

BOOK REVIEWS

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Yoshiko Kawachi. *Sheikusupia no Sekai [Shakespeare's World]*. Tokyo: Seibido, 2007. ISBN 978-4-7919-7124-4c1082. Pp. 307. Price 4000 Yen

Reviewed by RYUTA MINAMI

Professor Yoshiko Kawachi, one of the top Shakespearean scholars in Japan, has worked extensively on Shakespeare and his contemporaries. She has published many articles and books at home as well as abroad, which is still rare among Japanese Shakespearean scholars. Her *Calendar of English Renaissance Drama 1558–1642* (1986) and *Japanese Studies in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (1998) are two telling examples of her academic work in the ‘traditional’ mode. Also, Kawachi is one of the first Japanese Shakespeareans who recognized the importance of the study of Shakespearean translations and adaptations in Japan. She has directed considerable efforts towards the establishment of the studies of ‘Shakespeare in Japan’ as an academic field. She was the chief editor of *Shakespeare Worldwide* (1986–1996) and also published *Shakespeare and Cultural Exchanges* (1995), which includes some of the important publications on Japanese Shakespeares. Kawachi’s latest work, *Sheikusupia no Sekai [Shakespeare's World]*, encapsulates her academic career in that it covers studies of Shakespeare’s plays in the conventional manner as well as Shakespearean recreations in Japan. The book comprises three parts: the first part is called “Shakespeare and Japan”, the second “Shakespearean Studies” and the third “Miscellanies”. Each part is full of insightful arguments and all the chapters are worth mentioning in this review, yet for reasons of space I would like to write primarily about the English chapters in Part One. These chapters, I believe, demonstrate her true value as a frontrunner in this comparatively new field of studies.

Generally, many of the articles and books on non-Anglophone Shakespeares are likely to start and end with no more than detailed descriptions of the productions they discuss. This is in part because their target readers are almost always presumed to be ignorant of the languages of the productions under scrutiny. Some basic information is always indispensable in discussing non-Anglophone Shakespeares, yet this sometimes turns out to be frustrating for those who want to discuss non-Anglophone performances in detail. Kawachi, being fully aware of this dilemma, starts her book with a succinct overview of Shakespeare reception in Japan from 1841 to 2005, while, at the same time, providing us with some theoretical framework for writing about attempts at translating, adapting and performing Shakespeare in Japanese. She maintains that the Japanese translators, who “are acutely conscious of cultural difference”, “cannot but become adapters” and re-contextualize and culturally recreate the original texts (6). She also adds that the Japanese directors are required to “reinterpret Shakespeare’s original texts as classics in different cultural and social context, assimilate them into Japanese psyche and culture, and adapt them skillfully for the Japanese stage” (13). In other words, Kawachi suggests here that Japanese theatrical productions of Shakespeare inevitably become two-fold or double adaptations. This two-fold nature of Shakespeare in Japan naturally leads to “the limitless ‘performability’” and the promotion of “the Shakespeare biz” (13). This apparently simple but insightful definition of Shakespearean adaptations allows her to go beyond mere descriptions of Japanese translations and stage performances in the ensuing chapters.

Among the chapters on Shakespeare’s individual plays in Japanese culture, the most notable example of Kawachi’s academic prowess can be found in the second chapter, “Gender, Class, and Race in Japanese Translations of Shakespeare”. Analyzing the male and female discourse strategies in the translations of Shakespeare’s plays before and after the Second World War, Kawachi demonstrates the linguistic and cultural gaps not only between the original English texts and their Japanese counterparts but also between the pre-war (before 1945) Japanese translations of Shakespeare and their post-war counterparts. Whilst elucidating the changes in the Japanese understanding of some Shakespearean plays, Kawachi illustrates that the shifts in translation reflect the changes of women’s language and consequently the shifts in the sex/gender system of modern Japan. In the other chapters on Shakespeare translations in Japan as well, Kawachi shows the careful attentiveness that she had demonstrated in compiling her *Calendar of English Renaissance Drama 1558–1642*, and historicizes the translations and performances in question to indicate the socio-cultural positions of Shakespeare in Japan. She has successfully accumulated a lot of information from primary sources on Japanese translations, adaptations and performances so as to argue the variegated afterlives of Shakespeare in twentieth century Japan.

Interestingly, towards the end of the book, Kawachi gives her readers an opportunity to see these afterlives of Shakespeare in Japan from another perspective. In the third chapter of Part Three, "Shakespeare Business in Eighteenth-Century England", Kawachi discusses how Shakespeare was "dis-covered" and re-created in the eighteenth century, as if to suggest that what Garrick and his contemporaries did for establishing Bardolatry is somewhat similar to what the Japanese translators and theatre practitioners did in bringing Shakespeare into Japanese culture. She does not mention "Shakespeare Business" when discussing re-creations of Shakespeare in Japan, yet the readers cannot but be aware of the business factor underlying the Japanese Shakespeares. I believe this is how Kawachi expects the readers to read her book and that this is how her book can be insightful.

At the end of the book is a list of the places where the chapters in the book were originally published. The names on the list include Moscow, New Delhi, Shanghai, Łódź, Prague as well as New York, London and Tokyo. This geographical diversity reflects not only the academic recognition she has received worldwide but the broad scope of her academic interests and activities. And this diversity is closely related to the basic concept of this book. Just as the Japanese title of the book, *Sheikusupia no Sekai*, can be also translated as "The Worlds of Shakespeare", Kawachi shows us a variety of worlds that are created by and around Shakespeare. Towards the end of the final chapter, Kawachi writes: "In the twentieth-first century, language and literature studies should be advocated so as to promote international cultural exchanges" (297), and the readers will see that the worlds of Shakespeare have functioned as sites for such intercultural exchanges from the very time his plays were first staged. In other words, Kawachi successfully illustrates the life and afterlives of "Shakespeare" as a cultural icon. Considering the quality and range of the book, it is regrettable for non-Japanese readership that a third of the chapters are written in Japanese. Yet this book is one of the best guides available in English to the studies of Shakespeare in Japan.

***Shakespeare's Local Habitation.* Ed. Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney. Łódź: University of Łódź Press, 2007. ISBN 978-83-7525-035-0. Pp. 266. Price 25 PLN**

Reviewed by PIOTR MASZEWSKI

In his introduction to *Shakespeare's Local Habitations*, R. S. White compares William Shakespeare to a bird, which unlike dinosaurs, survived throughout the ages thanks to his ability to "move much" (7). Shakespeare, "rooted in