

## Book Reviews

**Emi Hamana, *Shakespeare Performances in Japan: Intercultural-Multicultural-Translingual*. Yokohama: Shumpusha, 2019. Pp. 188.**

Reviewed by *Yoshiko Matsuda* \*

Since the 1990s, as the theories of postcolonialism and cultural studies have developed in Shakespeare studies, a great number of works concerning the localization of Shakespeare in performance in Asian countries have attracted wider attention among Shakespearean scholars and theatre practitioners worldwide. Significant books such as *Shakespeare in Asia* (2010) edited by Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan, or *Performing Shakespeare in Japan* (2001) by Minami Ryuta, Ian Carruthers and John Gillies, have shown us how Asian theatre has adapted or sometimes appropriated Shakespeare's "original" texts in the process of modernization and globalization. With this book, *Shakespeare Performances in Japan: Intercultural-Multicultural-Translingual*, Emi Hamana, one of the leading scholars of theatre studies in Japan, updates our perspective of the localization of Shakespeare through performance in contemporary Japanese theatre. With outstanding examples of "case studies" of Shakespeare performances in Japan within the last ten years or so, this book allows us to discover the power of a Shakespearean performance which can change our cognitive and even social reality in international, multilingual and translingual ways.

This book is divided into two parts; Part I "Intercultural and Multilingual Performance" composed of 4 chapters, and Part II "Translingual Performance" consisting of 3 chapters. Apart from chapter 5, where fundamental concepts of translingual practice is demonstrated by close-reading and analyzing the translingual moment between Henry and Katharine in the well-known wooing scene in *Henry V*, the book discusses Shakespeare performances in Japan from 2008 to 2017, aiming "to investigate them against the broad background of world Shakespeare performance studies" (12). Hamana began the project "combining Shakespeare studies and intercultural education more than

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fifteen years ago” (9), and in that sense, her main interest is always in investigating educational or interactive effects which Shakespeare performances have on our communities. The chapters in the book are not necessarily placed in chronological order, and she doesn't try to discover how Shakespeare performances have developed or evolved in Japan over the last ten years. Hamana, however, highly appreciates the fact that Shakespeare performances in Japan are now in the phase of transformation from intercultural or multilingual to translingual and that these performances actually change the world in which we live.

Part I, including chapters 1 to 4, deals with the present intercultural or multilingual situation of Shakespeare performances in Japan, analyzing certain performances or directors in each chapter. While Hamana admits that interculturalism is sometimes inseparably mingled with the history of European imperial expansion, and that intercultural theatre is, for better or for worse, a product of the globalized Shakespeare industry, she also believes that it can function as “a conduit” (36) for a cultural exchange between two cultures and reveals the “uniqueness” (35) which each culture has. In chapter 1, she discusses a Japanese-Korean performance of *Othello in Noh Style* (2008), a collaboration of Ku Na'uka, a Japanese theatre company, and Lee Young-taek, a leading Korean director, as an example of an intercultural performance of Shakespeare. By incorporating the elements of Korean shamanistic ritual and Japanese Noh theatre, the performance focuses on the salvation of Desdemona's soul instead of the racial issue of Othello in the original text. Pointing out that no other “feminist” intercultural performances of Othello explicitly address Desdemona's spiritual condition after her death, Hamana argues that the local performance of Othello has potential to disclose, question and subvert the original text.

Such potential which a local Shakespeare performance has in contemporary Japan in the aftermath of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami is pursued in the next chapter, “Performing Shakespeare after the March 2011 Disaster: Yamanote Jijosha's *The Tempest*.” Yamanote Jijosha is a small theatre company based in Tokyo, and its founder and director, Masahiro Yasuda, is known for his *yojohan* acting method which confines “the movements of actors to the space of a typical tearoom size, *yojohan*” (39). Yamanote Jijosha's *Tempest* (2015), a radical adaptation of Shakespeare's original text, also utilizes his acting method, and presents the apocalyptic vision of humankind with the extreme physicality deeply rooted in contemporary Japanese life, rejecting the reconciliation in the romantic and consoling ending of the original text. Although the theatre company is not a “major” or commercialized one among Japanese theatre companies, the adaptation works as a strong criticism toward Japanese society after the disaster. Hamana highly values the company's postdramatic activity, writing that they present “Shakespeare in a manner to which contemporary Japanese audiences

can relate, retaining the underground theatrical spirit of resistance against establishment” (50).

In the next two chapters, Hamana continues to explore the possibility and significance of Shakespeare performances in recent Japan, dealing with Ninagawa Yukio’s late directions of *Richard II* (2015), *Ninagawa Macbeth* (2015) and *The Two Gentleman of Verona* (2015), and Suzuki Tadashi’s *King Lear* (2009). Both are the most famous and successful Japanese directors who have adapted Western plays into Japanese contexts, and moreover, have taken their performances abroad and received high commendations from both critics and audiences. In chapter 4, “Multilingual Performances of Shakespeare Worldwide: Multilingual *King Lear*, Directed by Tadashi Suzuki,” she discusses the possibilities of multilingual performances of Shakespeare through her case study of the 2009 version of *King Lear* produced by SCOT, the Suzuki Company of Toga, in the mountainside village of Toga in Toyama prefecture. Multilingualism is a concept referring to the situation where there is “the knowledge and use of three or more languages” (Bhathia and Ritchie xxi). Hence, multilingual theatre could be interpreted as a theatre where three or more languages are used and understood by performers and sometimes the audience. In that sense, Suzuki’s *King Lear* is a genuine multilingual performance which used four languages: German (spoken by Lear), English (by Goneril), Korean (by Regan) and Japanese (by Cordelia). Since Suzuki’s choice of these four languages does not necessarily reflect the current linguistic condition in Japan, Hamana supposes that they are chosen for artistic and contingent reasons. This performance, however, reveals the reality of dis/communication in our society. She proceeds: “the four-language version of *King Lear* foregrounds the dysfunctional family that cannot understand one another” (82), and from the perspective of multicultural theatre, the limitation or incomprehensibility of language is important for the appearance of translingual practices where people who are from different cultures and speak different languages try to understand each other beyond the limitation of their otherness and heterogeneity.

The latter half of the book focuses on translingualism in Shakespeare’s text and performances. Chapter 5 examines the translingual scenes of *Henry V* and demonstrates the translingual practice between the people of different linguistic and cultural background. Translingual practice signals a paradigm shift in language education, and its central concept is that communication “transcends individual language” and “involves diverse semiotic resources and ecological affordances” (91). Translingualism is differentiated from multilingualism in that translingual practices emphasize not linguistic communication but semiotic or cultural interaction and conflict as a significant motive to understand each other better, whereas the multilingualism just refers to the coexistence of different languages. Therefore, translingual practice is necessarily accompanied with something complementary for our mutual communication. The complementary

systems in translanguaging are semiotic resources such as voice, facial expressions and gestures, and ecological affordances such as the circumstances and settings available for interaction. The wooing scene in *Henry V*, where Henry, the English king, has an exchange with Katharine, the French princess, in English and French presents an example of translanguaging practice. Although they each speak in their own languages, Henry sometimes speaks in broken French, and Katharine also speaks in broken English. Although neither of them understand the other language fully in the scene, the exchange highlights the significance of the incomprehensibility, or conflict which requires our awareness of “otherness,” and drives us to further communication.

Then how do we develop communication with “others” beyond incomprehensibility? Hamana expects that there is the possibility of using innovative digital technology and ideas as the means of semiotic resources and ecological affordances. In chapter 7, she shows how *Safaring the Night* directed by Yasuro Ito, “a highly experimental production of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*” (131), represents the current translanguaging reality in 2010’s Japan. The adaptation is set in the world of virtual reality in 2045, in which the age of so-called singularity is predicted to come, and two AI enterprises, Oberon and Titania, who once fought a war with each other, have now agreed to a historic integration. It was performed as immersive theatre, and the audience became participants in the action, downloading a special application of the performance to their smartphones, walking around the special venue in the studio decorated by projection mapping, and finally making their decisions about the ending of the story through the app. Hamana suggests that all these props and devices of the production to immerse the audience into the world of *Safaring the Night* should be regarded as semiotic resources and ecological affordances in translanguaging practices to promote interactive communication beyond the limitation of languages in performances of Shakespeare. These factors of semiotic resources and ecological affordances require an audience member to “be a highly active, ethical and thoughtful agent in the performance” (148), and there we recognize the possibility of translanguaging practices in theatrical performance which stimulate the awareness towards the actual world that is abundant with conflict and incomprehensibility.

At the end of the book, Hamana again emphasizes the potential of Shakespeare’s works which “will continue to be adapted, recycled and updated for a variety of audiences worldwide, thus giving life to new performative forms and meaning—whether intercultural, multilingual or translanguaging” (150). As a specialist of performance studies as well as language education, she strongly believes that cultural contact through performance, adaptation, or translation of Shakespeare actually changes our cognitive and social reality in spite of incomprehensibility and heterogeneity inherent in communication. Her belief about the possibilities of cultural exchanges fascinatingly connects the concepts

of intercultural, multilingual, and translingual practice to the contemporary performances of Shakespeare in Japan. In that sense, this book is an innovative and welcome contribution to Shakespeare studies, as well as performance and adaptation studies that are always waiting to be updated.

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**Li Jun, *Popular Shakespeare in China: 1993-2008*. Beijing: University of International Business and Economics Press, 2016. Pp. 199.**

Reviewed by *Lan Zhou*\*

As the book title indicates, this book surveys a period from 1993 to 2008, a span of fifteen years around the turn of the millennium, on the topic of popular Shakespeare in China. During this period, China witnessed the important cultural phenomenon of a Shakespeare boom. This cultural phenomenon was also characterized by the development of a socialist market economy and the rise of popular culture. This book is significant and new as it addresses issues on popular Shakespeare during this important historical period. Li's awareness of the notable different situations between China and the West can best be seen in his research method with cultural materialism—a perspective rooted in Marxist theory and popular in Shakespeare studies of recent years. This book explores how these two cultural entities, Shakespeare and popular culture in China, “are determined by various political, economic, or social factors in a peculiar Chinese context,” which contribute to a localized study of popular Shakespeare (Preface). It tries to explore the relationship between Shakespeare and popular culture by examining three basic traits of popular Shakespeare in China: accessibility-oriented and audience-oriented, carnivalesque, and re-contextualization (169).

This book starts with an overview of the scholarship on Shakespeare in China from 1989-1990 and onward. An array of major scholarly works written in Chinese are carefully reviewed with an objective evaluation of their remarkable contribution as well as limitations. Li also notices an increase of works in English by authors that embrace both international vision and cultural heritage. Among these, two deserve special mention: Li Ruru's *Shashibiya: Staging Shakespeare in China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003) and Alexa Huang's *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), both of which are highly evaluated by the author and have a discernable influence on his book. Rather than following the critical tradition of making a general comparison of Shakespeare's plays between the East and the West or searching for Shakespeare-ness within the Western tradition, Li follows the method shared by Li Ruru and Huang by “exploring full meanings of both Shakespeare and China in the process of localizing and re-contextualizing Shakespeare in China” (9). It adds to the book's originality and academic depth. Moreover, Li Ruru's and Huang's acute senses of fundamental changes and new trends of Shakespeare performances in China help shed light on Li's research.

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The tension between Shakespeare's high-cultural status and vitality in popular culture is a heated topic in Shakespeare studies. However, the concept of popular culture is still problematic and difficult to define. An outstanding merit of Li's book is its outlining of several basic characteristics of popular culture in China. Li tries to draw from Western theorists and literary critics of culture studies, such as Matthew Arnold, F. R. Leavis, Theodor Adorno, Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, John Fiske, and Mikhail Bakhtin, to formulate a working definition of popular culture. Despite their spectrum of varying attitudes towards popular culture, Li sets the definition in historical context by applying fundamental principles of Marxist criticism, which highlight the social conditions represented by the market economy base and the importance of populace.

This book has a chronological approach with three subdivisions of the whole period (1. The 1990s, 2. Between 2000 and 2008, 3. 2009 and after). Each shares the aforementioned characteristics while evolving to new implications and complexities. During the 1990s popular Shakespeare was a new phenomenon in China. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the emergence of a booming culture industry and a competitive culture market promised a more diverse form in Shakespeare productions. The post-2008 period witnesses the opportunities and challenges of global culture industry. Shakespeare productions during this time span have displayed new shades to be more prolific and cross-cultural.

Li explores the emergence of popular Shakespeare in China in the 1990s by focusing on two productions of *Twelfth Night* in the years 1993 and 1999 respectively. Shakespeare had been a highly mystified icon of high culture in China before the 1990s. Those two productions of *Twelfth Night* are chosen as examples of a new cultural phenomenon that challenged high culture. He draws on Bakhtin's theory to explain the subversive nature of popular culture, analyzes several aspects of the carnival (including music, makeup, and language) in the 1993 version, and critiques another particular paradigm of the carnival—carnavalesque laughter in the 1999 version. As both productions were by the same co-directors, they are good for comparison. While the 1993 version is significant for its awareness of incorporating elements of popular culture and marks a popular Shakespeare rising in China, Li finds an intentional reinforcement of carnival spirit in the 1999 version. Take Malvolio, a minor character for example: his costume creates a comic effect by having a mismatched Chinese tunic suit paired with Western-style bottoms, whereas he simply wears a Chinese tunic suit in the 1993 version. As Li observes, Malvolio's new image in the 1999 version "sarcastically addresses the contradictory sentiments of both nationalism and xenophilia" at that time (58). Compared with the campus production in 1993, what made the market-oriented

production in 1999 a great success was social progress and the vitality of cultural enterprises in the late 1990s.

Li further explores popular Shakespeare in China between 2000 and 2008 through three categories of Shakespeare productions: “big-time” productions, “autobiographical” small-time productions, and “anthropological” small-time productions. He creatively annotates Alexa Huang’s definition of small-time Shakespeare productions by subdividing them into two categories. He concludes that there is an ongoing evolution of popular Shakespeare from the “big-time” to the “small-time” productions in mainland China during this period. Li concentrates on nine distinct Shakespeare productions representative of those varied categories: Tian Qinxin’s *Ming* in Beijing in 2008, three performances (*Richard III*, *Coriolanus*, and *Hamlet*) by the avant-garde director Lin Zhaohua, and five productions (*Approaching Shakespeare*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* staged in three cities) by several directors (Peter Lichtenfels as the only foreign theatre director). His detailed analysis looks at several aspects of the adapted plays. The argument goes as follows: the accessibility and audience-oriented “small-time” productions represent popular Shakespeare in a truer sense and they are more fitting and valuable than “big-time” and director/adaptor-centered “small-time” Shakespeare productions in China during this period (71). According to Li, the commodity fetishism and *shengshi* (a grand nation) ideology of *Ming* drives away *King Lear*’s intrinsic aesthetic value from the adapted play. On the other hand, Li argues that Lin Zhaohua’s productions go too far in experimenting with form and challenging mainstream theatre conventions, rendering them difficult for general appreciation. Productions of the first two categories serve one of two ends: either commercial and political ends which are not primarily aesthetic, or the director’s ends which are not primarily audience-oriented. There is an ongoing evolution of Shakespeare from the “big-time” to the “small-time” productions in China. However, Li’s personal preference for “anthropological” small-time Shakespeare productions is a slight hindrance to scholarly objectivity. He overstates audiences’ accessibility as the criterion for evaluating adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays. As far as the particular socio-economic and cultural conditions are concerned, all these adaptations are valuable attempts to embrace the Bard with local characteristics which will contribute towards the enrichment of literature and the development of culture identities, whether they be commodities of culture industry, art for art’s sake, or art for the people’s sake.

Another notable contribution of this book lies in its survey of performances and activities relating to Shakespeare in Chinese universities with a case study of the University of International Business and Economics (UIBE) thanks to the author’s first-hand observation and direct participation. Based on his personal experience as a former student and a current faculty member, Li provides a detailed account of UIBE’s holding of three Shakespeare festivals on



campus and its active participation in the Chinese Universities Shakespeare Festivals. While Li's alma mater is characterized by its business-oriented environment with a strong vocational emphasis, Li and his colleagues ably utilize these business elements by setting new curriculum on Shakespeare's plays and business, following the interdisciplinary course modes practised at universities abroad. He also teaches drama for performance to make the Bard attractive to his students. It reveals his expectations on the Bard's accessibility from the artistic training institutes to the public, especially on how it contributes to the prosperity of art and humanities in domestic colleges and universities. It is a huge task with a promising future in reforming the current learning system, as the young and the well-educated are always a major social composition of the audience. As a platform for education and creativity, campus Shakespeare study holds a great potential in shaping the future of Shakespeare performances in China. Amateur performances and festivals on campus are often ignored by critics, and very little has been known about this topic. Li's study fills the lacuna by drawing attention to the role that Chinese universities play in popularizing Shakespeare in China.

Li's book is largely based on his PhD thesis in 2013. Full of original observations and elaborate footnotes, it is a very informative book despite its occasional careless editing. For example, "The above-reviewed Chinese Shakespearean scholars and their works have made remarkable contribution to Shakespearean studies in China" is a repeated sentence within the same paragraph (4). Li updates and refines his research in a more recent article with a fuller discussion (Li and Sanders). While ambitious as the book title suggests, Li's book does not include important performances from other parts of the Chinese-speaking regions (such as Hong Kong and Taiwan). The historical circumstances make popular Shakespeare in these two locations unique and significant. Nor does it include performances from other areas in China. All the cases only include performances from big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin. The dynamics of popular culture in small cities will also add to a carnivalesque spirit and a larger audience. Besides, the reader might also be interested in various forms of popular Shakespeare (such as fiction, music, and film). Understandably, the author has to be selective when explaining a representative cultural phenomenon, but it would be helpful to include more topics to study the relationship between Shakespeare and popular culture in China.

Various forms of popular Shakespeare production make it easy for the average contemporary Chinese audience to appreciate the Bard and stretch their appreciation of art. The task of popular Shakespeare is to keep a balance between the Bard's cultural legacy and entertainment value. But it doesn't all work out smoothly due to political, social, and cultural factors. Murray Levith criticizes the Chinese adaptations of the Bard for having "celebrated his lesser

plays, neglected several of his masterpieces, excised sex, religion, and contrary politics from his texts, added to them, and at times simplified, corrupted, or misunderstood his characters and themes” (137). Even though Levith’s study is based on productions before the year 2000, we are still facing this dilemma to some extent. Hopefully there will be a tendency of high quality productions benefiting from increasingly frequent cultural exchanges and economic growth. By examining a specific form of Shakespeare in a specific context, Li’s book demonstrates that Shakespeare productions have been improved and innovated in a new era.

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**Soji Iwasaki's Japanese Translation of Shakespeare, *The Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint*. Revised edition. Tokyo: Kokubunsha, 2019. Pp. 242.**

Reviewed by *Yasumasa Okamoto*\*

Now in Japan ten complete Japanese translations of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* are available for us to read, together with half a dozen translations of his selected sonnets. The translators' names are, in chronological order of their first editions: Shoyo Tsubouchi (1934), Junzaburo Nishiwaki (1966), Ichiro Tamura, Tadanobu Sakamoto, Osamu Rokutanda and Mikio Tabuchi (1975), Nobutaro Nakanishi (1981), Yuichi Takamatsu (1986), Yushi Odashima (2007), Hideo Yoshida (2008), Toshihiko Ohyagi (2013), Soji Iwasaki (2015), and Kenji Ohba (2018). It might be said that these many translations of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* typically show the results of English studies that have been actively carried on in postwar Japan.

Iwasaki's translation, which was revised with a few corrections in a larger format in 2019, is unique first in that he translated Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and *A Lover's Complaint* as a volume as they were originally published in quarto in 1609. Nishiwaki also translated *A Lover's Complaint*, and there were two other translations of the longish narrative poem by Atsuhiko Narita (1995) and by Sadanori Ohtsuka and Yoshitoshi Murasato (2011) before Iwasaki. But the three predecessors were translations independent and separate from *The Sonnets*. Iwasaki enabled the Japanese readers for the first time to read *The Sonnets* and *A Lover's Complaint* as a collection, as a continuous whole.

Iwasaki follows John Kerrigan in considering that Samuel Daniel's *Delia and the Complaint of Rosamond* (1592) gave a model (a tripartite structure) of publishing a sonnet sequence to his contemporary poets, including Thomas Lodge (*Phyllis*, 1593), Giles Fletcher (*Licia*, 1593), Edmund Spenser (*Amoretti*, 1595), and Shakespeare. Kerrigan asserts that "as Katherine Duncan-Jones has shown, *Delia* spawned a series of books in which a sonnet sequence is followed by a lyric interlude and a long poem" (66). But Iwasaki does not merely follow Kerrigan. He has long devoted himself to the study of Elizabethan poetry including sonnet sequences and translated into Japanese Samuel Daniel, *Delia with the Complaint of Rosamond* (1592), Henry Constable, *DIANA, OR the excellent conceitful Sonnets of H. C.* (1594), and Michael Drayton, *Idea, In Sixtie Three Sonnets* (1619) [all published by Kokubunsha, in 2000, 2016, 2017 respectively], and edited *English Renaissance Love Sonnets*, an anthology of selected sonnets by his translation of Sir Thomas Wyatt, Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, Sir Philip Sidney, Samuel Daniel, Henry Constable, Michael Drayton,

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Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, and Mary Wroth (Tokyo: Iwanami Library, 2013). He also published *The Poets of the Rose* (Tokyo: Kokubunsha, 2012), which is a collection of essays in Japanese on the Elizabethan sonneteers.

Both Duncan-Jones and Kerrigan think highly of Alastair Fowler's numerological analysis of Elizabethan poetry in his *Triumphal Forms: Structural Patterns in Elizabethan Poetry*. Iwasaki appends to his translation two essays, one of which is entitled "The Individualism of Desire in English Renaissance Poetry: Death of Cupid" and the other is a summarized account of Alastair Fowler's, a little esoteric, theory of numerology in Shakespeare's *Sonnets* which could be made sense of only if *The Sonnets* and *A Lover's Complaint* are considered as a whole. Fowler's analysis also explains the significance of Shakespeare's irregular sonnets (fifteen-line sonnet 99, twelve-line sonnet 126, iambic tetrameter sonnet 145) in his numerological scheme. Iwasaki's summarized account is very useful to the Japanese readers.

Iwasaki has been engaged in English studies with a clear awareness of method. Among his main published works in Japanese are *Shakespeare's Iconology* (1994) and its sequel *Shakespeare's Cultural History: Society, Theatre, Iconology* (2002). In the introductory chapter of the former he explains his method for studying English Renaissance drama. He intends: (1) to read history in images just as history of ideas tried to read history in ideas, (2) to deal with images on the stage as stage tableaux, not as linguistic images, (3) to grasp drama as an integration of visual, auditory and physical experiences, or as a device for making us experience visions rather than as media of transmitting meanings. Thus he pays special attention to Elizabethan emblems and icons, for there exist in emblems both allegorical "picture" and "application" (poetry as an explanation), that is to say both visual images and linguistic expressions, and in icons images and meanings as incarnations of religious and secular cultures. He says that if we call the total system of those images iconography, Renaissance iconography is indispensable for decoding the stage tableaux and visual images of Shakespeare's plays. Iwasaki analyses in terms of iconography *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *The Winter's Tale* in *Shakespeare's Iconology*. His translation of Shakespeare's *Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint* is based upon his accumulated knowledge of Elizabethan poetry and iconology in the wide perspective of cultural history. He provided footnotes to every sonnet and, in addition, 27 relevant illustrations from Geoffrey Whitney, *A Choice of Emblems* (1586) and other sources. This is a second unique feature of his translation.

Iwasaki is well known to the reading public in Japan as the translator of William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1974; Iwanami Library, 2006), in which Empson chooses examples for his analysis from Shakespeare more than any other poet, and especially from Shakespeare's sonnets. A third feature of Iwasaki's translation is that he invites us to be

sensitive to Empsonian ambiguities, or multiple meanings the words and phrases of the sonnets imply. In “Afterword” to his translation he says that we should be sensitive to Empsonian ambiguities, if we are to fully understand the complex ideas implied in “use” in Sonnet 6, the multiple meanings of “lines” in No. 16, the ambiguity of “Th’expense of spirit in a waste of shame” in No. 129, and the ambiguities produced by puns typically found in “will” in No. 135. In the first essay appended to his translation, he quotes Empson’s analysis of “lines” in Sonnet 16.

*Lines of life* refers to the form of a personal appearance, in the young man himself or repeated in his descendants (as one speaks of the lines of someone’s figure); time’s wrinkles on that face (suggested only to be feared); the young man’s line or lineage—his descendants; lines drawn with a pencil—a portrait; lines drawn with a pen, in writing; the lines of a poem (the kind a sonnet has fourteen of); and destiny, as in the life-line of palmistry—*Merchant of Venice*, II. ii. 163. (Empson 54-55)

Iwasaki’s translation enables us to read Shakespeare’s *Sonnets and A Lover’s Complaint* in the wide context of Elizabethan cultures, evoking the multiple meanings the words, images, and ideas may imply in Renaissance iconography, in the total system of associations of Renaissance people.

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