Translating Shakespeare in Early Twentieth-Century Japan: The Case of Tsubouchi Shōyō, Natsume Sōseki, and Okakura Yoshisaburō

Kohei Uchimaru

The Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham, the United Kingdom

Abstract

This paper discusses what Shakespeare in Japanese translation loses and gains in terms of translational equivalence. A good test case can be provided by three important works from the early twentieth century by Tsubouchi Shōyō, Natsume Sōseki, and Okakura Yoshisaburō. Shōyō's 1911 rendition of *Hamlet* was the first full-length, literal translation of Shakespeare into Japanese. However, despite his efforts to approximate Shakespeare's language, Shōyō's translation failed: his deference to the original work, including the transliteration of character's name and Greco–Roman allusions, crucially separated the foreign from the domestic. Furthermore, the play's imagery was lost on the target audience. Indeed, in his critical essay, Sōseki expressed doubt about the translatability of Shakespeare's authentic voice into the vernacular, arguing that Shakespeare should be accommodated by Japanese culture rather than Japanese culture by Shakespeare. Sōseki's perspective on translating the Bard was shared by Okakura, whose 1916 translation of the Induction of *The Taming of the Shrew* made extensive use of Japanese equivalents of Shakespeare's language and imagery. In fact, by employing a translational strategy based on a cognitive process of learning things unfamiliar to the target reader, the translation localized nearly all Western-derived elements into the Japanese context without making any changes to the plot. As such, Okakura's translation not only represents a gain in translational equivalence by capturing Shakespeare's spirit, but also intercultural and transcultural possibilities amid the current academic interest in global "Shakespeares."

Keywords: Shakespeare in translation, Shakespeare and Japan, Tsubouchi Shōyō, global Shakespeares, East Asian Studies, translation studies

1. Introduction

"Bottom, bless thee. Thou art translated" (3.1.113). (Note 1) In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Peter Quince's confusion indicates that Bottom is lost in translation, and the translated Bottom is not identical to the original one, though Bottom is Bottom. Similarly, Shakespeare in translation is generally figured to constitute a loss, and, for centuries, translators grappling with the Bard have had to tackle losses arising from linguistic (e.g., semantic, syntactic, and phonological) and cultural differences. As Shurbanov avers, "[a]s any kind of translation is an act of transferring information across linguistic and cultural boundaries, the degree of genealogical and contractual relatedness

between the two languages and cultures it attempts to bridge is important to take into account" (53). How translatable works are, therefore, depends upon the degree of cognation between the source and target languages. Translation is all the more formidable between fundamentally different registers, such as Japanese and English, and Japanese translators of Shakespearean texts have indeed weighed what experts in translation studies call equivalence between Shakespeare's language and Japanese. (Note 2)

This paper discusses what is lost and gained in Japanese translations of Shakespeare, primarily in relation to types of equivalence during the translation process. It analyses a test case of three important works from early twenty twentieth-century Japan: (1) a 1911 direct, full-length rendition and production of *Hamlet* by Tsubouchi Shōyō (1859–1935), who was the first to translate Shakespeare's entire works in 1928; (2) a biting critique of Shōyō's translation by Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916), widely esteemed as modern Japan's greatest novelist; and (3) a 1916 archaic rendition of the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew* by Okakura Yoshisaburō (1868–1936), the doyen of English studies in Japan, who served as head of the English Department at the principal teacher training institution for secondary schools, the Tokyo Higher Normal School. (Note 3)

Shōyō's staging of *Hamlet* was memorable for being the first to deploy a direct, full-length translation that kept the original character and place names, as well as the first to use entirely Western costumes and actresses in female roles. The performance of Shōyō's translation was innovative in a literary culture that had often adapted Shakespeare's texts into local settings, and in a theatrical environment in which actresses had been officially banned from the theatre during the feudal period.

However, what has attracted scholary attention is that, despite its commercial success, Shōyō's translation received harsh criticism in aesthetic terms when mounted at the Imperial Theatre (*Teikoku Gekijō*) by the Literary Arts Society (*Bungei Kyōkai*), which he established in 1906 (Powell, 47; Kishi and Bradshaw, 23). (Note 4) The most thorough critique was offered by Sōseki. His testy comments on Shōyō's *Hamlet* deserves due consideration, given that he devoted much of his youth to an exhaustive study of English. At the behest of the Ministry of Education, he was sent to Great Britain in 1900–1901 to study English literature, and attended weekly private tutorials in London with W. J. Craig, who served as the principal editor of the first Oxford Shakespeare (1894) and, whilst mentoring Sōseki, oversaw the first Arden Shakespeare series. Sōseki's profound knowledge of and in-depth insight into Shakespearean texts is best illuminated in his 1904 monumental critical essay, "On the Ghost in *Macbeth* (Makubesu no yūrei ni tsuite)." Familiar with one of the most problematic parts of the play, the entrance of Banquo's ghost, Sōseki refutes arguments that Banquo's ghost is merely a subjective hallucination, and should, therefore, be invisible on stage, by focusing on Macbeth's psychology and imagination. Sōseki's achievement is all the more astonishing in so far as he reached the same conclusion as the doyen of nineteenth-century Shakespeare criticism, A. C. Bradley's argument in *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904) several months before the classic work was published (Kobayashi, 2005). A look at his critical comments on Shōyō's translation can provide in-depth insight into losses and gains arising from translating Shakespeare into the vernacular: Sōseki held the translator culpable for his fidelity to the source text, arguing that such a literal translation did not strike a chord with the target audience.

Less acknowledged, but not less important, is that Sōseki's perspective was shared by Okakura. He also spent 1902–1905 in Britain, France and Germany to study English literature and the teaching of English, and, on his return, figured pre-eminently as "the most famous teacher of English" (Toyoda, 27). Okakura published a large amount of Japanese translation of English literary texts, arguing that

transferring the source's meaning across linguistic and cultural boundaries was feasible only when different coordinates between English and Japanese were carefully negotiated. Okakura's view crystallized in his archaic rendition of the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew*, which appeared in a 1916 edition of *Eigo Seinen* as part of a jumble of Shakespeare pieces celebrating the tercentenary of his death. (Note 5) The translated text is juxtaposed with the English text, with notes and glosses in the margins at the bottom of every page, so that students of English can compare them.

Translations of English literature in general and of Shakespeare in particular is more than a product of purely linguistic considerations (Huang, 2011). They are, as Ewbank elucidates, "mediated through the particular poetics and politics of a culture and "move on a sliding scale towards adaptations" (7). Adaptation studies, as Sanders notes, are not "about making polarized value judgements, but about analysing process, ideology, and methodology" (20). The present study, therefore, will examine losses and gains not as a dichotomy but as a process or continuum, illuminating how "the particular poetics and politics of a culture" operate on each translated or critical work.

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2. Gained and Lost in Shōyō's Translation

Before proceeding to discuss the aforementioned three examples, it will be helpful to give a brief account of the early history of Shakespeare in Japanese. As Hoenselaars puts it, the nineteenth century witnessed the spread of Shakespeare in translation, which resulted in "people's familiarity with Shakespeare around the globe" (1). Japan was not exempt from that global trend, and a considerable effort was invested in translating Shakespeare into the Japanese vernacular once Japan resumed diplomatic relations with Western nations in 1868. Translation was considered necessary to demonstrate Japan's cultural proximity to the West, as Miyoshi points out: "[t]he fact that an English text could be translated into Japanese, and *vice versa*, was seen at least partially as an act of demonstrating Japan's cultural compatibility with Britain at a time when the British Empire ruled the world" (278). Indeed, the Japanese were preoccupied by the idea that any civilized nation-state had translated all of Shakespeare's works into the vernacular, as a Japanese expert in English studies, Takemura Satoru, contends: "almost any first- or second-class civilised nation in the world has at least one rendition of the entire works of Shakespeare" (210). Such translation was inevitably expected to preserve and replicate an "authentic" Shakespeare (Minami, 78–80).

Indeed, as Satō puts it, the Japanese renditions of Western literature entered a new phase in the 1890s, when direct, literal translation gained favour (2): original imagery and both character and place names were retained, without any changes to the plot. (Note 6) For instance, when translating the trial scene from *The Merchant of Venice* in 1891, Isobe Yaichirō, a founder of the National English Association in Japan (*Kokumin Eigakkai*), boasted that "the original text is transferred verbatim" in the translation (2). Doi Shunsho, an actor who worked with Shōyō, added to his 1904 Japanese rendition of *The Merchant of Venice* his comment that "it is culpable to orientalise a Western taste" (1).

A similar trajectory was followed by Shōyō's 1911 Japanese rendition of *Hamlet*. Remarkably, he strives not only to approximate Shakespeare's language by deploying archaic words derived from traditional theatres, such as *kabuki* and *jyōruri*, but also to share the rhythm and gravity of Shakespeare's blank verse by making extensive use of the traditional verse scheme. As he later wrote, "[t]he language of my *Hamlet* was inevitably touched by *kabuki* and the seven–five syllabic meter of traditional Japanese poetics" (Gallimore, 50).

The basic rule of Japanese prosody concerns syllables in a phrase. What matters is not the number of stresses and accents, as in English verse, but the number of syllables. A syllable in Japanese almost always consists of a consonant followed by a vowel, with an exception of "n," which is regarded as an isolated syllable. The most fundamental numbers of syllables in Japanese classical verse—for example, *waka* and *haiku*— are five and seven, and the combination creates a lyricism that strikes a deep chord with Japanese audiences. Shōyō's flexible use of this metrical system achieves some success in making the target audience hear the musicality that the source audience would have heard. Comparing a section of Hamlet's soliloquy with its translation demonstrates the point (each number indicates corresponding phrases):

Shakespeare

And thus (1) the native hue of resolution

Is sickled o'er with (2) the pale cast of thought,

And (3) enterprises of great pith and moment

(4)With this regard their currents turn awry,

And (5) lose the name of action. (3.1.85–90)

Shōyō

(1) *ke tsu shi n no/ mo to no i ro ha/* (2) *a o ji ro i/ yū ryo ni shi ro cha ke,/* (3) *i ka na da i ji no/ ku wa da te mo,/* (4) *ko no yu e ni so re,/ ha te ha* (5) *ji tsu kō no/ na wo u shi na u* (111). (Note 7)

Shōyō's masterly use of the metrical system is eloquently shown in a five–seven–seven–five syllable structure: "*a o ji ro i / yū ryo ni shi ro cha ke*,/ *i ka na da i ji no/ ku wa da te mo*." His daring attempts to approximate Shakespeare's language emerge not only in the Japanese phonological equivalent of Shakespeare's verse, but also, as each corresponding number illustrates, in the original syntactic order: he retains the syntactic features of Shakespeare's play. The feat is all the more amazing, given the absence of cognation between Japanese and English. This indicates that Shōyō strives to pay great deference to the semantic, syntactic, and phonological aspects of Shakespeare's language.

However, for most critics, Shōyō's translation was provocative. Although the sources of the problem are variously located, the major problem was, as Powell puts it with reference to contemporary newspapers, that "the language of *Hamlet* was in fact a barrier to understanding" (49):

> There are several contemporary complaints that it was hard to understand. He had mixed elegant and vulgar speech levels, as indeed Shakespeare does, but the audiences found this confusing. Not only that, but the deliberate use of archaisms from a variety of different historical periods compounded the problem. (Powell, 48)

Although Shōyō worked as "Shakespeare does," his faithful translation provided the target audience with a separation of the foreign from the domestic. Arguably, most alienating to them was his transliteration of the original's similes and metaphors, and his reticence about the use of "words associated to Japanese or Chinese legends and traditions" (Tsubouchi, 1978-88, 583) and of words that "have specific associations and historical background" (Tsubouchi, 1916, 16). A notable instance can be observed in 3.4, in which Hamlet blames Gertrude for her hasty remarriage following her husband's

death.

Shakespeare

Look here upon this picture, and on this,

The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.

See what a grace was seated on this brow—

Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself (3.4.52–55)

Shōyō

Kore goranze kono nisugata to kono shouzō, chi wo waketa kyoudai nagara, kono kimi no kedakasa rippasa haipirion no chijire gami jiyōbu jin no takabitai. (156)

In dexterously transposing Shakespeare's verse into Japanese prosody, Shōyō transliterates "Hyperion" as "*haipirion*" and "Jove" as "*jiyōbujin*." Yet, such imagery was not easily acceptable to the Japanese, as Shōyō himself was aware:

> All the similes and metaphors as well as lofty phrases sound odd and alien. . . . Most Japanese, who listen to "old Pelion, or the skyish head/ Of blue Olympus," are not quite sure if such names would refer to mountains or rivers. Similes, such as "Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove," evoke majestic imagery to those familiar with European literature, but such imagery is totally lost to most Japanese. (1911, n.p.)

The translator admits that his rendition does not resonate with the target audience, in large part because Shakespeare's imagery is lost in the literal translation.

What is perceived as Shōyō's aesthetic failure can be better illuminated by reference to translation studies. As Nida and Reyburn argue, "figurative language is very closely related to the cultural specialities of any language community", and such expressions "can only rarely be translated literally" (41). (Note 8) Nevertheless, such imagery is essential in understanding plays in the sense that, as Caroline Spurgeon elucidates, "the image. . . gives quality, creates atmosphere and conveys emotion in a way no precise description, however clear and accurate, can possibly do" (9). In addition, as Wong puts it, "unlike imagery meant to be read, imagery spoken on the stage has to satisfy the requirement of instant comprehensibility" (207). Despite, or perhaps because of, Shōyō's audacious attempts to approximate an authentic Shakespeare, his translation does not readily evoke such "atmosphere" and "emotion" for the receptor's mind, and failed to overcome the absence of cognation between the source and target culture in early twentieth-century Japan.

It is fair to say, from this perspective, that Shōyō's translation is comparable to what Nida calls "formal equivalence," which is "concerned with such correspondences as poetry to poetry, sentence to sentence, and concept to concept. . .The message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements" in the source language. The formal equivalence prompts the target reader to identify "as fully as possible with a person in the source-language context, and to understand as much as [one] can of the customs, manner of thought, and means of expression" (159). (Note 9) This suggests that although Shōyō's use of words and rhythm derived from *kabuki* and *jyōruri* is concerned with localizing Shakespeare, his rendition is actually in close proximity to what Brandon calls "the early canonical translations," whose aim was to "preserve the 'authentic' voice of Shakespeare in a

vernacular language" (7). Since such desire for authenticity effected a crucial separation of the foreign from the domestic, Shōyō's canonical translation failed, despite his use of traditional Japanese theatrical schemes. (Note 10)

Shōyō's translation furthermore disregards "dynamic equivalence," which Nida argues complements formal equivalence in translation. Briefly, dynamic equivalence encourages translators to use words and phrases that transfer meaning across cultural and linguistic boundaries, and yet also preserve the imagery that readers in the source context would experience with the source text. (Note 11) Figuring prominently as a proponent of such equivalence was a celebrated novelist and critic, Natsume Sōseki, who offered a biting critique of Shōyō's translation.

3. Sōseki's Critique of Shōyō's Translation

Sōseki's critical essay, "Dr Tsuchouchi and Hamlet," though admitting that "[i]t is hard to imagine the pains of translation unless one has experienced them for oneself, and in that respect I have a deep regard for what Dr Tsubouchi has done," aptly articulates what Shōyō's rendition of *Hamlet* loses in terms of fidelity to the original 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… (Gallimore, 48)

For Sōseki, the problem is not that Shōyō's translation is incorrect, but that it remains too "faithful" to formal Shakespearean features to strike a chord with the target audience. Sōseki is acutely aware that Shakespeare's figurative language is too "unnatural" as a means of expression and that unless the audience or reader were a "native" of Shakespeare's "unique kind poetic country," one would be "denied the right to savour its pleasures; that is the particular challenge of Shakespearean drama" (Gallimore, 47). Therefore, readers and audiences, Sōseki argues, cannot "savour its pleasures" if unable to appreciate Shakespeare's poetry in Japanese:

> If you are the kind of person who just goes along with the story, as anyone can do, but ignore the poetry, or else are unwilling to make the effort to understand Shakespeare's poetry, then you will incur nought but frustration and mental conflict. (Gallimore, 47)

If "people are unable to enjoy those rhythms that emerge from the particular arrangement of accents in recitation," Sōseki contends, "most of them will not bear sitting long hours in the theatre" (49):

> Shakespeare was a poet, and poets steal fire from heaven. . . . [W]e have to become aware of the magical force of these words to appeal to audiences with rhythms that transcend common sense. This is to say that the lines in Shakespeare's plays should be accepted as music than can hold an audience's interest just as the *nō* and *utai*. If we neglect this point, then we can only end up destroying both the words "as they brush the treetops with mountain mist" and the rhythms of the everyday language (Gallimore, 49).

Sōseki's criticism indicates that, despite Shōyō's efforts to translate Shakespeare's poetry by deploying the Japanese language and rhythm derived from *kabuki*, his desire to preserve the Bard's authentic voice destroys "the magical force" of Shakespearean language and imagery. As a result, his translated text can neither appeal to the audience nor hold its interest. As Borlik notes, the critic assumes that "[i]f

Japanese playwrights were to write in effusive pentameter and pepper their verse with allusions to Greco–Roman gods or the Bible the result could only be an awkward travesty" (386). Sōseki argues that the translator instead needs to accommodate the Bard in one's culture, rather than accommodate one's culture in the Bard. His claim underscores the loss resulting from Shōyō's intention to preserve Shakespeare's authentic voice in the vernacular. For him, it was essentially impossible to translate that voice into Japanese. (Note 12)

Sōseki's proposal arguably refers to what Baker calls "connotative equivalence," whose aim is to describe or evoke a similar image in the minds of speakers of the target language as of the source language, or refers to what is perceived as "transculturation," by which "elements of a source 'culture' are taken up or naturalized into a target 'culture' so that these elements lose, wholly or partly, their foreign condition and cease to be perceived as 'other'" (Pratt, 102). This suggests that Sōseki's insistence on the right to translate Shakespeare into Japanese cultural idioms emanates from his ambition to "read Shakespeare from a 'Japanese point of view' . . . without deference to Eurocentric sensibilities or standards of literary value" (Borlik, 398). For him, Shakespeare should be accommodated by Japanese culture, not Japanese culture by Shakespeare. Sōseki's approach to accommodate the Bard to Japanese cultural idioms sharply contrasted with Shōyō's desire to impose the Bard's authentic voice on them.

4. Okakura's Dynamic Equivalence-Oriented Approach to Shakespeare

It is doubtful whether Sōseki's argument gained favour at a time when most Japanese scholars of English studies strove to replicate the understanding of the source reader (Satō, 57). However, his insistence on transculturation was quite possibly shared by Okakura. Similarly to Sōseki, he was acutely aware of the gulf between the source and target cultures, as demonstrated in his introduction in a locally produced annotated English edition of *Hamlet* (1932):

> If our minds have not been so much cultivated as to be deeply touched by literature, even when it is what has been perceived as the flower of literature since old times, we should remain faithful to our current tastes. . . . How is *Hamlet* relevant to our minds, and why is the play regarded as a masterpiece? I find it of much importance to raise such questions and seek to identify its answer in our minds. (Tsuzuki, n.p.)

In stunning contrast to Shōyō, Okakura suggests that "our current tastes" should not be forcibly integrated into the framework of what Eurocentric sensibilities perceive as the Bard, but should remain faithful to current Japanese tastes. Such an approach to Shakespeare guided him towards seeking Japanese equivalence with which to express similar ideas of Shakespearean texts. Indeed, that idea is succinctly voiced in his 1933 lecture in the Shakespeare Society of Japan:

> How can Shakespeare be made intelligible? An answer to the question is to make a comparative study by drawing a parallel between the West and Japan. We also had drama in the age of Shakespeare, and the development of the drama bears resemblance to that of the West. Therefore, findings derived from research on Japanese theatre makes the Western theatre more readily comprehensible. (Okakura, 1933, 47–48)

His claim to exploit a shared semantic code in understanding Shakespeare became crystallized in his audacious attempts to localize the Induction of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Of special interest is that Okakura's translation includes an introduction that is not in the original, which claims that: "an old folktale says that Rōshō in a country of Shu had an ephemeral dream of prosperity for fifty years. That is a Chinese story, and this is Shakespeare's writing" (Okakura, 1916, 6). This Rōshō episode in fact derives from a *noh* piece, *Handan*, familiar to the educated Japanese, in which a youth named Roshō stays a night at an inn during his trip. Waking up to find that the imperial power has been delegated to him, he exults in his prosperity, yet soon realizes that it was only a dream.

The aim of this introductory piece is clear, when compared with the plot of the Induction: a lord finds a tinker, Christopher Sly, in his intoxication and decides to play a trick on him. In Sly's sleep, the lord's attendants carry him to his "fairest chamber." (1. 44), make the tinker "wrapped in sweet clothes" (1. 36), prepare a "most delicious banquet" for him (1. 37), to persuade him to be "a mighty lord" (1. 63). Waking up to find that he has become a lord, Sly boasts "Upon my life, I am a lord indeed,/ And not a tinker, nor Christopher Sly" (2.71–72). By presenting a similar classical Asian play as the Induction, Okakura appeals to the semiotic equivalent between the stories of Roshō and of Christopher Sly, after which he invites readers into the world of Shakespearean text, so that the plot makes more sense to Japanese readers. More strikingly, though making no changes to the original plot, he changes characters' names (for example, the renaming of "A Lord" as "Daimyo") and relocates the setting of the play to accommodate a fictional feudal kingdom in ancient China. Hence, the play is also retitled with a distinctively exotic oriental flavour as *Handatsuke Ikake Daimyō* (*A Tinker Daimyo Concocted*).

Okakura further spices up his text with archaic and bombastic Japanese words and phrases derived from classical literature, as well as uses Japanese syllabic metre. One eloquent instance of its use appears in scene 2:

Shakespeare

We'll show thee Io as she was a maid

And how she was beguiled and surprised,

As lively painted as the deed was done. (Induction 2.53–55)

Okakura

Hidari no otodo no aoi no ue no

On ryō ni osoware te uwanari uchi no simoto ni kurusimu

Sono arisama wo sonomamani egaitaru mo omeni kake mashō. (1916, 105)

[Back translation]

Lady Aoi, a daughter of the Minister of the Left,

Was possessed and attacked by a jealous ghost,

Which we'll show you as lively painted as the deed was done. (Note 13)

On top of his extensive reorganization of the syntax and deployment of flexible combinations of seven- and five-syllable phrases, all Greco–Roman allusions undergo a localisation process when shifted into Japanese: Io, who is raped by Jove, is translated into a noble woman courtier, Lady Aoi, in *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji Monogatari*), a national classic in Japan. She is a legitimate wife of the protagonist, Hikaru Genji, whose lover, Lady Rokujō, is so intensely jealous that she leaves her body spiritually in

order to possess and murder her rival. (Note 14) In translation, Io's agony is localized as Lady Aoi's. Although Lady Aoi's anguish is not identical with Io's, her description undoubtedly strikes a deeper chord with the Japanese.

Meanwhile, where Japanese equivalence does not work, Okakura uses common nouns in favour of sense-making:

Shakespeare

Wilt thou have music? Hark! Apollo plays,

And twenty caged nightingales do sing

Or wilt thou sleep? We'll have thee to a couch

Softer and sweeter than the lustful bed

On purpose trimmed up for Semiramis. (Induction, 2. 34–38)

Okakura

Itotake no koe ga goshomō nara are are tenjō no ongaku ga

Mata kago no uguisu kazuamata saezuriatte orimasuru

Oyasumi ga gyoi naraba otoko ni oture si mashō

Site so took no futsukurato negokochi no yoikoto ha

Youen no aneki no nedokomo monokaha de gozaru. (1916, 134)

[Back translation]

Will you have string music? Hark! Heavenly music here

And lots of caged bush warblers do sing.

Or will you sleep? We'll have you to a couch,

Which is softer and sweeter than

The lustful bed for a queen.

Whilst translating "music" into music played by traditional Japanese wind and string instruments (*itotake no koe*), Okakura simply changes "Apollo plays" to "Heavenly music (*tenjō no koe*)," and "Semiramis" to "a queen (*aneki*)." Indeed, he explains with reference to "Adonis" (2.49) in additional notes that "I have transposed Adonis into 'a youth,' because I cannot find any equivalent for a beautiful youth in the oriental mythology" (105). In addition, the above quotation illustrates that not only Greco–Roman allusions but also other Western-derived words and phrases undergo localization, as demonstrated in the translation of "nightingales" into "bush warblers (*uguisu*)," which are familiar to the Japanese.

Such equivalent translation also provides the Japanese reader with a deeper understanding of the play's meaning. For instance, the renaming of popular "ale" as "unrefined sake (*nigori zake*)" and aristocratic "sack" as "refined sake (*seishu*)" would have augmented insight into what Thompson calls "a comic contrast of social levels" (60). It is fair to say that Okakura seeks to capture the spirit of Shakespeare's text by exploiting an equivalent semiotic code between the source and target cultures. Indeed, his translational assumption, as his disciple Fukuhara Rintarō observed in 1937, derives from a notion of "Equation," the aim of which is to appreciate the West by assimilating aspects of Western

cultures into their Japanese equivalents (116).

Okakura's principled approach to Shakespeare is comparable to the psychological theory of education known as "apperception," a cognitive process in which an individual makes sense of an idea by assimilating it into the body of ideas that he or she already possesses:

> Things can be made intelligible through "categories." In short, things are comprehensible on a basis of one's experiences as a single unit. . . .We can clearly understand what we have experienced, but struggle to grasp what we have not experienced. In this light, our familiarity with Japanese gives much weight to our comprehension of English. (Uei, 146)

From this perspective, his translation operates as a means of understanding Shakespearean texts by assimilating them into the body of semiotic and cultural codes already possessed by target readers. His translation reflects his ambition to read Shakespeare from an intercultural standpoint, without complete deference to Eurocentric sensibilities.

Indeed, Okakura took a strong stance against deference to Eurocentric hermeneutics of the Bard, as demonstrated in his essay on *King Lear*, in which he writes: "deference to appraisals [of Shakespeare's texts] by the likes of a great poet Shelly, a masterly essayist Lamb, and, more recently, the doyen of literary criticism, Bradley, gets on my nerves" (1934, 12). Okakura, therefore, attempts to undercut the desire of scholars of English studies to replicate the authentic voice of Shakespeare in the vernacular, largely by striving to negotiate with Shakespeare on Japanese cultural terms instead of imposing him on Japanese culture. In this light, both Okakura and Sōseki prefigure Japanese intercultural practitioners of Shakespeare, such as Kurosawa Akira and Ninagawa Yukio. Although translation normally figures as a loss, it is fair to say that Okakura's ambitions to localize Shakespeare reward fresh insight into intercultural possibilities of translating the Bard in Japan, given current academic interest in global "Shakespeares."

5. Conclusion

According to Brandon, Asian students learning Shakespeare in late nineteenth century followed a similar path, in the sense that their translations used indigenous and traditional verse forms to approximate the Bard's blank verse, which suggests that the "touchstone for judgement is the original English Shakespeare" (7). Whereas Shōyō's translational practice rang with the Asian tendency to preserve the authentic voice of Shakespeare in the vernacular by approximating the form of the original, Sōseki expressed doubt about such standards by claiming that Shakespeare should be accommodated by Japanese culture rather than Japanese culture by Shakespeare. Indeed, Okakura sought not to approximate the formal features of Shakespearean text, but to capture what is perceived as the Shakespearean spirit by exploiting a semiotic equivalence accessible to the target reader. Whilst Shōyō's formal equivalence can be seen as a loss in terms of the target audience's receptivity, Okakura's dynamic equivalence or "transculturation" offers a fresh insight into how to translate Shakespeare in terms of intercultural and Asian "Shakespeares" popularized by global Shakespeare scholars. Soseki's criticism and Okakura's translation find their most eloquent expression in the highly acclaimed films of *Macbeth* and *King Lear* by Kurosawa and violently beautiful intercultural productions, including *NINAGAWA Macbeth*, by Ninagawa. Their practices can be traced to Okakura's call to seek out a Japanese equivalent of Shakespeare to understand his plays from a Japanese point of view.

In stark contrast to artistic practitioners, Japanese translation of the Bard seems to follow Shōyō's tradition of preserving the authentic voice of Shakespeare in the vernacular. Indeed, major translators of Shakespeare not only transliterate the name of characters and places as well as Greco–Roman allusions, but also strive to approximate his blank verse and puns, even when the result does not strike a chord with the target audience. Arguably, such translators, most of whom have been Shakespeare academics, consider it their mission to convey the Bard's authentic voice to the target audience. In this sense, the touchstone for judgement continues to be "the original English Shakespeare." However, as Huang favours "the Aesthetics of Transculturation" by saying "Asian readings can help us to reach back to alternative ways of knowing Shakespeare" (2011, 196), audacious intercultural approaches to translation will enrich perspectives on his plays. In this light, Soseki's critical comments and Okakura's translation should be indispensable readings not only for historians of Shakespeare's reception in Japan, but also for translators of Shakespeare.

*All Japanese names appear as the family name followed by the given name. A macron over a vowel indicates that the pronunciation is lengthened. All translations of quotations from Japanese books and articles are mine unless otherwise indicated.

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Notes

Note 1. All citations from Shakespeare refer to *The Oxford Shakespeare*.

Note 2. Wong and Luong have discussed Chinese and Vietnamese translations of Shakespeare in terms of translational studies.

Note 3. In this essay, Tsubouchi Shōyō is referred to as "Shōyō" and Natsume Sōseki as "Sōseki," given the familiarity of the Japanese with their given names.

Note 4. The aim of the Bungei Kyōkai, devoted to pioneering new Western drama, was artistic, as well as educational and instructive (Kishi and Bradshaw, 20).

Note 5. Although unknown outside Japan, Okakura was influential in English studies, and well acquainted with Shōyō and Sōseki. It is thus fair to say that his translation was conceived in response to their translational and critical works.

Note 6. This study adopts Baldick's definition of imagery as "a rather vague critical term covering those uses of language in a literary work that evoke sense-impressions by literal or figurative reference to perceptible or 'concrete' objects, scenes, actions, or states, as distinct from the language of abstract argument or exposition. The imagery of a literary work thus comprises the set of images that it uses; these need not be mental 'pictures', but may appeal to senses other than sight. The term has often been applied particularly to the figurative language used in a work, especially to its metaphors and similes" (106).

Note 7. This Japanese translation divides each idiom into syllables in order to explain the syllabic metre. For example, "ke tsu shi n" is actually one idiom "Ketsushin (決心)"

Note 8. Nida and Reyburn also argue that "[b]ecause figurative language is proportionately less frequent than nonfigurative, it carries more impact" (41).

Note 9. Nida and Taber define formal equivalence as the "quality of a translation in which the features of the form of the source text have been mechanically reproduced in the receptor language. Typically, formal correspondence distorts the grammatical and stylistic patters of the receptor language, and hence distorts the message, so as to cause the receptor to misunderstand or to labor unduly hard" (201).

Note 10. Morton argues that Shōyō "was chiefly concerned with 'naturalising' the text so that it seems to read as it were 'at home' in Japanese" (25). However, his 1911 rendition of Hamlet was not natrualised, despite his use of the traditional verse form. His intention throughout his career was to preserve the authentic voice of Shakespeare in the vernacular. See Kobayashi (2006).

Note 11. A more detailed account is provided by Nida and Taber, who defines dynamic equivalence as the "quality of a translation in which the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the response of the receptor is essentially like that of the original receptors. Frequently, the form of the original text is changed; but as long as the change follows the rules of back transformation in the source language, of contextual consistency in the transfer, and of transformation in the receptor language, the message is preserved and the translation is faithful" (200).

Note 12. See Kawachi 39–40.

Note 13. In old Japan, "the Minister of the Left" (*Hidari no Otodo* or *Sa Daijin*) was second only to the Chief Minister, a position equivalent to that of today's Prime Minister.

Note 14. Hikaru Genji is the second son of an emperor. He renounces his status as a member of the imperial family for political reasons and lives as an imperial officer. In addition, "Cytherea" (Induction 2. 50) is translated into "*Yōkihi* (Yang Kwei-fei or Yang Guifei)," who is a romantic but tragic historical queen familiar to the Japanese