful model for filling in this gap in comparative studies of Spanish and Japanese national theater, and in the shift in recent discussions of East and West into a different paradigm. My dissertation’s focus on honor as a crucial binding concept between these two empires and their national theaters, on their emergence and performance of self-onstage, and the modern moral dilemmas over “honor” which remain popular within our own contemporary context, also builds upon the discussion of honor and honor codes not just as external systems imposed on a populace, but also as systems maintained internally by the populace and in their own images. In this way, my study will attempt to avoid the reductive labeling of these dramas as propaganda produced by an elite class that merely reinforces dominant social orders and

ideologies.<sup>16</sup> While I recognize that the concept of the self or self-awareness (on the part of the actors, audience, and the nation) is at times fluid, I maintain that in the origins of national theater, during eras of empire-building, one can find the foundations for the conflicts and conversations which perpetuate an idealized national self and a “new honor code” that persist to this day for citizens of both nations.

Scholars from many disciplinary fields have explored the theme of honor, most recently in regard to the field of kabuki studies. As my predecessors have maintained, I believe that in a variety of ways, historically and figuratively, the theater is a particularly sacred space for the arts. Kawatake Toshio notes that the theater represents a “baroque fusion of the arts” that makes best use of its appeal as an imaginary space, by drawing from elements of visual, aural and oral techniques to represent the reality established by the artistic format. The fusion that occurs in this demarcated realm breathes life into its creations, and forms a type of interactive story-telling that encourages the viewer-participant to be drawn into the universe of the play. This fusion is analogous to today’s digital zones of contact, heterotopias, and more generally, to cyberspace, in that both function as spaces for the convergence of a collective imagination, and provide space for other media, such as animation, film, and the internet, to bring various manifestations of the theatrical works into a type of literary and artistic conversation with early adaptations. This is

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<sup>16</sup> William Blue documents the popularity of this perspective, noting that José A. Maravall often argued that “the plays, whether they are about a rustic’s dignity, a noble’s honor, or love, overtly or covertly attempt to incorporate the lower classes’ desires, especially those of the laborer/merchant class, into the *existing system of aristocratic values* [emphasis mine]” (Blue 13).

certainly true for the theatrical traditions of both Spain and Japan and a modern consequence of the Digital Age.<sup>17</sup>

With the emergence of videogames and other, potential media, which allow for the replication and adaptation of popular media into cyberspace, and the potential to increase interactivity, I question if can we renegotiate the relationship that Linda Hutcheon describes between an adaptation and its original, or, if there another potential relationship that has yet to be revealed?<sup>18</sup> And with the expansion of the audience for these works, which in some ways have been divorced from their original context (as noted by Blue and others), how often are we “reading and watching from a distance”, as Frank Episale has noted in his review? Perhaps it is here that the relatability of the adaptation becomes a way to bridge this difference between audience and media, and answer the call to celebrate the arrival of new eras and points of future digital contact.

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<sup>17</sup> See Duncan Wheeler’s archival research on the film industry in Spain and its resulting theatrical and television adaptations as another excellent archival resource. His book released in 2012 meticulously documents, but also contextualizes the popularity and production of national plays by Lope de Vega, Pedro Calderón de la Barca and other national playwrights. While he does not examine the complexities behind adaptation as a transcultural process, his book has revived a crucial understanding of the modern support these works received in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and this documentation adds crucial insight into the role the popularity of these plays and their themes played during the period of Spain’s Civil War (1936-1939) and the nationalist dictatorship of Francisco Franco (1939-1975).

<sup>18</sup> Take note of Linda Hutcheon’s initial questioning of the relationship between the adaptation and the original; although not directly referenced, the rise of interest in Cyberculture studies and the ways in which the internet has facilitated the development of challenges to a more “linear” narrative experience, in my final chapter, this project would cover some new ground or potential intersections. Given the ways in which film and television have provided domestic and international audiences with innovative manners through which to engage with these works, how will new narrative techniques offered by gaming (through the use of increasingly more immersive technology such as Augmented Reality) shift our expectations and experiences with the next generation of textual and cinematic adaptations?

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## CHAPTER 2: FIGHTING FOR HONOR: GENDER AND LOYALTY IN *FUENTEOVEJUNA AND CHŪSHINGURA*

*La tradición de Chūshingura es el relato de los eventos históricos de los 47 Ronin. Fue nuestro objetivo mantener y respetar las emociones y los temas fundamentales de la verdadera historia, pero viéndola a través de la lente que la hizo pertinente para el público contemporáneo, comenta el realizador. El público mundial del cine actual habla en una lengua vernácula de fantasía, ciencia ficción y superhéroes. Para mí, la intención era tomar el Chūshingura japonés y darle un amplio alcance internacional presentándolo de manera tal que utiliza esta nueva paleta hollywoodense... Es una película a la antigua.*

--Carl Rinsch, director of *47 Ronin* (2013) in *El País* in 2013

The quotation above from the director of the American adaptation of *47 Ronin* appeared in the Uruguayan newspaper *El País* in 2013, as part of an interview event designed to promote the film. While at first the statement appears to prime the Uruguayan audience for the usual excitement and promotional “buzz” that movie studios generate for their projects, it also highlights the result of cumulative messaging about the role of *Chūshingura* not just in the Japanese theatrical canon, but also in a canon that is increasingly global. Rinsch links his creative direction to a codified language understood by a global public, a public that scholar David Damrosch and others have noted, is made of individual popular culture consumers. These consumers form the ideal target audience for these goods, because they view his adaptation of this (if not *the*) Japanese play *Chūshingura*, in a way that satisfies the “Hollywood” palate of a contemporary audience. The undertone of Rinsch’s response demonstrates awareness that he is marketing his adaptation of the play as a way of “maintaining and respecting the emotions and fundamental themes of this true historical event” based in part on the shared vernacular of the genre, in this case one of fantasy, science fiction, and superheroes. But what is this latent, common language that Rinsch, a director who was initially famous for his work in

commercials, expresses in a Spanish-language newspaper, about his film, which is an American adaptation of a Japanese play? How did this language come to be, and what are the underlying messages which make Rinsch's appeal to authenticity, a common trope with adaptations of national plays, seem commonplace? This chapter explores not just the links between the dramatic legacies of Spanish and Japanese works and their early cinematic history, but also the general move toward "cultural convergence", a term coined by scholar Henry Jenkins, which aids in understanding these points of contact between cultures. As discussed in the previous chapter, in order for these works to be "understood" and adapted, several factors must be satisfied. Breaking with previous conversations about simulacrum and adaptation, I instead argue for a networked approach when examining the creation of adaptations and the canons they reify or challenge about honor and justice.

The theme of honor encompasses a significant body of international scholarship which explores revenge motifs in the theater of the early modern period, including works such as Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *The Treasury of Loyal Retainers*.<sup>19</sup> Spain has a well-recognized and researched history of revenge dramas written by the playwrights of the classic national theater: Lope de Vega, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Tirso de Molina, and others.<sup>20</sup> Pronko acknowledges

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<sup>19</sup> I use the shortened form *Chūshingura* throughout this chapter (unless otherwise noted) to refer to the various versions of the play by both Chikamatsu Monzaemon (bunraku), as well as the popular kabuki version by Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shoraku and Namiki Senryu (1748); the authorship will still be noted to maintain clarity.

<sup>20</sup> As Leonard Pronko notes in one of the few articles in English-language scholarship to bring Spain into this conversation on revenge plays, both traditions offer striking similarities, the main ones: "the rigidity of social regulation; the importance of order and the evil of disorder; the dominance of society over the individuals; the importance of appearance; and finally the need to blot out dishonor in blood" (34). However, Pronko then argues that both nations deviate due to different interpretations for the importance of reality and appearance, stating that "what the Spanish description fails to express for the Japanese is the old Confucian idea that a man cannot

these plays as generic peers of Kabuki theater. Based in part on the comparative themes running throughout this scholarship, concurrent conversations about the social and communicative role of domestic adaptations of national plays arguably occur in Spain and throughout Latin America. These studies suggest several questions to be explored in this chapter: How do prime exemplars of “national plays”, specifically, *Chūshingura* and *Fuenteovejuna*, act as cultural nodes” to embody the zeitgeist of their respective citizens? What do the controversies and conversations reveal about the shared sense connections among patriotism, honor and revenge from these plays?

### **Honor in Spain and Japan: a Complex Hierarchy**

Since the early nineteenth century, Spain and Japan have invested in political and intellectual campaigns designed to “rediscover” and re-establish their vast theatrical traditions. From the latter half of the twentieth century onward, as part of similar nation-building periods, a renewed interest in repackaging these national plays for a new generation arose. This action has been repeated by a long-line of performers, scholars, and directors, and repackaging has allowed for personalizing or even completely amending the major themes of these plays—a process that effectively ensures that certain themes would endure as integral to “national” character. Previous critical conversations initiated by literary scholars often centered around debates on honor in these revenge plays. This chapter shows that although revenge is an important plot device of these works, there is a need to refocus analysis on *Chūshingura* and *Fuenteovejuna* as complex presentations of honor and justice in their respective nation-building time periods. Previous scholarship has rarely examined the Golden Age Spanish *comedias* or the Kabuki *jidaimono*

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live under the same heaven as his father’s enemies...lead[ing] to a proliferation of revenge plays in Japan in which the hero sacrifices himself for his father or his lord” (33).

without concentrating on the theme of revenge, and perhaps to a lesser extent, honor. To date, however, there is little literary scholarship analyzing the similarities between these two particular works, despite the lengthy documentation on the historical legacy that both nations share with each other. This chapter should begin to fill that gap, while acknowledging the abundant scholarship on honor in these plays as separate works. The difference between positioning these two plays as honor plays instead of as traditional “revenge” plays in a comparative study is an important one. While revenge has become the focus of performances and dramatic criticism of both *Fuenteovejuna* and *Chūshingura*, I believe that what both dramatic works share is less the glorification of revenge, than a common interest in the preservation of honor and justice. Here, the action of justice occurs when the balance has been restored by correcting the loss of honor. Violence may be justified in this context, but ultimately, it is the moral battle between conflicting manifestations of honor and revenge, and the resulting balance called “justice” that is the focus of these plays. The recent categorization of these plays as “revenge” dramas privileges the gory spectacle of violence, and buries the complex questions of loyalty, honor, and obligation that have always been woven into the cultural fabric of both works. Although they were composed at different times, these dramas are united in their conversations on the merits of honor during important periods of national and social reform. The place of esteem that they hold not just for domestic, but now also for international audiences, as cultural exemplars, further reifies the public importance of both dramas.

To analyze the way both texts have interwoven themes of loyalty, inter-class conflict, and national identity in their respective artistic visions, I examine several pivotal scenes and iconic characters which capture a universal debate on the role of honor and its maintenance of justice and social harmony. These scenes and figures are important not just for their relevance to the

plot, but also as elements whose inclusion, or exclusion, formed well-defined political positions for their productions in later adaptations. For example, in *Fuenteovejuna*, the first polemical scene is centered on Laurencia's admonishment of the village men of Fuenteovejuna, and the second, the final pardoning of the villagers by the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand and Isabelle. In *Chūshingura*, these iconic scenes are centered on the classic revelation of head retainer Yuranosuke's motive for vengeance against the tyrannical Lord Moronao, as well as the depiction of the "Event at Akō Castle" scenes, in which the violence sparking the initial consequences for the vendetta is revealed to the audience. While in *Chūshingura*, the final suicide scene of the loyal retainers turned *ronin* has overshadowed these earlier scenes for many Western audiences, these moments also trigger the initial questions of loyalty and honor in the face of cruelty and tyranny which set up the justification for later violence against the superiors of the protagonists. Honor in these spaces is influenced by class and gender, and generates the most continuous conflict about obligation and justice in these two nations.

It is important to understand the historical context in which such discussions on honor and its maintenance are replicated, challenged, and reified. Like Tokugawa Period Japan (1603-1868) throughout much of *The Golden Age* (1492-1681), Spain maintained a socially stratified society. Recent scholarship from Scott Taylor (2013) on the intersectional nature of honor, along with crime and punishment, recounts much of the sociological and anthropological research that has attempted to explain the unique prevalence of honor rhetoric identified with Golden Age Spanish society. While Taylor utilizes a socio-historical perspective, his methods include archival research of various accounts of crimes committed and the resulting punishments issued by the monarchy and religiously influenced courts, while providing a background for the cultural context of honor in Golden Age Spain, outside of its popular depiction on stage. According to

Taylor and others, such as Donald Larson and Arnold G. Reichenberger, there are several major defining characteristics of honor rhetoric in Spain, especially in *comedias*:

the first was an undeveloped political economy, and the second was an emphasis on a family-centered morality that tore apart any larger sense of community. The [social] honor code undergirded this moral system, and it placed highly different demands on the behavior of men and women, with a special emphasis on female sexual purity, family loyalty, and the physical segregation of men and women. (Taylor 4)

When layered on top of centuries of political, religious, and national concerns from the completion of *La Reconquista* (711-1492) to various colonial projects throughout the Americas, Taylor and others attribute concerns about honor as synonymous with concerns about the *limpieza de sangre* (the purity of blood, in this sense, from Islamic or Judaic influences). Note the overt hostility of the peasants of *Fuenteovejuna* as they express anxiety about the *converso* (convert—particularly of Jewish people to Catholicism) history of the Comendador Fernán Gómez de Guzmán, although this was a common literary and dramatic trope throughout Golden Age literature.<sup>21</sup> This social and political anxiety to prove that one's family came from "old Christian" blood remains palpable throughout *Fuenteovejuna* and other works by Lope de Vega and other *comedia* playwrights. Interestingly, Taylor is one of the few to explore the legal codification of honor. He makes an intriguing observation on the role of the courts at this time, explaining that:

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<sup>21</sup> For more information on the body of research on *converso* culture and the dichotomy of "New" and "Old" Christians in Golden Age Spain see further works by Leslie Levin (*Metaphors of Conversion in Seventeenth-Century Spanish drama* 1998), Kevin Ingram (editor of the anthology *The Conversos and Moriscos in Late Medieval Spain and Beyond* 2009), and Amy I. Aronson-Friedman and Gregory B. Kaplan (editors of the anthology *Marginal Voices: Studies in Converso Literature of Medieval and Golden Age Spain* 2012). In this case, even though the Commander claims noble blood, his behavior toward the men and women of *Fuenteovejuna* causes them to question the purity of his blood (and the purity of his intentions as a leader).

when legal authorities stepped into a confrontation over honor, it meant not the end of interpersonal confrontation but instead a new stage for the conflict, one with a referee and more formal rules of engagement [the duel]. Despite their remarks on how the law obtained satisfaction for affront, contemporary commentators tended to agree that law and honor were two separate systems. (Taylor 69)

Here, one can infer that conversations around justice, or the satisfaction of balance (justice), were conflictive or in flux with the concerns of honor, or reputation, legally addressed in Spanish courts.<sup>22</sup> The law is not necessarily equal to honor, not can justice itself can be considered honor. Despite the desire of the Comendador to challenge peasants to duels, dueling fell out of favor, but the concept that the shedding of blood could be used to clean this dishonor endured as a cultural myth to be debated and socially scrutinized. Indeed, “judging from the honor play, in Golden Age Castile the sexual purity of women was the only important component of male honor, and the only way to avenge dishonor related to this purity was with violence” (Taylor 102). Yet this aspect of Spanish (masculine) honor was not the only case in which justice would be sought. As lengthy dueling logs note, men invoked the rhetoric of honor, and ultimately the duel, for “the protection of one’s family in general..., the maintenance of one’s credit and property, the defense of one’s office and status, and the competitive nature of early modern male sociability” (Taylor 104). While the predominant conversation is rooted in the initial debates of honor between women and men, the concern of respect and *oficio* (office) will also play a crucial role as a second topic of interest in honor plays.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Justice in the sense of ensuring that the social obligations tying together the various pillars of the Spanish community, peasant, nobles, the Monarchy and the Church, required continued conversations about the nature of honor and control. Comendador revolts against the Catholic Monarchs to satisfy his bloodlust and behaves as tyrant to the people he is supposed to protect. Hence he becomes a traitor as well as a tyrant—a political criminal, moral criminal and social criminal whose degradation of his own honor, sullies the honor of all associated with him.

<sup>23</sup> It is important to consider that the presentation of honor within these plays is designed to generate conversation and debate over the conflicts among various types of honor and respect.

The modern discussion about honor, vengeance and the Golden Age *comedia* can be traced to several tendencies in literary criticism. First, the concept of honor, and its preservation, were topics of interest not just for contemporary scholars, but also for Golden Age scholars and government officials and sociopolitical critics at the time who were interested in preserving the social status quo. The texts produced during this era provide a wealth of discussion about the conflicts which occur when honor has been removed from individuals and families. Much of this concern over honor takes the form of discussions about nobility, chastity and xenophobia in the form of anti-Semitism or Islamophobia. However, in modern scholarship, one of the earliest trends to emerge can be encapsulated in previous scholarship conducted by figures such as Cyril (C.A.) Jones. In his often-cited articles produced in the late 1950-1960s, he responds to a previous literary “crisis,” arguing that researchers had ignored the larger debate about the historical reader’s response to these plays, in favor of preoccupations with the “historicity” of the play. Critics have subsequently raised questions about the psycho-social effects of honor plays, mainly by comparing the “authenticity” of Spanish social concerns of honor and the merits of these plays as popular entertainment. Others have focused on investigating the historical and legal context of the plays, citing the contrasts between the legal codifications of the conflicts on stage with their results in the courts of the time period. More recently, scholars ask their readers to consider the ethics and social power behind these plays, by linking these discussions to current rhetoric about personal agency, social obligations and political power. Hints of this “pushback” can be found not just in Jones, but also in works by William R. Blue, and Ignacio Arellano, as they address a growing frustration with the best methods for re-envisioning conversations about

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What is presented on stage, should not completely be taken as an authentic representation of Spanish life at this time, but instead, should be studied as a stylized interpretation of this life.



the honor code, ones which step away from the pathologizing or moralizing conversations of previous decades, and consider the literary nature of these works, not just their cultural messaging. While these trends are not necessarily restricted to specific time periods, the importance of the methods through which they ask us to consider honor, as a social, literary or psychological force remain important to our understanding of what the honor code is in these literary works and affirms that what we refer to in singular, may in fact be a concept made up of “many”.<sup>24</sup>

Translations of *Chūshingura* by Donald Keene (1952) of the Bunraku (and later Kabuki) play written by Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shoraku and Namiki Senryu,<sup>25</sup> and of *Fuenteovejuna* by Lope de Vega (1612-1614) also highlight similar concerns and social anxieties. The Japanese audience of *Chūshingura* is introduced to discussions of honor rooted in part in Tokugawa Era reinterpretations of Confucian values toward piety, loyalty, and the ritualistic performance of honor. I note here the cultural differences toward suicide, the spilling of one’s own blood, and the restoration of honor. Although popular, modern assumptions have created the view that suicide is always acceptable as a socially redemptive act within Japanese culture, this is not the

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<sup>24</sup> In this case, I am also referring to the various intersections of class, gender and other socio-cultural categories that both clash as well as reaffirm the honor concept. There are a multitude of perspectives on the nature of honor and shame, and the way the relationship between the two is impacted by cultural as well as personal factors. Melveena McKendrick and Frank Pierce have also written extensively on this. For more information on the multiplicities of honor as interpreted by psychologists and social scientists, see works by Pitt-Rivers (1966), Freiderich (1977), Casimir and Jung (2009) as well as Eiko Ikegami (2003).

<sup>25</sup> The play is in fact an adaptation of Chikamatsu Monzaemon’s original Bunraku work *Goban Taiheiki* (1706), though this is the version of *Chūshingura* most commonly translated by Westerners in the modern era; see early translations by Jukichi Inouye (1917) who is credited as producing the first translation of the play into English by a Japanese author, James Murdoch (1882) and Frederick Dickins (1880).

case in social practice. Pre-modern Japanese attitudes toward suicide were legally and socially codified, although this did not prohibit social commentary within the public sphere.<sup>26</sup> Given the religious traditions of Catholic Spain, never would suicide be considered “justifiable” as a way to regain lost honor. Within both nations, punishments were often extended to the heirs of those who committed suicide.<sup>27</sup> In Japan, while not enthusiastically endorsed, the underlying belief that blood “cleanses” sin and marred honor was maintained through social and judicial structures, but only for those who adhered to strict rituals.<sup>28</sup> Due to their radically different views towards suicide, blood more often appears in the form of murder in Spanish honor plays, while Japanese plays instead focus on the ritualistic nature of suicide, but only for those of worthy social status.

The topic of suicide and honor has been well researched in Japan by domestic and international scholars, but less attention has been paid to similar conversations about honor culture, murder, suicide and revenge in Spain. Elizabeth Dickenson and James Boyden note that historically, suicide as both a socio-cultural and criminal action is an under-researched topic throughout Europe. This holds especially true in Spain, despite the religious and cultural syncretism that makes it an early topic of cultural debate. In addition, Dickenson and Boyden argue that the rise of honor culture is a Post-Reconquista phenomenon—one which is the result

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<sup>26</sup> For more information on suicide and Japanese culture in the Kabuki Theater see Samuel Leiter’s article “The Depiction of Violence on the Kabuki Stage” (1969).

<sup>27</sup> For more information on suicide in Golden Age Spain see “Ambivalence Toward Suicide in Golden Age Spain” by Elizabeth G. Dickenson and James M. Boyden from the text *From Sin to Insanity: Suicide in Early Modern Europe* (2004).

<sup>28</sup> Chikamatsu Monzaemon and other playwrights of Japan encountered heavy criticism of their immensely popular “love suicide genre” due to the overuse of suicide as a way to “glamorize” tragic couples who over-privileged their *ninjo*-desire to remain together.

of ideological Christian values from this warring period intermingling with elements of patriarchal honor culture. Eventually, by the seventeenth century, the honor paradigm supersedes its religious roots (Dickenson and Boyden 101). The Reconquista refers to the Christian reclaiming of many regions of the Iberian Peninsula to form what is now recognized as modern-day Spain. While initially a series of battles for independence from the Umayyad Empire, the resulting rhetoric that Spain would finally be reunited under the Christian monarchs, Isabelle and Ferdinand, became the basis for religious and cultural rhetoric that would extend well into later centuries. Though seemingly at odds with the “Christian values of empathy and compassion”, the “use of honor, and the justification of the violence used to maintain it” were increasingly no longer seen as being at odds with church doctrine for the purposes of justifying the violence of colonial projects in the New World.<sup>29</sup> It is this slide into the acceptance of violence in formerly “compassionate” places that mutates into the violence used to justify honor culture in Spain. This violence did not remain just in the colonies, and with the association of the Catholic Church, violence was also wielded against those who broke with doctrine and social practice. This intersection should not completely be seen as unique to Spain. For example, the extreme penalties used to punish the families of those who committed suicide remained unique to Spain, but there are actually institutional parallels in Japan. The families of Spaniards who committed suicide suffered from a wide range of penalties, ranging from bans from holding public or ecclesiastical offices, to the inability to receive any sort of honors, to the seizure of property and inheritance, to the more socially humiliating/disenfranchising inability to ride

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<sup>29</sup> Note that this violence is a part of the Christian justification for the reunification of Spain under the Catholic monarchs and the campaign of Crusades during the medieval period.

horses (103-04). Dickenson and Boyden are among the first to make the important observation that the descendants of people who committed suicide received punishments similar to those who were outed as “heretics” against a system which supported a Christian elite.<sup>30</sup> As with Edo Japan, this discrimination was not just culturally practiced but also enshrined in the legal code.<sup>31</sup> However, like Japan, there was a clear difference in both law and society, between those who committed suicide as an action of faith or loyalty, as opposed to those who did so out of “despair or madness”.<sup>32</sup> In addition, both countries held the action of suicide for the purpose of “self-glorification” in high contempt.

In Spain, early conversations on the topic of honor, especially around suicide, centered on cases of despair, self-glorification and martyrdom, but the initial debates around honor in *Chūshingura* center on the divide between *ninjo* and *giri*, concepts related to honor, which help to define the difference in responsibility to the individual, and toward his or her social

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<sup>30</sup> Spanish culture cultivated extensive terminology to describe those who were considered outside of this Christian system: *moros*, *morisco/as*, *converso/a* etc. Popular plays often presented conflicting images of these figures, with some *moriscas* or *conversas* painted as sympathetic figures, complicating the often antagonistic and stigmatizing social position and existence of actual Spaniards labelled with these terms.

<sup>31</sup> Dickenson and Boyden take care to note that the official “Penalties of 1484” reveal the roots of this discrimination and the connection between suicide as “proof” of apostasy or heresy, often as the final offending “action” of this system (104).

<sup>32</sup> Dickenson and Boyden reference the letters and texts of Francisco de Victoria’s lectures on the topic of suicide as representative of the common “Augustinian” condemnation of suicide to preserve honor (in the sense of self-glorification). While he offered some approval for suicide committed for the sake of others, similar to what I would call martyrdom, though in a secular context, his stance was still overall disapproving. However, this stance by the Church did not prevent the myriad popular depictions of suicide as both tragedy and in the form of martyrdom from being popular topics. In fact, “Los Mártires de Japón” by Lope de Vega is one such example in which Lope sets a martyr play in Japan (which he never visited).

connections. Translated as one's [internal] emotions, and social duty or obligation, the majority of literary and critical debates of the play historically center on conflicts between these initially Confucian values. Indeed, this initial, internal division inspires early criticism about *Chūshingura*, as Japanese dramatic and literary scholars argue over various elements of honor throughout the play. Ultimately, should the various depictions of honor and loyalty performed by these *ronin* be lionized? If so, is there universal agreement that their pathway to revenge is supported by a true dedication to maintaining a social status quo of "honor and justice", and not just the result of interpersonal arguments or gains? Donald Keene makes several observations about this crucial conflict in Japanese plays, a conflict which is still replicated through other arts, including modern animation.<sup>33</sup>

The divide between *giri*, *ninjo* and many other aesthetic and psychological values is part of a long-term debate stretching from contemporary studies on the Japanese psyche, to the cultural-philosophical debates of the Edo period Bakufu, who sought to combine Japanese

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<sup>33</sup> Donald Keene makes an interesting argument about this *giri-ninjo* divide as a pivotal part of Chikamatsu Monzaemon's style of writing for *bunraku* (puppet) plays. The depiction of this struggle becomes a personal marker, as Keene notes, in this case focusing on the role that the *giri-ninjo* divide plays in depicting the struggles which female characters endure, he argues, [in comparison to the women of the ukiyo-e painted by Saikaku, "...In the plays of Chikamatsu (1653-1725)...we find quite different women. Chikamatsu's heroines, whether supposedly historical figures or women from the contemporary ukiyo milieu...are mostly unhappy victims of the conflicting claims of their passions (*ninjo*) and their obligations(*giri*) to society. *Giri* had both Buddhist and Confucian antecedents, developing equally from the awareness of the law of causality and the duties arising from the need for moral justice. *Giri* can be 'warm', and a natural response to the kindness of others, but more often in the plays it is a "cold" obligation inspired not by gratitude but by the rules of society...*Giri* not softened by feelings (*ninjo*) may seem inhuman, as it denies the individual's right to be happy at the expense of society. *Ninjo* unchecked by *giri* not only is self-indulgent but may in the end lead to self-destruction, as in the love-suicide plays for which Chikamatsu was especially famous" (*The Vocabulary of Japanese Aesthetics III* 333).

Buddhist values with Confucian social structures.<sup>34</sup> In this sense, Japanese scholarship has often attempted to answer the question “what makes Japanese culture so unique?”. How is it unique not just from its neighbors in East Asia, but also during periods of Modernization, when increased interaction with the West encouraged cultural comparisons and conflict? Post-World War II there was a burst of scholarship in both the United States as well as Japan that sought to document these differences in cultural values and anxieties. One of the leading scholars in this field, Takeo Doi, produced critical studies that are still used to describe the cultural phenomenon of *giri-ninjo* today. During this period Doi argued that there were key semantic differences in a comparison of Western and Japanese psychoanalytical methods and models. In this case, instead of the translation of *ninjo* as a type of universal “human feelings”, Doi advocates for an interpretation in which *ninjo* means “specifically knowing how to *amaeru* [depend on another’s love] properly and not to respond to the call of *amaeru* in others. Japanese think themselves especially sensitive to these feelings, and those who do not share that sensitivity are said to be wanting in *ninjo*” (Doi 49).<sup>35</sup> *Ninjo* in this sense is the emotional bond which “spontaneously occurs in relations between parent and child, husband and wife, or brothers and sisters” whereas “*giri* relations are relations between in-laws, neighbors, with close associates, or superior in

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<sup>34</sup> This includes the Buddhist concepts of *mugen*, *enso*, *wabi*, *sabi* and many others which appear as common cultural tropes in modern Japanese media and art. For a brief explanation of major philosophical figures and concepts, see Mara Miller’s article “Japanese Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art” (2011).

<sup>35</sup> Doi elaborates earlier in this article on the concept of *amaeru*, or the ability to “depend and presume on another’s love...to seek and bask in another’s indulgence”. He cites what psychoanalyst Michael Balint calls “passive object love”, in part because the term captures the value that the object of the behavior is to receive love itself, and not to manipulate a relationship for some other end. The term is not used to refer to a social superior depending on the love of a social inferior (Doi 47). I suggest that this brings to mind people who bask in unrequited love, though Balint and other scholars argue that there is not an equivalent in Western culture for this emotional concept.

one's place of work" (Doi 49). Following this line of reasoning, my interpretation of *giri* and *ninjo* aligns with that of Doi, mainly in noting that *ninjo-giri* relations are not necessarily mutually exclusive, although I believe that much of popular culture likes to examine the spaces in which these relationships come into conflict.

Early conversations about *giri* and *ninjo* in literature are rooted in discussions of honor, but as within Spain, exist as part of a larger system or network of negotiations. Similar to conversations about the practice of *bushidō*, there is an acknowledgment within the scholarship on honor that the historicity of a practice and its romanticized literary depiction (propagation) may be in conflict, but ultimately, work together. The threads become entangled and it is difficult to discern which is fact, fiction, or something altogether new. As with *Fuenteovejuna*, *Chūshingura*, as the actual historical rebellion, and as a literary text, contain much of this conflict, which reveals much about the conversations on honor and propriety of its respected time period.

James McMullen is one of several contemporary scholars who have worked to unpack much of the Confucian rooted response to *Chūshingura*, which initially centered less on the question of honor (due to the assumption that Confucian scholars considered the question of honor to be settled within the play), and in its place questioned the divide it presented between law and righteousness (McMullen 294). This concern about honor and its relationship to justice, righteousness, and law mirrors the concerns discussed in *Fuenteovejuna* on the topic of love (self, *eros*, and *agape*), and social harmony. Here, honor should not be the only topic of debate. Instead, the focus should be placed on the system of actions used to maintain honor, and then return the world of the play to a harmonious state. Concerning this debate, the conversation about honor in Japanese theater runs parallel to conversations in Spanish theater along several

critical lines. Both nations have a history of envisioning their version of honor codes and ideas as unique markers of their national and cultural heritage. The marketing of this link between literature and nationality is fueled by the premise that the specific dramatization of these ideas can come to be representative of the philosophical nature of the nations and their inhabitants. This is particularly ubiquitous in the marketing of *Chūshingura* texts, both scholarly and popular, which often feature epigraphs or prefaces stating “to know this play, is to know Japan.”<sup>36</sup> There are myriad similarities between the two nations in regards to the influences impacting the honor theme: the belief that blood cleanses honor, social stratification, debates on the morality of the urban and rural divide, a heavily gendered class hierarchy, and a strong legal foundation to enforce these policies. When these factors combined with popular literary and theatrical traditions, they produced cultural products to enforce and challenge this cultural status quo. For the purpose of this dissertation, a comparison focusing on the gender and class-stratification of honor is of particular interest. In criticism on *Fuenteovejuna*, the role of women has been carefully examined and debated, but in the case of *Chūshingura* this role remains under-researched. While I could only speculate on the reason for this gap, it is clear that a comparison of the two dramas in this regard can reveal much about the complex structures of these plays and their sophisticated portrayal of honor. Little research has been dedicated to comparative analysis of these two plays, despite these shared cultural and historical values.

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<sup>36</sup> Famed Kabuki scholar Kawatake Toshio makes a similar note on the classic assumption that “knowing” this play, is to “know” Japan and this classical cultural struggle for justice, honor and righteousness. The assumption that once people, in particular Westerners, understand this play as revealing something unique about Japanese culture is an oft-repeated motif in later adaptations, as discussed further in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.



## Honor as a Gendered Hierarchy

Scholarship on women and the honor theme has historically posed an intriguing conundrum. Men are often the focus when it comes to violent enforcement of the honor code linked to women, but conjugal honor remains strong. Although the legal and religious organization of the patriarchal household was different, the underlying need to control the sexual agency of Spanish and Japanese women produced similar effects. For these women, a chaste reputation was paramount to maintaining honor, and any suggestion that they were unfaithful to their husbands, fathers, brother, or other male figures, was punishable by death.<sup>37</sup>

At first glance, *Fuenteovejuna* and *Chūshingura* present a seemingly unusual comparison when it comes to honor and gender. It may seem that the women of both plays are subversively tasked with great responsibility to spur their men to revenge, yet it becomes clear that instead of challenging norms around honor and sexual agency, the women of both plays are tasked with the reaffirmation of the status quo of their respective cultures, including the recent push in modern scholarship on *Fuenteovejuna* to identify Laurencia's ability to protect herself from sexual assault to be feminist because of the nature of her confrontation with patriarchal figures. While in many ways she does generally challenge the expected norms for peasant women—she initially rejects the social norm of marriage-- I hesitate to fully endorse this view of her character in part because she, as well as Lady Kaoyo and other women of *Chūshingura*, protect the cultural status

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<sup>37</sup> For more on these links, see works by Gabriela Carrión *Staging Marriage in Early Modern Spain: Conjugal Doctrine in Lope, Cervantes, and Calderón* (2011), Fredrik Ljungqvist "Female Shame, Male Honor: The Chastity Code in Juan Luis Vives' *De Institutione Feminae Christianae*" (2012) and Allyson Poska *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain: The Peasants of Galicia* (2005).

quo of their respective environments, and the label may be placed anachronistically. In fact, none of the women in these plays argue for a more transgressive sexual or social agency on the part of their Spanish or Japanese peers. Instead, when they do break with the cultural norms, it is to justify their fight to maintain the idealized, chaste norm for their social stations. Both women's experiences with the threat of assault situate them as damsels in distress, a method through which their female voices can be used to chastise male counterparts, who are not upholding their masculine, honorific duty to protect them as extensions of the male identity. However this break with tradition, in order to justify the later reinforcement of the social norm, is a common trope for many of the women in *Fuenteovejuna* as well as *Chūshingura* as a literary device.

As one of the highest ranking women in *Chūshingura*, Lady Kaoyo represents one of the premier models of female virtue in *Chūshingura*. Yet despite being a paragon of virtue and loyalty to her husband, Lord Hangan, her lapse in judgement, and decision to keep secrets from her husband, contribute to the downfall of the household. Lady Kaoyo's initial entrance onto the stage hints at the upstanding quality of her morality. Her humility, and noble birth, are suggested as she enters the stage "barefoot and ...trailing robes...their hems, like the sacred brooms, [which clean] the white sand of the approach to the shrine. Her lightly powdered face is of jewel-like beauty. She kneels at a respectful distance and bows" (Keene 32). With the first illicit love letter she receives from Lord Moronao, Kaoyo is immediately confronted with one of the foremost affronts to honor in the play. As mentioned above, honor was deeply rooted in patriarchal beliefs about ownership, female sexual agency, and violence. Here, any public implication that Kaoyo was not chaste could potentially lead to social as well as economic ruin.

In addition, she is depicted as a faithful wife, but one who puts her own desire to protect her husband over allowing him to protect her, upsetting the “natural order” of the society of the play.

Kaoyo’s experience rebuffing the advances of Moronao represents a difficult struggle between wits. Unlike the women of samurai families or those of the country farmers, Kaoyo’s social station affords her some protection and discretion to address him directly. However, she is still at risk of losing her outstanding reputation if rumors that she is engaging in an affair, especially with Moronao, reach her peers. In this case, her decision not to involve her husband in this battle, in an attempt to protect him from his own fiery temper instead of allowing him to fulfill his duty to protect her virtue, sets off the initial conflict of the play. Throughout the first three acts, Moronao relentlessly pursues Kaoyo, but due to their high social station, he is unable to make his intentions overt. In this case, he preys upon her training and knowledge as a woman who served in high-ranking households to give her poetry often heavy with a sexual subtext. These types of conflicts abound in play, with women like Kaoyo often forced to consider their need to fulfill their *giri* obligations with those of their *ninjo* ones in the face of dishonorable conduct. Kaoyo is well aware of the precariousness of her social and physical safety, and openly ponders “[if she] should brusquely put him [Moronao] to shame? But that would only cause her husband’s name to figure in gossip. Should she take the letter home and show it to her husband? No—in that case, Lord Enya [Hangan] might give way to feelings of outrage and this might lead to injury or some other mishap. So, without saying a word, she casts back the letter in Moronao’s direction” (Keene 35). Tragically, the scenario she hopes to avoid by concealing this information from her husband, aids in his downfall. According to Confucian norms of conduct, she should have revealed this information to Hangan, and deferred to his authority. Instead, her concealment emboldens Moronao’s behavior, causing his objections to her rejection to escalate,

eventually to the point where he makes the extent of his violent intent known to her. In his response to her initial rejection, Moronao makes it clear that he casts responsibility for his sexual advances onto Kaoyo, viciously stating: “I, Moronao, can make the country rise or fall at my pleasure; and whether I let Enya live or kill him depends on your heart, Kaoyo, alone” (Keene 35). He asks her to serve as the gatekeeper, and subvert the power structure in place, which emphasizes Moronao’s selfish desires and leads to the fall of their home. Eventually, Kaoyo’s final poem to Moronao, and his subsequent abuse of her husband, sets off Hangan’s attack. Her response to him is:

They would be heavy enough  
Even without this new burden,  
These night clothes.  
Do not pile onto your own robes  
A robe that is not your own. (Keene 58)

The new burden refers to the burden of his attacks towards her, however, the final line of her poem infuriates Moronao the most. I regard this exchange as one of the crucial sources of conflict in the play. To emphasize further the insult of Moronao’s actions toward Lady Kaoyo, Moronao reads Kaoyo’s response in the presence of Hangan. As an act of spite at being rejected, Moronao begins to berate Hangan, despite the fact that he delivered the letter without knowing the response it contains. After noting that Kaoyo has not revealed his attack to Hangan, he sarcastically says:

What a miraculously chaste woman you have for a wife. The poem she sent me is a typical example of her virtue. ‘Do not pile onto your robes a robe that is not your own.’ A chaste wife, yes, chaste indeed. You’re a lucky man. It’s no wonder you were late in arriving at the palace. You stick so close to your home you can’t be bothered about His Excellency. (Keene 59)

Moronao taunts Hangan by turning Kaoyo’s dedication to preserving her chastity and Hangan’s honor into a liability and an affront to Hangan’s faithful ability to serve the Emperor. His taunts

imply that Hangan sticks too closely to his wife, and is, in fact, distracted by his loyalty (and presumably sexual interest) such that he is unable to attend to his responsibilities toward the Emperor. Moronao further subverts a social norm that would exalt Hangan's loyalty to both his wife and his master by berating him, and comparing his faithfulness to Kaoyo to the folk story of "a carp that lived in a well". The implication is that like a small, country fish moving out of his rural well, and into a large river (the palace and its city), Hangan, too, will eventually die because he cannot adapt to his surroundings and is out of place in his role in the palace. After confirming that Moronao is not "mad" and is fully aware of the extent of his insults, Hangan then commits the act which leads to his order to commit *seppuku*. He draws his sword in the palace and slashes at Moronao, injuring him, but not seriously (Keene 60). Hangan's decision to attack Moronao, which he reveals to have been a premeditated action, is one which has been the subject of debate for many scholars of the Edo period, as well as for contemporary scholarship. This debate, as with *Fuenteovejuna*, was complicated by the fact that the play and its variants were based on historical events. In this sense, most of the conversation centers on Neo-Confucian understandings of filial piety, and the balance of *giri* and *ninjo* between master and servant (social classes), and between romantic partners. This latent conversation about the righteousness of Hangan's attack did not remain just "on stage", but was also reflected in the law and civil debates of the period. Keene notes Edo scholar Ogyu Sorai's explanation:

By righteousness we mean the path of keeping oneself free from any taint, and by law we mean the measuring rod for the entire country. A man controls his heart with decorum and his actions with righteousness. For the forty-six samurai to have avenged their master on this occasion shows that they are aware of shame, as becomes men who are samurai; and since they have followed the path of keeping themselves from taint, their deed is righteous. However, this deed is appropriate only to their particular group. (Keene 2)

Sorai continues to explain that despite having access to their pursuit of the vendetta, the root cause of the vendetta, their lord's decision to attack another in the palace, and their subsequent

pursuit of the vendetta, were inappropriate, and “not to be tolerated under the law” (Keene 3). Thus, even scholarship from that period made a stark line between a valid need to respect the fidelity of the master-retainer relationship, while still respecting the obligation and definitions of justice under the law (and potentially acknowledges, that there may be conflicts between the two institutions). However, the role of women and the effects that this vendetta had on their livelihood and sense of loyalty to their households remained understudied in subsequent periods.

Due to this research gap, the role of the samurai women featured in the play has been undervalued, and in recent years, has been left out altogether from adaptations and performances of the play. Despite this, early versions of *Chūshingura* made sure to highlight the complicated cultural nuances behind their roles and the act dedicated to featuring their own resolution to *the giri-ninjo* conflict. Samurai women Tonase, Konami and Oishi mirror the conflict between *giri* and *ninjo* of Lady Kaoyo, but due to their lower social rank, they maintain their *giri* obligations over those of their *ninjo* obligations, privileging both of these values over their personal desires for happiness. Junko Saeki notes that this conflict is also heavily gendered in kabuki plays, in part due to the “strong male-centered structure of samurai society in early modern Japan” (238). She further elaborates that “samurai society is made up entirely of male members...the strongest of which was the relationship between a lord and his men.” In this context, Saeki argues that within this emotional framework, any well-regarded samurai man would be expected to demonstrate his willingness to sacrifice the bond he shares with women, no matter their station or relationship to him, as the ultimate demonstration of his loyalty to his master. I would argue that the women of *Chūshingura* are asked to make a similar sacrifice, by supporting their husbands and lovers’ vendetta, and ultimately dooming themselves to widowhood and social precariousness. Although scholarship on *Chūshingura* has often focused on the loyalty of the

retainers to their master, the women of these men are also regarded as exemplars of honor, and throughout their scenes emphasize the tragic condition loyalty to their families and duties has brought to them.<sup>38</sup>

One less-analyzed scene depicts a common motif in kabuki plays, the motif of the ill-fated lovers. A young engaged couple, Konami and Rikiya, are forced to demonstrate the boundaries of their loyalty and fidelity to their families and lord by the vendetta. From her initial entrance, Tonase, married to Kakogawa Honzo Yunikini (Honzo), makes her dedication to the welfare of her daughter Konami clear. Upon meeting with Oishi, the wife of Yuranosuke, and the mother of Rikiya, she boldly states “these two swords are my husband’s soul, and when I wear them I speak for us both, for I serve as his deputy” (Keene 134). By wearing the double swords, a common sign and historically a marker of those employed as samurai, Tonase draws from her background as a woman from a samurai class who is her husband’s confidant, but does not consider herself his equal, mirroring deeply-held Confucian values about the role of women within patriarchal households. Despite Tonase’s plea that the engagement should still be honored, Oishi initially refuses to fulfill this agreement and proceeds to insult Tonase and by proxy her husband Honzo, for initially attempting to bribe Lord Moronao, cruelly responding that “our master Lord Enya Hangan died by his own hand. This was because of his hasty temper, it is true, but the tragedy arose from his uncompromising honesty. It was quite a different matter with Honzo, who used gold and silver to curry favor with Moronao” implying that Tonase’s family were sycophants of the tyrant (Keene 135). Tonase retorts that Oishi is overstepping her

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<sup>38</sup> See the following works for more intriguing scholarship on *Chūshingura* and honor: Henry Smith “Chūshingura in the 1980s: ReThinking the Story of the Forty-Seven Ronin” (2008), Junko Saeki “Gender Construction and Chūshingura as a Japanese National Legend” (2008).

boundaries by rejecting Konami on behalf of Rikiya, and in a battle of wits, returns Oishi's insult by implying that due to his status as a *ronin* he has no choice but to "marry some rich merchant's daughter" due to the fact that he had "lost all sense of duty and propriety" (Keene 137). Despite this harsh exchange, Konami refuses to consider another marriage match, pleading with her mother that "a chaste wife does not marry a second time," words stated to her by her father. Together, the mother and daughter decide to die, but are stopped by Oishi who is moved by their display of loyalty, to Rikiya and to each other. At this point in the play, she sings a line praising both women, by comparing them to the two pines that grow from a single trunk (Keene 139). Oishi is explicit about the virtues both women exhibit, declaring to Tonase, "you were ready to kill your only daughter, though you're bound to her by ties of obligation", and to Konami "you showed true chastity" (Keene 139). However, Oishi also shows her dedication to the samurai family background and agrees to allow the marriage to take place, only if the mother and daughter can offer "the head of Kakogawa Honzo, on [this] wooden stand" (Keene 140). Oishi's dedication to fulfilling revenge, and to supporting both Rikiya and Yuranosuke, is also crucial throughout the scene, and this dedication leads her to break with tradition and directly attack Honzo after he refers to Yuranosuke as a "debauchee, with no thought of avenging his master" and as a "model lunatic for all Japan, and Rikiya –tadpoles turn into frogs, as they say" (Keene 142). In response, she declares "I'll show you whether or not a *ronin*'s rusty sword will still cut. I'm unworthy of him, but I'm Yuranosuke's wife. You're an opponent after my heart. Come, let's have it out!" (Keene 142). She quickly "tucks up the hems of her skirts and snatching a lance from its rack on the wall, readies herself for an attack" (Keene 142). The scene ends with Rikiya's sudden appearance and he promptly kills Honzo. In a common narrative trope in kabuki, Yuranosuke appears shortly after to reveal to both families that he understood that this



was Honzo's goal all along, and that he sacrificed himself in order to ensure that he would finally die by his son-in-law's hand as repayment for the damage caused by his insult and his lack of confidence in his master.

As Honzo lays dying, and confirms that he takes ownership for his role in the death of his master, both sets of samurai parents permit Konami and Rikiya to marry, although what should be celebrated as an engagement is instead presented as a wake. After the plans for the attack on Lord Moronao have been revealed both to the families as well as to the audience, the act both alleviates Honzo's concerns that he would not be able to gain revenge, as well as neatly wraps up the "unfinished business" of the play. The act poignantly ends with the recognition of the bonds between parents and child, and husband and wife, which would be broken by the violence of the events to come. "The ties binding father and child are snapped with the thread of his [Honzo's] life...they intone together, mourners and lovers, the Invocation to the Buddha...even as they pray for the dead man's salvation, they know in their hearts that the young couple's happiness, which brings him solace, will last but a single night" (Keene 149). As with the bond between husband and wife, the bond between parent and child would also be sacrificed in order to support the battle for justice for the ultimate relationship—the one between master and lord.

Throughout this scene, Tonase, Konami and Oishi embody many of the virtues women from the samurai class were expected to adhere to under Confucian norms. Tonase, as the mother and caretaker of Konami, raises a special awareness of the importance of her role of ensuring her daughter's stability by acknowledging that it is "especially humiliating for me [Oishi's rejection of Konami as a bride] because you are not my child but Honzo's by a previous marriage, and he may wonder if I neglected you for that reason. I can't go on living if he suspects that of me" (Keene 138). This inability to continue living could be interpreted not just

as an emotional expression of grief but potentially an acknowledgement that Tonase's husband, bound by his own obligations to protect Konami, would be forced to kill his wife. Konami's fervent plea to listen to her father's words and remain chaste, even if she is rejected by Oishi and Rikiya, also presents the image of a relationship based not on lust, but a chaste devotion towards one another. However, this scene also highlights Konami's struggle to place the larger, social goal of revenge for Enya Hangan over her more immediate and personal desire to marry Rikiya. While it may initially seem that Konami is stubborn, I think it is this stubbornness to adhere to the wishes of her father, and to align her desires with his, that should instead be read as praising her devotion.

One of the final, and most controversial women of the play is Okaru, a woman from the country, who is linked romantically to the lesser samurai Kampei. Unlike her chaste companions, Okaru does not hesitate to engage willingly in salacious behavior when she offers to "go off" (engage in sexual intercourse) with Kampei in the opening scenes of the play. At her initial entrance in act three, Okaru quickly strikes a clear boundary between the consensual sexual contact she has with Kampei, and the forceful manner in which Bannai, one of Moronao's retainers, attempts to seduce her. Okaru quickly rebuffs his advances and calls public attention to his attack, although it may put her own reputation at risk. In this case, the diversion she creates pays off, and causes several servants to condemn his attack and his behavior publicly, noting that his actions are an affront to a house "known for its strict decorum!" (Keene 54). The added subtext to this is that his lord, Moronao, is covertly attacking that same sense of "strict decorum", and like the lord he serves, Bannai, too, is lecherous and corrupt. From the head of the household to those who serve in the bottom ranks, the moral corruption of the home and its associates go on to corrupt other forces. However, in yet another twist, common in this genre of

play, Kampei reveals that he has gotten the servants drunk in order to have to condemn Bannai. Here Bannai, Kampei, and Okaru turn to trickery to gain what they desire, but at great cost to their personal honor.

This action may seem to be condoned initially, but their transgression of indulging “in the flesh” leads to Kampei’s absence from his post-- an absence that sets off a chain of events eventually leading to his suicide and Okaru’s rental to a brothel. While at first Kampei takes responsibility for these actions, Okaru has also neglected her duties by giving in to her sexual and emotional desires, and she provides an intriguing female companion to Kampei. After Hangan attacks Moronao in the palace, Kampei rushes to his aid, but it is too late. Lamenting his carelessness for “...indulging in fleshly pleasures” Kampei is acutely aware that he has caused great disrespect to his post by abandoning his lord when he was most needed. In despair, he acknowledges the public nature of his shame, asking “How can I show myself before people wearing my swords?” (Keene 62). Interestingly, Kampei quickly takes the blame for his lack of care, and Okaru is the one who immediately takes full responsibility for distracting him from his duties. Upon hearing his despair, she exclaims “but who is to blame for having made a delinquent samurai of you? It was all my fault. It one of us is to die, it is I who should die before you. If you kill yourself now, who would ever praise your samurai spirit?” (Keene 62). In a moment of disgrace and cowardice, the couple plan to flee quickly to the home of her parents in the countryside, instead of taking ownership of their failures within that moment.

While this couple may seem to present a lamentable model for honor, what redeems them is their willingness to make amends for this lack of fidelity to their superiors and the dishonor it brings them. While Kampei finds redemption through his own suicide (the circumstances of which include mistaken identity and murder), Okaru decides to be sold to a brothel to raise

money for their survival.<sup>39</sup> This decision, the result of her father's assumption that Kampei was already considering selling her "for his lord's sake", becomes a way through which Okaru can regain some of the honor she has lost (Keene 91). Instead of feeling despair at her plight, Okaru tells her mother, "I'm leaving my husband, it's true, but I'm selling myself for our master's sake, so I don't feel sad or anything like that. I go in good spirits, Mother" (Keene 93). These good spirits do not last long, as Okaru eventually learns that her father has been murdered, and her brother Heiemon learns that she has been contracted to the hero of the play, Yuranosuke. Due to his initial belief that Yuranosuke is planning a doomed attempt to gain revenge, and that Okaru has gained some knowledge of this plan, Heiemon attempts to murder Okaru to preserve her honor. "Rather than let you die at a stranger's hands, I will kill you with my own hands. I can't let any woman with knowledge of the great secret escape, even if she's my own sister" (Keene 121). Heiemon pleads with his sister to consider dying for his sake, in order to allow him entry among the trusted *ronin* of Yuranosuke's group. Noting that Kampei has committed *seppuku*, and that Yuranosuke would most likely kill her due to her husband's role in their lord's disgrace, he reminds her of their unfortunate social station and the entry fee that blood would pay, "the sad thing about being of the lower ranks is that unless you prove to the other samurai your spirit is better than theirs, they won't let you join them. Show you understand by giving me your life.

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<sup>39</sup> Japan has a lengthy history of state-regulated brothels, many of which have been preserved to the present day due to their historical and artistic impact on Japanese culture. One of the most famous areas, Yoshiwara, continues to spark the imagination of Japanese audiences. Amy Stanley's recent text *Selling Women: Prostitution, Markets and the Household in Early Modern Japan* (2012) offers a more recent investigation of this history. Scholars of World War II Japan and activists have also heavily criticized the role the Japanese State played in approving the imprisonment and torture of Korean and Chinese women as "comfort women" under a similar system.

Die for my sake, sister” (Keene 121). Okaru listens carefully to her brother, and after realizing that her father has been murdered, and her family left destitute (and her brother is dedicated to dying for their master’s sake), she offers not just her blood, but her body as well for revenge. “What reason have I to go on living? But if I died at your hands, I’m sure Mother would hate you for it. I’ll kill myself. After I’m dead, if my head or my body can bring you credit, please use it for that purpose” (Keene 122). Before she can commit suicide, Yuranosuke reveals himself and stops her, offering praise to the siblings for their loyalty and honor by offering entry into the group for Heiemon. Finally, Okaru is able to fulfill the duties she mentioned in the previous acts, and serves as a woman worthy enough to praise not just Kampei, but Heiemon’s samurai spirits.

*Fuenteovejuna*, like *Chūshingura*, combines fiction with historical fact, drawn in part from the actual revolt of the town Fuente Ovejuna in 1476 and the 1471 battle for Ciudad Real. Unlike the world of *Chūshingura* and the Incident at Akō Castle which took place December 14 1702, which assumes a mostly idyllic vision of life in the city and countryside, the peasants of the village of Fuenteovejuna are forced to fight to retain an idyllic vision of rural life in their village once the Commander asserts his tyrannical control. Laurencia, Barrildo, Mengo and Pascuala bemoan the way the culture of “city folk” drives them to use euphemisms for much bad behavior and personality characteristics. This position contrasts with that of the peasants of the town who have retained their desire to call things “as they are,” and in the process, exposes a general distaste for the hypocrisy that such behavior fosters. In fact, Laurencia leads this conversation, and the next one with the men, which centers on the nature of love, in particular, the proliferation of self-love (selfishness) (Racz 17). However, in a common thread with the women of *Chūshingura*, Laurencia makes it clear that despite her acknowledgement that there is

a form of pure love, the thing she loves most is not a man, but instead “just [her] honor” (Racz 18). Although the women of *Chūshingura* and *Fuenteovejuna* are likened to jewels, their chastity is emphasized here as the treasure. *Fuenteovejuna* pushes this idea further by linking women to food, particularly for the ways in which both are “consumed” by men, emphasizing an appetite that is sexual as well as gastronomic. Upon meeting with the Commander, both Pascuala and Laurencia are implored to see the “gifts” offered by the townsfolk to celebrate his arrival. Unfortunately he wastes no time in making it clear that he is interested in laying sexual claim to both women, going so far as to threaten to latch the door behind them as they view the items (Racz 24). Again, Laurencia leads this resistance, stating: “How much more tribute would it take/ To make him happy with these meats?” (Racz 25). Ortuño, one of two retainers of the Commander, replies: “Your meats would be the sweeter treats,” leading Laurencia to respond “I hope they make his belly ache!” (Racz 25).<sup>40</sup> Laurencia’s rejection of the Commander’s lust, and the manner in which the social paradigm is so heavily privileged toward the capricious whims of men, is woven throughout the play, and has provided the basis for many of the feminist perspectives present in recent literary scholarship on this play.<sup>41</sup> Although her social station, and that of the majority of the women of the town of Fuenteovejuna, does not match the high noble status of Lady Kaoyo, there are more similarities joining their plight with those of the lower-

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<sup>40</sup> Both plays are loaded with sexual double entendre and euphemisms to make it clear to the audiences the sexual intent of Lord Moronao and the Commander.

<sup>41</sup> Recent scholarship taking on this analytical framework include: Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano *Feminism and the Honor Plays of Lope de Vega* (1994), Dawn Bratsch-Prince (2000), and Stacy Parker Aronson “They Said, She Said: Making the Case for Rape in Fuenteovejuna” (2015).

samurai classes and maid classes. However, Laurencia's candor speaks to a universal struggle for autonomy in both societies:

I can't abide his infamy! So many girls were gullible  
In trusting the Commander's plights  
And now live days that rue those nights. (Racz 10)<sup>42</sup>

In this context, Laurencia personifies this perspective when she continues to be unmoved by the material gifts offered by the Commander's retainers and sings the praises of her idyllic peasant life as one preoccupied by foods and country simplicity. Laurencia embodies Lope's ennobling of the simplicity of an idealized pastoral society, a popular literary trope which would extend well into the eighteenth century in Spain. The honesty of the village people and their association with moral decency stand in stark contrast to the hypocrisy and decay that is found in urban spaces. In conversation with Pascuala, Laurencia notes that as a (peasant) woman, she would be pleased to:

go to bed content with toil  
And give thanks with a 'lead us not  
Into temptation' of sheer praise (Racz 11).<sup>43</sup>

However, both women agree that this is not the case for men, who find devious ways to take advantage of women:

[until] They get their way in love, what skill  
They use in finding crafty ways  
To make us, in the end, forlorn!  
When, worn down, we give up the fight,

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<sup>42</sup> "¡Cuántas moças en la villa, del Comendador fiadas, anda ya descalabradas!" (lines 192-195).

<sup>43</sup> Franciscan Scholar Antonio de Guevara also introduced this popular trope in Spanish literature and social circles in his text *Menosprecio de Corte y Albanca de Aldea* (1579). The work is based on a fictionalized account of Marcus Aurelius' life and served as a type of didactic manual for those of influence at court (much in the style of Machiavelli's *The Prince*). See Carmen Rabell (1992) for further exploration of this theme and Guevara's work on Spanish literature.

They take their pleasure in the night  
And leave us wretched on the morn. (Racz 11)<sup>44</sup>

Whether peasant or noble, both Pascuala and Laurencia remark that there are unequal standards of conduct for men and women. In both plays, the manipulation of this inequality helps to fuel the moral depravity of its villains. Along these lines, the Commander shares negative traits similar to those of Lord Moronao: cruelty, selfishness, and lechery. The effects of these traits are amplified when directed toward women of equal and lower stations, and threaten to upset the social order. The initial source of conflict in *Chūshingura* focuses on Moronao's attempts to threaten Lady Kaoyo, and others, but word of his misconduct does not reach the Emperor until he is murdered. However, in *Fuenteovejuna* the Commander's sinister reputation has gone beyond the battlefield and the terror he inflicts on the villagers eventually reaches the ears of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabelle. As an Alderman gravely recites to the King:

In Fuenteovejuna, sire,  
A humble village, I believe,  
The cruel Commander now retires  
To have his way with peasant girls  
More freely than we care to state.

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<sup>44</sup> Laurencia's original line is "con su amor y sus porfías, tienen estos bellacones, porque todo su cuidado, después de darnos disgusto, es anochece con gusto y amanecer con enfado" to which Pascuala responds with one of the more famous examples of anti-semitism in the play. There is considerable scholarship exploring the anti-Semitism reflected in Golden Age Spanish Literature, but not much on this play--see recent work by Roger Martínez-Dávila (2015), Kevin Ingram (2011), Ben Zion Netanyahu (1999). In this section, both Laurencia and Pascuala compare the mistreatment of the Jewish population by the Inquisition (seeking to convert Jewish people to Catholicism under penalty of expulsion from Spain) and the Catholic Church to those of (Christian) Spanish women, stating that both groups are often "interrogated for proof" – in the case of women, that they are truly "Spanish women" (the assumption that they are more interested in passion), though once that passion has been spent, the same male interrogators "Now chastise [them] for [their] consent" (Racz 12).



He keeps his vassals there as far  
From happiness as they can stay. (Racz 27)<sup>45</sup>

Note that not only has the Commander's salacious behavior become a problem of honor but he has also neglected his responsibility for the well-being of his vassals, which is a direct rejection of his aristocratic obligations, and eventually, a sign of his rejection of the Spanish monarchy. Although he tries to convince Laurencia by listing the names of other women he has "seduced", she remains unmoved and on guard, going so far as to call Gómez a devil (Racz 31). Before he pounces on Laurencia, Frondoso, a young man who has become smitten with Laurencia despite her constant rebuffing of his proposals of marriage, appears from the bushes and picks up the crossbow that Gómez dropped. A fight breaks out, and Frondoso is able to protect Laurencia, but he does so knowing that it may later cost him his life. Although Laurencia claims to be protecting her honor from the lust of the Commander, Frondoso claims that he was driven to protect her out of love—again mirroring the previous conversations about the nature of natural love, self-love, and lust, and the human capacity to be motivated differently by each facet of love. In this case, Frondoso appears to conflate both love and honor, stating that he remains indifferent to the Commander's pleas because "love is deaf/And, from that day it reigns supreme,/ Will not be swayed by argument" (Racz 33). The Commander's response is swift, even though he has decided to fight Frondoso, his social inferior, which breaks with the chivalric code. Indeed, his shame and desire for revenge come from his irritation that the townspeople refuse to capitulate to all of his demands, despite the tyrannical model of leadership he displays.

The men of the town of Fuenteovejuna, in comparison to their female counterparts, present a second conversation around honor, which is the amount of honor they retain as male

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<sup>45</sup> "En Fuente Ovejuna creo, por ser su villa, y tener en ella casa y asiento. Allí, con más libertad de la que decir podemos, tiene a los súbditos suyos de todo contento ajenos." (lines 688-694)

peasants in the face of the Commander's noble rank. Much like the Loyal Retainers, we see not only exemplars of honor, but many of the complex points of conflict which are part of the "nodes" of the honor system. For example Juan Rojo and Laurencia's father, Esteban, often rail against the egregious behavior of the Commander. However, bound by the respect they need to maintain as villagers toward their lord, and the Crown he is supposed to represent, they often refuse to fight the Commander directly. This is in part due to their responsibility to act as models of loyalty and leadership as aldermen. However, eventually Esteban begins to show signs of rebellion, but only once the honor of his own home is threatened. In one of the moments which begins this conflict over Laurencia's honor, as well as the honor of the women of the town, Esteban confronts the Commander. After being ordered to sit, and addressed as if he were a dog, Esteban engages in a series of verbal exchanges with the Commander on the merits of honor:

You honor us as only men  
Of honor can, as men who've none  
Can scarcely proffer what they've not. (Racz 38)

In response, the Commander makes clear that he is interested in claiming Laurencia, going so far as to state vulgarly that other women in the village have acquiesced to him, leading Esteban to reply that the unnamed women have "disgraced us all" (Racz 39). Again, instead of being more overt about the protection he should offer the women of the village, Esteban attempts to bargain with the Commander, reminding him that:

We of the land  
Are glad to live by your command  
And seek but honor for our homes

As Fuenteovejuna, too,  
Can boast distinguished residents. (Racz 40)<sup>46</sup>

With this response, Esteban sets up what will become the justification for the violence to befall the Commander. Here the division is more one of class than gender. The Commander attempts to present his salacious behavior as the norm in the cities, presenting the townsfolk of Fuenteovejuna as uncultured, despite the reality that his behavior is dishonorable and unbecoming of a leader and representative of the crown.<sup>47</sup>

In one of the most infamous scenes of the play, Laurencia interrupts a meeting of village men after narrowly escaping from the Commander. Disheveled and infuriated by their inaction and deference to a tyrant, she berates them for several stanzas. Her tone is acerbic, as she calls the men, including her father, “frail chickens”, “barbarians”, “hares”, and “little girls”. Although infuriated by her own suffering, Laurencia condemns their inaction and the manner in which they have neglected their duty to protect all of the women of the town from assault and harm.<sup>48</sup> In

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<sup>46</sup> Esteban states “Señor, debaxo de vuestro honor vivir el pueblo dessea. Mirad que en Fuente Ovejuna hay gente muy principal.” (lines 977-980) The next comment by Cuadrado takes aim at the Commander’s lineage and the hypocrisy of nobles with less than noble reputations, noting that “No doubt that Order [Friars of Calatrava] numbers men/ who wear the cross with bloodlines far/ Less pure than simple townsfolk own”(Racz 40). The original line “Alguno acaso se alaba de la Cruz que le ponéis, que no es de sangre tan limpia.” (lines 989-991)

<sup>47</sup> Esteban elaborates further during this exchange, drawing a line at the immorality that the Commander attempts to position as the norm of the cities, stating: “God still inhabits cities, thought/ Where vengeance is more swift and clean” (Racz 41). This is potentially a biblical reference to the stories of Sodom and Gomorrah, which when read with the previous anti-Semitic allusions to the familiar lineage of the Commander, references Laurencia and Pascuala’s conversion about distrust of both men and Jewish people.

<sup>48</sup> More infamous in later directorial decisions about adaptations of the play, Laurencia uses a homophobic slur as a final insult (lines 1770-1780), suggesting that the men of the town should put on the clothing of the women, and in order for there to be a chance for redemption of the town’s honor, the town itself would revert back to a period of Amazonian rule (Racz 75). See Duncan Wheeler *Golden Age of Drama in Contemporary Spain: The Comedia on Page, Stage*

this sense, her speech can be read as a social voice berating not just the men of Fuente Ovejuna but those in a larger sense who refuse to protect their social “inferiors” from harm. In this case, Laurencia’s actions mirror the willingness of Tonase to fight on behalf of Konami, or Oishi to fight on behalf of her husband Yuranosuke. She is not content to leave the actual bloodshed to the men, and she quickly encourages the rest of the women of the town to reclaim their *personal* honor also by taking up weapons, arguing:

Why should they alone enjoy  
The honor stemming from this feat?  
As Women we have suffered most  
The outrage from his foul misdeeds. (Racz 74)<sup>49</sup>

She even compares herself to “El Cid” or “Rodomonte,” classic male heroes from the Spanish literary canon, as she appoints herself leader of a quickly assembled women’s squadron. In a play dedicated to the elevation of collective justice, it is clear that Laurencia will not allow the men of the town to forget that the women of Fuente Ovejuna also have a right to take part in the claim to justice for their own personal honor, not just as extensions of male households. To this end, she is also the only women to participate in the actual murder of the Commander, when she glibly tells her friend Pascuala, “I’m going in [Pascuala], for *my* sword/Must stay unsheathed until *my* name’s restored” (emphasis mine; Racz 78)<sup>50</sup>. While it is clear that the Commander’s

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*and Screen* (2012 pp. 75-104) for more information about the rediscovery of this play and the politics of its domestic performances.

<sup>49</sup> “¿Será bien que solos ellos desta hazaña el honor gozen, pues no son de las mujeres sus agravios los menores?” (lines 1824-1827)

<sup>50</sup> Note that Tonase of *Chūshingura* similarly takes up the swords of her husband to assert her agency and ensure she is able to protect the honor of her family. “Pascuala, yo entro dentro, que las espada no ha de estar tan sujeta ni envainada.” (lines 1902-1903)

tyranny justifies their violent revolt, Lope de Vega also juxtaposes the obligation to protect women with the obligation to protect the social order, which is reaffirmed extensively by the pardoning of the villagers by the monarchs Ferdinand and Isabelle at the end of the play.

While both *Fuenteovejuna* and *Chūshingura* place an enormous burden on women to aid men in the maintenance of honor and justice, the plays also make similar commentaries on the nature of tyranny and dishonor, even for those who are lower within the social hierarchy. The peasants murder the offending Commander, much in the same way the *ronin* murder Lord Moronao and both groups symbolically parade the heads of their former leaders as a celebration of their collective victory. Although neither play provides a ringing endorsement of violence, both do utilize various methods to mobilize sympathy for the oppressed, marginalized groups of the respective plays. To this end, unlike a story that would solely celebrate revenge, both groups, peasants and *ronin* also pay a blood price of their own in the form of torture or suicide for these offenses, but rarely is that blood price paid without debate or extensive justification for its undertaking. This final punishment ensures that the status quo of social harmony is maintained and offers a moment of reflection after the murder of their superior to clarify why the violence was justified. These final moments are often where cultural messaging about honor and dishonor are again reified and offer intriguing scenes for adaptation as the plays are later performed by other cultures.

Although *Chūshingura* and *Fuenteovejuna* at first appear to be separated by national and chronological differences, they are united in their interest in debating the notion of honor, and the ways in which people are driven to protect it. By placing these plays together in

conversation, it is my hope that future scholarship will continue to examine the common threads and philosophical perspectives that challenge assumptions about honor and justice. Previous scholarship has overlooked the potential benefits of examining the commonalities between the genres of both nations. This can also have other consequences as the role of literature and its impact on social depictions of the “other” is still hotly debated. In this sense, the scholarly focus could shift from arguments that focus on the lionization of violence, to a paradigm that includes the discussion of the merits of justice, honor, and personal autonomy. Shifting this paradigm will also break away from the assumption of “inherent violence” as a part of Japanese or Spanish honor culture, and challenge the cumulative messages and stereotypes that have been used to other these works historically in American adaptations. Ultimately, while violence is justified to combat tyranny, it is the moral battle between the honor and dishonor, that should be the focus of these plays and makes them internationally enduring pieces.

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**CHAPTER 3: GHOSTLY WOMEN AND MEN: *TŌKAIDŌ YOTSUYA KAIDAN* AND *EL BURLADOR DE SEVILLA Y CONVIDADO DE PIEDRA***

*“Iemon Tamiya: A murderer haunted by a ghost can’t escape heaven’s net, but I’ll try anyway”*

*–Yotsuya Kaidan (162)*

The epigraph above was uttered by one of the most famous villains in the kabuki genre, Tamiya Iemon, the husband of the famous ghost, Oiwa, of Nanboku Tsuruya IV’s 1825 play *Tōkaidō Yotsuya Kaidan* (“Tōkaidō, Yotsuya Ghost Story”). The quotation captures his unrelenting desire to escape punishment for his abuse of Oiwa, and displays his general contempt for the social and moral order of Tokugawa Period Japan. This attitude provides a stark contrast to the examples of justice and honorable behavior displayed by the characters of *Chūshingura* and *Fuenteovejuna*. In Chapter 2, I discussed the paradigm of honor in these two plays, which assumes that the restoration of social justice and equilibrium can be a valid reason for the use of violence. In the case of the citizens of the town of Fuenteovejuna, their collective effort to overthrow the Commander makes each townsman a powerful agent for justice, similar to the roles of numerous loyal retainers of Enya Hangan of *Chūshingura*. The plays analyzed in this chapter, however, provide evidence of a cultural shift in the concept of honor and human morality which occurred between the Tokugawa and Meiji periods, as well as the Golden Age to Early Enlightenment Periods, and raise several questions about the complex role of honor. What happens when the social order cannot be restored through violence because the villains refuse to bend to heaven’s will? Can a dishonored victim receive justice by seeking revenge after death? How does a society restore justice against people who upset and disrespect the “natural” social order? The protagonists of *Yotsuya Kaidan* (1825) and *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de*

*pedra* (1630) by Tirso de Molina face these complex questions as they are forced to enact revenge after death and aid in our understanding of nearly two centuries worth of cultural differences.

To date, these plays have not been placed together in critical conversation. Comparative studies by Oshima Tadashi, Takayuki Yokota-Murakami and others have categorized Don Juan as the archetype of the “seducer” bringing his mythos into the same taxonomy as Japanese literary figures such as Prince Genji, yet there is little scholarship that explores the two plays in terms of honor, revenge, and political metaphor.<sup>51</sup> In doing so, I hope to invigorate comparative scholarship to explore the lengthy, parallel literary history of Japan and Spain beyond the focus on the similar historical legacy between both nations, for example during the volatile period of trade known as the Nanban Period (1543-1614). *Tōkaidō Yotsuya Kaidan* and *El burlador de Sevilla y el convidado de piedra* are plays that are extremely well-regarded national masterpieces, and their dramatic legacies represent a form of cultural shorthand to depict nationalistic ideologies and cultural preoccupations about morality during intense syncretistic

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<sup>51</sup> See Takayuki Yokota-Murakami’s analysis of Oshima Tadashi’s *A Study of Don Juan Types* (1966) from his text *Don Juan East/West: On the Problematics of Comparative Literature* (1998). Oshima tends to describe these figures as Japanese Don Juans, while I would argue that the archetypes are similar, but not a perfect comparative fit in terms of protagonist-archetypes. While seduction is an important theme, it neglects the socio-historical and political structures fundamental to both plays. Seduction is one part of both stories, and certainly part of the appeal, but the cultural messaging about deception and the sinister (almost sociopathic) nature of Don Juan makes the seduction theme less important for this project, although certainly appealing when it comes to later adaptations. Yokota-Murakami calls this the study of “Don Juanism” as a cultural object, and less the “spread of the Don Juan theme...that may prove to be more significant” (14). I do, however, agree with the exploration of Don Juan and other plays as a “transcivilizational literary phenomenon” (18). See Chapter 4 for more information on these depictions among adaptations and the rise of the “~ism” perspective.

periods of socio-cultural change.<sup>52</sup> These legacies include many motifs and narratives regarding the appearance of ghosts, poetic justice, and exploration of the catalysts that sever the bonds tying society to morality. In this chapter, the following section examines promises of matrimony and I survey several themes common to both plays. The first theme is a comparative emphasis on the rejection of social bonds of loyalty to marriage and fidelity to authority figures, specifically through lies and deception. The second theme frames Iemon and Don Juan as examples of masculine hyper-individualists who become villains because of their abuse of the norms of collectivist societies. According to work by Geert Hofstede, individualism and collectivism form one dimension of national culture, and both terms attempt to describe the “relationship between the individual and the collectivity that prevails in a given society” (Hofstede 209). Various scholars in Psychology, Anthropology and Sociology rely on this framework for cross-cultural comparisons, because “the norm prevalent in a given society as to the degree of individualism or collectivism expected from its members will strongly affect the nature of the relationship between a person and the organization to which he or she belongs” (Hofstede 212). Hofstede elaborates further, explaining that “more collectivist societies call for greater emotional dependence of members on their organizations; in a society in equilibrium, the organizations should in return assume a broad responsibility for their members...[w]henver organizations cease to do that...there is disharmony between people’s values and the social order...” (Hofstede 212). Finally, I compare the use of the supernatural expressly as poetic justice and revenge to preserve honor during these moments of cultural disharmony.

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<sup>52</sup> Satoko Shimazaki “The End of the ‘World’: Tsuruya Nanboku IV’s Female Ghosts and Late-Tokugawa Kabuki” *Monumenta Nipponica*, Volume 66, Number 2, 2011, (240).

For there to be ghosts, there must be death, and both *Yotsuya Kaidan* and *El burlador* feature several prominent examples of both as core plot devices. In *Yotsuya Kaidan*, Oiwa is betrayed and isolated by her scheming husband as he murders her father, pawns her clothing, divorces her and eventually drives her to an unfortunate early death, and subsequently causes the death of their child. In *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra*, the loyal nobleman Don Gonzalo Ulloa, considered a “true” gentleman in contrast to Don Juan, loses his life through a similar set of circumstances. He is murdered while protecting his daughter from Don Juan’s unsuccessful sexual assault.<sup>53</sup> Despite losing their lives, both ghostly protagonists are left with a final resort-- the power of the supernatural, an ability to reverse the order of the natural world and return as ghosts to punish their victimizers. This supernatural power serves as justification for them to enact a bloody revenge upon their betrayers and enemies. In the previous chapter, we saw the lengths to which characters will fight to restore their honor, and I ultimately argued that this process is what is considered the basis for justice and culturally sanctioned violence. However, this chapter explores the “dark” side of the honor debate, which co-existed with media depicting “moral” exemplars of honor. In these two plays, fighting for one’s honor as a ghost is not a punishment for the victims. The ghostly form is depicted as a laudatory tool of justice to right the wrongs after death that were originally committed in life. This use of poetic justice also exposes the systemic hypocrisy which lead to the death of the victims. The justification of the use of divine power provides a subversive contrast to the ideas presented in the previous versions of morality in both *Chūshingura* and *Fuenteovejuna*, and the overall subversion of cultural norms in the plays. In the towns of Yotsuya and Seville, the elites are no longer the most moral

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<sup>53</sup> There is ongoing debate about the attempted assault of Ana. In my view, based off the final stanzas of the banquet scene in which Don Juan is confronted by Don Gonzalo (as a ghostly statue) and admits that Ana saw through his “engaños”, I interpret the attempt as unsuccessful.

figures, dishonor and deception reign free, and only the dead have the power to punish the sins of the living. The introduction of ghostly characters as agents for poetic justice captures periods of social pessimism, and offers anxious social critique about the changing cultural institutions as well as messages about the morality of the worlds beyond the plays.

### **Promises of Matrimony Lead to Mayhem**

Part of the honor debate requires an examination of its supporting tenets in society. For systems in which honor is a core component, the loyalty of the individual becomes a commodity.<sup>54</sup> This commodification leads to cultural concerns about loyalty to authority figures. For example, as seen in *Chūshingura* and *Fuenteovejuna*, an underlying dramatic catalyst is an authority figure who has caused harm to his subjects, which cascades into other broken and reformed loyalty bonds among subordinates and superiors. As previously referenced in Chapter 1, there are several literary interpretations for the term honor, although in the context of this section, the understanding of *honor* (and *honra*) follow the definitions discussed by Bruce Wardropper. Wardropper explains that the social construction of *honor*, and the more passive *honra*, are drawn from the Aristotelian foundation of the theater and its imitation of life on stage as a high goal. *Honor* is something that is “bestowed,” while *honra* is instead something that is given. When considered within a cultural framework such as that of Edo Period Japan (江戸時代) or Golden Age Spain—*honra* is often the “word” used to describe what in modern terms could be understood to refer to the honor attributed to women, as in reputation. But many of the questions surrounding the social system of honor in kabuki and Spanish theater probe the

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<sup>54</sup> However, the reverse can also be true and it can also be argued that honor itself may initially be the commodity in this system as a way to ensure loyalty among members.

boundaries of masculine systems of authority and Confucian ideals of the “gentleman”— submission to father-figures, monarchs, religious institutions and even “heaven” itself.<sup>55</sup> The men and women of *Chūshingura* and *Fuenteovejuna* are justified in rejecting the spiritual authority *as well as* the legal authority of their rulers, because it is clear that these authority figures are not upholding the behaviors required of them to rule honorably. The prevalent theme of deception is also woven throughout *Yotsuya* and *El burlador*, and provides another means for scrutinizing contemporary culture. Deception in *Yotsuya* and *El burlador* is not just a literary device; the consequences faced by those who engage in deception in both plays are didactic, as they demonstrate to the audience the disastrous consequences for the cultural transgressors. Deception is integral to stagecraft. Part of the appeal of the theme of deception is that it captures a social fear within patriarchal societies—fear of women’s infidelity and their lack of deference to male control, especially in comparison to Eve or Izanami, both of whom are prototypical female figures present in both religious narratives in Japan and Spain. Both plays use the scenario of the “sexual deception” of women and their perceived (dis)loyalty to their male authority figures to explore “the weaknesses” of the human spirit. This focus on the sexual deception of women as a literary device highlights the most intimate ways in which the male villains, Iemon and Don Juan, also betray their monarchs by subverting the power invested in them as religious and political figures. Unlike the *ronin* or peasants who are wrenched apart due to circumstances caused by their loyalty, Iemon and Don Juan take interest in quickly cutting the bond between man and wife whenever convenient, and in the process, flout the rules perpetuated by religious and governing bodies.

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<sup>55</sup> This mirrors the decision to divorce or break up a marriage in which two people have been spiritually and legally bound together. See Laurel Cornell’s “Peasant Women and Divorce in Preindustrial Japan” (1990) for more context about marriage and divorce debates in Japan.

Catholic Golden Age Spain and Neo-Confucian/Buddhist Tokugawa Japan established strict official state religions as a part of the cultural education of their citizens. These religious bodies also created protocols for controlling the behavior of the populace and could support, or hinder, the power of the monarchy.<sup>56</sup> Although these institutions exert control within society, they are in turn also influenced by their participants as social expectations regarding gender and political roles naturally wax and wane over time. Despite this flexibility, women remained at a political disadvantage within both Spain and Japan as honor culture designated them as property and sabotaged their efforts to gain more power until later centuries.<sup>57</sup> Divorces were possible in Japan, but less so in Spain, where debates about the validity of marriages were of greater interest. Evidence of these debates about marriage and loyalty can be found in both plays, and ultimately, marriage is rarely depicted as a “sacred” rite but rather as another arena to gain power as all characters involve flouting rules and a jostle for power.

Different versions of *Yotsuya Kaidan* have altered the initial relationship between Iemon and Oiwa and the circumstances of their marriage. In some versions, Oiwa’s father has learned of her husband’s disloyalty to his master (by refusing to join the other ronin of *Chūshingura* in

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<sup>56</sup> For more information on the religious power of the Catholic Church and its links to empire, social controversy and colonialism during this period see “The ‘False Chronicles’, Cardinal Baronio, and Sacred History in Counter-Reformation Spain” by Katrina Olds (2014), “Aspectos de la Historiografía Moderna. Milicia, Iglesia y Seguridad.” by Madgalena de Pazzis Pi Corrales (2016), and “‘Exempt from time and from its fatal change’: Spanish imperial ideology, 1450–1700” by Eva Botella-Ordinas (2012). *From Sovereign to Symbol* (2011) by Thomas Conlan is an excellent resource for further information about the power of the Bakufu and Buddhism in Edo Period Japan. Fumio Tamamuro details the way in which the bakufu also send the temple system to suppress Christianity in the article “Local Society and the Temple-Parishioner Relations within the Bakufu’s Governance Structure” (2001).

<sup>57</sup> See *The Social and Gender Politics of Confucian Nationalism: Women and the Japanese Nation-State* by Nicole Freiner (2012) for more information on the dynamic roles of women in politics.

taking revenge, and eventually soliciting work from his master's enemy), and "calls her home" to remain with him (the initial beginning of divorce). Iemon kills his father-in-law for this offense as well as to cover the secret that Iemon is also stealing from his lord. This betrayal of Oiwa, Lord Enya Hangan, and the murder of his father-in-law breaks many of the boundaries about filial piety set by Neo-Confucian rites and codified into Edo Period law.<sup>58</sup> The rules delineating the legal and spiritual obligations for maintaining social bonds also served the purpose of maintaining societal expectations and were thought to ensure political harmony around the shogun.

At the start of the play, Oiwa's desire to marry Iemon against her father's wishes provides the first of several examples of unfilial behavior that are presented to the audience. This particular example includes Iemon's behavior against his former Lord, Oiwa's against her father, and Samon's betrayal of Oiwa. Samon, Oiwa's father, explains when arguing with his former son-in-law, "Oiwa was bad, of course, to have married you of her own accord, without my consent. Though I let her go her own way that time, I can't bear you now...anyway, I can't have my daughter married to a thief" (11).<sup>59</sup> Iemon also uses Oiwa's desire to regain her father's favor to his advantage when Oiwa discovers her father has been murdered. Formally, since the marriage contract was in the process of being broken, Iemon is under no obligation to help Oiwa or their son financially or emotionally. Against her better judgement, she trusts Iemon with the revenge of her father, but only after she and her sister decide to commit suicide

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<sup>58</sup> For more on Edo period law see Harald Fuess's *Divorce in Japan: Family, Gender and the State, 1600-2000* (2004).

<sup>59</sup> In this version from 1948, Samon makes it clear to Iemon that he is aware of Iemon's past as a failed retainer, and that he specifically wants to cut ties because of this final act of disloyalty (stealing from one's lord) and out of interest in his harm of Oiwa.



as a way to regain some of their social standing. Iemon prevents her suicide attempt by placating Oiwa with a reminder of her obligation to defer to his will: "Osode [her younger sister] has got reasons to die, for she has lost both her father and husband, But, as for you, Oiwa, it'll be against your duty to your **husband** [emphasis mine] if you kill yourself....We've not yet been formally divorced. So your father's enemy is mine too" (Nanboku 45). Iemon then uses this appeal to the women to remember their marriage bonds to encourage Osode unknowingly to marry the murderer of her husband, Naosuke. He argues that this marriage would allow her to "succeed in avenging" her father's death despite her protests that it would be against her duty as a wife to take a second husband. This action mirrors the debate between the lovers Konami and Rikiya in *Chūshingura*. In this case, the desires of the individuals are trumped by the obligation of the children to follow the wishes of their family and preserve their honor. Yet, instead of rejecting these advances, the marriage process, and the loyalty it is supposed to represent, are juxtaposed with the loyalty of other bonds. Osode and Oiwa have ignored the better judgement elicited by their father in order to place their trust wrongfully in figures who have demonstrated that they are not acting with honorable intent. The deceptive use of marriage as a quick-fix for resolving honor is inverted here.

The ease that Iemon displays when it comes to exchanging his wife Oiwa for the young Oume demonstrates a lack of interest in preserving the filial bonds between husband and wife within marriage. Oume's family quickly proposes marriage to Iemon as a way to cure the lovesick young maiden, by claiming "We'd gladly let her serve you as a mistress if we were of the merchant class. But, as we are of the samurai, it'll be so disgraceful-----" (Nanboku 59). In addition to promising the young maiden to Iemon, they first present him with bowls of valuable gold coins, which causes speculation on the part of the audience. Is Iemon really interested in

the young maiden, or, is this an attempt to profit financially? Regardless of the answer, Iemon quickly divorces Oiwa, and refuses to warn her that the present the neighbors sent her contained a disfiguring poison. His capriciousness stands in contrast to the broken bonds between husband and wife in *Chūshingura*, who are tragically separated by the need to take revenge on behalf of the lord who supported them. While saddened by the death of their male family members, the women of *Chūshingura* understand that they, too, are making a sacrifice by supporting their men in battle. Part of this sacrifice is expected of them as members of samurai households, yet marriage in *Yotsuya* is broken for personal gain, whether financial, social or personal. To be dishonorable is to willfully break these social and “natural” bonds created to maintain order in society. Within this context, men such as Iemon, who deliberately break even the most intimate of bonds, cannot be trusted within a collectivist society that relies on their loyalty to the preservation of the households they create and support. Iemon’s unwillingness to protect Oiwa and respect the boundaries of his current marriage bring about the destruction of Oume’s family as well as his own. Yet, deception and the consequences of transgressing, by stepping outside the boundaries of marriages for one’s personal gain, are not restricted just to works within the Japanese kabuki tradition.

Recent studies of Tirso de Molina’s interpretation of the Don Juan “myth” note that Tirso seems to be the most critical about lying in order to engage in the rite of “marriage”. Many of these arguments note that Don Juan promises to marry each of the women he sexually deceives before they “give in” to his advances, enticing the women into a sacrament that he will break. In this sense, he is taking advantage of women who believe that he will in fact marry them in order to make their coupling valid in the eyes of society and the Church. Enrique Vivó de Undabarrena argues that this criticism can even be found in the perversion of matrimonial

gestures that form many of Don Juan's subtle attempts to gain sexual access to the women around him. For example, the repeated emphasis on the joining of hands as a sign of trust mirrors the same gesture found within Catholic marriage rites.<sup>60</sup> Ironically, it is this same gesture which Don Gonzalo performs in the final act of the play to condemn Don Juan to the fires of hell, and not the "fires" of passion.

In this case, the term deception highlights that the villains are men who willfully encourage women to become unchaste, and worse, engage in adultery by betraying the will of their male authority figures. Iemon and Don Juan's capriciousness serve as a potential warning for those in power who are quick to take advantage of changing social roles to advance their own desires. Only Doña Ana and Oíwa appear to see through the deception, although arguably not before it is too late. The problem is not just sexual activity, but the inherent disloyalty (and dishonoring) of the women of these plays within a patriarchal system. In both plays, the susceptibility of women to fall into these "traps" is provided as justification to keep them out of civic duties and to consolidate power around male figureheads off stage. Ironically, it is the men within the plays that do the most damage toward marriage and other supporting state institutions. Yet while other canonical plays explore these themes with the hope of providing moral models of aspiration for audiences, no such hope is provided to the women and men of these plays who are more easily corrupted and flawed. Despite these moral failings in being deceived by the words of a suave lover, or in remaining loyal to a disloyal husband, only the victims are given a

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<sup>60</sup> Undabarrena also explores the concept of valid and non-valid marriages, in part by drawing on texts and Tirso's familiarity with the recommendations and reforms which resulted from the Council of Trent. The proliferation of these documents and extensive controversy around the validity of marriage, sex and power reveal a very complex debate which sought to preserve not just the will of the Church as a powerful institution, but also to protect the assets of men and women and preserve social order.

second chance to redeem their honor, and it is questionable if they have “learned” from the experience at all.

The comparison of loyalty and disloyalty to one’s lord, and the honor of maintaining loyalty or disloyalty in marriage also highlights the unequal divide in the social power held by women and men at the time. In Edo period Japan and Golden Age Spain, women were at risk of exploitation due to their secondary status within the social hierarchy, regardless of their social caste. As Sekiguchi explains:

The latent power of the women of the highest social strata was an open secret in Edo. Women of the Tokugawa period are usually imagined as weak and submissive on the evidence of such texts as the *Onna Daigaku* (Great Learning for Women). However, if one takes a closer look at the *goshuden* and *osumai*, at least, a marked contrast between these texts and reality becomes apparent. In fact, representations of strong women began to proliferate in texts of the late Tokugawa period. At the same time, strong women were made the targets of scorching critiques. (Sekiguchi 212)

In this cultural context, women become symbolic vessels and semi-public representations of the family (male) honor. The disloyalty to the smallest unit of the system, the family, reveals a disloyalty that could manifest as disloyalty to the state and crown. These fears related to disloyalty are also linked to a larger campaign Sekiguchi notes, to disenfranchise women and remove their connections to men in power. Fueled in part by popular media during the period, the development of counter-images, in the form of *Oiwa* and others, explores this reaction to fears of what Sekiguchi terms “female power.”<sup>61</sup> Sekiguchi elaborates:

Webster’s dictionaries were being used in great numbers as well. Since these two dictionary projects had influenced each other through mutual competition, they shared

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<sup>61</sup> Sekiguchi notes that the “elimination of the power of women presented a just cause regardless of whether one looked upon it in the light of the Confucian Classics or that of the ‘learning of the West’” (Sekiguchi 217). In this context, men in power sought to find ways to exclude women from positions of power by using reasoning drawn from both Eastern and Western philosophical sources.

many similarities. The term gynecocracy is listed in both of them, in addition to such related terms as ‘gynarchy’ and ‘gyneocracy’. Entering Japan as part of the new knowledge from the West, this term appears to have met with great interest. It reverberated with the sarcasm and the ridicule with which involvement of women in government had been looked upon in the West since the Greeks. But it also reflected a mounting concern with the rights of women in Britain and America at the time. (Sekiguchi 217)

The imposition of modernization as outlined by Western powers, along with domestic attempts to consolidate power, caused more conservative imperialists to use these terms as a way to justify the need to “protect” women further, not as individuals, but as property and moralized manifestations of male honor and control.<sup>62</sup> The fact that Oiwa, her sister Osode and many others come from high-ranking social backgrounds (samurai families), does not protect them from harm, or guarantee that the men in positions of authority within their lives will uphold their duty to be honorable. Nanboku’s covert criticism highlights the limited means women had within these systems to protect themselves from the predators who attempt to work the system in their favor. Sekiguchi and other scholars make it clear that there were still limits to this subversion—“The significance of this change [an increase in strong female characters in kabuki and novellas] was severely limited to be sure. Strong women were in demand only if they conformed to the system. Strength in women was praised only as long as it served the rule of men. But what about strong women who did not meet this condition?” (Sekiguchi 214).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> For a perspective which highlights the important ways in which women fought back against religious narratives which sought to subjugate them, see *Women in Japanese Religions* (2015) by Barbara Ambros.

<sup>63</sup> Sekiguchi explains: “Though the imperial restorationists reached further power during the Meiji Restoration, it should be stated that these concepts and illusions to the *Iching* and other classical Chinese texts were still the basis of Neo-Confucian thought that influenced the creation of the original play in 1825. With the ‘Renovation of Imperial Rule’ (*osei goisshin*), the Tokugawa lost their power and surrendered Edo to the restorationist forces. The emperor and his court were moved from the imperial palace in Kyoto to Edo castle, and Edo was renamed Tokyo” (216).

A similar cultural shift to more interpersonal plays which highlight the conflicts within households can also be found in Tirso de Molina's creation of Don Juan. While the depiction of the dead and the afterlife on stage are well represented throughout the Spanish medieval period, particularly in the form of religious plays, Golden Age Spanish authors brought to the stage more contemporary depictions of these social concerns and figures in anachronistic settings.<sup>64</sup> From the opening scenes in which Don Juan assaults the Duchess Isabela by pretending to be her lover, he reveals to the audience the fact that he, like Oiwa's husband and the disgraced ronin Iemon, enjoys the chaos and deception that he causes others, particularly by targeting women, of all social stations. The shift in this case to highlighting the aggressor, instead of more saintly depictions, is also an intriguing way of centering the dramatic attention on the "rogue" and eventually on the punishment he will receive for his evil actions. Like Oiwa, the women of *El convidado* are flawed by the social standards of Golden Age Spanish society – the Duchess Isabela retains a lover, and the less noble women and peasants are easily charmed by Don Juan's promises of marriage. Despite these flaws, Tirso de Molina still presents the women as worthy of protection and a happy resolution to the disgrace they suffer (despite how readily they fell into the "burlas" set by Don Juan). This also arguably describes the trend noted by Vivó de Undabarrena—Tirso has a habit of creating "dishonored women" who are not "desechos morales (*immoral outcasts/waste*). A veces son extraordinarias figuras de mujer, que han sucumbido ante la fuerza del amor, no por específica debilidad de su sexo, sino por la natural flaqueza humana u

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<sup>64</sup> For more information on the rhetoric and traditions of *auto sacramentales* see, for example, numerous works by Ignacio Arellano and J. Enrique Duarte, including their book *El auto sacramental* (2003).

otras circunstancias exteriores” (Vivo de Undabarrena 330).<sup>65</sup> The fault is not that of the women for giving into the sexual advances, so much as of the men who tempt them with false promises of marriage and loyalty. This is not to say that the women are not responsible for their own transgressions, and indeed, many within *El burlador* suffer for the role they play in creating their own “deceptions.” This line of thought also supports some of the earlier social myths or assumptions that women are inherently corruptible. However, Elizabeth Rhodes provides a contrasting opinion:

...The cleansing ritual in which *El burlador* appears to culminate is relative at best, for Don Juan's crimes against society are merely exaggerated enactments of the perversion practiced by the very individuals who suffer his *burlas* (Wardropper 1973). Royal and familial authorities wink repeatedly at his excesses, and women's failure to guard the fortresses of their virginity invites his trespass of their bodies...although Don Juan's violations are extremely powerful and threatening, and although they open the portals of hell itself, they are by no means original, rather are merely aggrandized paraphrases of his victims' own, if lesser, moral shortcomings. (Rhodes 274)

Like the protagonists of *El burlador*, the protagonists of *Yotsuya Kaidan* are flawed and prone to accepting or being fooled by deception due to a love of material goods or generally due to an overreliance on the human-created realm. Although she is presented as a faithful wife, Oiwa initially upsets her father by insisting on marrying the ronin Iemon without his permission. Her father Samon refuses to tell his daughter that the reason he insisted on forcing her to separate from Iemon, despite her pregnancy, was that he realized that Iemon subsisted upon money stolen from Iemon's lord (Enya Hangan). Oume, a young woman, lusts after Iemon, and her grandmother and father (Yumi and Kihei) conspire to help Iemon poison Oiwa so they can be

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<sup>65</sup> My translation: “Sometimes they are extraordinary figures of women, who have succumbed to the force of love, not because of specific weakness of their sex, but because of natural human weakness or other external circumstances.”

married. Naosuke, Iemon's brother-in-law, teams up with Iemon to kill Osode's (Oiwa's sister) husband Yomoshichi. Osode turns to prostitution after becoming destitute, and her husband Yomoshichi is unable to gain revenge for his lord's death and neglects to take care of his own vendetta and household. His financial neglect is the impetus that forces Osode into prostitution, when her pride causes her to hide her poverty from her father and sister Oiwa.

Within these plays, marriage should not be considered the institution or the action that is being condemned. Instead, both playwrights remind audiences that they have a responsibility to consider the larger social role that marriage plays in supporting the bonds of Japanese and Spanish culture. As a marker of familial loyalty and a public declaration of financial and social connections, the microcosm of "the marriage," and the support it offers, become an allegory for other social bonds between "master and lord" or among nobles, and a way of exploring the uncertainties around the maintenance of honor and individual responsibilities.

### **Iemon and Don Juan: Hyper-individualists in Collectivist Societies**

While born into different socio-political contexts, the models of masculinity in Spain and Japan share similar traits. Part of what makes Iemon and Don Juan such effective villains is the fact that they are the hyper-individualist ideal of masculinity in their respective cultures. During periods of intense social reorganization and debate over the components of femininity, similar conversations existed in exploring the elements of masculinity. While they have been called "devilish" or have other similarly hellish terms used to describe them, Iemon and Don Juan reveal a cultural anxiety about the role of men who are feeling abandoned by a society in flux. Iemon and Don Juan represent an extreme version of the definitions of masculinity that are supported by the status quo, to the point that their pathological quest for wealth, power, and honor reveals two antagonists who take particular delight in gaining access to power through



transgressive acts.<sup>66</sup> The constant push toward transgression takes a turn toward engaging in acts of evil, including behaviors that could be considered blasphemous toward the religious institutions of their respective cultures, the Catholic Church for Don Juan, and Neo-Confucian Buddhist rites for Iemon, for their own personal gain. Not only do they no longer pledge loyalty to their kings and lords, they even fail to recognize the hierarchy of the heavens, leading to a mutual refusal to “reap what they sow” (*quien tal hace, que tal pague* and 自業自得 *jigōjitoku* in Spanish and Japanese), which would resonate as iconic messages that appear in later adaptations of both plays.

The existence of these refrains in both cultures, examined in terms of honor in both plays, reveals a similar concern for two nations that are re-inventing themselves in the face of a new era of social and political readjustment. If individuals refuse to be held responsible for the consequences of their actions, so will the nation be, if unaware of the consequences of unrestricted consumption and capriciousness. The taboos both men break can be categorized into several groups: sexual taboos (against norms regarding gender/sexuality involving women), institutional-political taboos (disloyalty to leadership), and religious taboos (rejection of the heavenly hierarchy). Each category of taboo is rooted in destroying the honor of the victim, while allowing the “devilish rogue” to engage in unrestricted activities. Their activities are a subversion of honor, in the sense that honor must be collectively maintained and participatory.

Rhodes explains that the first *burla* of *El burlador* is significant not just for its opening deception of the duchess, but also because it reveals Don Juan’s ability to manipulate the various

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<sup>66</sup> For more information on other masculine gender models, see “Beyond Don Juan: Rethinking Iberian Masculinities” (2012) by Mary Newman, Ángels Carabí and Josep Armengol.

strengths of hyper-masculinity for his benefit. Don Juan's "enactment of archetypal masculinity, evident in his proper submission to authority at key moments, his persistent valor, and his sexual prowess, win the admiration of other characters, empower him, and thus enable his progressive scaling of social offense...The trickster had made royal impotence painfully apparent not only by bedding the Duquesa Isabela [in the palace], but by bringing to light the fact that she was actually expecting another man to manifest the same King's lack of control" (Rhodes 277). In contrast to Konami, the faithful daughter of the hero Honzo of *Chūshingura*, Isabela's dishonesty directly contradicts with the mantra Honzo gives his daughter "man cannot serve two masters, as a woman cannot serve two husbands [emphasis mine]". In this context, Iemon and Don Juan appear to be "devilish rogues" due to emphasis on their use of cleverness to trick and harm others, and a pathological insistence on breaking the status quo. Both men take active delight in murder, taboos, and other social transgressions while assuming that they are above retaliation. They break from the collective loyalty and bonds of their respective cultures, and instead, provide different stages of warning as examples of the failures of hyper-individualism. For example, Don Juan's need for punishment by Heaven is the ultimate consequence for his impulsive nature and actions. Suave and mired in greed, he uses his cleverness for "burlas" (the seduction of women by pretending to be interested in them long-term, or by impersonating their lovers) to break the status quo throughout the play, to the point of being exiled from Sevilla for his constant harassment of women. Iemon also reveals from the start of his play that his life has fallen apart due to this own greed and cowardice, plunging the audience right into the action of his misdeeds. Various forms of foreshadowing often linked to the rogue archetype make the audiences of both plays aware that each man will be forced to later account for his wickedness, especially toward the women he victimizes. The constant rejection of previous systems of loyalty

in favor of selfishness and self-interest unite both these men, who find themselves in societies which are quickly modernizing. Don Juan later appeals to blood ties and appears to be willing to “pay for his misdeeds”, leading to what Rhodes calls a refined “performance of the ideal Man: [Don Juan] is eloquent, intelligent, his boldness incites admiration in all, and his sexual engine is the envy of the patriarchy and matriarchy alike [as a member of the male elite] (Rhodes 278). This contrasts with Don Gonzalo, who ultimately is presented as one of the few ideal “men” in the text.

In one of the most iconic scenes of *El burlador*, Don Juan and his servant Catalinón are walking through a churchyard while discussing Don Juan’s most recent conquests. While he has “fled” the consequences from his victims, it is clear that his religious surroundings would not stop Don Juan from discussing his next sexual conquests. The irony is clear, for instead of seeking shelter in the church in repentance for his crimes, he uses the location as a place to pursue his own desires. As stated earlier, his belief that “que tan largo me lo fiais” influences his perspective and world view. After noticing a large statue, Don Juan asks his servant about the man it depicts and Catalinón responds that the statue is of Don Gonzalo Ulloa (murdered by Don Juan). The King requested that the statue be built with an inscription: “Here lies (awaits) the Lord’s most loyal Knight (for) revenge against a traitor.” Throughout the play, Don Juan takes refuge in his charm as a true *caballero* or gentleman, despite his actions which reveal him to have few, if any, noble traits. The inscription, like the stone statue, stands in stark contrast to Don Juan’s false public “image” of himself as a *caballero*, with that of a true, loyal *caballero* (Don Gonzalo Ulloa) who has earned public recognition by the King in death, and as the plaque foreshadows, obtains religious favor to complete his revenge. The label of “traitor” takes on a religious connotation as Don Juan provides the ultimate contrast to the loyal knight Don Gonzalo

Ulloa, who is concerned with protecting his daughter and ultimately the religious righteousness of the natural order according to the social norms of the time period. Don Juan mocks the inscription, stating that the revenge has been long coming [if Gonzalo Ulloa was going to achieve it] and that it is important that he does remain asleep [ironic, since he is in his eternal “sleep”]. If Don Gonzalo is waiting to seek his revenge while dead, then it is best that he loses hope that he will achieve this because/ satisfying his rage and desire for revenge will be a long time coming”.

JUAN: ¿Qué sepulcro es éste?

CATALINÓN : Aquí con Gonzalo está enterrado.

JUAN: Éste es a quien muerte di. Gran sepulcro le han labrado.

CATALINÓN: Ordenólo el rey así. ¿Cómo dice este letrado?

JUAN: "Aquí aguarda del Señor el más leal caballero la venganza de un traidor." Del mote reírme quiero. Y, ¿habéis vos de vengar, buen viejo, barbas de piedra?

CATALINÓN: No se las podrá pelar quien barbas tan fuertes medra.

JUAN: Aquesta noche a cenar os aguardo en mi posada; allí el desafío haremos, si la venganza os agrada, aunque mal reñir podremos, si es de piedra vuestra espada.

CATALINÓN: Ya, señor, ha anochecido, vámonos a recoger.

JUAN: Larga esta venganza ha sido; si es que vos la habéis de hacer, importa no estar dormido, que si a la muerte aguardáis la venganza, la esperanza agora es bien que perdáis, pues vuestro enojo, y venganza, tan largo me lo fiáis. (62)<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Translation (mine):

JUAN: What [whose] tomb is this?

CATALINÓN: Here, [Don] Gonzalo is buried.

JUAN: This is the man I murdered. What a great tomb they have carved for him.

CATALINÓN: As ordered by the King. What does the sign say?

JUAN: "Here, protected by the Lord and in await of revenge, lies the most loyal Knight [in revenge of a traitor]." The nickname cracks me up. And, My Good Old Man, Stone Beard, have you been avenged?

CATALINÓN: One cannot shave the beard of he whose beard grows so strong [a pun on the concept of strength and growth of a stone beard, and will].

JUAN: Tonight I will await you at my inn for dinner; there we will duel, if revenge pleases you,

Despite Don Juan's belief that he will have more time to deal with the consequences of his deception of others, he finds that his day of reckoning is closer than he anticipated when the stone "guest" Don Gonzalo later appears and joins the two men for a silent and unnerving dinner. After the dinner, Don Gonzalo issues his own invitation to Don Juan and Catalinón. This dinner presents an intriguing contrast to the previous one hosted by Don Juan, in which he attempts to present the "niceties" he has acquired as a gentleman, causing one of the servants at the inn to exclaim that he is a true gentleman of "good taste." In contrast to this dinner celebrating the realm of the human world and its materiality, the dinner hosted by Don Gonzalo takes place in a tomb, with furniture built from materials used to design crypts. The dinner he offers Don Juan and Catalinón is acerbic and symbolic; the meal consists of vipers, scorpions, and vinegar in place of meats and wine, and the men are serenaded by a chorus (presumably of the damned) singing songs about heavenly retribution instead of the frivolities of a life of leisure.<sup>68</sup> Don Gonzalo reveals his true intention in inviting Don Juan to dinner, and inverts the "fire" (associated with Don Juan's fiery lust) into the light and fire of hell, as he reminds Don Juan that the time has come for him to pay for his misdeeds:

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although what a bad row we will have, if your sword is of stone.

CATALINÓN: Hey, sir, it has become dark, let's get out of here.

JUAN: What a long this revenge has been; if you are going to do it, it is important not to be asleep, that if you wait for revenge in your death, hope. It is good that you will lose, because I trust that your anger, and revenge, will be a long time coming.

<sup>68</sup>Lines from the chorus of the damned include: "Adviertan los que de Dios juzgan los castigos tarde, que no hay plazo que no llegue ni deuda que no se pague" and "Mientras en el mundo viva, no es justo que diga nadie qué largo me lo fiáis siendo tan breve el cobrarse" (76). I translate both phrases as "Observe, those who [assume] that from God's judgements, punishments come late, there is no deadline that does not arrive or debt that is not paid" and "While in the world of the living, it is not fair to tell anyone 'I have time, trust me' while being so short on settling claims".

Aquéste es poco para el fuego que buscaste.  
Las maravillas de Dios son, don Juan,  
investigables, y así quiere que tus culpas a manos de un muerto pagues, y así pagas de  
esta suerte las doncellas que burlaste. Ésta es justicia de Dios, quien tal hace, que tal  
pague. (77)<sup>69</sup>

In this line, the mention of justice is crucial. Don Gonzalo makes it clear that this is not just an act of revenge, but instead a rebalancing of the natural and heavenly order. He is an agent of heaven who is acting on behalf of God to gain justice for the women Don Juan harmed. Don Juan initially attempts to fight back, he tries to placate Don Gonzalo by claiming “A tu hija no ofendí, que vio mis engaños antes” (77), the implication being that because his tricks were not successful, that no harm was caused (ignoring the fact that he killed Don Gonzalo during the attempt). Don Gonzalo is unmoved, and reminds Don Juan that in the eye of heaven, the success of the trick does not matter because he made his *attempt* at deception clear.

Don Gonzalo Ulloa makes the major sin and reason for justice clear—although Don Juan is responsible for Don Gonzalo Ulloa’s murder, it will be by his hand that God will punish Don Juan for his sins against women, and ultimately, for his refusal to respect the rules of the natural world. Just the intent of harm is worthy of this poetic punishment and Don Juan pays with his life. The repetition of terms such as debts, payment, and other transaction-related language also reveals the power structure around the honor transference and the public nature of honor and violence. As the hellish chorus is reaffirmed for Don Juan, there are always mortal

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<sup>69</sup> Translation: “This is little for the fire you sought. The wonders of God are, Don Juan, inscrutable, and so, He wants your faults to be paid through the hands of a deadman, and so it is fate that you pay for the maidens that you mocked. This is the justice of God, whoever does it, so they will pay.

consequences for choosing only to consider the pleasures of the material world of humans, a world associated with deception, and to put off the long-term considerations of morality.

As with the world of *El burlador*, *Yotsuya Kaidan* presents its audience with a complex interpersonal web of pride and desire. To highlight moral themes to come within the story, references to hell and damnation are numerous. In the initial acts, the name of the “massage parlor” where Osode works is nick-named “hell”, there she and several clients make puns referencing the Sanzu river (similar to the river Styx). Later, audiences will view stagecraft spectacles which associate Oiwa with blood and fire, including the now iconic image of Oiwa stepping out of a burning lantern to haunt Iemon. One of the most pivotal scenes of the play foreshadows Oiwa’s concern not just for her own safety and her attempts to wait for Iemon to avenge her father’s death (at the hands of “robbers”), but also her desire to protect her newborn son. During this scene in the third act, Iemon has been slowly poisoning Oiwa shortly after the birth of their son with a medicine developed by Kihei and Yumi to make her “feel better.” The medicine causes her to retreat from light (literally and figuratively) and eventually, will deform her face, a process which she describes as a “burning sensation.” Over time, Oiwa has grown weaker and soon explains to Iemon: “I know I’m to die in very short time. Life isn’t dear for me, but my soul won’t rest in peace for love of this baby” (3). Instead of comforting her, Iemon decides to drop his charade in order to be as cruel as possible to Oiwa, to convince her to divorce him or hasten her death. He matter-of-factly tells her “of course I will [marry again after her death]” “you want me to help you in avenging your father? I won’t. I said I would but I’ve changed my mind” (3). To add further insult, he then proceeds to strip Oiwa of her clothing and the few belongings she has yet to sell, including a comb given to her by her mother, to pawn them because “[my] sweetheart asks me to buy her a comb.” His callous rampage finally ends

once he takes away the mosquito net protecting the baby's crib, while Oiwa sobs. As a final blow before the act ends, Iemon attempts to have their servant Taku assault Oiwa in order to ruin her reputation as a faithful wife. Taku refuses to complete the act and instead reveals the entire plan to Oiwa, including fetching a mirror so she can see the effect of the poison on her face, leading to the now famous moment in which Oiwa's hair begins to fall out while she combs it. What should have been a moment in which Oiwa engages in a ritual of beautification, becomes a moment in which Oiwa observes the putrefaction of her own body. As she looks at her comb, she explains:

OIWA: My mother gave this comb to me in her dying bed. I wish [for] my younger sister to use this for my memory...I'll comb my hair with this for the last time. I am to die, and Oume will marry my husband. Oh, how I resent Iemon. And, Kihei and his family too ---. I'll never let them live on in peace.

TAKU: Why, the fallen hair shed[s] blood... (3)<sup>70</sup>

Unexpectedly, Oiwa dies right after this moment, when she accidentally trips and falls upon the knife Taku used to threaten her. This officially begins her reign of terror, in which her ghost slaughters Oume, and her family, the Itos, person by person. Oiwa also assumes the form of a large rat in order to kidnap her infant son, who presumably dies. Unlike Don Juan, who is confronted only twice by the ghost of Don Gonzalo, Iemon is repeatedly haunted by Oiwa, who appears in his dreams and chases him through temples despite prayers to ward off her revenge. Her persistent quest for justice eventually drives Iemon mad, and pushes him to the point of complete financial destitution as he loses all forms of support, and his brother-in-law,

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<sup>70</sup> While this section is taken from an official English translation of a kabuki production of (presented by Somegoro, Moshio, Shikan, and Ebizo at Mitsukoshi Theatre from July, 1948) by the production company Shochiku, other versions of the play in Japanese also make reference to this exchange. See versions by Gunji Masakatsu (1993) and Nanboku Tsuruya (1981 reprint).



Yomoshichi, vows to kill him for harming Oiwa.<sup>71</sup> A shrine is eventually built to appease her ghost by the townspeople, and in front of this shrine, Oiwa orchestrates a final confrontation between Iemon and Yomoshichi, leading to Iemon's death and the repayment of justice for Oiwa in Iemon's blood. Her threat to see that the lineage of both the households of Kihei (Oume's family) and Iemon is destroyed, is fulfilled, and, her vengeful acts allow her brother-in-law to gain revenge on her behalf and for her father.

Oiwa gains more access to her victims than Don Gonzalo in the space of the "dream world." If one imagines that there is a permeable layer between the material, but "dream-like" world that Don Gonzalo fully inhabits, then there Oiwa takes her powers one step further and haunts Iemon in his dreams. In the occasional dream scenes in the play, Oiwa visits Iemon as an amorous version of her younger self to seduce and confront him. In a translation of "The Dream" by Paul Kennelly, the markers of summer and fall festivals (Tanabata and O-Bon) decorate the hut, providing context about the season (summer) and the liminal space of the dream-world, and the material-spiritual world Oiwa inhabits.<sup>72</sup> True to his insidious nature, Iemon is unable to resist flirting with the young "country-women" he has stumbled across during his search for his hunting hawk. As in *El burlador*, the concept of plenty and the graciousness of "invitation" and seduction are also prominent, as "Iwa," the young country maiden, accepts Iemon and his servant's offer to "celebrate" the seasons with food and drinks. After finding time

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<sup>71</sup> Depending on the version of the kabuki production, Oiwa appears as other lovers, during different seasons in his dream; this also includes Oiwa appearing as a giant rat to "eat" a letter of recommendation given to Iemon by another untrustworthy ronin, which foreshadows later events of the play.

<sup>72</sup> Tanabata and Obon are also cultural festivals associated with love and seduction, as well as the possibility of reunification with the deceased. The festivals are still celebrated toward the end of summer and into the fall, also marking a shift in the seasons, which is analogous to the shift in phases of life for humans.

to be alone, Iwa and Iemon exchange a series of lines from a famous collection of poems, with the subtext of fated lovers being reunited. This poem takes on a second meaning for the audience, who at this time, recognizes the ghost of Oiwa disguised as Iwa:

OIWA: Here is my name. [gives strip of Tanabata streamer to Iemon]

IEMON: This is a verse in the *One Hundred Poems* collection that is offered at the Tanabata Festival. ‘A rock dams the rapids ...’

OIWA: ‘And, after it divides the river, I know the two branches will meet again.’ Divided in the end. It is Tamiya whom I will meet

IEMON: Heavens! You sound just like the lunatic Oiwa that everyone’s gossiping about!

OIWA: I am called ‘Iwa,’ the same as the rock in the poem, and you must be the lover for whom I yearn!

IEMON: [has not caught on to the similarity yet] You’re’ the exact image of my wife, Oiwa, long ago when she was just a country girl...

OIWA: Separated by a rock I am your lover. From today...(151)

[Oiwa’s face appears in [a] basket and scares off the servant]

*“Iwa” and Iemon consummate their affair and after Oiwa scares off the servant, the two lovers begin to speak.*

OIWA: Just a moment, you are a handsome man, and since you had a wife called Oiwa, you must be merely flirting with me!

IEMON: No! Why should I flirt? Although I had a wife called Oiwa, she was an evil woman. I left her because she was a damned nasty case!

OIWA: (*Anguished*) Have you eternally forsaken your former wife, of whom you speak so spitefully, Iemon?

IEMON: Somehow your expression and that of Oiwa...

OIWA: Resemble each other? The light of the moon should guide me to Buddha’s paradise, but instead it chills like the vengeful face of Oiwa. But when tides of the same then pound the damning rock with pain from this world.

IEMON: Heavens! What did you say?

OIWA: Vengeance on Iemon! ...

IEMON: Has revenge completely possessed you?

OIWA: To hell you come, Tamiya!

IEMON: No way! (154)

Tanabata is a holiday associated in Japan with the unification of two lovers, represented by two major constellations whose paths cross the sky around this time in July, but here the poem's original celebratory meaning is subverted. Indeed, Iemon will cross paths with Oiwa again as he is fated to do so, and no prayers will stop her righteous fury.<sup>73</sup>

The relationship of gender and the supernatural to the concept of honor is complex. At the heart of these plays are men who have severely wronged the women in their lives, going so far as to harm them mentally and physically, providing justification for spiritual retribution in the afterlife for their blighted honor. For example, the transgression of familial ties and social treachery justifies the damnation of Iemon and Don Juan Tenorio, communicating that blasphemy against family, friendship and society is only rewarded with madness, hauntings and eventually death. The sins committed against the women of the plays serve to embody and communicate these social and moral ills, and show the divide between sacred and demonic spaces, the material world, and the world of the "senses", which can be full of deception and temptation. As will be explored in the next chapter, each of the stories presented contains various "twists" in which there are still opportunities for redemption. *El burlador* and *Yotsuya Kaidan* have legacies in adaptations, which reveal alternative endings for their devilish rogues that seem to offer space not just for redemption, but also sometimes, for sympathy. These reinterpretations can reveal the complex shifting social values behind the cultural preoccupations with honor, gender, and justice. These endings range from damnation, to more ambiguous

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<sup>73</sup> Oiwa's name is often written with the kanji for stone, perhaps suggesting that she will be just as stubborn as "stone" (difficult to move).

endings, offering scenes in which Iemon and Don Juan Tenorio see the errors of their ways, repent of their evils, and reach salvation. Despite these adaptations of recent years, the damnation ending still proves the most popular with modern audiences. Yet, the message at the core of both plays reveals a universal truth about the human condition-- the pursuit of illusion and deception in the human realm produces a temporary and unfulfilling life, and those who refuse to consider the “debts” they will have to pay, may be shocked by the “person” who is sent to collect the debt. Often, the ghostly figures who have claimed their revenge, are the ones who are sent to collect these mortal debts.

### **Poetic Justice and Social Pessimism**

While at first glance the differences in time and cultural context might seem great, I argue that the reliance on the supernatural and the consequences of sowing individual discord in collective societies unite these texts in critical conversation.<sup>74</sup> By using the term supernatural in this context, I am referring to a definition which emphasizes the spaces beyond the natural world physically sensed by these characters within the “world” of the play. Chikamatsu Monzaemon and other kabuki playwrights were especially interested in the use of the term *sekai* (world) to describe the “worlds” of the plays. Arguably, this fluidity allows for later adaptations of works to take place in the same “world” (or in English “Universe”) of these works. It also requires (assumes) that the audience viewing the works understands the ways in which these worlds intersect (especially in the case of Iemon); something similar was seen in the Spanish novel

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<sup>74</sup> Collectivism and individualism are terms which originated in Psychology and Sociology as a way of categorizing cultures which prioritize norms which place the perceived needs of the society over the individual wishes or welfare of an individual (and vice versa). See studies conducted by Hofstede (2001), as well as Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, & Gornik-Durose, (1999).

(*Don Quixote* etc.) and its use of external poetic references to connect figures and narratives.<sup>75</sup>

The ghosts of Don Gonzalo Ulloa and Oiwa become substitutes for the darker side of poetic justice. In *Chūshingura* and *Fuenteovejuna*, however, the justification to act violently toward one's superiors to protect one's honor is not heavily debated because it is clear that both parties are dishonored victims and the goal is to restore the status quo in a time of flux. The reflection of this violence in stagecraft and for narrative enhancement also reveals cultural conversations about the way the afterlife and the metaphysics of the natural world are brought to life on stage, and in some cases, even become part of the dramatic "mythos" of the play's protagonists.

Uniting both nations is the concept that the ghosts in these plays convey: the shared cultural message that they are able to subvert the larger karmic structure of "justice" in both nations' religious traditions. The popular depiction of Oiwa in Japan, and Don Gonzalo Ulloa in Spain, explores the notion that the dead may be allowed to speak for themselves with the approval of the supernatural realm, and that no evil deed goes unpunished (the trope of poetic justice). While it would be difficult to argue that either culture would present Oiwa or Don Gonzalo Ulloa as role models, or that it is moral to haunt one's enemies, this interpretation acknowledges the presence of similar traditions that satisfy the audience that justice will be served, and that the subversion of social taboos in order to right these wrongs is justified. Andrew Keitt has investigated the boundaries of these religious public and private spaces in Golden Age Spain, arguing that the constant negotiation between the "sacred," described as codified ritual endorsed by socio-political institutions, and the supernatural, magic or visions which were deemed

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<sup>75</sup> Sekai in this case refers to the concept of the "world" of a text (usually a play) within the kabuki tradition. To this end, many texts were said to take place in the world of famous works such as *Chūshingura* as a way of elaborating or expanding upon elements of the narrative, or in some cases, to capitalize off of the success of these works. See works by Kawatake Toshio for more on sekai.

demonic and illegitimate, was deemed particularly essential to baroque Catholic identity.<sup>76</sup> A similar argument can be made for the role of Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism, and Shintoism in Japanese religious life during a different, but similar time period during the unification of Japan. In both folk and sociopolitical traditions, women are more closely linked to the supernatural than men, and often gain social recognition for their role in manipulating or being manipulated by the spiritual world beyond the material world experienced by humans.<sup>77</sup> The elites of Edo Period Japan also documented consistent religious and socio-political concerns about the best methods for dividing sacred from profane spaces, both at home as well as in cities. This division even extends to the interior of the individual (*hone*—private feelings and desires, *tatemaie*—public behavioral performances), as well as class distinctions between those with special status (elites) and other groups such as the burakumin, who were considered an untouchable-like caste. Although women were initially considered to be “profane” in Shinto and certain Buddhist sects, they were allowed some power and the ability to gain further social respect. These positive roles include acting as mediums within folk traditions, or more formally as Christian or Buddhist nuns or Shinto priestesses.

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<sup>76</sup> Keitt’s perspective is one that mirrors concerns about purity and sanctity seen in cultures such as Shinto (Japan). Spanish philosophers, such as the eighteenth-century scholar Benito Jerónimo Feijóo, as a scholar working under the power of the Spanish Inquisition in the eighteenth century, later documented these differences. “Cartas eruditas y curiosas” (Carta XX: Reflexiones críticas sobre las dos Disertaciones, que en orden a Apariciones de Espíritus, y los llamados Vampiros, dio a luz poco há el célebre Benedictino, y famoso Expositor de la Biblia D. Agustín Calmet 1753), while also offering spaces for supernatural occurrences which would still affirm canonical Church doctrine. His observations also represent the cultural and philosophical shifts occurring in Spain during its Enlightenment period. In addition, similar literary and philosophical explorations of the afterlife and its links to choices made by the living can be traced to “The Myth of Er” from Plato’s *Republic* as well as the epic poem *Dante’s Inferno* by Dante Alighieri.

<sup>77</sup> For more information on women in Shinto see works by Karen Smyers (1983).

The influences of Neo-Confucian Buddhist Rites also affected women in Japan, by creating a similar dichotomy which controlled their public and private participation in religious rituals, and that fostered the assumption that sins committed in the human world would be paid for in the next. Allan Grapard argues for a syncretic interpretation of the contradictory prominence of women in religious spaces in Japan during this time period. In his exploration of the *Kojiki* (c.725), Grapard argues that trends in scholarship tended to “separate folk religion from the elite tradition found in these [national] myths” (Grapard 4). In his exploration and critique of a rigid three-world layer model (of which Japanese religious tradition mirrors the three-layered model espoused by the Catholic Church, although this was developed independently from Judeo-Christian traditions), Grapard describes a “realm beyond” which is normally considered inaccessible for those who are not part of a shamanistic tradition. Instead of a rigid model, Grapard states that these religious spaces are “mental maps of the sacred...a blueprint for the spatial manifestation of social power and its codification that is inscribed on bodies at the time of ritual” (Grapard 6). This scholarship suggests that the link between women and the supernatural is one that is long-standing and offers space for the continued exploration of the tropes which both support the use of miracles and women, or condemn these women as witches, heretics or demons.<sup>78</sup> Despite this initial dichotomy however, complex characters such

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<sup>78</sup> Grapard cites the creation myth of Japan as a way of understanding the manner in which social constructs placed on mythical/supernatural bodies correspond to ritual code in Japan. The gods Izanami (female) and Izanagi (male) mate and produce an island that was “thrown away” because Izanami “spoke first” (to invite Izanagi to sleep with her). The main island of Japan, Honshu, is the production of their second night together, which was deemed appropriate because Izanagi invited Izanami to join him first. Also see his text *Japan's Ignored Cultural Revolution: the Separation of Shinto and Buddhist Divinities in Meiji* for more information about the ways in which these folk traditions deviated under pressure of modernism.

as Oiwa challenge the notion of woman as corrupt, and instead support a feminized evil power which produces a different connection between women and violence for this time.

*Yotsuya Kaidan* and *El convidado* highlight the pleasure of working in the darkness for the sake of revenge and righteousness.<sup>79</sup> Paul Kennelly notes that the initial production (1825) of *Yotsuya Kaidan* was shown along with *Chūshingura* which “allow[ed] audiences to contrast world[s] of dark and light: the newer play’s representations of ghosts and grim lower-class life were set against the aristocratic heroics of Japan’s outstanding vendetta play....If *Loyal Retainers* epitomized feudal loyalty, *Ghost Stories at Yotsuya* treated this ethic as irrelevant if not abhorrent” (Brandon and Leitner 136).<sup>80</sup> Audiences are encouraged to be disgusted by the depths of depravity that both Don Juan and Iemon embody, and see their exploits as those of a larger system of aristocratic elites who cover their own flaws by day, while engaging in depravity. As manifestations of the worst aspects of the human condition for collectivist patriarchal honor cultures, selfishness at the expense of the group, audience members are encouraged to satisfy their own desire to see these men punished for their transgressions and obstinate refusal to correct their moral failings and avoid taking advantage of the failings of others. Shimazaki further analyses this difference in the laudatory and maligned models of virtue espoused by *Chūshingura* as well as *Yotsuya Kaidan*. She presents the simultaneous

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<sup>79</sup> Their rise in popularity corresponds to the similar cyclical appearance of anti-heroes, though it should be noted that Iemon and Don Juan are not displaying heroic traits, and while they are protagonists, the model of behaviors they glorify are not to be lionized. As devilish rogues, they are models to fear and avoid instead of emulate outside of the theater.

<sup>80</sup> In an intriguing link to the world of *Chūshingura*, the malicious character of Oiwa’s husband Iemon is emphasized by noting his treachery to Enya Hangan—the same Enya Hangan from *Chūshingura*. This link to the “world” (*sekai*) of *Chūshingura* would have been a crucial cultural reference for kabuki audiences and would convey cultural clues about Iemon’s disloyalty.



popularity of both works as representative of a socio-cultural shift in the perception of the concept of *fugishi* (disloyal) to the exemplary depiction of *gishi* (loyal), elaborating that “*Yotsuya Kaidan* turns the adoration of *gishi* on its head, by both emptying the word itself of its meaning and portraying the loyal retainers in an unflattering manner while representing their disloyal counterparts, the *fugishi*, in a style calculated to make them attractive despite their evilness” (Shimazaki 129). The visual representations and iconography to mark this contrast on stage are also hotly debated in Spanish and Japanese scholarship.

Much has been written about the use of spectacle and the supernatural in Spanish and Japanese stagecraft and literature by scholars such as Parker (2005), Mitchell and Schwartz (1961), Earle (1956) and others. One area of common interest for scholarship in recent years has been the development of language to describe the supernatural, which is considered culturally “valid” and supported by institutions such as temples and churches, in opposition to the supernatural associated with evil forces and folk superstitions. Part of the justification for the depiction of supernatural powers on stage (and in plays) is certainly for the sake of spectacle and entertainment. Research on *keren* effects from the kabuki theater tradition has revealed stagecraft involving fire, water, flying wires and trap doors. Many of these techniques were initially created specifically for use in *Yotsuya Kaidan* and later adapted for use in other plays. There are also gaps in the literature when exploring the link between women and the use of the supernatural work that closely examines the way women can harness demonic forces as a tool of justice and not as witchcraft or religious experiences. Both Spain and Japan during this period were full of societal norms which created a mythos of women as being particularly susceptible to deception, or coercion, yet, both plays seem to place more of the blame for this manipulation on the male antagonists. The supernatural in this case is divinely inspired, despite the violence and

gore, and eventually these supernatural elements also become a crucial “part/persona” of the plays. Unlike Don Juan and Iemon, who are rogue archetypes, the figure of Oiwa would become so powerful, that even now, Japanese and American audiences recognize many of the horror genre tropes she has inspired. Her image has reverberated, much in the way that the term “Don Jon” or “Don Juan” has entered the American vernacular to describe a promiscuous man (following the translations by Molière and Lord Byron, cementing their status as popular and literary figures). These roles can take on more sinister implications if the women become possessed or return to the human world as ghosts, which holds true whether they are the avengers, as in the case of Oiwa, or they are the ones to be avenged by proxy, in the case of the male statue of Don Gonzalo Ulloa. Keitt elaborates further on the contradictory position held by women during this turbulent period of Catholic identity formation in the face of the Reformation, by explaining that:

...spiritual direction has been constructed not merely as a tool of social control, but a tool for controlling women in particular—women possessed of ‘power protected in inner spaces of the mind’ ...were increasingly seen as a threat by a male-dominated church hierarchy in the late sixteenth century. Certainly there was no shortage of sexist rhetoric among Counter-Reformation churchmen, but there were also impassioned defenses of women’s spirituality...criticisms of the Seville anti-alumbrado propositions contain a forceful defense not only of women’s spirituality ...[but also ] defense of their fitness as religious teachers. (Keitt 105)

Keitt’s claim highlights the influence of the tracts on discernment written by French religious scholar and university chancellor Jean Gerson in the 1500s. Although Gerson’s works discuss many areas of interest during a period of internal and external strife for the Catholic Church, recent scholarship has been more interested in recovering the critical conversations around the distrust of women and Gerson’s linking of women to “false revelations” (Keitt 59). The association of women with sensuality and susceptibility to being easily deceived, particularly by claiming that they are more prone to suffering from “physiological disorders” and moral

corruption speaks to an inherent distrust of women within the Judeo-Christian tradition. The same gift that allows women to be closely linked to the spiritual world due to their curiosity and desire to learn and experience spirituality, also becomes the reason for their enclosure or exclusion from participating in those same rituals in the public sphere. This exclusion means that the enforcement of the boundary between sacred vision or holy spirit and demon could be wielded directly as a tool to control women and exclude them from full social status as citizens. Yet, when women or marginalized figures become a part of the supernatural, they are able to subvert this control by using these powers to punish their abusers.

This goal to seek revenge after being horribly abused becomes an iconic trope of the play and, as will be explored in Chapter 4, presents part of a pattern for adaptation that is closely linked to a similar pattern in *El burlador* and others. Recent scholarship has investigated the visual and dramatic legacy that *Yotsuya Kaidan* and its author have wrought in “New Kabuki” theatrical conditions (a term coined by Kasuyama Masao describing the resurgence of kabuki plays produced around the mid-nineteenth century by intellectuals outside of the traditional theater institutions). This line of scholarship argues that *Yotsuya Kaidan* has a special place in the kabuki canon as a pivotal work in the “household drama” genre. Within this genre, playwrights shift the narrative focus to producing plays featuring the relationships which affect female protagonists instead of the traditional focus on the relationships valued within traditional masculinity. The dominance of a masculine gaze produced a hyperfocus/production of topics more prolific in the historical drama genre of kabuki plays. The expansion and development of female kabuki characters past the generic boundaries of “princess plays” (which mirrored fairy-tale conventions, and often involved elaborate dance choreography), to dynamic female characters who push back against the constraints of society and family, captured the socio-

cultural debate about the role of women off stage during the nineteenth century.<sup>81</sup> Not only did the inclusion of more female protagonists provide evidence of this shift in the canon, but one can also argue that the shift presented a new interest in male *antagonists* who manipulate the status quo by using their cleverness and charisma for nefarious purposes. This interest, and the political messaging it carried, also provide evidence of the shift in public and domestic roles of women and their own rise to power within the shifting social norms of nineteenth-century Japan.<sup>82</sup> As nineteenth-century Japanese scholars and politicians grappled with the concept of Japan's role in emerging global politics, the role of colonialism, imperial expansion, and Western-style modernization in a new global political paradigm provided considerable debate in the media and society. Much of this debate was centered on political and social beliefs about women, colonial power, and modernization.<sup>83</sup> In this context, I interpret Oiwa's husband, Iemon, as a character who represents a failing of the "old ways," a samurai figure who is lost within a new system which has stripped him of his status, and as a man who is unable to find a way to support himself and his wife, and without the moral fortitude to want to support himself without the use of trickery. His downfall is a sign of change to come, as many families who previously enjoyed recognition and wealth as members of the samurai class found themselves suddenly without title or a traditional livelihood due to policies enacted during the Meiji Restoration of 1868, almost forty years later after the fall of the Tokugawa Shogun. Subsequent

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<sup>81</sup> See works on the three most difficult princess roles (*san hime*) and other princess roles from the period dramas (*jidaimono*) genre described by James R. Brandon and Samuel Leiter in *Kabuki Plays on Stage: Brilliance and Bravado, 1697-1766 Volume 1* (2002).

<sup>82</sup> See *Acting like a Woman in Modern Japan: Theater, Gender, and Nationalism* (2001) for more historical context around this transition, including the importance of Ibsen's plays in Japan.

<sup>83</sup> For more about women, modernization, and public life in Meiji Japan see texts by Mara Patessio (2011) and Marnie Anderson (2010) and Rebecca Corbett (2018).

abolition of the feudal system and caste privileges, the push to adapt western forms of modernization with Japanese social values, the development of a constitution and parliamentary system of government under the Meiji Emperor (instead of a shogun), all added to a revival in productions of *Yotsuya Kaidan* and other plays which captured both the chaos and conflicts of social change during this period. Arguably, without a leader, and left to his own base devices, Iemon becomes a manifestation of a Freudian cultural “id”, a fearsome individual who quickly sheds himself of the loyalty to his wife and political elites which should have sustained him. Tirso de Molina’s play *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra (El convivado)*, shares similarities in social and political themes and fears with *Yotsuya Kaidan*. Like his counterpart Iemon in *Yotsuya Kaidan*, Don Juan is a human manifestation of “contemporary” id set in a fourteenth-century setting (Naples). Despite this time frame, the cultural opinions and concerns reflect those of the author about seventeenth century cultural preoccupations with sex, religious piety and honor during a period of intense cultural change throughout Spain. These are also topics of great interest in kabuki, including *Yotsuya Kaidan*.

Historically, the reception of both plays and their gory theme of revenge remained popular with audiences. Later adaptations of both works reveal complex examples of masculinity and femininity on stage despite anachronisms. Arguably, some of this success has been due to the re-envisioning of the villain Don Juan Tenorio less as a demonic figure, and more as a representative of what Chaiwut Chittkusol calls “el *Urbemensch español*” within the nineteenth century (Chittkusol 533). Read in this way, the figure of Don Juan is less a depiction of “out of control id” or a satanic force, and more of an embodiment of the extremely idealized man of Spain of the seventeenth-century. The social critique here is clear—if left unchecked, in a system of deception and without adherence to moral values, this type of person runs rampant

and is uncontrollable even by the King. Consequently, every institution is at risk, even the church, as it is Don Juan's final act of blasphemy that seals his fate in hell. Ultimately, it is not primarily the sex acts which Tirso condemns, and sends Don Juan to hell, but rather his lying, and unwillingness to take personal responsibility for his actions and the social chaos they produce. Extensive scholarship by E Behrend-Martínez, Ignacio Arellano, AF da Cruz and others argue that Don Juan is not the only *burlador* in the play, and indeed the kingdom seems to be surrounded by many who hope to take advantage of others to satisfy their own desires. The use of the term *burlas* and not sins (*pecados*) further emphasizes a moral line between social dalliances and taboos. This division could suggest an exploration within the text on the interpersonal and divine retribution that is sure to come from allowing smaller misgivings to turn into larger sins.

This detachment is part of a general atmosphere of skepticism and pessimism that was also a part of baroque culture. As Mathé Allain notes:

[The Spanish baroque]...includes[s] among its essential features disenchantment with life and disillusion with earthly reality, both of which are summed up in the word *desengaño*...The play [*el burlador*] is an elaborate network of deceptions in which each deceiver is in turn deceived...The feeling of unreality is heightened by the unreliability of appearances. People are never what they seem...Emotions are as inconstant as appearances. (Allain 176-77)

The discussion of disillusionment and the inherent deception woven into the fabric of the human plane of existence find a conceptual counterpart in the Buddhist religious tradition. Allain's observation that "the play [*el burlador*] is then an extended metaphor: 'La vida es burla,' a joke in which the best joke is that life is not a joke because there is death and there is hell" also fits the final message of *Yotsuya Kaidan*, and I would argue, is a view also to be found in Buddhist philosophical traditions" (Allain 184). Iemon and Naosuke, Don Juan and Catalinón are final witnesses that the justice of heaven does not operate on the same timeline as the human world,

and that there will always be consequences to pay for the chaos they inflict upon others. The cultural preoccupations in these plays revolve around the shifting social norms supported by different social institutions in Japan and Spain during periods of intense cultural change. These social norms dictate the types of honorable (here meaning socially acceptable to those in power) interactions for relationships among immediate family members, people of different genders, and members of various levels within social hierarchies.

In Spain and Japan there are several enduring social institutions from that time that remain today: monarchy/imperial systems, religious systems, (Catholicism and Buddhism respectively); and popular media to support debate, discussion, and education among the populace. Of particular interest to this project is the relationships between media systems which produce content, such as the theater, and institutions which regulate this content and its consumers, for example, government and religious bodies. This interest is rooted in an exploration of the ways both plays manage to reveal complex concerns about gender and power in Spain and Japan. For example, many recent studies of *Yotsuya Kaidan* focus on the ubiquitous popular images of the ghost of Oiwa as a symbol of resistance to the socially prescribed depiction of motherhood and the accepted views of morality, femininity, and motherhood held up as the standard for Japanese women of samurai families during the restorationist period of the late Tokugawa Era (nineteenth century). The interest in challenging the images of female morality, and the rise of “good wife, good mother (*ryosai kenbou*)” takes on a line of government-sponsored media which encouraged women to be deferential, and, critical of their connection to the natural, “carnal” world. Sekiguchi notes that this line of thinking about women and their shifting role in a changing political period was supported by a syncretistic system of beliefs drawn from Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism, Shintoism, as well as

various political systems. In Spain, the concerns about marriage, for religious and political reasons, and the appearance of the *caballero* reveal similarly competing images about the ideal man.<sup>84</sup>

Nanboku and Tirso de Molina have created works which present a critical view of Japanese and Spanish societies. These plays are also part of a canon of works which challenge the system of honor and morality practiced by their contemporary societies by revealing the hypocrisy of their adherents. Nanboku has created a spirit, who becomes the archetype of the female ghost (*yurei*), who is fearsome but also a sympathetic cultural figure. Oiwa's subversiveness is justified by her wrath as a woman "pushed to the edge" by her husband's cruel disloyalty and repeated wounding of her personal honor. Tirso's depiction of Don Juan presents him less as a seducer, and instead as a man who works the system in his favor by taking advantage of the institutional failures of those around him. While the King seems to arrange marriages for the appropriate couples, ensuring that the status quo has been preserved and the "wrongs righted," there is little-to-no commentary about the appropriate punishment for the web of deception woven by the nobles and peasants. Ironically, in both cases the system that enables both antagonists to harm others, also provides a venue for supernatural poetic justice as a way for the protagonists to take their revenge. This reversal enables the wronged female protagonist to wrench her last bit of dignity from her disloyal husband in the form of revenge. To make it clear from the start that there is no "innocent" party among Iemon's many enablers, Nanboku makes the connection of her husband Iemon Tamiya to the paragons of virtue, in *Chūshingura*, but

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<sup>84</sup> See Leo Ching's upcoming text *Trans-imperial Characters: Popular Culture and its Discontents* and his earlier book *Becoming Japanese: The Politics of Identity Formation in Colonial Taiwan (2001)* for more on these topics and the link between colonialism, national identity, and popular culture.



notes that Iemon is the absolute opposite of the loyal samurai he is supposed to embody. Indeed, Oiwa is failed by her husband, and her initial refusal to listen to the pleas of her father not to marry Iemon, leads to the downfall of her household and all those associated with her dishonor. The social pessimism of *El burlador* reveals a similar cultural anxiety on the topics of sexuality, honor, loyalty, and control. Tirso's version of Don Juan Tenorio is best known for his salacious behavior and has become a cultural exemplar of deception, mischief and impulsive evil. The social commentary woven throughout the play also reveals criticism and skepticism toward the morality of the social elites, which enable Don Juan to act with impunity throughout the kingdom. As a master of deception, Don Juan is enabled by a system of nobles, including the King, who seem to be at the mercy of their own emotions and whims, and are easily manipulated into morally ruinous decisions. A pessimistic reading of the play, from start to finish, provides a tableau of nobles as well as peasants who only need a slight push from Don Juan to fall easily into the traps because of lust and greed, some of which they initially set up themselves in part due to their own moral failings. Even the King, the highest mortal power in the play, seems to be somewhat oblivious to what is occurring in his own household, or those of his nobles, suggesting a certain dark element that could also be a metaphor for the monarchy's obliviousness to corrupt forces within the kingdom of Spain.

The complex religious traditions of Spain and Japan also include practices surrounding the performance of honor not just of those currently living, but also for people who have passed away and hope to retain their high status in the afterlife.<sup>85</sup> The protagonists of both plays receive no "redemption" or "salvation" in the sense of being placed in the paradise of their respective

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<sup>85</sup> For more on women and Buddhism in Japan see the book *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan* (2002) edited by Barbara Ruch.

religious tradition in the original works. This is a break from the usual “happy endings” that are a part of both dramatic traditions in comedic or household play genres, and from the redemptive or didactic morals of religious play genres. Satoko Shimazaki notes that “Oiwa is probably the first Japanese ghost, at least in the history of kabuki, who does not quickly attain salvation after accomplishing her purpose” (240).<sup>86</sup> In this sense, Oiwa represents the plight of many women who were suffering within a system that both lauded their loyalty and faithfulness to the maintenance of their patriarchal household, even during a period in which they lost social and political power. *Yotsuya Kaidan* also reveals a larger comparative commentary on the anxieties that arise over the fracturing of social bonds during a period of intense social restructuring.<sup>87</sup> The protagonists of *El burlador* are affected by a similar fate. Although the remaining “tricksters” of the text are not actively condemned to death like Don Juan, there remain questions about the fate of the kingdom. Don Juan’s servant Catalinón reveals some of this anxiety about “paying the price” that Don Juan did as he died. Are the nobles and others affected by Don Juan, even the viewing audience, risking a similar fate by assuming there would always be time to repent?

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<sup>86</sup> Initially considered inferior to their male peers, Buddhist women were in fact relegated to their own special hell in part due to the associated sins they committed by being born as women.

<sup>87</sup> Nanboku IV based his interpretation of Oiwa on the historical figure of Oiwa who is enshrined at in (Oiwa) Tamiya Inari Jingu in Shinjuku, Japan. The shrine was created to appease the spirit of the historical figure of Oiwa and to this day, in a style like the folk stories around Macbeth, those reportedly playing her ask for her blessing before presenting her story on stage. Like *Fuenteovejuna* and *Chūshingura*, Nanboku blends both historical fact and fiction to create his story and draws from a lengthy folk tradition that continues to inspire the imagination of horror fans today. : 於岩稻荷田宮神社 <http://www.tokyo-jinjacho.or.jp/chuou/5249/>

Ultimately, the audience for *Yotsuya Kaidan* and for *El burlador* are presented with complex plays which prompt them to think closely about the social boundaries of their respective societies. Unlike the moral exemplars of “incorruptible elites” seen in *Chūshingura* and the peasants of *Fuenteovejuna* who demonstrate a desire to maintain the status quo, the worlds of *Yotsuya Kaidan* and *El burlador* are fleeting and too mired in the senses, a concern that captures social anxiety around the shifting social and political roles of Golden Age Spain and Edo Period Japan. Arguably, the moral dilemmas around Don Juan and Oiwa are part of the power that allows these images to endure, be exchanged, and adapted. As social anxiety around new points of contact with other cultures triggers cultural debates about interpersonal relationships, national identity, and military power, we will most likely see new versions and explorations of these figures as their archetype echoes and adapts to new formats and audiences. Chapter 4 will explore this convergence of [popular] culture among the nations of Spain, Japan and the United States, and the methods through which adaptation has fostered this relationship to appear in new and innovative narrative formats.

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## CHAPTER 4: ECHOES IN THE MODERN AGE --ADAPTATIONS OF JAPANESE AND SPANISH NATIONAL PLAYS

*There is a difference between never wanting a story to end--- the reason behind sequels and prequels, according to Marjorie Garber (2003: 73-74)--- and wanting to retell the same story over and over in different ways. With adaptations, we seem to desire the repetition as much as the change. (Linda Hutcheon 7)*

*-Linda Hutcheon*

In previous chapters, I have explored the continued preoccupation with the cultural honor code and the manner in which these cultural concerns manifest in four national plays. Although these plays differ in terms of chronology and location, the iconic characters and cultural messages about honor are still present to this day in these plays and continue to manifest in forms relevant for contemporary audiences. In this final chapter, I explore a selection of twentieth-century examples, predominantly in formats such as film, to analyze this shift in medium and to discuss the types of components adapted from the plays for these audiences, both domestic and foreign. While previous chapters focused on drawing connections among the dissemination of honor messaging by analyzing the plot and characters of these plays, I next focus on analyzing several crucial visual design and aesthetic choices from the American adaptations of *Chūshingura* and *El burlador de Sevilla* with the hope of initiating a discussion of the differences in directorial approach for each. In this way, this exploration seeks to support and examine the conversation around honor, while also acknowledging the diverse range of domestic and international adaptations within the corpus of these works.



## **Branding a Nation: Global Aspects of Adaptation and Soft Power after World War II**

Adaptation is not unique to American culture and can be traced as far back as the Ancient Greek concept of mimesis. Linda Hutcheon states that adaptations were a sign of creativity and praise (Hutcheon 20). This receptive attitude toward adaptation is another common element shared among Japanese, Spanish and American popular audiences partly due to socio-political circumstances in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although the chronological periods of rapid adaptation within classical, national theater do not necessarily match for Spain and Japan, the development of both artistic and aesthetic criticism synchronizes. From these similar phases, the heightened perception that both nations held of their power as perceived by outsiders to their respective cultures is clear and well-debated. This is not to imply that this evaluation was always one based on hierarchy, and indeed, in early documentation of travel literature and other genres, both countries arguably treated their interactions with the other as hesitant equals. In this sense, Spain and Japan are united by their desire to emphasize their unique cultural aesthetics, and ultimately, a mutual need to establish from the stage, the ideal “essence” of the country on the screen. By focusing on a subset of adaptations of these plays produced during the perilous periods leading up to and after World War II, I bring into conversation a series of works which capture a moment of iconic, cultural zeitgeist. General trends in domestic adaptations in Japan and Spain tended to follow several categories, as outlined by previous scholarship: as a cultural practice seen in theaters of both nations, as a way of “branding” a national identity around topics of honor and national identity, and finally, as a means of establishing directorial fame.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Twentieth-century Japanese director Kenji Mizoguchi has discussed these early connections between the cinema and kabuki in his own work, particularly his exploration of *jidaimono* themes and wide-angle cinematography.

At this stage, it is crucial to describe the myriad difficulties that arise when attempting to analyze and compare many of the adaptations not just of kabuki or bunraku plays, but also specifically the large canon of *Chūshingura* and its numerous adaptations, in Japanese and English. As is the case for many of the adaptations of *Chūshingura*, as well as live performances of the play, often there are logistical problems surrounding the performance of the “entirety” of the complete, eleven-act piece. Even now in the historic Minamiza Theater in Kyoto, during the start of the Kabuki opening season, the play is still performed as a part of the regular repertoire, but rarely are all eleven acts presented. Often only specific scenes may be performed (such as those which have been deemed most relevant to the plot of the play, like the initial sword-drawing scene, the tea house scene, and the final castle battle and *seppuku*). Even in recent scholarship, it is common to omit sections for analysis. Akira Watanabe elaborates in his own article on *Chūshingura*, that he omitted “escenas como la segunda, la octava, la décima, y la mayor parte de la cuarta y la novena,” as a way to explain the plot to his Spanish-speaking audience.<sup>89</sup> This artistic decision is one that is more practical than a commentary on the merits of these scenes, although I acknowledge that as an action, the selection or exclusion of certain scenes is not without its own latent, political decisions. Ultimately, these scenes are featured for their relevance to the exploration of honor within the play or due to polemical issues their inclusion sparks. When examining a cinematic adaptation process as a series of decisions formed by the relationship between the audience, director, and the director’s approach to the film, the comparative analysis of a director’s interpretation of a scene and its predecessors can

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<sup>89</sup> Watanabe notes here that a translation of *Chūshingura* does not exist in Spanish, however this no longer seems to be the case with releases by various publishers such as Ediciones Miraguano (2006), Olañeta (2013), and Eyras (1996). Most scholars agree that Donald Keene’s translation is one of the most faithful in English.

reveal considerable information about the cultural conflicts and context driving the popularity and understanding of a work. Keiko McDonald is one of the first scholars to highlight this need for selectivity as the director's "first working principle [specifically] with *Chūshingura*" (McDonald 241). In this sense, when analyzing this play, one could ask if the director values "historicity" first and markets this play as being "authentic," or, if there is other appeal to romance or honor?

The second issue which complicates the analysis of these types of comparisons is language, and the difficulties surrounding the accessibility and acquisition of these earlier Japanese films as a primary source. While Spain has invested heavily in the preservation of many of its early films and those produced during the Franco regime, only a few of the original Japanese films are still accessible (some were lost due to the bombing of World War II, others to neglect and the lack of preservation technology). However, several of the more popular and well-regarded versions have been preserved, but the audio quality of the Japanese track and availability of subtitles is not guaranteed. As is the case with other products of material culture, subject cannot come at the cost of the "intelligibility" of the play in its full length, in particular, when the audience is not a domestic one with the cultural capital to fill in the cultural "spaces."

I will briefly draw comparisons among trends in a selection of film, text, and stage adaptations of *Fuenteovejuna*, *Chūshingura*, *El burlador de Sevilla* and *Yotsuya Kaidan*. Among these adaptations are the Spanish director and choreographer Antonio Gades' 2009 ballet production of *Fuenteovejuna*, his long-time friend Federico García Lorca's 1931 production of *Fuenteovejuna*, and television director José Zamora's 1971 production of *Fuenteovejuna* for Estudio 1. In addition to these, I draw into the conversation the popular 1748 kabuki edition of Takeda Izumo's *Kanadehon Chūshingura*, and several film adaptations, including new kabuki

(*shinkabuki/shinpa*) author Mayama Seika's ten-act version (1934-1940). Mayama's version, titled "Genroku Chūshingura," was later filmed and directed by Kenji Mizoguchi, and later adapted to film in 1958 by Kunio Watanabe.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, I explore the version of *Yotsuya Kaidan* popularized by Nobuo Nakagawa in 1959 and the releases of "Don Juan" by Molière, Lord Byron, and José de Zorrilla.<sup>91</sup> It is my belief that in surveying general conversations and changes to these adaptations, we acknowledge that not only have the adaptations become significant works in their own right, but they have also continued to influence the popular imagination, by at times usurping or challenging the historical myth and literary imagination behind their ancestral, dramatic play. The body of film adaptations exposes the themes central to the mythos of the historical event. In addition, the adaptations form a useful body of information for further analysis and critical consideration about the play. They reflect the changes in social and national norms and expectations of decorum for their historical audience. Following Sarah Cardwell's methodology, in which she argues for the importance of surveying traditional discourses around adaptations, I examine several pivotal scenes and historical trends among these plays. This is important not just to highlight trends or differences relevant to the plot, but also to explore the trends which have formed well-defined political positions for their productions. For example, in *Fuenteovejuna*, the first historically polemical scene centers on Laurencia's admonishment of the village men (and her use of a particular homophobic slur), and the second scene focuses on the pardoning of the villagers by the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand

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<sup>90</sup> Mizoguchi's version was filmed in two parts in 1941 and 1942 featuring the same actors from the vanguard Zenshira Troupe.

<sup>91</sup> I like to point out the relationship between the theater and other media. Satoko Shimazaki explains "early modern print culture in Japan is equally about text and image—about the creation of objects that today would be categorized as belonging to the separate disciplines of art and literature, or as straddling the two realms" (Shimazaki 13).

and Isabelle. In *Chūshingura*, a polemical moment unfolds with the revelation of head retainer Yuranosuke's motive for vengeance against the tyrannical lord Kira during the infamous "Ichiriki Tea House" scene, as well as the depiction of the "Event at Ako Castle" scenes, in which the violence sparking the initial consequences for the vendetta are revealed to the audience.

## **World War II, Spain, Japan and the Film Industry**

Satoko Shimazaki notes generally positive reception toward adaptation built into kabuki as a genre, by stating that "audiences at the time knew very well that on the kabuki stage, nothing was ever fixed: if a kabuki play outlived its first production, it would inevitably be reworked, transformed into something new. By the same token, every production was inevitably a reworking, a transformation of earlier material" (6). In this sense, adaptation and the space for creative, individualistic expression it offered, especially within a collectivist culture, was a celebrated part of the kabuki theatrical tradition.<sup>92</sup> She further elaborates that:

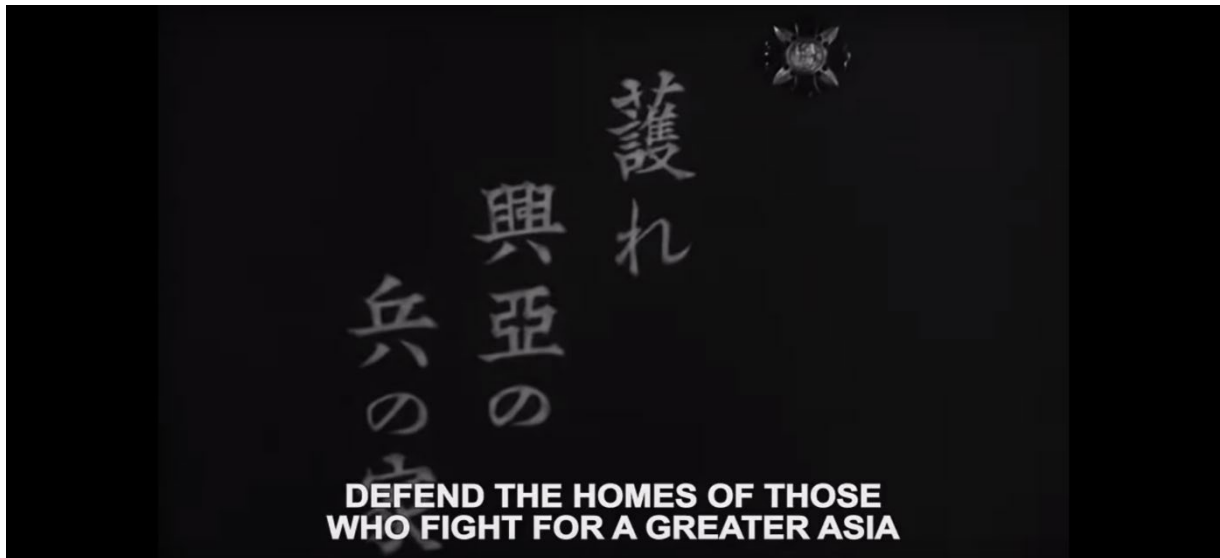
In the European context, the development of a print and the circulation of printed scripts had a significant impact on the reception of plays and understanding of theater. Particularly in Shakespeare studies...books contributed to the construction of the playwright as an author and how writing and printed scripts came to affect the meaning generated through performance. (Shimazaki 11)

The reciprocal relationship between the kabuki theaters and budding film industry in Japan went so far as to have directors search for kabuki starts for filming.

Spanish and Japanese film development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was formed by a combination of diverse, theatrical influences and traditions. In the early stage of

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<sup>92</sup> Mie as a stage device also became a form of calling card, for example, the popular crossed eyes of the Danjuro family were incorporated into several performances of "aragoto" characters.



*Figure 7 Nationalist message at the start of Makino Masahiro's adaptation from 1941.*

cinematic studies, Japanese directors and literary critics engaged in the adaptation of Western plays and the creation of new forms of cinema and theater culture. This replicated what Hutcheon calls pleasure derived from “repetition with variation, from the comfort of ritual combined with the piquancy of surprise. Recognition and remembrance are part of the pleasure (and risk) of experiencing an adaptation; so too is change” (Hutcheon 5). In this sense, the early scholarship and development of the theater provides the earliest bridge between these two formats, one in which kabuki initially figures heavily due both to its aesthetic uniqueness and emphasis on combining various textual, visual, and aural elements to form an emotive tableau.

Yet the outbreak of World War II provides a different lens through which to view the combination of modernity, nationality, popular culture and governmental policy in Japan and Spain. David Desser has tracked the development of Japanese propaganda films leading up to those produced during and in the period after World War II. The rise of what he calls national policy films (*kokusaku eiga*) mark this period as one in which the relationship between

government and film was particularly crucial.<sup>93</sup> Themes included more explicit anti-British and Allied messages, a focus on *kokutai* (national essence) seen in the prevalence of samurai films, xenophobic messages and Pan-Asian Unity (under Japanese rule).<sup>94</sup>

A similar pattern emerges in Spain with the revival of interest in and romanticizing of folklore and the traditions of the earlier periods of cultural growth in the arts as well as a desire to cement Spain's importance in Europe as a major cultural power, spurred by the fascism and nationalism of the twentieth century. Francisco Franco, who rose and remained in power in Spain from the end of the Spanish Civil War until his death in 1975, was a prominent fan of film and its power as a story-telling medium. Arguably, film became, according to András Lénárt, one of "the most powerful instruments of the Spanish propaganda" (Lénárt 324). Lénárt identifies at least seven ideological components that he argues drove the Franco regime's creation of film and censorship policies:

a) focus on those stages of the Spanish national past that were considered by the regime as glorious and exemplary; b) Hispanidad and the notion of the Spanish superior race (master race); c) hegemony of the Castilian language (castellano); d) Catholicism and the Catholic Church; e) the army that guaranteed the order and the perpetuance of the governing power; f) the sacredness of the family and the woman as the Mother of the nation; g) the constant presence of the enemy as a consequence of the international conspiracy of Communism, Bolshevism and the Freemasonry. (Lénárt 324)

He points out the inherent irony when connecting these components into a consistent policy, mainly, that "the aim of Francoist film policy was to create the real *national film*, but it was

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<sup>93</sup> For more information on censorship and film in Japan, Desser recommends Anderson and Richie (1982), Kyoko Hirano (1992) and Tadao Sato (1987) (35). Bonnie and Hans Braendlin (1996) have an excellent text which details further the use of film as propaganda in many nations during this period.

<sup>94</sup> Desser notes that Makino Masahiro's *Genroku Chūshingura* (1941-1942) can fall into the category of propaganda film due to its "valorization of Japanese tradition [filial piety, self-sacrifice, subscription to feudal hierarchy] and by the appropriate of classical aesthetics in the films' style" (39).

never explained clearly what they meant by *national*. As there was no explicit definition, the alloy of the regime's main feature films can indicate what the nationalist New Spain thought of itself' (Lénárt 325). I deviate from Lénárt's point, in order to argue that this lack of clear definition is in part by design because the ambiguity allows for a malleable definition of "national" to be recreated as needed by the regime. Indeed, not only do fascists not have to define what is national, if they do not, then film makers are forced to consider what could be considered *not* national (or even worse, what could be considered a *betrayal* of these values). Through these general components, Francoist film (and later television) studios developed a special interest in adaptations of national works, as a way to "show foreign countries ...how glorious had been the journey of Spain that led the nation to its actual state" (Lénárt 332). This "glorious" vision is often the direct result of fascist manipulation of film directors and their works.

### **Recent Trends in American Adaptations of *Chūshingura* and *El burlador***

Film critic André Bazin, kabuki scholar Kawatake Toshio and Spanish scholar Matthew Stroud, and others have outlined the complex relationship the theater embodies as a space for cultural and political representation of the self and other. Theater and Cinema have a shared history, and exchange themes, actors and stagecraft, but while they take similar approaches and cues from one another in terms of staging, representation, visualization of time, characters, and so forth, there are unique challenges to both media in adaptations. While I do agree with the arguments of John Beverley and others who state that there has been little interest in "reception" in criticism about Golden Age Spanish drama, and that there should be more space to recognize that audiences have "re-written" these texts, I still remain in agreement with José Maravall and José Borque, that as scholars we should be able to scan texts, plays, and performances as



historical documents, not looking for “ideological verisimilitude” as John Beverley suggested, but for evidence of the socio-historical factors influencing the production of the work. Since the 1970s, Spanish *comedias* have been utilized as tools which “propose a conservative ideology designed to maintain the grand ideals promoted by the aristocracy.”<sup>95</sup> The “propaganda” thesis has endured because it is a serious point to consider in the original play’s contexts as well as the historical contexts to follow. Japanese kabuki followed a similar trajectory, in which its creators and the content they produced on and off stage were subject to scrutiny and censorship by authority figures. Yet these same restrictions also inspired creative methods for avoiding punishment, and allowed playwrights and performances flexibility to challenge various institutions and bend these authoritarian messages for populist audiences. Such creativity rose during the Post War Eras (1920-1970), with the works of polemical figures such as Takeuchi Tetsuji, and Mayama Seika, who challenged and reframed the theater as a cultural space, and found inspiration in the theater as a subversive “popular” space.<sup>96</sup> I do believe that the play productions produced a harsher response from the governments of both countries, in part due to what Kawatake termed “the horizontal nature” of such forms of theater. Kawatake in particular argued that because kabuki actors walk out into the audience, by use of the *hanamichi*, there is a level of interaction among the actors, audience and the work that had fallen out of favor in Western dramatic works, which he believed wanted to maintain distance through the acknowledgment of a fourth, observant, wall. In this context, I think that Kawatake and other

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<sup>95</sup> For more on this perspective, see the text *Sociología de la comedia española* (1976) by José María Díez Borque (359).

<sup>96</sup> For more on the subversive directorial works on Tetsuji Takechi, including his development of the pornography industry in Japan, see Miwako Tezuka (2011), Tetsuji Takechi (2003) and Kristen Cather (2012). Mayama Seika’s literary revival of *Chūshingura* during WWII became the basis for the film adaptation by Mizoguchi Kenji.

kabuki scholars should consider a different model of adaptation, in which the adaptation, whether to a different form of “theater”— such as an opera adapted to a ballet, or an adaptation moving from theater to film, or text to theater, is subject to at least three layers of “viewing” or authenticity. The first is the actual “historical event” as it reportedly occurred, second is the by-product (“original”) text and audience, the final layer is the adapted work and its extended audience. To explore the final layer of this form of adaptation, I analyze two American adaptations of *Chūshingura* as well as *El burlador de Sevilla*, *47 Ronin* and *Don Jon*, both released in 2013. While little has been written about the films in the scholarly sphere, in my opinion, the films are part of a legacy of adaptation, and have ties to historical traditions and background which continue the exploration of honor and loyalty. These recent adaptations reframe the nature of loyalty and honor by highlighting cultural preoccupations with gender and social class from an American perspective. This is particularly true as both films focus on the ability of the “underdog” or outcast to redeem himself and regain honor through the help of men and women. Honor in the world of these American adaptations takes on several forms, although the one most focused upon is the outsider’s battle for recognition and approval from masculine spheres of influence.

The American version adopts many of the core plot points and characters from the play, but it is clear that the choices in costume design and settings place the events of the original play in an imagined vision of “Edo” Japan, with anachronistic hair and clothing worn by the actors. This combination of a modern Western interpretation of traditional Japanese aesthetics proved to be ineffective and produced a version of Edo Japan that seemed uncanny and deviated greatly from the traditions set by previous Japanese adaptations. This odd blend of visuals in setting, and particularly costuming, at times seemed unintentional. A “dance” performance combines

elements of kabuki as well as noh costumes, and other design choices make the distinctions among historical fidelity, cultural insensitivity, and an imagined vision of this “Edo” unclear. Unlike the costumes worn by actors in the previous Japanese adaptations, the costumes of the characters of *47 Ronin* appear to be reimagined versions of their historical counterparts. Despite British costume designer Penny Rose’s assertion that she wanted to base her design choices “on the culture and what the shapes [of the clothing] should be”, the blend of design elements comes across as jarring, and chaotic. I argue that this first aesthetic deviation from historical (sartorial) fidelity in the American adaptation produced a vision of Japan, within a deeply traditional play, that seemed at odds with the messaging about honor that the play originally supported. The majority of fashion twists appear to also address women’s clothing, which further presents a jarring juxtaposition of traditional samurai armor-covered men and women who appear to have stepped out from the pages of an American fashion magazine. Previous versions of *Chūshingura* maintained visual fidelity in order to draw audiences into a setting of Edo that appeared to be visually and historically accurate, which is a key component that makes the play traditionally resonate with many audiences. Rose’s blend of modern clothing aesthetics, particularly the use of a bright, pastel palette, with that of traditional Japanese and Pan-Asian traditional clothing, earned the film a Saturn Award nomination for best costume design, but was not enough to create a more positive reception of the film by both Japanese and American audiences, and negatively marks the adaptation as “other” within the canon of adaptations of the film.

*47 Ronin* opens with references to the “mysterious” island of Japan and a male narrator with a heavy Japanese accent links the identity of the samurai with individual and national honor. The narrator then explicitly states that those without honor are considered to be outsiders, or *ronin*. This explanation offers not just a clarification of the term, but also establishes the more

serious, negative connotation the term has in Japanese, while creating an emotional equivalent for American audiences.<sup>97</sup> The images of samurai fighting and other iconography associated with Japan for the post-WWII American audience also taps into Hutcheon's concept of memory by using the phrase commonly associated with the story, "To know this story is to know Japan."<sup>98</sup> Yet, as with the decision to deviate from precedents set by previous adaptations, the creation of a new character, Kai, further changes the ways in which honor messaging is communicated within the film. American actor Keanu Reeves plays the main protagonist Kai in *47 Ronin*, and in an intriguing twist on the concept of "outsider," this American adaptation also emphasizes that Kai is a half-Japanese orphan found by Lord Asano and Oishi Yuranosuke. This focus on being the outsider, and subsequently the "underdog," links post-WWII American interpretations of Japanese homogeneity to concerns around honor and racial purity. These are not concerns which are present in previous adaptations and seem to be created specifically for American audiences. Here, Kai is a cultural "ronin" because he is not fully Japanese *and* lacks family status. In order to earn honor within this film, he will have to overcome his status as a racial outsider as well as be accepted socially by his Japanese, adopted family and fellow ronin. This situates the majority of the conflict around honor as viewed through an American lens of Japanese preoccupation with racial purity and homogeneity. This perspective potentially taps into a legacy of Orientalist thought about the ethnic and racial composition of Japan, which positions American audiences as

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<sup>97</sup> The Museum at Sengakuji refers to the *47 ronin* as *gishi*, to emphasize their loyalty to Lord Asano and to recognize their later reprieve by the Meiji Emperor (also on display at the museum).

<sup>98</sup> This phrase is constantly associated with *Chūshingura*, and has been for centuries. Its use is still found in film, books, and scholarly articles and even appeared on the title page of the *47 Ronin* graphic novel published by Dark Horse created by Mike Richardson, Stan Sakai and Kazuo Koike in 2012. In this way, the audience is being asked to equate their knowledge of this play, with their "memories" (cultural in this case) of Japan and Japanese culture.

more accepting because of their support for Kai.<sup>99</sup> These concerns and constant awareness of “place” within the social hierarchy are seeded throughout the film. This is often reflected in the form of the negative comments Kai receives about his heritage, when at one point, a ronin compares Kai to the chimera they work together to kill. The ronin implies that Kai, too, is a beast that should have been “put down.” Despite this mark of being “outside” Japanese culture due to his standing as neither fully Japanese, nor from a samurai family, the heroes of the play treat him as an acceptable playmate for Lord Asano’s daughter Mika, but make it clear that there is still a social distance between the two. In this case, Kai’s ability to transcend these prejudices makes him a true hero, and demonstrates for American audiences that honor, and social status, can be gained by outsiders.

Unlike previous versions of the plays and films, this version introduces magic, which is used by the villain and villainess to possess Lord Asano and cause him to turn upon his



*Figure 8 Kai defeats the chimera (kirin) and demonstrates his loyalty.*

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<sup>99</sup> See Wester Wagenaar’s article “Wacky Japan: A new face of orientalism” for more information on modern applications of Edward Said’s frameworks of orientalism as applied to modern Japan. In particular, Wagenaar notes the rise of “wacky” and “techno-“orientalism as lenses through which the West “others” Japan.

superiors. While in part due to the graphical advances in computer technology, the use of CGI throughout the film adds to the sense of spectacle that Japanese adaptations and the kabuki version of the play contain. Yet unlike the Japanese adaptations which included long, panning shots of elaborate castles, or dramatic splatters of blood on tatami mats as focused, spectacles, 47 *Ronin* uses CGI liberally and even introduces a “witch” as a character vehicle to justify the gratuitous use of CGI in the film. The introduction of magic is not just for entertainment purposes, it also eliminates the traditional Neo-Confucian controversy present in Japanese adaptations of *Chūshingura* by providing an external cause for Lord Asano’s misbehavior when goaded by Lord Moronao. In this version, Lord Asano has been “bewitched”, and is no longer presented as a man well aware of the political campaign of slander being waged against him in the play and film adaptations. Other changes include shifting the focus of Lord Moronao’s offenses from insults toward Lord Asano’s wife, to Mika, mainly by publicly insulting her social and sexual status by feigning surprise that Mika is her father’s daughter, and not a “concubine” during a ceremony for the Shogun. In this adaptation, the cause for the confrontation between Lord Asano and Lord Moronao is due to a bite from a magic spider, from a witch hired by Lord Moronao. Lord Asano is then “bewitched” and attacks Lord Moronao while hallucinating that Lord Moronao is attempting to rape his daughter. His belief that he is protecting Mika’s honor makes him a more sympathetic figure, and incites outrage from the American audience when the Shogun forbids the ronin from seeking revenge after Lord Asano commits seppuku. Lord Asano’s death is treated with a sense of gravitas as he reminds Mika and Oishi that he must atone for his mistake so that no one can say that “his people are without honor.” This change creates a

desire for “revenge” more explicit for American audiences, while still addressing the initial concerns around Lord Moronao’s sexual advances in the original play.

*Don Jon* makes a similar shift concerning sexual advances and honor, but instead of focusing on concerns about racial hybridity, the play challenges modern concerns about sexuality, honor, and redemption in contemporary American society. Actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt, who plays “The Don,” wrote and produced the film, and seems to be less concerned with fidelity to previous adaptations of the play which focused on heavenly salvation and redemption. His adaptation produced in 2013 is influenced by elements from the version by Lord Byron, but also offers a space for a sympathetic view toward “The Don,” which mirrors José Zorilla’s pivotal adaptation and removes many of the concerns around the supernatural from previous plays. In this adaptation, the setting is a small urban area in modern day New Jersey, which invites a contrast between the honor culture of previous adaptations of *El burlador* that take place in Italy and Spain, with the performance of masculinity found in urban families of Italian decent in the Northeastern part of the U.S. The audience is immediately confronted with an opening montage of women in proactive outfits from contemporary American popular culture, including reality shows, television dramas and music videos and pornography, as “The Don” introduces himself. Shirtless, except for a cross around his neck, The Don searches for pornography and explains to the audience (breaking the fourth wall) that he only values a few things in life, “my body, my pad, my ride, my family, my church, my boys, my girls, and my porn.” This adaptation immediately overwhelms viewers with several of the initial conflicts from previous adaptations, conflict between father and son, as well as celebration of his enthusiasm toward committing evil and the almost demonic power of seduction that “The Don” has over his



*Figure 9 Barbara and The Don argue over sexuality and fantasies in relationships.*

peers and women. However, the Don admits that what he is chasing when he sleeps with myriad women and within pornography is the “fantasy,” which he finds addictive.

While *Don Jon* embraces the sexuality associated with the Don Juan tradition within adaptations of the play, one should not ignore the way in which the film explores the conflicts around hypocrisy, and the illusion of romance and love sold to young men and women in American media, a decision which maintains a connection to the original text. Although the Don initially falls in love with “Barbara,” the perfect woman from a wealthy background who opposes pornography and wants the Don to “better himself,” she is obsessed with romance movies, which arguably sell unrealistic fantasies about the acceptable forms of relationships in American culture. Barbara refuses to allow the Don to clean his own apartment because she finds it “unsexy,” in this case emasculating, and a marker of his lower economic class, which leads to the couple’s first battle. In a series of close, tight shots of the couple standing face-to-face, Barbara calls the Don disgusting for hiding his pornography consumption from her, causing



the Don to retaliate by quickly pointing out her hypocrisy, since he claims that her “movies” also sell her a fantasy. He argues that just as he consumes a “fantasy” about relationships when he views pornography, she too, is obsessed with the “emotional” or “mental” pornography of romantic comedies. Despite telling the Don at various points that he would be happy if he always told her “the truth,” when her own agenda about what society and relationships between men and women should be like is challenged, Barbara breaks down and leaves him. The older, eccentric, and recently widowed Esther, whom the Don meets during a night class, is able to help him touch base with his own “reality” and escape his depression. As the relationship between this couple forms and grows, the Don rejects not just the fantasy of pornography, but also the belief that he has to be married or follow other “cultural” fantasies in order to create his own happy ending. In this adaptation, the Don is not a man who thrives on evil, but instead, as with the protagonist of Zorilla’s work, he is redeemed through the love of a woman who taps into his spirituality. In the next sections, I will highlight some of the origins of these adaptations, and explore other pivotal tropes which have affected the adaptation of plays for domestic Spanish and Japanese audiences.

### ***Fuenteovejuna*: Gender, Sexuality and National Identity**

In the case of *Fuenteovejuna*, certain trends are visible in its adaptations which reveal a pattern of criticism targeting Spanish honor culture. The first, produced by Antonio Gades in 1994, provides an intriguing adaptation of the play into the world of dance and choreography. The second is a version produced by Federico García Lorca during the years of Republican rule in Spain (1931-1936), and finally the made-for-television version produced by Juan Guerrero Zamora in 1971, which has often been condemned as a “failed” adaptation.

Antonio Gades' version of *Fuenteovejuna* combines one of the "national plays" by the "national playwright" of Spain with flamenco as an artistic means to communicate the plot just the plot? of the play. The choice of flamenco, the dance form most commonly associated with Spain and Spanish identity as a nation, and more specifically associated with Andalucía, demonstrates an awareness of multiple layers of cultural identity and the preservation of artistic verisimilitude. This adaptation was not Gades' first. He also earned acclaim as the director and choreographer for 1974's *Blood Wedding* (adapted to film in 1981) and his version of *Carmen* was released in 1983 as a ballet. The adaptation of *Fuenteovejuna* Gades is most famous for premiered in Genoa in 1994, and was his last choreographed work before his company broke apart in 1998 and he died in 2004. Gades' adaptation is interconnected with the original source, but also with other adaptations that are part of the "world" of Lope's play. In fact, *Fuenteovejuna* adapts an earlier version produced during the 1930s by La Barraca, the theater troupe formed by poet and playwright Federico García Lorca. While both adaptations support the general plot structure of Lope de Vega's original text, both Gades and Lorca omit Laurencia's "cowards" scene, and remove the final "pardoning" of the villagers by the monarchs. During the 1930s, the production elicited positive responses from the Republic and Leftist groups, who praised either the unity of the townspeople or their collective morality. Ironically, these traits would later be co-opted by the fascist regime and re-envisioned as part of Spanish indemnity and honor. Duncan Wheeler and Sarah Byrd have interpreted these changes as marking significant shifts in political perspective, by arguing that the removal of the monarchs effectively leaves the audience inspired by a more "populist" interpretation of the play's events and supports the villagers' murder of the Comendador. In this context, there is no need for a royal pardon, if no crime has been committed.

As Gades' production of the play ends, the audience is left with the final tableau of villagers, weapons in hand, exclaiming that the town of Fuenteovejuna has reclaimed its glory.<sup>100</sup> Antonio Gades' adaptation should not be considered a "high-fidelity" adaptation of Lorca's work. For example, Gades includes a new scene titled "Fronroso's test" (Prueba a Fronroso) created for the dance in order to demonstrate the manner in which Esteban, the father of Laurencia, challenges Fronroso's desire to marry her. I interpret this challenge as a scene of competing masculinities, in which Esteban and Fronroso are attempting to reclaim honor. Yet it is Gades' interpretation of the infamous scene in which Laurencia calls the men of the town "cobardes," which produces a different perspective from Lorca's work (which omits this scene entirely). In this version, the meeting among the village men to determine what should be done about the Comendador's abuse of the villagers occurs simultaneously on stage with the Comendador's attempt to assault Laurencia. In silence, Laurencia is joined by the other women of the village in a somber flamenco promenade, and the women slowly cross the stage in darkness, from stage left to right, "breaking" into the light of the men's meeting. Still in silence, except for the delicate strumming of a guitar, in unison the women pantomime the assault but

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<sup>100</sup> For more on creating national identity see *Creating Spaniards: Culture and National Identity in Republican Spain* by Sandie Elenor Holguin. Holguin notes that Lorca linked "the work of his theater directly to that of the Republic" often by reading a mission statement before performances by La Barraca, stating: "The students of the University of Madrid, helped by the Government of the Republic and especially by the Minister of [Public Instruction] Don Fernando de los Ríos, are creating for the first time in Spain a theater with the creative heat of a nucleus of young artists now standing out with a luminous profile in today's life of the nation" (109). This awareness of political impact and a desire to use music, and craft performances for a diverse audience were also part of La Barraca's mission of acting with "absolute impartiality and for the joy of being able to collaborate to the extent of our power with this beautiful hour of the new Spain" (109).



*Figure 4 The women of the town urging the men to take action in Gades' production of Fuenteovejuna*

then suddenly shift into expressions of anger, as they break the walls of the stage and grab pitchforks to bring to the men. Laurencia is not alone in spurring the men to act, as all the women of the town join her in a moment of rage, and initiate a call to violence to fight for their own honor without a need for approval from the Crown.

Unlike these politically fraught adaptations, Juan Guerrero Zamora's 1971 version made for television attempts to focus on the gore and fear that are sometimes glossed over by other writers and directors in their adaptations. Zamora's version of *Fuenteovejuna* for television, represented a version of an adaptation that Duncan Wheeler would describe as "failed," because it breaks too much with the spirit of the original piece. One of the greatest departures from its theatrical roots is its brutal opening. As the opening credits scroll, the viewer is assaulted by the screams of the villagers and scenes of blood dripping on walls, the tightening of the torture rack and an ominous voice which shouts accusations of "¿Quién mató al Comendador?" while

tortured villagers respond “todos a una”. Admittedly, the movie has not aged well, despite its initial moderate success, and faced difficulties in part due to conflicts over what Wheeler calls its “lack of cinematographic competence.” Government censors admonished Zamora by stating that the film was “too long [around 2 hours]” and that Zamora “...not only refuses to eschew violence but clumsily foregrounds even the most latent hint of aggression in Lope’s text” (Wheeler 158). For example, there are extended scenes of torture and rape in which the Comendador violates three women: María, Marcela and Manuela, which deviates from the original text’s rape of Jacinta (Wheeler 157-160). Further emphasizing this “error” in adaptation, censors went so far as to say that the film not only betrayed the text, but also “betrayed Lope and Spanish history,” further condemning Zamora by implying that he created a television film which “deformed the spirit of Lope de Vega’s tragedy, political and historical interests and exaggerated so much that it shifts the interest to the Spanish black legend” (Wheeler 160). The reference to the black legend can be interpreted as running parallel to the violence of the “dark past” of Spanish colonization of the Americas and of its own people to maintain its status quo of honor through violence. However, as a viewer who has grown up during the popular resurgence



*Figure 5 Opening credits reveal images of blood and gore amid the torture of the villagers.*



*Figure 10 Laurencia confronting the men of the town (1972).*

in both game and television of the “grindhouse” film aesthetic, established in the 1970s, I would offer a more forgiving view of the film and its initial response. The torturous screams and emphasis on gore are all staples of this genre’s aesthetic, and immerse viewers in the horrors suffered by the villagers not just at the hands of the Comendador, but also by state institutions designed to protect the Comendador first, and the people second. The dialogue Zamora uses remains fairly faithful to the original text by Lope de Vega, including the peasants, lead by Laurencia, shouting lines such as “Fuenteovejuna los tiranos mueran” and includes considerable emphasis on screen for the pardoning of the villagers by the King and Queen, replicating their monologue in full before the villagers who have fallen to their knees to ask for mercy and show their continued loyalty to the crown. Yet Zamora’s faithfulness to the original language of Lope de Vega’s play only appeared to have further infuriated the censors, although Zamora did go on to produce other popular television adaptations for Estudio I (his television studio). The polemical reaction to Zamora’s adaptation seems to be influenced by the perceived glorification

of violence inflicted on women and those who are lower in the social hierarchy depicted on screen, and less criticism toward his fidelity to the play or his adaptation process.

### ***El burlador: Brief Variations in the Exploration of a Masculine Ego***

I now shift to focus on trends in adaptation regarding José Zorilla's popular version of *el Burlador de Sevilla*, titled *Don Juan Tenorio: Drama religioso-fantástico en dos partes* (1844). His revision is one of the first to capture and reframe rising concerns about cultural institutions, passion and honor. While most Americans are familiar with the dramatic adaptation written by Molière, *Dom Juan or The Feast with the Statue* (1665) or the poem "Don Juan" (1821) by Lord Byron, Zorilla's adaptation represents a shift in Spanish literary and cultural ideals in the nineteenth century, and utilizes several crucial Romantic lenses to explore the intricate connection between honor and redemption. It is important to note that *Don Juan Tenorio* is heavily influenced by the version written by Antonio Zamora, *No hay deuda que no se pague, y convivado de piedra* (1714 or 1722), and this influence includes retaining the core scene in which the statue of Don Gonzalo enacts justice by taking Don Juan Tenorio by the hand and "burning" him as he kills the younger man and damns him to hell. Despite this similarity, Zorilla's version offers a romantic portrayal of Don Juan as a young man "redeemed" through his love of Doña Inés, and is saturated with many of the cultural concerns around gender, modernity and the past which characterized the Spanish Romantic Period. In Zorilla's version, the love of God (through his relationship with Doña Inés) redeems Don Juan and allows both of their souls to be saved. Zamora's ending reinforces the supremacy of the church and the monarchy in a manner which resembles Tirso's ending.

The Romantic period of Spain is marked in part by the rise of *costumbrismo*; as a movement, costumbrismo represented an interest in the everyday life and folklore customs of

Spain and is closely tied to the Romantic Movement's exploration of satire, nature, passionate love and the inner self.<sup>101</sup> In particular, the Romantic interest in exploring the mystic or supernatural, and its connection to love and the miraculous are also core components present in *Don Juan Tenorio*. Zorilla highlights the supernatural power that Don Juan seems to inflict on others at will, yet as with other adaptations, Zorilla implies that this powerful influence is associated with demonic and satanic origins. At the start of the play, Don Juan even remains masked throughout the middle of the first act as the events of the play take place over the period of Carnival, which can be interpreted as a lack of hesitation as he reveals his true self to his rival Don Luis.<sup>102</sup>

In this adaptation, Zorilla opens the play with two immoral young gentlemen. Don Juan and Don Luis Mejía are young men who have challenged each other to commit as much evil as possible over the course of a year to see which one of them has the most "luck." This leads to both men reciting monologues in which they read to each other letters which describe the numerous types of sin and chaos they have created over the year throughout Italy, Spain, France and Greece. This hypermasculine display includes general drunken debauchery, sexual conquests, and dozens of murders, and provides evidence of Don Juan's ability to corrupt other young men by challenging their masculinity and the pervasive immorality of the elite classes. Unbeknownst to both young nobles, the father of Don Juan Tenorio, Don Diego, as well as the Comendador and future father-in-law of Don Luis, Don Gonzalo Ulloa, have received word that

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<sup>101</sup> For more on costumbrismo, the Enlightenment, and Romanticism in Spain see the texts by Phillip Deacon, Joaquín Alvarez Barrientos and Russell Sebold.

<sup>102</sup> This provides an interesting connection with *Yotsuya Kaidan*, which also places an emphasis on supernatural events taking place during religious periods.



Don Juan will be at the Laurel Inn. To discern for themselves his character, both men don Carnival masks and eavesdrop on the conversation between the two. Don Juan, after naming himself, is eventually unmasked by Don Gonzalo and disowned by his own father at the Laurel Inn. At this point, when he realizes that there is no way to redeem himself from this embarrassment, Don Juan appears to give in completely to evil, promising that he will “steal” the honor of the fiancée of Don Luis, Doña Ana, as a final conquest for this public affront to his own honor. Despite Don Luis’ attempt to warn Doña Ana and to protect her by staying overnight in her room, which also puts her honor as a noblewoman at risk, Don Luis is captured by Don Juan and his servants. Yet, Don Juan is distracted by the sudden arrival of Brígida, who is the attendant of the young Doña Inés, who has spent most of her life in a convent, shifting his focus to her instead as his next sexual conquest.

As with Don Luis, Don Juan’s rapid mood shifts and constant goading seem to imply that he can seduce both men and women to commit acts of evil by preying on their pride or greed. Even his servant Ciutti exclaims to others, “Yo creo que sea él mismo un diablo en carne mortal, porque a lo que él, solamente se arrojara Satanás” (4.1. 1940-1943).<sup>103</sup> As a part of his arsenal of tricks, Don Juan is also able to use his words as a “poison” to manipulate others to act as he wishes (3.3. 1731-1742). He can cast “spells” via letters, as well as influence others to help him commit evil. Zorilla also appears to imply that what made the young Doña Inés susceptible to Don Juan’s influence was her isolation in a convent, enforced by her father, which kept her apart from the rest of society and unknowing of its ills and deception. Her naïve nature makes her easier to deceive, but she is not completely helpless. After regaining consciousness from fainting

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<sup>103</sup> Translations provided by N.K. Mayberry and A.S. Kline unless otherwise noted: “I think that he himself is a devil in mortal flesh, because only Satan would dare to do what he does.”

upon seeing Don Juan, Doña Inés states: “si el débil corazón se me va tras de don Juan, tirándome de él están mi honor y mi obligación” (4.2. 2121-2124).<sup>104</sup> Despite her father’s concerns that “the devil came down and stole her” when Don Juan kidnaps her, Doña Inés makes it clear that she recognizes that her own honor, her chastity, is in danger as she finds herself attracted to Don Juan.

This dynamic, one in which Doña Inés, as the representative of a young and compassionate love, and Don Juan as a satanic, masculine form of lust, represents a shift in the gendered paradigm of honor found in previous versions of the play. In a passionate scene in which the two confront each other, Doña Inés accuses Don Juan of using magic such as an “infernal potion” (filtro infernal) or an amulet, to cause her to fall in love with him. She attributes the source of this magic power to Satan, who appears to have given Don Juan the strength to gaze at women and make them capitulate to his whims (line 2172). Love, communicated through words, spoken or written, is likened to a poison, venom, or even a form of hypnosis by Doña Inés to emphasize her inability to prevent it from spreading and compelling her to act on her feelings. Despite this overwhelming power, the audience is asked to consider if Don Juan and Doña Inés are truly falling in love, when Don Juan states that paradise has opened for him, and that instead of love (really a form of mortal love of the flesh, lust), it is actually God’s love that is causing him to pursue Doña Inés (73).<sup>105</sup> This holy love has motivated him truly to seek permission to marry her, and consider repenting of the evil he has committed.

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<sup>104</sup> “If my weak heart should stray following after Don Juan my honour and obligation pull me the other way”.

<sup>105</sup> Don Juan states, beginning in line 2263, “No es, doña Inés, Satanás, quien pone este amor en mí; es Dios, que quiere por ti ganarme para Él quizás.” In the line after, Don Juan renounces the mortal love, lust, that he is often associated with in previous adaptations, and embraces the love

In a final showdown, Don Juan attempts to bargain with Don Gonzalo for Doña Inés's hand in marriage, stating boldly:

DON JUAN: No amé la hermosura en ella,

ni sus gracias adoré;

lo que adoro es la virtud,

Don Gonzalo, en doña Inés.

Lo que justicias ni obispos

no pudieron de mí hacer

con cárceles y sermones,

lo pudo su candidez.

Su amor me torna en otro hombre

regenerando mi ser,

y ella puede hacer un ángel

de quien un demonio fue.<sup>106</sup>

Don Juan stresses that Doña Inés's virtue and piety will provide a way for him to redeem himself and make his way to Paradise, but the audience is left to wonder if this is merely another trick, or if Don Juan could truly be motivated to become another man by her virtue. When Don Luis intervenes and jeers at this sudden proposal, both noblemen accuse Don Juan of a false change of heart, an act of cowardice which enrages Don Juan. He then shoots Don Gonzalo and stabs Don Luis stating:

Llamé al cielo y no me oyó,

y pues sus puertas me cierra,

de mis pasos en la tierra, responda el cielo, y no yo. (4.10. 2619 - 2622)<sup>107</sup>

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of God. Instead of being filled with lust for Inés, her virtue has "filled" him, too, with virtue and motivates him to swallow his pride and meet with the Comendador.

<sup>106</sup> "It is not the beauty in her alone I adore, nor her grace: what I adore is the virtue, Don Gonzalo, in Doña Inés. What neither judges nor bishops could do with prisons and sermons, she with her purity succeeded. Her lover turns me into another man, regenerates my being and she can make an angel of a man who was a devil."

<sup>107</sup> "I called to heaven: it did not see, and since it closes its doors to my whole earthly course, let heaven be blamed, not me".

Don Juan blames Don Gonzalo and Luis' "unwillingness" to acknowledge his attempt to change for the better as a reasonable justification to cause their injuries and eventual deaths. Don Juan flees, and only years later finds out that it is Doña Inés who refused to give up on winning Don Juan over to God, and who eventually intercedes on behalf of his salvation.<sup>108</sup> In a twist on the supernatural confrontation of the statues in the graveyard scene of *el Burlador*, Doña Inés' spirit appears to Don Juan and states the terms of the bargain she made with God:

Yo a Dios mi alma ofrecí  
en precio de tu alma impura,  
y Dios, al ver la ternura  
con que te amaba mi afán,  
me dijo: "Espera a don Juan'  
en tu misma sepultura.  
Y pues quieres ser tan fiel  
a un amor de Satanás,  
con don Juan te salvarás,  
o te perderás con él.  
Por él vela: mas si cruel  
te desprecia tu ternura,  
y en su torpeza y locura,  
sigue con bárbaro afán,  
llévese tu alma don Juan  
de tu misma sepultura. (Part 2.1.4. 2997- 3012)<sup>109</sup>

In this version, love can save Don Juan when he is then confronted by Don Gonzalo's statue. Because he willingly returned for Doña Inés and earnestly pleaded for redemption of his soul, the lovers are able to find peace in the afterlife. This adaptation also deviates from endings in which

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<sup>108</sup> This intercession is reminiscent of the way in which saints in the Catholic Christian tradition are able to intercede on behalf of other mortals.

<sup>109</sup> I offered my soul to God, the fee for your impure soul, and yes, God, on seeing the tenderness with which I loved a man, said: 'Wait then for Don Juan in your grave's loneliness. And since you want to be loyal to the love of a son of Satan, you'll be saved with Don Juan or be lost with him; but if he's cruel and scorns your tenderness in his crudity and madness, and goes on, in barbarous zeal, he will carry off your soul from the very grave itself.' "

the King resolves the chaos inflicted by Don Juan, implying a shift from a cultural focus on the monarchy as absolute, and instead, dramatizes an individual internal, spiritual direction and connection with higher powers outside of the old institutions. Estudio 1, the same studio which produced *Fuenteovejuna*, also produced an adaptation for television in the 1970s which remains popular.

### ***Chūshingura: Variations in the Samurai Spirit***

As with *Fuenteovejuna* and *El Burlador de Sevilla* in Spain, in Japan, adaptations of kabuki and bunraku plays remained popular for decades after the invention of other formats such as film, television and computer gaming. In many ways, adaptation between kabuki and bunraku performances set a reciprocal relationship between playwrights who would adapt various classics and current events for both stages. Chikamatsu Monzaemon is credited as the first playwright to address the events of “Ako Castle” in his bunraku performance of “*Kanadehon Chūshingura*,” although his original one-act play written in 1706 is referred to as the *Goban Taiheiki*.<sup>110</sup> His foundational one-act version takes place in the theatrical version of the world (*sekai*) of fourteenth-century Japan. To avoid censorship, his play changed the names of central historical figures (Oboshi Yuranosuke versus Oishi Kuranosuke) as well as adjusted some of the other historical markers of the play’s setting. However, historical and literary scholars were able to identify the parallels, and it is generally accepted that “the villainous Kira is identified by Chikamatsu [as] with Ko no Moronao (d1351), Lord Asano with Enya Hangan (1350)...the name of Asano’s retainer and others remained in *Chūshingura*” (Keene 5). The adaptation of

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<sup>110</sup> Donald Keene notes another kabuki play on the topic which used the folk heroes the *Soga Brothers* as a cover; unfortunately it appears no full copy of that ancestral play exists in part due to the fact it was quickly censored (Keene 4).

*Chūshingura* most familiar to Japanese and international audiences is the version created by the team of Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shouraku and Namiki Senryu in 1748.<sup>111</sup> Despite their different chronological periods, each version of *Chūshingura* still faced the threat of censorship—whether it was from the Bakufu forces or censorship enforced during the occupation of Japan by American military forces after WWII.<sup>112</sup>

In this sense, *Chūshingura* offers a fascinating companion to *Fuenteovejuna*, due to its shared performance tradition surrounding the elimination of certain scenes from the play. Like *Fuenteovejuna*, *Chūshingura* is also inspired by historical events and additional centuries of “hearsay” which have greatly altered the manner in which later authors amended the narrative. Brian Powell and Donald Keene have noted that despite the later variations, including both Takeda Izumo, Chikamatsu Monzaemon and Mayama Seika’s versions, it is not clear what exactly triggered Lord Asano (Enya Hangan’s) drawing of his sword in the shogun’s palace, and his subsequent suicide. Historical texts recorded after the event have listed several suggestions for the animus and adaptations produced by Japanese film directors in the twentieth century, and offered hints of the cause of the conflict. Both Takeda and Mayama’s adaptations present versions of Moronao as a noble who is resentful of the favor curried by the younger Asano within the Tokugawa power structure. Chikamatsu’s version presents Moronao as not only a jealous noble, but also as one who attempts to seduce the wife of Asano (Lady Asano Kaoyo) in

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<sup>111</sup> Interestingly, Keene notes that details around the authorship have been attributed to notes by the literary figure Jipennsha Ikku (1765-1831). The version credited with inspiring later film adaptations would be Kenji Mizoguchi’s adaptation of Mayama’s “Genroku Chūshingura,” called this to differentiate it from the previous versions (1941-1942). Previous directors for film and television argue that Mizoguchi’s version set many of the film tropes that became crucial to the visual components of later versions of *Chūshingura*.

<sup>112</sup> See James Brandon’s work on censorship during the Occupation Period in 2006 and 2007 for more information about the censorship process from an American perspective.

the first act of the play. This is alluded to in Kunio Watanabe's film version (1958) as well as within Mizuguchi's earlier productions filmed between 1941 and 1942.

One of the limitations of the adaptation of the bunraku play into the kabuki version is the way in which many of the longer plays have been adapted from the bunraku performances. Currently only one or two acts from the play may be performed, leading to only the most famous scenes from the play being performed, at the cost of the loss of the full context of the play. In addition to this, many changes have been documented in translations and performances since 1833, some of the most pivotal being the inclusion of a *michiyuki* (lover's journey), a focus on fight choreography, as well as removal of the performance of the final seppuku finale. Other versions of *keren* (or spectacles) unique to the kabuki versions may be found in film adaptations, including the attack on Hangan's castle as well as Yuranosuke licking the dagger Lord Asano used to kill himself. Often the more grotesque spectacles are used in film to imply a stronger connection between Yuranosuke and his master, and to provide visual support of his dedication to following his master into death.<sup>113</sup>

With each adaptation, whether of *Fuenteovejuna* or *Chūshingura*, the viewer is struck by the uniform, consistent adherence to the original narrative's unity of time, place, location, language, etc., as well as the nuanced variations that define each adaptation's performance of a pivotal scene. This variation can range from a decision to rely on the language of the original text (as seen in Lorca and Zamora's staging of *Fuenteovejuna*, as well as the adaptations of *Chūshingura* explored here), but may also extend to the inclusion or exclusion of scenes, and even the appearance of new characters, as seen in *47 Ronin*'s addition of Kai and Mika. This is

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<sup>113</sup> Another is the death of Sadakuro, a ronin turned thief who is killed by Kampei's bullets.

especially true for adaptations of *Chūshingura*, as Takeda Izumo and Mayama Seika's versions opted to focus on the subplots surrounding the lesser known retainers. The gender of characters can even change to add to the exploration of subplots, something which is **not** done in kabuki versions of the work, though consistently the majority of cast members appear to be Japanese. In the 1958 production of *Chūshingura* Director Kunio Watanabe chose to include the female spy Rui, during the tea house scene as the "spy" who first checks in on the debauched Yuranosuke (instead of two of his male ronin companions) to confirm his new drunkenly lavish lifestyle to her superiors. Although this observation could be taken for granted, I would argue that the focus on women in the film adaptations by Kenji Mizoguchi and Kunio Watanabe emphasizes their role in supporting Yuranosuke's quest for revenge. This reflects the conversations about the role of women and shifting power dynamics and politics of the era in which the films were produced (1940s and 1950s-60). In particular, Watanabe's Rui as a character appears to be influenced by a deemed "female *Chūshingura*," *Kagamiyama* (Mirror Mountain). The manner in which the evil lord Kira kicks the young lord Asano is reminiscent of the infamous samurai Lady Iwafuji's beating of the country noblewoman Onoe with her sandal, and Watanabe's long shot of a single drop of blood on the tatami mats of the palace, mirrors the bloodshed that the viewers know will end the film and both plays. Mizoguchi was one of the first directors to emphasize this shedding of blood, and it quickly became a film staple, despite no mention of this wound in the plays (or kabuki productions). One major difference which remains understated in the film adaptations, but not in the kabuki versions, was the emphasis on the retainer Yuranosuke (Oishi's) breaking of the religious taboos associated with the death of Lord Asano. It is possible that both directors chose to emphasize the inappropriate levels of alcohol consumption and Yuranosuke's dalliances



with the prostitutes of the tea house as offensive enough to suit their respective audience's sense of decorum around such an event.

Considering these points above, the use of space and the historical exchange of stagecraft between theater and cinema, and the subversive political messages relevant to the medium, it can be argued that both the text and film adaptations of *Chūshingura* do share a common theme of depicting intra- and cross-class conflict on the stage. In this context, the notion of loyalty, both to one's lord, other vassals and ultimately, the nation, is manipulated by the director in order to contend with societal norms and political affiliations of his respective era. This manipulation is important to keep in mind in the composition of several layers of both historical "fact" and poetic, nationalistic fiction. As a whole, the nuances in adaptations are often centered on the need to publicly demonstrate the concepts of "loyalty" and "fidelity" to one's superiors: this could be loyalty to the monarchy or empire, loyalty to one's faith or even loyalty to one's nation during a period of war. Not only has the retainer Yuranosuke in each adaptation obtained long-awaited revenge for his lord's death, but also he has done so publically, in front of the members of high and low society, and ultimately before the world.

This loyalty, or at least the public presentation of it, also draws criticism from some scholars, both contemporary and from the respective period of the original work. In particular, Donald Keene took issue with the ways in which the film adaptations of the 50s and 60s presented Yuranosuke's loyalty to Asano (Enya) stating that:

Yuranosuke's loyalty is absolute. There is nothing to suggest that he would have been a particle less loyal to Enya Hangan even if the latter had been a cruel or contemptible master. The 'debunkers' of traditional history who have asserted that Enya (Asano)...was avaricious and cruel, only make us marvel all the more at the unswerving loyalty of the forty-six ronin...it is further proof that the ronin were uninterested in anything but claims of loyalty. This fact is deliberately altered by adapters of *Chūshingura* for the films; in order to please modern audiences [1978] they insist that

Enya *earned* the loyalty of his men by their sterling administration of his fief. The whole nature of the play is the unconditional nature of loyalty. (Keene 17)

Despite Keene's insistence that the ronin were solely motivated by their unwavering loyalty, one must keep in mind that for the original audience, the conflict between *giri* (duty) and *ninjō* (feelings) would have been as central to the discussion on stage as the notion of loyalty and fidelity to one's family, lord and emperor.<sup>114</sup> Mayama Seika's later work of *Genroku Chūshingura* does just that, while Ken Mizoguchi's adaptations of his work seek to personify and explain the circumstances surrounding the vendetta, rather than "force" the audience to think that Yuranosuke had to "earn" the right to the vendetta. The nuance is slight, but it does shift the perspective of the viewer in later adaptations. I agree that Yuranosuke's loyalty is clear from the start in both films, however, the honor conflict presented to the audience centers on the manner in which Yuranosuke must dampen his desire for revenge, in order to appear "low and unassuming" in order to achieve his strategic goal. The director's adaptation of this struggle is what best encourages a diversity of performance methods on screen.

### ***Yotsuya Kaidan: Connecting Theater, Screen and Game***

Unlike the sections above, in this section I analyze one of the most popular film adaptations of *Yotsuya Kaidan*, which was produced in 1959 by director Nobuo Nakagawa.<sup>115</sup> Despite the play's popularity and its reproduction in ukiyo-e, there are few film adaptations of *Yotsuya Kaidan* which exist, making Nakagawa's version one of the most critical modern film

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<sup>114</sup> Keene explains further that there have been some contemporary accounts that argue Moronao is really the hero of the play because he was the one who kept his composure despite his frustrations with an "inept" junior politician.

<sup>115</sup> Another popular adaptation includes an episode in the animé *Ayashi: Samurai Horror Tales* published by Toei Animation in 2006.



Figure 11 Nakagawa highlights Oiwa's disfigurement by including the "hair combing" scene pivotal to kabuki versions of the play.

adaptations in part due to its scarcity as well as its fidelity to the narrative.<sup>116</sup> Considered a classic for Nakagawa's cinematography and other elements, this film presents a more modern vision of Oiwa and her quest for revenge. The film draws heavily from its association with the kabuki play, and while it takes extensive advantage of the effects of film, such as sweeping landscapes, and audio, Nakagawa's changes to the narrative bring more attention to the plight of Oiwa as well as her sister Osode, and often a more sympathetic portrayal of Iemon.

Nakagawa focuses heavily on presenting long shots with expansive visions of Japanese landscapes along with not shying away from the iconic elements of the kabuki stage. The film

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<sup>116</sup> Other film adaptations include *Shimpan Yotsuya Kaidan* (1928) by Itou Diasuke, *Shinshaku Yotsuya Kaidan* (1949) by Kinoshita Keisuke, *The Depths* (1956) by Masaki Mori, and *Illusion of Blood* (1965) by Shirō Toyoda. Other recent productions include films released in 1981 and 2002 by Yukio Ninagawa. At this time, I am waiting for the arrival of a copy of *Illusion of Blood* which I believe would offer an intriguing comparison to Nakagawa's adaptation due to Toyoda's adaptation process and general changes in socio-cultural movements in Japan in the mid-1960s.

opens with the traditional quickened pace of clackers (*hyōshigi*) signaling the start of both the film and the kabuki “play.” While stage assistants quickly draw back the iconic green, orange and black curtain, ghostly text accompanies the mournful song of the *gidayu* and *shamisen* players who are seen seated to the right of the stage in a pan shot. The song is accompanied by floating white lyrics which foretell the general lament of Oiwa and her downfall. Viewers are then greeted by a sole burning candle, in the style of those popular during the Edo Period, held aloft by another stage attendant dressed all in black. The darkened stage dissolves into widescreen images of landscapes and sounds which reflect the passing of seasons and bring the audience into the frame of the film. Nakagawa also relies on the theme of concealment as a consistent filming technique to create an eerie and uncomfortable setting for viewers. Just as the characters of the film often hide their true intentions, Nakagawa often presents shots taken from behind soft drapes of cloth such as curtains found on a window or bed, lattices in windows, and reeds, giving the audience a voyeuristic feeling while they watch the tragic and bloody scenes taking place on the screen. This creates an atmosphere which makes the actions taking place in the Tamiya household seem even more illicit and haunting when supported by a palette of dark blues, deep purple, and a hazy black throughout the film.

Nakagawa’s adaptation also paints Iemon as a slightly more sympathetic character, spurred on to commit murder by his brother-in-law and henchman Naosuke. In this sense, the adaptation asks the audience to consider how both men represent different sides of evil, one greedy and the other opportunistic, while Oiwa and Osode present a virtuous, united front against their masculine counterparts. Oiwa, while presented as naïve, seeks revenge from the supernatural world as she does in the play, but Nakagawa enables her younger sister Osode to seek her own revenge, quite literally with her own sword. While mostly faithful to the play,



*Figure 12 Osode confronts and stabs Iemon.*

Nakagawa's version of Osode teams up with her husband Yoronosuke, who had originally been thought to be dead, to confront Iemon at Oiwa's grave. Osode is similar to the one presented in versions of the play performed in the 1940s, and presents her as a brave young woman from a samurai family who, like Oiwa, does not hesitate to engage in direct battle with a male enemy. While she does not land the final, deadly blow, Osode tells Iemon that she is there to fight not just for Oiwa's honor, but for her own as well. Here, as in the previous adaptation, Osode joins the ranks of women who are able to exercise their agency and regain honor for the disrespect and violence they have endured.

While I have just provided a limited comparison of films and aesthetic choices found within adaptations of these four plays, it is my hope that by continuing to examine these texts and their cultural legacies and receptions, the enduring "clichés," around masculinity, success, the use of violence and divine retribution as scholar Ignacio Arellano dubbed them, and the manner in which plays speak to loyalty can be further explored and analyzed. It should be noted

that the acknowledgement and inclusion of film adaptations of such films within recent years has become, at times, an act of defiance and the notion of a canonical, “different ending” still remains polemical. There may be “one true ending,” according to the source material, yet, the next few decades suggest that content creators and audiences will continue to seek out these stories and adapt their messages. As more works join the corpus, the variety of adaptations and their transformations into a range of media will reveal enduring cultural and individual concerns about honor, gender, and loyalty.

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## **CONCLUSION: APPROACHING NEW SHORES BETWEEN ADAPTATION AND VIDEOGAMES**

“And where does the newborn go from here? The net is vast and infinite.”

- Motoko Kusanagi *Ghost in the Shell* 1997

While there are many similarities among the selection of Spanish and Japanese plays, and their adaptations, analyzed in this dissertation, I do not dismiss crucial differences in the historical contexts, social nuances, religious contexts, and so forth, in my contextualization of their national traditions. However, overall these differences serve to underscore the striking similarities Spain and Japan share in the development and expression of complex honor codes. This includes an interest in exploring the intersections of conflicts between personal and professional loyalties, sexual relationships between men and women living within a patriarchal honor system, and even the justification of supernatural punishments for members of society who fail to uphold the moral code. From their early points of contact during the Nanban Era (1543-1614), to contemporary political and diplomatic relationships, Spain and Japan have lengthy, shared interactions both friendly and contentious. Because of this shared relationship, I predict that the “soft” power of media and its role in fostering diplomatic and cultural relationships not just between Spain and Japan, but among many other nations, will also undergo a transformation over the next few decades. In an increasingly digital world where audiences are presented with wide-spread access to curated media consumption tools, such social media and streaming film and games, the Pratt’s analogy of the beach will have to grow and adapt to these changes. In this sense, I now see the previous beach model as more of a “nodal waterway” of rivers and streams that mimic this network of works and objects which continue to inform the imaginations of

international audiences. As Pratt pointed out, the vision of two cultures who meet at the beach is one often loaded with colonial semiotics and cultural confrontation, however, I believe that the relationship does not always have to be antagonistic. Based on my analysis of honor in this dissertation, what I found was that cultures must consistently reframe how they depict and define themselves in relation to a new other. This reframing becomes the basis of the echoes later seen in various plays and literary texts. The “echoes” of the fictionalization of historical events, in particular, are important because they form the basis of the stories nations tell about their own creation and importance in a constantly shifting world order. Hence some of the earliest works for adaptation are based on fictionalized history in this context. This process is not restricted to early dramatic and literary works. The success of the Cool Japan Movement in the mid-1990s, which flooded American markets with Japanese-produced anime, manga and videogames, was modeled in part from American popular culture hegemony after WWII. The continued success of this model, despite some skepticism from modern Japanese government officials, proves that there are calculated logistical models for the success of exported narratives and a growing demand for localized media. In this age, cultural capital consumption constantly increases at a rapid rate due to new “digital” tools, spaces and communities, but this is not to say that concerns around censorship and lack of access to these media will disappear. As seen in the case of the four plays investigated here, each one dealt with specific concerns about censorship, proving that the desire for governments to control the access its citizens have to media created outside of its domain is not a unique situation. Due to this influence, I argue that the external forces which shape adaptations targeting domestic as well as international audiences should be included in the contextual analysis of adaptations. This dissertation has also revealed the enduring connections between media and politics, extending from the theater to the cinema and eventually to other

formats for media consumption over the past two centuries. The struggle to move between social strata, the conflict between social obligation and personal desires, justice, and honor are core to the plot of each play. The manner in which these plays form the basis of new archetypes for villains and heroes also continues to capture the imaginations of international audiences.

Despite these new imaginary spaces, the central question of honor still remains complex, and at the end of this project I find my perspective has shifted. Based on my analysis there is no one definition which best captures the various conversations around honor: honor is not a single thing, it is an amalgam of various external and internal forces. It is gendered as well as closely linked to an individual's socio-economic class. Finally, honor is individual, collective, and most importantly, fleeting. The cost of losing honor for those who break the social conventions of their respective society can lead to generations of poverty and ostracism. Even with this great burden, my findings suggest that honor can be regained if those who lost it are willing to pay a very bloody price for the opportunity for social advancement and financial profit. In these national plays which are often considered revenge plays, I argue that the need to push back against the loss of personal honor and disgrace validates the "means" through which characters find redemption, and it is fitting to adjust the language around the categorization of these plays to capture this difference. The tendency to use violence is often an action of "last resort" for these characters, and as moral people "pushed to the brink", the protagonists remain virtuous despite their dishonorable circumstances. Re-centering the language of categorization around the term honor more strongly captures the root of the socio-political anxiety during periods of great cultural changes faced by Japanese and Spanish citizens. Concerns with honor woven throughout these plays reveal cultural preoccupations among characters of many different social strata who must grapple with changing social structures which were the result of intense periods

of imperialism, colonization, and modernization efforts. The complex relationship among national identity, patriotism, and honor are explored across adaptations and the depictions are not unilaterally positive or without controversy.

When confronted by the overwhelming amount of texts, plays, and other media presented in this dissertation, and the textual corpus at large, the reader may ask: “Where do we go from here?” The rise in “new media” and interest in global exchange has, and will always, give rise to new questions and conflicts among different cultures. Henry Jenkins coined the term convergence culture originally to denote the similarity some cultures take on as they mutually participate in the creation of media, but in this conclusion, I ask the reader to extend the term to cover the convergence of a global popular culture that already occurred centuries ago. Initially, Jenkins defines this term as the process through which nations explore and share media among three concepts: media convergence, participatory culture, and collective intelligence. While Spain and Japan are not necessarily “converging into one nation”, the similarities in cultural conflict represented in modern media is worth investigation. In my view, adaptation is a manifestation of convergence culture, specifically the convergence of media and participatory culture. In this broad context, my interpretation may be at odds with scholars whose research is more focused on fidelity because I read the adaptation of different media as not necessarily one that is polemical at the start of this dissertation. In fact, I initially argued that simultaneous adaptations can exist within the multi-modal “world” of an adapted work and that the criteria for adaptations being “worthy” of canonical inclusion based off of solely an adherence to literary fidelity is too restrictive. This initial argument raised several questions: What happens when adaptations are shared across cultures—does this convergence create something new? How well can adaptations be read in a world of convergence popular culture, when the ability of stories and

texts to “wash up” upon the beaches and saturate audiences is stronger than in previous periods? To narrow the scope of these questions, this dissertation analyzed the theme of honor within these four national plays of Spain and Japan in order to better delve into the similarities and differences in adaptation processes. These four plays, and I suspect others, represent the roots of popular domestic works whose streams later converge with adaptations produced in other countries. Adaptation in this context, I argue, is a step in that “convergence” process. While adaptations of national plays such as *Fuenteovejuna*, require the audience to have a certain level of cultural capital to understand the more nuanced social criticism these works contain, the plays and their adaptations still remain engaging for audiences without that same level of cultural context due to their inherent flexibility and overarching honor themes. Modern audiences who consume adaptations seem to be less concerned with conversations around authenticity, and much more interested instead in the common depiction of “super heroes” and anti-hero archetypes that these plays contain. Audiences are able to converge around the core spirit of the play, while also adding and adopting their own cultural narratives and aesthetics into these works.

Another theme to emerge from this comparative analysis is the crucial role women hold within the shifting socio-political frameworks of these plays. While previous scholarship has generally explored the impact of women such as Laurencia, Lady Kaoyo, and Tonase, who are important voices within their respective plays, there has been little scholarship to position these women as part of cross-cultural phenomena of modernity, honor, and women’s empowerment. I found it striking to see how each woman made it clear that while they loved certain men, they also recognized their perceived powerlessness at the hands of villains, and each woman asserted the right to fight for her own honor, and at times, for the honor of women around her. All four



Figure 9 "Samara" in the American adaptation of *Ringu*

plays avoid the depiction of female protagonists solely as “damsels in distress” by instead choosing to highlight their own internal and external struggles to empower themselves. This is not to claim an ahistorical image of these plays as feminist works so much as to note that women could advocate for their own power within their

respective social structures. Not recognizing female agency as different from more masculine depictions of honor has the effect of eliminating the complex relationship between women and honor, but also has likely fostered the practice in some adaptations of removing completely the narratives involving female characters. Admittedly, this practice changed in the twentieth century as more directors and creators attempted to capture the importance of narratives involving female characters and their agency as iconic figures. Occasionally, this has produced the consequence of some female figures becoming figures who are “larger” than their initial literary context in popular culture. For example, in the case of *Yotsuya Kaidan*, the ghost of Oiwa herself has become an “echo,” the prototype for many Japanese ghosts in the contemporary horror genre, and introduced a new type of “movie-monster” to American audiences. While American audiences may not know her original story, they recognize the ghost-trope she popularized (and react accordingly) as they view American adaptations of films such as *The*



*Figure 10 Hisako*

*Ring*, featuring the ghost Samara, or play as the ghost Hisako in the fighting game series *Killer Instinct*.

More recent adaptations, for example those of *El burlador*, have revived the complex issues around social disillusionment and romantic fantasies by highlighting the cultural messaging around honor and its gendered constructs for both domestic and international audiences. The women of these plays are often heroes when attempts to reclaim their

lost honor drives them to extreme means. Yet, there is little hesitation while they fight for their social, emotional and sexual needs.

Finally, my analysis suggests that the influence of supernatural justice as a tool for marginalized or disenfranchised citizens is also a crucial comparative theme. Supernatural justice serves as a final tool or instrument of last resort for protagonists who are unable to fight back during their lifetime who wish to preserve the natural order of society. The saying that “people will reap what they sow” (*quien tal hace, que tal pague* and 自業自得 *jigoujitoku* in Spanish and Japanese) is an ominous warning that reveals the expectation for justice at the hands of a higher power, which this type of violence offers. Ultimately, in these honor plays, justice will be served, and the larger cosmic balance which enforces the status quo will endure despite the villains’ attempts to commit immoral acts. This “dark side” to honor plays reveals that the use of magic, especially magic related to the religious traditions of both nations, is not just a tool

to justify the use of spectacle on stage. Magic and supernatural justice are devices of poetic justice, and core components of later adaptations in Spanish and Japanese theatrical traditions.

Admittedly, exploring adaptations as objects and processes also reveals some of the complex generic differences among different forms of media and the relationships among creators. This exploration is not without criticism, as complex issues related to the ownership of intellectual property, cultural appropriation and systemic orientalism, are also valid concerns which can arise during the production of adaptations, especially those that are cross-cultural. These frustrations have recently been brought to light during by events in the world of game development. Conflicts between original content creators and adapters challenge the at times seemingly rosy relationship between games and adaptations. These very public conflicts lead to resentment by content creators for being pushed out of their franchise, and frustration on the part of developers who want to elevate the social prestige and technological impact of the worlds they have adapted. Robert Purchase captured this recent frustration during his 2017 interview with Polish fantasy author Andrzej Sapkowski:

When *The Witcher 1* came out in 2007, things began to change. Book publishers saw it as a way of reaching a new audience and so republished the series with game-related images and blurbs. It muddied the waters, making the distinction between game and author less clear. Not a problem in Poland, where Sapkowski was a household name, but to English audiences, where he wasn't published until 2008... "It was f\*\*\*ing bad for me," he says. As CD Projekt Red's star rose with each game released, the problem worsened. Take a look at the covers of the English books now and see for yourself. You can imagine why someone would mistakenly ask Sapkowski if he was the guy writing books about the games. "It happened," he says. "It happened. I can remember my reaction: I know many bad words and I used all of them, in many languages. "In 20 years," he says, "somebody will ask, 'Witcher, the game - and who's the author?'" No one will know. "*Somebody*," they'll say.

As the world of *The Witcher* grows, especially among English-speaking audiences, its original creator expresses concern that the story, and subsequently his role as *the creator*, will be



forgotten. This mirrors concerns within previous adaptation scholarship about fidelity and the implication that the original source should be more highly regarded than later adaptations, which are seen as “lesser” derivatives of the original literary text. This inversion of that hierarchy, one in which the game franchise has gained more popularity (and profit) than the text, greatly differs from the optimistic working relationship between game developers and authors envisioned by Linda Hutcheon. However, I do remain optimistic that this does not need to represent the typical relationship among content creators—in the future new forms of genre and interactive experiences will afford their audiences new ways to enjoy a wide range of media. Hopefully this will invigorate new forms of debate concerning honor and loyalty as these plays are adapted into new formats and by new audiences. The re-evaluation of concepts such as intellectual property, localization, adaptation as a process, and franchising will also have to adapt accordingly in order to appeal to a more diverse audience and global popular culture production system. In particular, the justification for the use of violence to maintain honor (and its consequences) will be of interest as virtual reality and augmented reality platforms become more accessible and raise new ethical quandaries for their audiences.

In full, this project has revealed several underexplored trends in adaptation, not just of these plays, but also within the inter-cultural adaptation processes. While translation and adaptation are different processes, I argue that the concept of localization remains one of the best frameworks through which to capture the relationship among different literary elements. In future exploration, I would like to focus further on detailing the trends among the differences within the acts of revenge across adaptations. Initially plays such as *Chūshingura*, and *Fuenteovejuna* are works which remain popular within the domestic sphere in which they were created, but due to historical and cultural factors the characters and narratives proved to be

malleable. The “malleability” of these plays is part of what makes them endure and remain applicable to cultural contexts beyond their initial target audience. The manner in which adaptations can be shaped to mirror the cultural context of their creation is part of what I consider to be the most appealing part of the adaptation process, not just the cultural capital required to be “familiar” with an adaptation. The concerns around loyalty and morality debated in these national plays is often overshadowed by more traditional perspectives which sought to turn these plays into revenge plays, or to debate issues around authenticity and ownership. In particular, the resulting focus on the theme of revenge as a way of categorizing these plays, and not on the complex concerns around honor and cultural context, has had negative consequences during times of war and conflict as these images become a tool for reductively presenting and understanding other cultures.

This dissertation has provided me with a new perspective that goes beyond my initial interest in exploring the narratives and historical context around these plays and their adaptations. As a content creator in several popular culture spheres, I have gained further appreciation for the ways in which these texts can be tracked and passed on to future viewers, scholars and content creators. Since the start of my original analysis, more adaptations have been produced, which adds to the growing corpus of these texts, and charts new areas for exploration. It is my hope that as I continue my inquiry along these lines that other scholars will explore the connections among these plays and the questions around honor that their paradigms present for contemporary audiences. The production of media such as film and games factors heavily into the adaptation process, and also merits continued study, as the industries themselves are subject to financial and cultural pressures affecting the ability of certain plays to be produced and marketed successfully.

I plan to expand this project to find ways to visualize the relationships among adaptations using technologies and data visualization methods developed in Information Science and Data Visualization and other fields. Potentially, this would allow others to add their own information or metadata about an adaptation and ultimately create a more immersive experience and research resource for future adaptation and comparative scholarship. I hope to show that by bringing in earlier versions of these adaptations into conversation, a pattern of adaptation that fits different cultural adaptations or profiles of specific types of narratives can be more critically examined and scrutinized. For example, contemporary versions of *Chūshingura* were once considered democratic “powerhouse” plays and movies after WWII, yet the story seems to have waned with American audiences in theaters, although the samurai image seems to remain popular in the world of gaming. A visualization tool would greatly enhance my ability to compare various components of these adaptations, to explore patterns among different facets, and to outline a scope for an investigative project. Despite these shifts and movements to new formats, these plays and their echoes continue to captivate audiences around the world and reinforce conversations related to honor, society and the human condition. While the motivations behind the characters are repurposed, and may be a source of contention, the effects of their iconic debates and imagery continue to live on in an increasingly global imagination.