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Competing for Supremacy: The Origins of Shakespeare Studies in Japan

Abstract: This paper reveals that Shakespeare studies in Japan originated through competing notions of literary studies. Traditional Japanese ideas about literature differed markedly from Anglophone ones, which focused on grammatical and literary-historical facts based on the notion of Shakespeare's universal appeal. Their principles were contested by Sôseki Natsume, who questioned Shakespeare's vaunted universality between the 1900s and the 1910s. Although specialist scholars began forming Shakespeare as an object of disinterested study in the 1920s, it was contested again by some reflective scholars who wished to employ Shakespeare as a means of liberal education. These contests for supremacy spawned divergent origins of Shakespeare studies in Japan.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Japan, Imperial University of Tokyo, Sôseki Natsume, Shôyô Tsubouchi, Yoshisaburô Okakura

Plural origins

The study of foreign languages and literature was inextricably entwined with moral education before Japan resumed its diplomatic relations with Western countries in 1868. As Benjamin Duke puts it, "[t]he Chinese classics set the agenda of the literary curriculum as a means to inculcate moral and ethical values essential for good government, according to Confucian teachings" (11). This notion was inevitably applied to English studies, as evident in the English preface added by Japanese editors to an 1869 English-Japanese dictionary:

> "The English language offers the readiest means of acquaintance with the manners and customs of the various nations of the world, and the knowledge

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> thus derived, by showing us our defects and how to remedy them, must be of utility to the Empire" (Takahashi, Takahashi, and Maeda n.p.).

The study of the English language and English studies were combined, and Japanese students conceived that English literature would be, in the words of Gerald Graff and Michael Warner, "a moral and spiritual force and a repository of "general ideas" which could be applied directly to the conduct of life and the improvement of national culture" (6), just as the Chinese classics had been. Shakespeare studies were no exception.

However, that was not the experience of Anglophone instructors employed by the Japanese government to teach English literature at the first Japanese university (the current University of Tokyo), which changed its name from Kaisei Gakkô to Tokyo University in 1877, was reorganized as the Imperial University in 1886, and then as the Imperial University of Tokyo in 1897. They began to teach Shakespeare in 1873, with guiding principles that differed markedly from Japanese ones and that proved embarrassing for Japanese students. A notable instance is Sôseki Natsume's (1867-1912) comments on Anglophone lectures on Shakespeare at the Imperial University in the early 1890s. Sôseki had studied English literature under the guidance of the Scottish scholar James Main Dixon, who taught Shakespeare, as well as the English language, from 1886 to 1892. Sôseki complained about Dixon's teaching methods:

> "He would make us read poetry aloud, read prose passages to him, do composition; he would scold us for dropping articles, angrily explode when we mispronounce things. His exam questions are always of one kind: give Wordsworth's birth and death dates, give the number of Shakespeare's folios, list the works of Scott in chronological order. For him, such an approach to literary studies was questionable: "Can this be English literature? Is this any way to instil an understanding of what literature is, English or otherwise?" He remarked in disgust that he "did not know the answer to that after three years of furious study" (Natsume 16: 593-94).

Sôseki's critical pronouncements show that Anglophone literary studies were not compatible with what he had expected of a literature class. Indeed, before embarking on teaching Shakespeare at the Imperial University of Tokyo in 1903, he had used the following texts as material for teaching English in higher schools: Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, George Eliot's *Silas Marner*, Dinah Craik's Victorian novel *John Halifax, Gentleman*, and Philip Hamerton's *Human Intercourse* and *The Intellectual Life* (Kawashima 165). The former three works can be called *Buildungsromans*, and Hamerton's book deals with the way of living, with clear didactic overtones.

In Sôseki's mind, the study of language and literature consisted of learning morals through English. As Vilslev points out, Sôseki's notion of literature and literary studies "springs from a confrontation between Western and Eastern traditions of literature; its point of departure being the realisation of distinct literatures" (274). Indeed, he blatantly confessed his failure to appreciate *Hamlet* when recollecting his school days (Natsume 12: 207). Confronting this distinction between Western and Japanese literary studies, Sôseki felt the need to re-purpose Shakespeare studies when beginning to teach that subject.

Against this background, this paper aims to reveal that Shakespeare studies in Japan rose out of competing origins. As Graff and Warner put it, "[f]rom their beginnings, academic literary studies were held together not by any shared definition of literature or of the discipline, but by tacit social agreements that enabled incompatible principles to coexist in uneasy truce" (2). This holds true for Shakespeare studies in Japan, where, in the words of Graff, one idea about English literature was invariably "contested" by another "competing model" (55). I show that the crucial periods of transition and contestation in Shakespeare studies in Japanese education institutions were the 1900s and the 1920s. The first marked a transition from deference to Anglophone principles in the 1870s to the questioning of them in the 1900s. The other involved the emergence of Shakespeare studies as a specialized subject in the 1920s, along with its competing model—liberal education. What is crucial to recognize is that these transitions were not straightforward, but rather can be understood as a contest for supremacy. To shed light on these competing aspects of Shakespeare studies in Japan, I primarily analyze how professors responded critically to their predecessors and contemporaries.

Anglophone principles

Although the department of English at the Imperial University was established in 1889, the teaching of Shakespeare had already begun in 1873, being entrusted to Anglophone instructors employed by the government. The primary method of introducing Shakespeare at the university depended on the foreign instructors. The first professor to teach Shakespeare at the university was James Summers—an Englishman who was appointed as a professor of English literature and logic in 1873, and who delivered lectures on *Hamlet* and *Henry VIII* (Toyoda 23-27). How Summers taught the plays of Shakespeare can be inferred from the examination for one of his courses in 1875:

> First Class: English Language and Literature.
> Write out and paraphrase the first few lines of Wolsey's address: "Farewell & c … as I do.

> Why is Shakespeare held in esteem? And why is Spencer less read than Shakespeare? [...] Give the characteristics of these writers […] Write ten lines from Hamlet's address to his father's ghost and paraphrase a few lines."
>
> Explain the expressions: —
> "I find thee apt."
> "Is by a forged process of my death Rankly abused."
> "The serpent that did sting thy father's life, Now wears his crown." (Tokio 105)

These examination questions involved the memorization of passages ("Write out"), philological nuances ("paraphrase" and "Explain the expressions"), and literary-historical facts ("Give the characteristics of these writers"). Although the question "Why is Shakespeare held in esteem?" may demand a bit more than philology, no evidence shows that Summers delivered lectures on the content of Shakespeare's plays or took any interest in their humanistic or aesthetic value.

Something similar can be said about Summers's successor, William A. Houghton, an American instructor who taught Shakespeare's works from 1877 to 1882. He used William Rolfe's American version of George L. Craik's *The English of Shakespeare Illustrated in a Philological Commentary on his Julius Caesar, Hamlet, King Lear, The Merchant of Venice*, and *Richard II* (Toyoda 28). His choice for the textbook makes sense given that Rolfe's editions had come into popularity in American schools as early as 1867 (Graff 39). Rolfe's edition of *Julius Caesar* is festooned with a battery of commentaries focused entirely on philological points and historical information, without making any mention to the meaning of the likes of Brutus and Antony's addresses to the public. This shows how Houghton also required Shakespearean texts chiefly for students to memorize grammatical and literary-historical facts.

More noteworthy, however, is that Houghton also required students to dismiss their traditional notion of literary studies. In 1881, his student, Shôyô Tsubouchi (1859-1935), who would later complete an entire translation of Shakespeare's works, took an examination that required writing critically on the character of Gertrude in *Hamlet*, receiving a poor grade on the basis that his criticism was moralistic. In his criticism of Gertrude, Shôyô had applied the Confucian tenets of "rewarding the virtuous and punishing the evil", a pillar of East Asian cultures when judging human behaviour (Tsubouchi 12: 345-46). Houghton was followed by Dixon, who taught from 1886 to 1892. The teaching of Shakespeare's texts thus continued to consist in students memorizing grammatical and literary-historical facts until around 1904.

Despite different ideas about literary studies, at the time, between the West and Japan, the majority of Japanese students admired Anglophone instructors and tended to reflexively and uncritically accept their new model of literary studies, at a time when the West was recognized as a staple of

progressive modernity (Takemura; Kawato). This adulation was prompted by a Japanese desire to assume a Westernized self-identity. Indeed, according to Europeans living in Japan, Japanese intellectuals in the 1870s earnestly adapted themselves to the West, so that they tended to be ashamed of revealing their past and history. For instance, a German doctor Erwin Baeltz stated in his 1876 diary:

> [T]he Japanese have their eyes fixed exclusively on the future, and are impatient when a word is said of their past. The cultured among them are actually ashamed of it. "That was in the days of barbarism," said one of them in my hearing. Another, when I asked them about Japanese history, bluntly rejoined: "We have no history. Our history begins today." (17)

In Baeltz's view, Japanese people were not concerned with their "history" but with the "future," namely a Westernized self-image. Such an attitude was observed in scholarship, as Sôseki bitterly recollected during his student days in the 1880s:

> In my day it was even worse. Attribute something—anything—to a Westerner and people would follow it blindly, all the while acting as though it made them very important. […] I might read one European's critique of another European's book, for example. Then, never considering the merits of the critique, without in fact understanding it, I would spout it as my own. This piece of mechanically acquired information, this alien thing that I had swallowed whole, that was neither possession nor blood nor flesh of mine, I would regurgitate in the guise of personal opinion. And the times being were, everyone would applaud. (Natsume 16: 593-94)

At a time when Japanese peopled tended to privilege the Western yardstick of modernization, it is not surprising that Japanese students automatically accepted Anglophone teaching of Shakespeare.

The Anglophone approaches to literary education in Japan were based on their own education. Anglophone professors had generally studied Shakespeare in their native countries during the nineteenth century. Indeed, their examination questions were similar to ones appearing in contemporary Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations, which English students in secondary schools were required to take to measure their knowledge of literature, including Shakespeare. For instance, the 1904 Cambridge Local Examination included the following questions on *Richard II*:

> Explain the following passages:
> (a) Thy word is current with him for my death,
> But dead, thy kingdom cannot buy my breath

(b) My wretchedness unto a row of pins,
They'll talk of state; for every one doth so
Against a change.
(c) Bound to himself! what doth he with a bond
That he is bound to?
(d) Bearing their own misfortunes on the back
Of such as have before endured the like. (qtd. in Jones 121)

As Kearney puts it, "English texts, just as much as classical, could be made to yield a harvest of grammatical, etymological, historical and rhetorical material and thus be made sufficiently demanding for the classroom" (263). This similarity implies that Anglophone instructors recycled the same kinds of examination questions used in English schools that themselves had only emerged in the nineteenth century.

Taking the post in 1896, Lafcadio Hearn delivered a series of lectures on Shakespeare that were in stark contrast to his predecessors. According to one of his students, Hearn admired Shakespeare's unparalleled genius and did not allow his students to seek out the meaning of words, use glossaries or dictionaries, or learn Shakespearean grammar before beginning to read his plays for pleasure and personal edification (Kaneko 125). Hearn's attempt to treat Shakespeare as *belles-lettres* drew flocks of undergraduates to his spellbinding classes. However, his Spenserian view of Shakespeare might have given students the impression that, as Borlik rightly puts it, "Shakespeare's greatness is an index of the greatness of the English race." Indeed, the Bard's genius was ascribed to an "organic memory" that had inherited the "particular mental tendencies and capacity" of "hundreds of former lives." There is hardly any doubt that "particular" meant "English" (Kaneko 390).

Nevertheless, Hearn praised the "universality" of Shakespeare's characters:

> There is a common universal truth of human nature in Shakespeare's characters, which is independent of custom and country, and is therefore quite as much Japanese as it is English […] Should Japanese society so change its structure within another hundred years as to resemble the great Western societies, Shakespeare's plays will then seem to a Japanese audience quite as natural as a Japanese play does to any Tokyo audience of the present time. (39-40)

As Borlik puts it, "[s]ubscribing to contemporary notions of social evolution, Hearn prophetically envisions a Westernized Japan in which cultural barriers to the appreciation of Shakespeare have all been eroded" (393). If his genius were conditioned by collective memory, and that memory were universal, then the Japanese would have no choice but to conform to Anglophone opinions as a universal truth until they became Westernized.

This origin of Shakespeare studies was spawned by Anglophone instructors, who, recycling the disciplinary norms that they had received in their native countries, employed Shakespeare's texts chiefly as memorization exercises for grammatical and literary-historical facts with little concern for the content of his works, and praised Shakespeare's genius as a universal truth.

A sea change, however, occurred in 1903, when, succeeding Hearn, Sôseki became the first Japanese-born teacher of Shakespeare at the Imperial University of Tokyo, following his return from an official visit to Great Britain in 1900-1902, where he had studied English literature at the behest of the Japanese Ministry of Education. There he attended weekly private tutorials in London with W. J. Craig, who was serving as the principal editor of the first Oxford Shakespeare and had overseen the first edition of the Arden Shakespeare series. Confronting the principles of his Anglophone predecessors, to which he was totally alien, Sôseki came to believe that "universality was not a priori, but historical" (Karatani 12-13). Therefore, he felt the need to resituate Japanese Shakespeare studies within another framework that comprised neither the inculcation of moral values, nor linguistic and literary-historical facts, nor the adulation of Shakespeare's universality: he decided to look only at the characteristics of the work itself without any recourse to its historicity (Natsume 16: 180).

Questioning the Universality of Shakespeare Studies

In allowing scope for the emotional engagement of the reader with Shakespeare's characters, Sôseki used these more psychological principles to oppose the philological principles that had previously guided Shakespearean education in Japan (Uchimaru "Sheikusupia" 197-218). Meanwhile, another qualm he had coalesced around how Shakespeare was attended by notion of universality. This section elucidates how Sôseki responded critically to the presumed universality of Shakespeare in his teaching of the plays in classes at the Imperial University of Tokyo.

Sôseki's lectures were audacious in their attempts to engage with Shakespeare's plays independently and without excessive deference to received Anglophone hermeneutics of the plays, as evidenced by one of his students: "he neither had academic snobbery nor blindly accepted the judgement of Western scholars but tenaciously determined his own attitudes towards English literature, albeit not obtruding them on his students" (qtd. in Nogami 173). The students were also encouraged to "have their own opinions" about Shakespeare's plays (Komiya 17). Another student similarly remarked that "instead of boasting his knowledge by citing large numbers of the opinions of Western Shakespeare

critics, he tenaciously maintained his own opinions and repudiated the indiscriminate embrace of the judgement of Westerners" (Urase 102).

These criticisms coalesced around the Anglophone notion of English literature, particularly Shakespeare. Indeed, when embarking on teaching English literature in 1903, Sôseki harped on the difficulty that Japanese learners of English literature would encounter:

> There is nothing in common in the lit[re] of a nation with that of another, except what is natural & universal to humanity; while our task which is of primary significance in literary estimate seems to be most arbitrary & to a great extent national, if not local or individual. And it is a matter of course that we cannot appreciate the literature of a nation, with whom we have little in common, but as a foreigner. (Mori 1-2)

As there was nothing in common in literature between Great Britain and Japan, it was difficult for Japanese people to read English literature as the English would. To unlock "the treasury of a foreign literature" actually required "a key handed down from the ancestors of the nation only to their children". Without such a "key", it would be "next to impossible to try to criticise Eng. literature like an Englishma[n] as a Japanese" (qtd. in Mori 5). Therefore, Sôseki insisted on the right to read English literature as a "foreigner".

His questioning of universality sharply contrasts with Hearn's ahistorical view that "[t]here is a common universal truth of human nature in Shakespeare's characters, which is independent of custom and country." While admiring Shakespeare's dramatic techniques, Sôseki confessed his sense of Shakespeare as a cultural "other" in his marginal notes on the play-texts that he referred to, in which his gloss of Hamlet's "Now I might do it pat" (3.3.73) speech highlights disparate views on revenge by responding to Dr. Johnson recognizing the speech as "too horrible:" "We Japanese do not find the speech so horrible, either because (1) we do not have a strong sense of "damnation," or (2) we have a strong passion for revenge, or for both these reasons." Hamlet's motivation for (in)action was premised on a Christian cultural context foreign to Japanese Confucian moral values. Suicide can also be seen as a noble act, not a mortal sin, in the face of disgrace, according to moral codes derived from Japanese Confucian disciplines (Natsume 27: 351).

Sôseki's sense of Shakespeare as a cultural "other" is evident in the interpretation of *Othello* he espoused in his 1906 lectures on the play. He commented on the words of Othello, who has decided to kill Desdemona, "But they are cruel tears" (5.2.21) as follows:

> Johnson says that "I [Othello] lament the punishment which justice compels me to inflict". His interpretation is that, although Othello sheds tears, he seeks

> justice. However, I like to interpret this "cruel" as being "cruel" to himself. This is cruel to Othello, and, therefore, he sheds tears. (Nogami, *Natsume* 237)

In Johnson's interpretation, Othello sheds tears because he has to be "cruel" to Desdemona. It is dictated by the "cause" (5.2.1) and "justice" (5.2.17) of God, because Othello, who sees himself as a Christian, believes that Desdemona is unfaithful in a Christian sense (Honigmann 84). For Sôseki, though, Othello feels killing is "cruel" to himself, and therefore sheds tears. In essence, Sôseki refused to view Othello's act as dictated by God, which is alien to him, and thus related it to such ethical conflicts as may occur in traditional love-suicide stories in Japan. By implicitly or explicitly exposing Shakespeare's otherness, Sôseki elicited different interpretations from Anglophone critics. His perception of Shakespeare as a cultural "other" inevitably invited him to question Shakespeare's universality. If Shakespeare was not universal, then it follows that any literal understanding or translation of his words would become difficult for Japanese people to appreciate. This qualm prompted his critique of Shôyô Tsubouchi's faithful rendition and production of *Hamlet* in 1911.

Critique of Japanese Translations

Although Shôyô's first-ever full-length Japanese translation of *Hamlet* can be seen as part of an effort to transplant the play into a Japanes cultural milieu, Sôseki criticized it for essentially doing the right things in the wrong way. In his critical review entitled "Tsubouchi Hakase to Hamuretto [Dr Tsubouchi and *Hamlet*]," Sôseki first regarded the translation as "a model of fidelity and respect for the original text" (Natsume 16: 382-83). For him, though, the entire venture seemed ill-conceived due to Shôyô's lack of concern with Shakespeare's otherness:

> *Hamlet* is a play written three hundred years ago in England. It is unrhymed, written in so-called blank verse with five beats to the line. Based on their awareness of these superficial features, one can well expect the minds of modern Japanese audiences with regard to this play, whether appreciative or critical, to be made up before reading it. What I mean to say is that rather than reading *Hamlet* with a belief bordering on a superstition that its concerns are closely bound up with the realities of modern Japan, I prefer to take a more critical stance on the extent to which our emotions and interest are excited by *Hamlet*. (Natsume 16: 381-82)

The interrogation echoes almost verbatim the criticism advanced in Sôseki's lectures on literature. This similarity suggests that his critique was targeted at

Shôyô's "belief bordering on a superstition that its concerns are closely bound up with the realities of modern Japan." If Shôyô assumed that *Hamlet* would appeal to Japanese audiences when his language was translated faithfully to the source text, then he concealed Shakespeare's historicity under the guise of universality:

> I would state unflinchingly that a man called Shakespeare was standing up there and ruining all our pleasure. If the gap between *Hamlet* and a Japanese audience is to be properly closed, we should not need England or three hundred years of history or the poetic language or all those troublesome adjectives. *Hamlet* by itself is enough. (382)

Actually, this historicity ("England or three hundred years of history or the poetic language") led to "a discrepancy of interest between the play and the audiences:"

> If one were to ask the several thousand people who saw the production whether they had enjoyed it so much that they had lost all thought of themselves and become completely absorbed in the action, then there probably would not be even one who could say that they had. I have no doubt in my mind that there was such a discrepancy of interest between the play and the audiences. (382)

Such a discrepancy was further highlighted by the fidelity to the source text:

> [I]t is to my profound disappointment that it is precisely because the Doctor is so faithful to Shakespeare that he ends up being unfaithful to his audience. He uses not a single word or phrase to appeal to Japanese psychology or customs. To the very last, his distorted Japanese follows Shakespeare to the word. (383)

In Sôseki's view, Shôyô's faithful translation paradoxically highlighted what Dennis Kennedy has called "Shakespeare's otherness" (187).

Such a "distorted Japanese" brought "only a dim appreciation based on a deliberate adaptation of our sensibilities:"

> When I appeal to my experience, I learn that the realm of poetry created by Shakespeare does not possess that universality that European critics ascribe to it. For us as Japanese it requires years of training to develop a proper appreciation of Shakespeare, and even this is only a dim appreciation based on a deliberate adaptation of our sensibilities (385).

If Shakespeare's historicity "distorted" the Japanese language and required adaptation of Japanese sensibilities, then Shôyô was called upon to stop being a "faithful translator of Shakespeare" by concealing its historicity under the guise of universality:

> Rather than being a faithful translator of Shakespeare, the Doctor should choose between giving up the idea of staging his translation, or, if he is to go ahead with the performance, of being unfaithful. (383)

Thus, Sôseki's concern with Shakespeare's otherness spawned another origin of Shakespeare studies, namely adaptation. In short, through what Genette (304) terms "proximation," Sôseki called upon the translator to bring the text in closer proximity with the social and cultural conditions of his time.

Specializing Forces

Sôseki's new ideas concerning Shakespeare studies were, however, contested, or practically ignored as unprofessional by burgeoning specialists in the 1920s. This shift formed another origin of Shakespeare studies in Japan, which followed a similar trajectory with what Joseph North has termed a "scholarly turn" from "belletrists" in Great Britain and the United States during the 1920s:

> [I]t becomes clear that one side—that of the belletrists—is going to lose. They are determined amateurs in a game that is speedily turning professional. They are unscientific: in eschewing the world of "verifiable facts" and instead opting to commit themselves to the world of "interpretations and values," they seem destined to confirm to the wider university that their practices of aesthetic appreciation, in Graff's words, have "no objective basis and therefore [do] not qualify for serious academic study." (22)

The harbinger of academic Shakespeare studies in Japan was John Lawrence, the British philologist who suceeded Sôseki at the Imperial University and taught Shakespeare philologically from 1906 until 1916. Unlike his Anglophone predecessors, Lawrence was a professional philologist who earned an MA at the University of Oxford in 1898, after receiving his doctoral degree at the University of London. He treated Shakespeare's texts as opportunities for philological analysis. Although his lectures gained high acclaim among research-inclined students, they seemed to have dismayed those who had a curiosity to study literature, not language. For instance, a student's description of his *Macbeth* class gave the impression that it was so devoted to linguistic minutiae as to be insufferably boring. Instead of interpreting the plays, Lawrence only parroted the interpretations of other prominent English Shakespeare critics (E.N. 273). Lawrence was concerned with treating Shakespeare as an object of disinterested study and ignored all aspects of aesthetic or humanistic merit sedimented in the plays.

After Lawrence, Shakespeare was handed over to his disciple, Sanki Ichikawa, who became the first Japanese scholar to hold the chair of English

with the title of full professor at the university. He started teaching in 1916 immediately following his return from Great Britain and the United States and delivered lectures on Shakespeare between 1920 and 1927. Ichikawa's annotated editions of *King Lear* and *Othello* focused exclusively on Shakespeare's language, and offered a running paraphrase and his historical explanations of the language without any commentaries on the content of the play.

Therefore, Ichikawa was seen as disconnecting literature from its human relevance, as was acutely observed by a popular novelist, Ryûnosuke Akutagawa:

> Students will become totally at a loss in the study of literature if they want to study seriously. If they study English literature philologically as Mr Ichikawa brilliantly does, then I think it makes perfect sense. Yet, then, the works of Shakespeare or Milton cease to be plays and poetry, becoming simply a meaningless row of English words. (Akutagawa 2: 436)

For Akutagawa, Ichikawa emptied out the content of literature in the service of linguistic analysis.

Ichikawa was discharged from teaching Shakespeare in 1927, and the task was, in turn, entrusted to Takeshi Saitô, who wielded authority as the first native professor of literature at the Imperial University of Tokyo. Although Saitô also had studied under the aegis of Lawrence, he was nevertheless engaged with English literature (in addition to language). However, to his mind too, Shakespeare should be treated for literary-historical analysis, as Mukoyama has pithily summarised:

> [I]t was Dr. Ichikawa who left the old way of study of English literature which is commonly called the descriptive grammar and started scientific study of English language by observing the linguistic phenomenon as they actually are in their historical development, so it was Prof. Saito who left the then prevailing older way of study of English literature which is commonly called the impressionistic criticism and started factual study of the literature by observing the literary works as they actually are in the light of historical development of English literature. (124)

Saitô's "factual study of the literature" was crystallised in *A Historical Survey of English Literature with Special Reference to the Spirit of the Time* (1927), which many scholars credited with heralding the advent of English literary studies as an academic discipline in Japan (Okada 46).Thus, the scholarly turn under the paradigms of the linguist (i.e. Ichikawa) and the historicist (i.e. Saitô) brought with it a very clear trend towards literary professionalism in the 1920s.

However, this model of Shakespeare studies as an object of detached study was questioned from its inception, as a scholar stated in 1921:

> Scholars of English literature usually study it as an academic discipline, without any regard for their emotional engagement with literary texts. As a result, English literature has been dried up into something like a dried sardine. English literary scholarship has so far dried it even further, presenting it as English literature. ('Henhen' 63)

Such a sharpened focus of the discipline was further problematized in the 1930s, as a prominent scholar, Akira Honda, warned in 1936:

> Shakespeare scholars should not be confined to the small corner wherein they are active investigators […]. Readers of Shakespeare would continuously decrease in numbers if scholars still confined themselves to the small corner without any regard to something else. (111-12)

Indeed, another prominent scholar of English, Rintarô Fukuhara, pointed out that the huge gap emerged between literary scholarship and the interest of the general public since its specialization began:

> Although English literature was studied and taught in a more academic and universal way during the Taishô era, it ceased to be a real object of interest for the Japanese […] English studies were divorced from the citizens. They were increasingly specialised and divided into many small research branches. They came to be beyond the interest of the general public. (*Nihon* 29)

This disconnection between Western scholarship and the Japanese was disclosed by Karl Löwith, the Jewish-German philosopher who was a student of Martin Heidegger and fled Nazi Germany to Japan in 1936. He problematized the Japanese reception of European sciences as a form of intellectual compartmentalization—akin to a "two-storey house" with no staircase between a higher (European) and a lower, more fundamental (Japanese) floor:

> They [Japanese intellectuals] live as if on two levels [floors, *Stockwerken*]: a lower, more fundamental one, on which they feel and think in a Japanese way; and a higher one, on which the European sciences [*Wissenschaften*] from Plato to Heidegger are lined up. And the European teacher asks himself: where is the step on which they pass from one level to the other? (232)

In describing this intellectual compartmentalization as an inability to pass between two floors, Löwith criticized Japanese intellectuals' inability or refusal to connect European sciences to the Japanese way of thinking and feeling. The development of Shakespeare studies resulted in a great division between "the European sciences" and feeling and thinking "in a Japanese way."

Considered in this framework, specialist scholars accommodated Shakespeare studies into the upper floor with no step into the lower Japanese "living" floor.

Shakespeare Studies as a Means of Liberal Education

Prominently figuring among the critics of specialization was Yoshisaburô Okakura (1868-1936), the doyen of English studies whose commitments straddled a line between scholarship and education. He expressed his doubt in his 1924 essay:

> It's a shame that the so-called scholars and artists tend to neglect their ultimate goal of carrying themselves to a higher level. They are wasting valuable time studying for its own sake, despite the fact that scholarship *per se* is only a means, or a tool, to an object. In so doing, they consider their work done. Due to this, current scholarship gives me no satisfaction. ("Brown Study" 248)

Undoubtedly, Okakura voiced distaste for the scholars who were not concerned with drawing from scholarship any consequences for themselves. Therefore, he wished to shift the focus of scholarship from an object to "a means":

> [T]he scholars and artists of our country must seek to cultivate their minds so that they can follow the dictates of their hearts and row their way by means of the boats and paddles that they themselves have crafted. ("Brown Study" 248)

Okakura saw literary studies as a means of "education (*kyôiku*)" and "cultivation (*shûyô*)" ("Brown Study" 248).

Okakura also insisted on how relevant *Hamlet* was to "our own tastes" (i.e. the lower floor), rather than unquestionably accepting scholarship, in his preamble to a locally published edition of *Hamlet* in 1932:

> If our minds have not been cultivated enough to be emotionally engaged by English literature, we should be faithful to our current tastes. We should do so even if it has been identified as the flower of literature since old times […]. It is necessary for those willing to read *Hamlet*, whether they are Western or Eastern, to ask themselves how relevant *Hamlet* is to their inner reality, why the play is a masterpiece, and then to seek those answers in themselves. ("Jo" n.p.)

His claim was not that the Japanese should read into *Hamlet* whatever they thought would be valuable as a cultural property of their own. Instead, Okakura was encouraging the Japanese readers of the play to consider their own relationships to the texts that they were reading.

Okakura promoted this principle in his teaching of Shakespeare, apparent in a 1933 speech at the Shakespeare Association of Japan, the first formal organisation for the study of Shakespeare in Japan. He recommended comparing Shakespeare's plays with their Japanese equivalents as a catalyst:

> How can Shakespeare be made intelligible? An answer to the question is as follows: we had drama here in the age of Shakespeare. There are a number of similarities in the development of drama between there and here. What I find important is, therefore, to ask elder people, who are familiar with our drama, to gather further materials from other people as well, and then to infer from our drama what their drama was like, based on research on ours. In other words, it is necessary to draw a parallel between the West and Japan and then to undertake comparative studies. ("Achira" 47-48)

Okakura argued that Shakespeare should be learnt inductively through parallels. His students were, therefore, encouraged to listen to kabuki or a *Jôruri* recitation accompanied by a buzzing effect based on the sound of a shamisen (a three-stringed Japanese musical instrument), to facilitate the understanding of Shakespeare's plays. In Okakura's words, "you can't fully understand *Hamlet* without knowing *Tsubosaka*" (Fukuhara, "Wakaki" 116). His concern focused not on how the English would understand Shakespeare, but how Shakespeare could be made relevant to Japanese people (Uchimaru "Teaching").

However, when aiming at "education," "cultivation," or relevance, literary studies ceased to be regarded as being professionally serious. Indeed, what Okakura was driving at was similar to John Henry Newman's idea of "liberal education" as a formative power that could make the objects of knowledge subjectively one's own (134). Therefore, his idea was blatantly contested by a specialist scholar of American literature: "I couldn't entirely agree with Okakura's attitude towards and approach to the study of English literature" (Sugiki 264). Thus, Okakura's idea of Shakespeare studies as a means of liberal education was not recognized as being academically serious.

Competing for Supremacy

Multiple strands of Shakespeare studies in Japan contested each other for supremacy. While discipline-oriented research on Shakespeare still remains the standard for serious academic study in higher education, the audacious Sôsekian treatment of Shakespeare is resurging under the banner of "Global Shakespeares" studies. Okakura's emphasis on Shakespeare's relevance to his readers is now seriously considered by the scholars and teachers of Shakespeare in schools. These incompatible, but multifarious, principles have coexisted, while contesting one another, since the early stages of Shakespeare studies in Japan.

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