

Who are the Japanese *Othellos*?: Reception and Productions of Shakespeare in Mainland Japan and Okinawa¹⁾

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Abstract

This paper, focusing on the productions of *Othello* in Japan, is intended to be the introductory part of a larger theme, “The Reception and Productions of Shakespeare in Asia — Starting from Mainland Japan and Okinawa —”.

In the past ten years, or so, the study of the productions of Shakespeare in non-English speaking countries, including Asia, is starting to attract academic interest. Japanese productions seem to be of particular interest for the variety of production styles they take. However, there seems to be a tendency to discuss the Japanese Shakespeare based only on the knowledge of the productions that tour to Western countries or the ones that have been drawing international attention in the pseudo-Western, “global” city, Tokyo. But adaptation of Shakespeare into local plays has continued to exist in the regional theatres since the early twentieth century, and we should keep them in mind, especially when we discuss “Japanese Shakespeare” in the Asian context.

Moreover, though Shakespeare productions in many parts of Asia and Africa often represent the importation and possible transgression of a foreign and potentially dominant culture, in East Asia, Shakespeare reached this region almost completely apart from the British colonial enterprise. Young Japanese, Chinese, and Korean intellectuals deliberately sought out Shakespeare themselves as part of their quest to overcome what were called “feudal tendencies,” and this effort produced multiple layers in the reception of the bard’s works²⁾. The first adaptation of *Othello* in Japan in 1903 is particularly interesting, for in that version, Venice was relocated to Tokyo, and Cyprus to Pong Hu Island (a part of Taiwan), reflecting the nation’s victory in the first Sino-Japanese War³⁾.

In this paper, I would like to examine how *Othello* in mainland Japan and Okinawa has been transformed in the hundred-year history, focusing on the modernization (or globalization) policy of Japan and the *Yamatonization* and ethnic identity of Okinawa, the region which can be regarded as a link between Japan and the rest of East Asia.

Keywords: Shakespeare in Asia, Okinawa, Yamatonization, Othello, Colonization

Introduction

The Japanese theatre is now starting to draw Western attention for the various adaptations and styles of performance of Shakespeare’s plays, ranging from rock opera to *Kyogen* and *Noh*. This focus of attention in both the academic and theatrical worlds has been especially enhanced since the Sixth World Shakespeare Conference held in Los Angeles in April, 1996⁴⁾. Since then, various international Shakespeare conferences, including the ones in the bard’s homeland⁵⁾,

started including the discussions of how to accommodate “Asian” adaptations and productions into the canon of Shakespeare studies.

However, among the Western, and even Japanese scholars of Shakespeare, there seems to be a tendency to discuss the “globalization” and “interculturalism” of Japanese Shakespeare based on the knowledge of the productions that happened to tour to the Western countries or the ones that have been drawing international attention in the pseudo-Western, “global” city, Tokyo. But adaptation of Shakespeare into local plays has continued to exist in the regional theatres since the early twentieth century, and we should keep them in mind especially when we discuss “Japanese Shakespeare” in the Asian context.

Now, among all the regional theatres in Japan, those of the Okinawa islands are the most characteristic, because of Okinawa’s geographic situation and also because of its complex history of colonization. While Shakespeare was first introduced to most Asian countries as the culture of the colonizer, or, if not, as an icon to show the degree of the country’s “westernization,” in early twentieth century Okinawa, it had also been one sign to show their degree of their *Yamatonization*.

The special focus of this paper will be the transitions of the productions of *Othello*, for being a play dealing with a hero’s feeling of *Otherness* in a Western society, it can be one of the most challenging plays to produce in a transitional society. Moreover, in actual productions, especially in East Asia, to represent Othello’s ethnic identity and his ambiguous position in the Venetian society of Shakespeare’s time is a very sensitive issue, and always reflects the intercultural views of each director as well as each writer of the adapted version.

So let us see how *Othello* in mainland Japan and Okinawa has been transformed in the hundred-year history of Shakespeare in Japan.

1. The First *Othello* in Japan

Shakespeare was first introduced into Japan during the late 19th century, which was a unique period coming just after three hundred years of national seclusion. It was a time when Western countries were colonizing many regions of Asia and Africa, and feeling threatened, the newly formed Meiji government abandoned the seclusion policy for a policy of rapid Westernization, including commercial, industrial, and military expansion, which eventually led to Japan establishing its own colonies. Though some scholars maintain that touring companies from England first introduced Shakespeare performances to Japan, their productions were for a very limited number of Western residents who lived in restricted areas, and most Japanese citizens had no chance to see them. In fact, having Japan’s own Shakespeare productions with Japanese actors seemed to have been regarded as a necessary step to demonstrate the “advanced” degree of Japanese “civilization.” In accordance with the expressed state policy of *Wakon Yosai*, or “Adapting Western know-how, but with the Japanese spirit,” the earliest Shakespearean productions introduced to the Japanese public were localized and contemporized adaptations,

and *Othello* was among the first of these early productions.

The first Japanese production of Shakespeare's *Othello* was presented in February 1903 by the producer Kawakami Otojiro (1864–1911) and his troupe. Kawakami came from humble origins in southern Japan, far from metropolitan centers, and he had no connection with the distinguished Kabuki families of the time. Yet, his aspiring *Shimpa* (New Wave) troupe became so successful that he was able to take it on tours of the United States and Europe between 1899 and 1902. In December 1899, he went to Boston, and inspired by Henry Irving, who was also on tour in Boston then, performed one scene adapted from "The Merchant of Venice" for an American audience. Four years later he introduced Shakespeare plays to Japanese audiences in the "Seigeki" style, which literally means "straight drama," featuring contemporary dialogue, rather than music and dance as in Kabuki. Otojiro chose the version of *Othello* translated by Tozawa Koya, and he had Emi Suiin, a young contemporary writer; adapt it to Meiji Japan for his troupe's production at the Meiji-za theatre in Tokyo and the Nakamura-za in Osaka.

The title itself was *Osero*, written in the katakana syllabic alphabet to show that it is a western name, but the places and characters were localized. Venice was relocated to Tokyo, Cyprus to Pong Hu Island (a part of Taiwan). The hero "Muro Washiro," (*Othello*), acted by Kawakami, was depicted as a dark-faced army general from southern Japan, while the heroine "Tomone" (*Desdemona*), played by Kawakami's wife Sada Yakko was depicted as the daughter of a distinguished family in Tokyo who wore beautiful western dresses. They marry against the will of the heroine's father, an ex-samurai given the Western title of a "Count" by the Meiji government, and the hero is appointed as the governor of Taiwan, which Japan had just colonized as a result of victory in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895.

The plot was almost the same as Shakespeare's original play, but there was one notable addition to the text. A passage was inserted explaining why Washiro (corresponding to *Othello*) was asked to return to Tokyo (corresponding to Venice). In this scene *Othello* receives a letter from the Duke ordering him to leave his post in Cypress, which will be assumed by Cassio, and return to Venice, but with no clear reason given. In Act III scene V of Emi's version, which is the adaptation of the corresponding scene, the officer Kurachi (who is a character based on both Gratiano and Lodovico) explains the reason given by the Japanese Prime Minister (corresponding to the Duke of Venice) as follows:

Kurachi (Lodovico): It is rumored in Japan that you massacred
 civilians when you suppressed the pirate revolt.
 All the press is writing about it...

Washiro: They say I killed the civilians? People who say this are shooting us in the back
 from afar. Such rumors can get started because the distance is so great between
 Japan and Taiwan. Ha, ha, ha...

Kurachi: Japanese are emotional people. They grow jealous to see you rise in fame, and try to pull you down. Because we live in an island nation, our jealousy grows larger and we lack the continental way of thinking... But public opinions are public opinions and since this rumor has spread so far, we can't ignore it. That's why I am sent here, but of course the prime minister believes you never did such a thing. (Emi, Suiin, osero, Bungei-Kuibu, Vol 7, Book 3, 1903. p. 57, translated in English by myself)

The letter from the prime minister requests that Washiro return to Tokyo and face bogus war crimes charges. Tomone's father is listed as one of the people who strongly advocated calling him back and replacing him with Katsu (corresponding to Cassio). This letter increases Washiro's doubts about his wife who, according to what he was told, had already committed adultery. This added letter also suggests that Kawakami is engaging in political satire by showing how Washiro (Othello), an outsider among the high society of Tokyo (Venice), has merely been used by the prime minister of Japan (the Duke of Venice) when his skills as a general were needed in an emergency and then discarded when hostilities in Taiwan (Cyprus) were over and he was no longer useful. The colonial government is already stable, and the prime minister may have wanted to get rid of Washiro (Othello), whose reputation he assumed was already tainted. It is also noteworthy that both the "pirates" Washiro subdued and the "native civilians" he allegedly killed are either Chinese or minority indigenous people in Taiwan, regarded at the time as second-class citizens in the rising Japanese empire.⁶⁾

The producer-actor Kawakami, who was himself from humble origins in southern Japan, said he had originally regarded Othello as a domestic play with universal themes of love and jealousy. Yet his adaptation of *Othello* as a play about the colonized and colonizers, with the hero Othello caught in the middle, is an innovative interpretation not to be found among the mainstream Anglo-American productions of the time.

Such incorporation of current events and the above mentioned character-transpositions seems to have appealed to a wide audience which was seeking novelty, but was still not accustomed to "raw" western culture. The production was repeatedly performed, and we can say that Kawakami succeeded in producing a play suited to the tastes of a general audience.

But this was also a time when a few young Japanese were aware of the canonical Shakespeare, as part of their university education. Leading intellectuals like Tsubouchi Shoyo (1858-1933), who studied western drama as a literary genre, found Kawakami's production too down-to-earth and criticized it, claiming Kawakami had diminished Shakespeare. As an ironic result, Kawakami's productions stimulated Tsubouchi and other intellectuals to translate Shakespeare and other western drama directly from the original texts and to introduce them on stage outside Japan's commercial entertainment world in productions usually considered by historians as the starting point of the *Shingeki* (new theatre) movement⁷⁾.

After *Othello*, Kawakami produced *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Merchant of Venice* in the same Seigeki style. He then produced a parody version of his earlier *Othello*, production that

was called *Shin-Osero* (*New Othello*, a comedy, 1906). It depicted the jealousy of an ordinary, middle-class Japanese husband. After that Kawakami stopped producing Shakespeare plays, traveled again to Europe and America, built a European-style theatre in Dojima, Osaka, and died on stage in 1911.

As for Tsubouchi, he completed full translations of all the Shakespeare plays, launching the age of *Shingeki* style Shakespeare, but it is said that he was still reworking his translation of *Othello* on his death-bed in 1933, never satisfied in his pursuit of the “authentic” Shakespeare.

2. *Othello* in Okinawa

Kawakami’s first stage production of *Othello* in 1903, set in contemporary Japan and Pong Hu Island is, in fact, relatively well-known and had been repeatedly taken up by directors and researchers. It is less known, however, that in the same year, the Okinawan intellectuals protested the display of Okinawan women in traditional costumes in the showcase of “Human Species Museum” along with the Ainu, Koreans and the Taiwanese aborigines advertised as “live specimens of exotic peoples,” in front of the Expo Site in Osaka (the *Jinruikan* Incident).

The writers of *Ryukyu Shimpo*, the local newspaper in Okinawa, insisted in April 1903: “To line up Okinawans with Taiwanese barbarians [*seiban*] and Hokkaido Ainu is to view Okinawans, who are truly Japanese, as one of these. No matter how insensitive Okinawans may be, we can never put up with this kind of humiliation.” Newspaper reports in Okinawa did not object to this dehumanizing exhibition itself, but to its inclusion of Okinawans, whom the writers insisted were fully assimilated Japanese. Likewise, Okinawan intellectuals protested vigorously when news broke of a plan to include Okinawa under the jurisdiction of the Taiwan governor-generalship. Again, it was not colonialism in itself that they objected to, but the idea of being placed in the same category as those who were not “true Japanese.”

When Okinawa was annexed by Japan in 1879, the central Japanese government emphasized that the Okinawans were originally Japanese (in contrast to eighty years later, when the Americans who occupied the island at the end of World War II tried to emphasize the racial and cultural differences between Japanese and Okinawans). To the majority of mainland people in that period, however, Okinawans were viewed as “barbarian others,” living in an exotic tropical island far to the south, hidden under the umbrella of the Chinese emperor. However, the trend of *Yamatonization* (assimilation with *Yamato*, or mainland Japan) and the decline of the pro-Chinese faction accelerated after the Japanese victory over China in 1895. More Okinawans came to see Japan as a nation on the rise, offering them the best hope for the future. Among the population at large was a broad, if not deep, effort to identify with Japan. Boys changed their hair-styles from the traditional topknot and pin to the crew cut popular on the mainland. Women began adding the -ko suffix to their given names, and men adopted *kun* pronunciations for their names which previously had readings that were closer to *on*. In Okinawa, unlike in Korea four decades later, such renaming was voluntary. Okinawans especially resented being

continuously compared to the people in Japan's colonies, such as Taiwan and Korea, and to other minorities in Japan who had been the object of assimilation policies⁸⁾.

Present day Japanese youth admire Okinawan culture, especially music, and think of Okinawan culture as in vogue and trendy. In contrast, early 20th century Okinawan youths and intellectuals thought anything Yamato was in vogue. In other words, at that time, the *Yamatonchu* (mainland Japanese) were the whites, whose dominant culture the darker Okinawans had to admire and emulate in order to be acknowledged as first-class citizens. Therefore, the modernization of Okinawa from the late 19th century and early 20th century was double-layered: at one level, to be modernized was to be Yamatonized, yet the model for this modernization, mainland Japanese, were themselves striving to be Westernized—at least on the surface.

Therefore, Okinawan playhouses, which had to be in vogue in order to survive, modeled new plays on those produced in Tokyo or Osaka in order to draw a large audience.

However, in 1906, three years after the *Jinruikan* Incident, Tokashiki Ichiza, a theatre troupe in Naha, readapted the Kawakami/Emi adaptation of *Othello*, and produced it at Kyuyozza with local actors. According to the *Ryukyu Shimpo* newspaper, this production was widely advertised as “Kawakami's Seigeki Shakespeare.” Since the Okinawan dramas basically took the *Kuchidate* form for their rehearsals, which meant that lines were taught orally without scripts, there is no official record left of this production, and we can only guess what it was like. Though the choice of the play must have been a demonstration of the degree of their *Yamatonization* and a claim that the Okinawans are “first rate citizens,” the production must have been performed half in Okinawa dialect, and the costumes were likely different from what Kawakami used. The theatre review in the same paper (presumably written by a *Yamatonchu*) is not exactly favorable, criticizing that the *Othello* actor “lacked dignity.” But the production seemed to have enjoyed a three-week run, which means it drew a considerably large audience.

Professor Ikemiya Shoji of the University of the Ryukyus wrote on *Okinawa Kenshi* in 1975 that Washiro/*Othello* “had been depicted by the Okinawan Theater Troupe as a Chinese man” in Meiji Japan, but he gives no clear evidence of this, except that it is according to an audience member's memory. If so, the actor in the role of Washiro could have appeared in a Chinese costume to show that he was the governor of Taiwan, and some people in the audience who were unfamiliar with the plot may have mistook him for Chinese. Whether this was the troupe's intentional revision of the Kawakami/Emi version or not, the fact that some Okinawans thought *Othello*/Washiro was Chinese could well reflect Okinawan conceptions of nationality in this transitional time. Okinawa had been an independent kingdom under the umbrella of China, and the audience may have had mixed feelings, longing to follow the modernization policy of mainland Japan but also nostalgic for the good old days of the Ryukyu Kingdom when they staged theater performances to entertain the envoys of the Chinese emperor.

Also, when we consider the geographical, cultural, and historical differences between Okinawa and mainland Japan, Kawakami and Emi's satirical depiction of Washiro (*Othello*) as an outsider in the high society of Tokyo (Venice) who is exploited by the prime minister of Japan (Duke of

Venice) would have rung a familiar bell for the contemporary Okinawan audience.

Yonaha Shoko, an Okinawan theatre critic, points out, “the ordeal of Othello/Washiro in Emi/Kawakami’s version is much like what Okinawa had gone through in Japanese history from the late nineteenth through the twentieth century.”⁹⁾ Ishizawa Shuichi also points out the fact that though considered “second-class citizens,” many people from Okinawa were sent to Taiwan in its early colonial years, and were often appointed, by the central Japanese government, as local policemen¹⁰⁾. We can say that there were many Okinawan “Othellos” during the colonial period of Taiwan.

Starting with the production of *Othello* at Kyuyoza, Japanese adaptations of Shakespeare plays flourished in the major theatres of Naha for a few years. In Okinawa, *Shimpa* (or “new wave”) plays, including Kawakami’s Japanized Shakespeare and *Kabuki*, which were considered the “old plays” in mainland Japan, were both welcomed as something “new,” and influenced by various genres of such mainland drama, *Okinawa Shibai*, plays in Okinawa dialect, were created in a distinctive style. However, Shingeki-style Shakespeare, which flourished on the mainland after Kawakami’s time, never became popular in Okinawa because Okinawan drama was more appealing to the local audience. Okinawan drama, performed in the dialects of Shuri and Naha, included a distinctive language, style and rhythm, which were missing in the productions of mainland *shingeki* groups. Shakespearean themes disappeared for a while from Okinawa Shibai, but reappeared later when the popularity of the local drama waned¹¹⁾.

3. Present day *Othello* in mainland Japan and Okinawa

Following an era of canonical, or Shingeki style productions of Shakespeare, we have now entered the age of a second Shakespeare boom, when a wide variety of Shakespeare productions, including the revision of adaptations in the Meiji era¹²⁾, flourish. Also, the reversion of Okinawa to mainland Japan in 1972 made us enter another era of the theatrical influence between the two regions. Here, I will briefly examine the major productions of *Othello* in the post-reversion era.

Ninagawa Othello

The now internationally acclaimed Ninagawa Yukio, who had his training in the Shingeki style, but whose grand settings also appeal to general audiences, directed *Othello*, in 1994. He used the colloquial translation of Odashima Yushi, which was popular during the 1980s and early 1990s; and cast the multi-Kabuki actor Matsumoto Koshiro VIX as Othello and the ex-Takarazuka star Kuroki Hitomi as Desdemona. This production was generally faithful to the Shingeki text, and, unlike his more freely rendered adaptations, like *Ninagawa Macbeth*, *Tempest*, and *Hamlet*, which toured to England; there was no Japanization, or localization of time and place. Yet, although Ninagawa followed the Shingeki style of western imitation, he also emphasized the “colonial theme” of *Othello* with extravagant settings and props.

For example, he uses a huge globe (Act II scene 1), emphasizing Othello’s voyage from Venice

to Cyprus, and then in the Cyprus scenes he uses the grand stairs (which he also uses in *Hamlet*) to emphasize Othello's position as the governor of Cyprus. With such images of the sea, adventure and colonial power, Ninagawa avoids diminishing Othello's character and seems to have succeeded in giving the production a dimension many Western productions fail to express.

***Anji to Bijo* (“Anji and the Beauty”) by Makishi Kochu¹³⁾**

Anji to Bijo, written and directed by Makishi Kochu, is a play based on *Othello*, chosen for production at the 60th anniversary of Okinawa Shibai in Kenmin Kyodo Gekijo and broadcast on NHK Okinawa television in March 1993. Makishi said in an interview that he had written it in the early 1950s as *Fuun Haebarujo* and that the play had been produced repeatedly since then, and was widely viewed in Okinawa. As recorded in the video, the acting style is almost naturalistic, with some traces of influence from Kabuki, and the dialogue is in the Okinawan language articulated in a distinctive rhythm.

The story of *Anji to Bijo* is set in the early 15th century, the feudal period when Okinawa was divided into many *majiris*, or fiefs, each ruled by *Anjis*, or lords. The hero is the Anji of Haebaru, who has an ugly scar on his face and believed that no woman would be attracted to him. But he falls in love with the beautiful Manabidaru, an aristocrat's daughter who tells him that she finds his scar a mark of masculinity. With the help of Asato, one of his retainers who acts as a go-between, Anji gets her consent for marriage and gives her a necklace with seventy-seven beads, a treasure, which is said to have healing powers. Amuro, another retainer who is jealous of Asato, conspires against Anji with Mutubunushi, who wanted to marry Manabidaru himself. They succeed in making Anji believe that his newly-wed wife is having an affair with Asato, and Anji arrests Asato and decides to kill Manabidaru. However, a happy ending is prepared for the Okinawan audience. Makato, a young handmaid to Lady Manabidaru, confesses just in time that she was deceived into stealing the magical necklace with seventy-seven beads. The criminals are punished, and Anji and his beautiful wife embrace each other. “Okinawan audiences won't experience catharsis in an unhappy ending,” says Makishi. “They like the play because they want to find the essentially positive human nature they see in everyday life set in the ancient time, and they expect everything to go well in the end.”

Though Makishi adapts themes and plots freely from Shakespearean and other classical Western plays to suit the audience's taste in the form of the traditional Okinawa Shibai, he does so to give deeper insights into this genre. Unlike the Meiji predecessors who completely depended on the *Kuchidate* form and left little or no records, Makishi is now working on the written records of his complete works, together with what he has learned from the oral tradition of elder generations. The completion of the record of his plays will certainly give us a better chance to examine the influence of Japanese and Western plays on Okinawan drama.

***Othello for Children* (1999)**

In “Othello for Children,” one of the serial “Shakespeare for Children” productions¹⁴⁾ by the

Tokyo Shakespeare Globe Company, the hero Othello, played by Sato Sei, was depicted neither as masculine nor dominant. His multi-colored hair and darkened skin just looked like a stylish youth's fashion in Japan, hinting that the problem of racial discrimination in present Japanese society is not caused by being visually "dark," but by different factors.

The play started with the scene of Othello's marriage to Desdemona (brilliantly played by the ever-young Takeshita Keiko), a scene which was repeated at the end of the play. Such repetition emphasized that this simplified version of Shakespearean tragedy is focusing on the theme of "jealousy," which may ruin anyone's everyday happiness. However, in this apparently lighthearted production, there was also lines of a different tune like that of the Duke of Venice (comically portrayed by Izawa Maki, who also played Emelia), who kept mumbling "Taegataki wo tae, shinobi gataki wo shonobi" ("to bear the unbearable," a phrase from Emperor Showa's speech broadcast for the first time on radio on August 15, 1945, announcing the ending of the war which led to the American occupation), a bitter parody of the colonial theme smartly hidden behind the tale "for children."

***Desdemona* (premiered in 2000).**

In addition, there was the multi-language production based on Kishida Rio's adaptation, directed by the Singaporean theatre practitioner Ong Keng Sen¹⁵⁾, who Okinawan researchers wished to invite in the year of the Okinawan Summit. Interestingly enough, it was produced in Fukuoka, curiously excluding Japanese, Chinese and Okinawan actors. This "interculturally" reconstructed collaborative project depicted "Othello" as an icon of the dominant male-centrism of "Old Asia," and "Desdemona" as "the Other" as well as somewhat feminine in relation to ongoing intriguing issues of gender and sexuality, such as masculinity and femininity, Occidentalism and Orientalism, and to colonize and to be colonized.

Conclusion

The year 2003 was a year of reflection, being the 100th anniversary of the Jinruikan Incident. It was also the 100th year of the production of *Othello* in Japan. Looking back at the history of the productions, we can see that ever since the first Japanese production of *Othello*, the depiction of the racial identity of the title role had been vague and subtle, just as racial issues in Japanese society were, and still are rarely discussed openly. However, unlike many of the modern western productions, the colonial theme underlined in the original Shakespeare play has often been focused, or at least hinted at by many Japanese producers and directors of *Othello*. In fact, who Othello or Desdemona are in present day Japan or Asia is a question that must be continuously asked.

NOTES

- 1) Part of this paper was presented at the 16th International Conference for the Association of

- Comparative Literature held in Pretoria, South Africa (16 August, 2000) and also as a special lecture at Brown University, U. S. A where I was invited as a Wayland Endeavor Fellow (17 March, 2002).
- 2) James Brandon, in his "Some Shakespeare (s) in Some Asia (s)" (*Asian Studies Review*, 20. 3, 1996, pp. 1-26) categorizes Asian Shakespeare productions into roughly three or four types. One is the canonical Shakespeare — an "elite" or "high culture" Shakespeare, recognized as distant and foreign, transplanted from England. The second and third types of Shakespeare are localized Shakespeare. The third and fourth types of are known as post-colonial, post-modern, or "intercultural" Shakespeare. My focus on this paper will be mostly on the popular, not canonical, Shakespeare, which may be the combination of the second, third and/or fourth type of productions according to Brandon's categorization.
 - 3) For the full script text of the Kawakami production, based on the translation by Tozawa Kosha and adapted by Emi Suiin, please see Suiin Emi, *Osero*, Bungei-Kurabu, Vol. 7, Book 3, 1903. Though my basic policy is not to discuss a play without seeing its stage production, since it is impossible to travel back through time to 1903, my knowledge of the Kawakami production is basically from the script, stage notes, and the readapted stage productions based on the script in 1991 (the Seinen-za version directed by Ishizawa Shuichi) and 1995 (*Seigeki Othello*, written by Tsutsumi Harue and produced by Haiyuza). In addition, I made a research trip to Taiwan in December 1998 to visit Pon Hu Island and other relics of the Japanese occupation in the area, to follow Kawakami's ideas of the 1903 production (Kawakami also visited Pon Hu Island before the actual production and made use of the result of the research trip in his stage directions).
 - 4) The result of one of the seminars of the Sixth World Shakespeare Congress held in Los Angeles on April 11, 1996, in which I participated as a panel member (Seminar XIII: "Japanese Performances, Adaptations and Co-productions of Shakespeare; The Values of Stylization and Localization") was published as *Performing Shakespeare in Japan* (Ed. John Gillies and others, Cambridge University Press, 2001). One of my early papers on Japanese adaptation of Shakespeare, "The Rose and the Bamboo: Noda Hideki's *Sandaime Richaado*" is included on pp. 133-145 of this book.
 - 5) For example, at SCAENA (Shakespeare and his contemporaries in performance), an international conference held at Cambridge University in which I presented my paper "A Midsummer Night's Dream in Okinawa," on August 11, 2001, nearly half of the productions discussed were ones in non-English speaking countries, and many of them were on Asian productions including Japan. However, all the Japanese Shakespeare productions discussed, excluding mine, were ones produced in Tokyo or ones that toured in England.
 - 6) When the Seinen-za Troupe, directed by Ishizawa Shuji, reproduced Kawakami and Emi's Meiji adaptation at the Tokyo Globe Theatre in April 1991, they added a line here explaining that Washiro was sent to Taiwan because he was a "dark-faced man from the south of Japan and physically more similar to the natives he must conquer and rule" (in the original Emi/Kawakami script, it only says that "Washiro has a dark complexion and that his origins are obscure, and he may even be *Shinheimin*"). Ishizawa at first considered defining Muro Washiro as "a member of the ex-Okinawan royal family," but dropped this idea in the actual production. For details, please see Masae Suzuki, "The Three Japanese *Othellos*" (a paper read at the Hong Kong Shakespeare Association on December 1996).
 - 7) The conflict over adaptations of *Othello* between Kawakami and Tsubouchi was skillfully portrayed in the October, 1995 production of *Seigeki Othello* (正劇室鷲郎) by the Haiyu-za Troupe at the Tokyo Globe Theatre. It is one of the plays written by Tsutsumi Harue (1950-), an America-based Japanese playwright who specializes in the study of Japanese theatre in the Meiji era. Curiously, the lines added by Emi explaining Washiro's alleged war crime, which were also adopted by Tsutsumi in her script, were omitted in the Haiyu-za production. For details, see Masae Suzuki, "Tsutsumi Harue and Shakespeare" (included in *Osaka Shogyo Daigaku Ronshu No. 109*, issued in December 1997).
 - 8) See Steve Rabson, "Assimilation Policy in Okinawa: Promotion, Resistance, and 'Reconstruction,'"

JPRI Occasional Paper No. 8, October, 1996.

- 9) This remark was made after she read the Emi/Kawakami script, a copy of which I sent her in October 1996, and her comments were included in a column in *Ryukyu Shimpo*, issued on December 9, 1996.
- 10) Ishizawa's intentions were confirmed by the script version of Seinen-za production as well by my telephone interview with Ishizawa Shuichi in October, 1996.
- 11) For details, see Masae Suzuki, "Kindai Okinawa to Sheikusupia Juyou," *Fukugan no Okinawa*, Jinbunshoin, 2003, pp. 107-114.
- 12) As mentioned in the third note, the reproduction of Kawakami/Emi version of "Osero" by Seinen-za (1991), and Tsutsumi's "Seigeki Osero" by Haiyuza are the two important productions of the revisions of the Meiji adaptations of Shakespeare, but I am omitting the detailed explanations of those two productions because they were published in a previous paper. For details, see Masae Suzuki, "Tsutsumi Harue and Shakespeare" and "Three Japanese Othellos".
- 13) I am indebted to Ms. Yonaha Shoko for sharing her knowledge on Shakespeare in Okinawa with me and for introducing me to the Okinawan actor/director Makishi Kochu (真喜志康忠). The publication of Mr. Makishi's complete works on which Ms. Yonaha is working as one of the editors (「真喜志康忠 沖繩芝居脚本全集 全10巻」), originally scheduled to be published in 2002, was postponed owing to the reorganization of the sponsoring publisher.
- 14) This series started in the year 1995 with an intention to introduce Shakespeare to beginners, including children, by youthful and skillful actors. The percentage of children in the audience is actually around twenty percent, and the series is now considered a refreshing adaptation of the bard's works even among the elder Shakespeareans.
- 15) *Lear*, On's first collaborative Asian project on Shakespeare, premiered in 1997 with a Japanese Noh actor and a Chinese Beijing Opera star in the central roles.

APPENDIX:

CHRONOLOGY OF PRODUCTIONS OF OTHELLO IN MAINLAND JAPAN AND OKINAWA (1866-2003)

February, 1866

Hamlet's Instructions to the Players and selections from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are performed by a certain "Mr. Seare," one of the foreign residents in Yokohama, exclusively for a limited number of foreign residents in Japan. This is believed to be the first performance of Shakespeare in Japan.

1889

The Emperor and Empress see Kabuki plays for the first time (*Tenran Shibai*), and thus the status of the Kabuki actors are elevated from "social outcasts" to celebrities.

1896

The first performances of *Soshi Shibai* (Political Protest Plays) from mainland Japan are introduced in Okinawa.

1886-1889

Excerpts from several Shakespeare plays are performed by English-speaking amateurs at auditoriums and theatres in Yokohama, primarily for foreign residents.

May 1885 to June 1891, and in 1893, 1894 and 1895

Sakura-duke Zuni no Yo no naka (It's a World Where Money is Everything), a Kabuki adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*, is produced at Ebisu-za in Osaka. The script, adapted by Katsu Genzo, is based on Udagawa Bunkai's novel adaptation from Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*.

1891

Othello is produced, along with six other Shakespeare plays, by the Miln Company at a public auditorium in Yokohama. Though the performances were primarily for foreign residents, Tsubouchi Shoyo, the influential novelist, critic and translator, saw this company's production of *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice*, along with several other Japanese scholars and students.

1893

Actor and producer Kawakami Otojiro goes on a "brief study trip" to Paris.

1899

Kawakami sees Henry Irving and Ellen Terry performing in *The Merchant of Venice* at Bonson's Knickerbocker Theater.

1899

Kawakami and his troupe perform "Sairoku," a scene adapted from *The Merchant of Venice*, at Copely Hall, Boston.

1903

Seigeki ("legitimate" theatre) *Othello*, produced by Kawakami Otojiro Productions, translated by Tozawa Koya, and adapted by Emi Suiin, is performed in Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto with Kawakami Otojiro as Othello and Sada Yakko as Desdemona.

1906

Othello is produced by the Kyuyoza-za, an Okinawan Drama Company, in Naha, Okinawa, and runs for three weeks.

1906

Shin Othello (New Othello), Tarokaja's comic version of Emi's adaptation of *Othello*, is produced by the Kawakami Troupe in Tokyo and Osaka

1908

Shin Othello (New Othello), re-adapted by Matsuo Shizuka, is produced by Okinawa-za, another Okinawan Drama Troupe, in Naha.

1912

A British production by the Allan Wilkie Company of *Othello*, together with five other Shakespeare plays, is presented at the theatre in Yokohama for foreign residents, and at Naka-za in Osaka and the Imperial Theatre in Tokyo

1914

Othello, translated and directed by Ikeda Daigo, is produced by the Mumei Company.

1917

Othello translated by Tsubouchi Shoyo, is produced by Togi Tetteki and Matsumoto Koshiro Ichiza, starring the kabuki actor Matsumoto Koshiro VII.

1925-1934

Four productions of *Othello* by Shingeki (New Theatre) groups are presented along with other Shakespeare plays.

1951

Othello is performed from a script translated by poet Kinoshita Junji.

1960

Othello, translated and directed by Fukuda Tsuneari, is produced starring Matsumoto Koshiro VIII and other Shingeki (New Theater) actors.

1971

Othello, translated by Mikami Isao, is directed by Senda Koreya.

1973

Toho Productions stages *Othello*, translated by Fukuda Tsuneari and directed by John David.

1977

Shochiku Productions stages *Othello*, translated by Odashima Yushi.

1978

Deguchi Norio directs a counter-culture “blue jeans-style” production of *Othello*, translated by Odashima Yushi.

1983

Othello, translated by Odashima Yushi, is presented by the Bungaku-za, starring Emori Toru.

1987

Othello, translated by Fukuda Tsuneari, is presented by the Gendai Engeki Kyokai.

1987

A Shochiku Production stages *Othello*, translated by Odashima Yushi and directed by Kuriyama Masayoshi.

1987

Noh Othello by Munakata Kuniyoshi is presented in Japan’s classical drama style.

1991

A Seinen-za reproduction of Kawakami/Emi *Othello* is directed by Ishizawa Shuji

1994

Odashima Yushi’s translation of *Othello* is directed by Ninagawa Yukio, starring Matsumoto Koshiro IX and Kuroki Hitomi.

1995

Seigeki ('legitimate' theatre) *Othello*, adapted by Tsutsumi Harue, is produced.

1999

Kodomo no Tame no Othello (Othello for Children) is produced by the Tokyo Globe Theatre.

2001

Ong Keng Sen produces *Desdemona*, a multi-language play based on Kishida Rio's
Adaptation of *Othello* in Fukuoka, Japan.

日本のオセロは^{なにびと}何人か
—大和と沖縄におけるシェイクスピア受容と上演—

鈴木 雅恵

要 旨

本論は、「アジアのシェイクスピア受容と上演—沖縄と大和を出発点として—」というテーマの、いわば序章にあたる部分を、日本におけるオセロの上演を中心にまとめたものである。

ここ10年ほどの間に、アジアを中心とする非英語圏のシェイクスピア上演や翻案が、研究対象として認められはじめ、特に、色々な様式をとる、日本のシェイクスピア上演が注目されているが、世界的なレベルでは、西欧圏で上演された作品か、せいぜい東京で上演された舞台しか論じられることはなく、存在すら知られないことが多い。しかし、アジアにおけるシェイクスピア受容の意味を分析するには、無国籍化した都市で上演されるものや、海外輸出むけの舞台を論じるのではなく、地域に根づく演劇として受容されたものにこそ注目する必要があるであろう。また、同じアジアといっても、英語圏の植民地となり、支配者の文化として、英語教育の需要とともにシェイクスピアを受け入れた国々と、日本をはじめとする東アジアの国々のように、近代化、西欧化の象徴として進んで受け入れた国々とは事情が違う。

特に、日本における最初のオセロの翻案上演（1903）は、日清戦争に勝利し、「近代」日本の植民地となった台湾及び東京を舞台とした作品であっただけに、当時の日本、台湾、中国、韓国および沖縄との関係と、西洋文化の象徴としてのシェイクスピア受容との関係を論じるうえで、格好の題材である。本論では、他のアジアの国々との架け橋としての沖縄と大和との関係に焦点をあてながら、明治から現代までの「オセロ」の変遷に注目し、アジアにおけるシェイクスピア受容を論じるうえでの糸口を探りたい。

キーワード：アジアのシェイクスピア上演、沖縄、大和化、植民地化、オセロ