

Alexander C. Y. Huang

**“WHAT COUNTRY, FRIENDS, IS THIS?”: TOURING  
SHAKESPEARES, AGENCY, AND EFFICACY IN  
THEATRE HISTORIOGRAPHY**

Were I in England now,  
as once I was . . .  
—*The Tempest* (2.2.27–8)<sup>1</sup>

The curtain rose at the King’s Theatre, Edinburgh, on 14 August 2011 to reveal a richly textured production of *The Tempest* on a bare stage with minimal props. As the lights came up, a group of white-robed sailors were caught in a meticulously choreographed storm, dancing to the mesmerizing beats of the master

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*Alexander C. Y. Huang is a general editor of The Shakespearean International Yearbook and director of the Dean’s Scholars in Shakespeare program and Associate Professor of English, Theatre, East Asian Languages and Literatures, and International Affairs at George Washington University, where he is affiliated with the Sigur Center for Asian Studies and the Medieval and Early Modern Studies Institute. He served as vice-president of the Association for Asian Performance. As Research Affiliate in Literature at MIT, he cofounded <http://globalshakespeares.org>. His Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange (Columbia University Press) received the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize of the MLA, honorable mention by the Joe A. Callaway Prize of NYU, and the International Convention of Asian Scholars Colleagues’ Choice Award. His new book, Weltliteratur und Welttheater: Ästhetischer Humanismus in der kulturellen Globalisierung (2012), explores the role of aesthetic humanism in the recent historical record of globalization and examines the works of intercultural directors, writers, and Nobel laureates Gao Xingjian and Mo Yan.*

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drummer upstage. The performers' costumes echoed traditional Korean *hanbok* attire and their acting style incorporated *t'alch'um* mask-dance drama techniques. Their long white sleeves flapped and swayed in sync with their movements. Engulfed in stagewide sapphire and then crimson lighting, their sleeves were transformed from symbols of violent wind and waves to raging fire on board a ship approaching a world where, as Gonzalo aptly summarized, "no man was his own" (5.1.211). With Prospero (King Zilzi) as the drummer upstage and Ariel dancing in the midst of the unfortunate sailors, the storm scene—one of the longest renditions of the "direful spectacle" (1.2.26) in the performance history of *The Tempest*—served as an anchor to the tragicomic narrative about the self and the other. For a fleeting moment, Prospero gave the impression of being a drillmaster at the helm.<sup>2</sup>

The drumming patterns and kinetic energy from the opening scene were carried over to the rest of the play. It became clear that this production was governed by an unpretentious and powerful visual language. As the play unfolded, the stage was transformed into a rice field symbolized by six broomsticks, a space inhabited by animals and indigenous island creatures. The well-received production in Edinburgh echoed what Virginia Vaughan, editor of the Arden *Tempest*, has described as a "theatrical wonder cabinet."<sup>3</sup> Befitting the overarching theme of Shakespeare's late plays, this island off the medieval Korean shore offers exotic spectacles, sounds, and new discoveries. The Shakespearean play with a Western narrative structure helped a company tell their story through the performers' Asian bodies on a global stage, though the structures of the play and stage scripts and the acting methods are not exclusive to any one region of the world. Just as the disoriented Viola, who is washed ashore in act 1, scene 2 of *Twelfth Night*, we are compelled to ask: "What country, friends, is this?" In the comedy, the captain provides a seemingly straightforward answer: "This is Illyria, lady," that being an ancient region in the Balkans along the Adriatic coast, a region familiar to early modern London audiences.<sup>4</sup> We have no such luck with touring productions that tack on transhistorical and evolving cultural locations, both imaginary and real. Touring productions create a heterotopia and sometimes a state of delirium as the name Illyria suggests.

A play born at the dawn of British colonialism and inspired by "the wreck of a ship bound for Virginia," as Michael Dobson reminded the audience in the program,<sup>5</sup> *The Tempest*, directed by Oh Tae-suk of Mokwha Repertory Company (Seoul), was reimagined in the vein of the twelfth-century epic *The Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms (Samguk Sagi)*, one of the most canonical narratives about fifth-century Korea.<sup>6</sup> Recast as a vexed character capable of recognizing his own limitations, Prospero was often challenged by the spiky-haired Miranda and worked closely with Ariel, a shaman, to manage domestic affairs. Ariel sometimes assumed a motherly role to augment the aging father's tenuous relationship with his teenage daughter. The production deliberately lagged temporally. Its dilation of temporality hinges on a fictional ancient Korea created by Oh and his team, a past that is durative and open-ended. The performance ended on a high note. Instead of a staff and books—symbols of authority and the archival source of knowledge in an ontological sense—Prospero carried a folding bamboo

fan (*hapjukseon*)—a symbol of artistry and intellectualism—when he was not at the drum.<sup>7</sup> The folding fan is an integral part of a gentleman’s accessories and is a more versatile prop and powerful symbol than books. It can be used to create a cool breeze but it can also be used as a screen to hide its holder’s face, as a daggerlike weapon, and as an important prop in stylized *p’ansori* music theatre (two-person operetta). In the final scene, Chung Jin-gak’s Prospero was alone onstage. He folded his fan and asked the audience tentatively whether the “magic [he had] made with this fan [had] given [them] happiness.”<sup>8</sup> Once the audience clapped in approval, he descended from the stage and handed his fan to an audience member. The audience was thus offered a passionate portrayal of a single father who happens to be an artist eager to pass on his “magic.” Outside the dramatic context, the fan served as a gesture of the company’s good will and as a mnemonic device. The production, which premiered in Seoul in 2010, received the 2011 Herald Angel Award in Edinburgh.

Performing Shakespeare in Asian theatrical styles and manufacturing Asianness through Shakespearean theatre—a reciprocal process that I refer to as Asian Shakespeares—has generated incredible artistic and intellectual energy. Perceived in many parts of East Asia as a modern figure, Shakespeare operates as a transhistorical brand. Theatrical transnationalism often collapses temporal and spatial dimensions of artworks—in this instance fifth-century, seventeenth-century, and twenty-first-century frameworks for understanding Shakespeare, the Korean Peninsula, and the British Isles. The reception of this collision of time and space reflects the unequal power relations that have been naturalized by the canonicity of dramatic works or genres. As one of the “Eastern-themed” Edinburgh International Festival’s (EIF) three prominent Asian performances of Shakespeare, Oh’s *Tempest* raised important issues of agency and efficacy. The EIF featured several genres of Asian performing arts ranging from theatre to ballet, including works by the Seoul Philharmonic and the Yogyakarta Palace Gamelan Orchestra, *The Revenge of Prince Zi Dan* (based on *Hamlet*) by the Shanghai Peking Opera Troupe, *Lear Is Here* by the Contemporary Legend Theatre of Taiwan, *The Peony Pavilion* by the National Ballet of China, and Haruki Murakami’s *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* in English and Japanese, directed by Stephen Earnhart. Why was Oh’s *Tempest* judged by British critics to be a successful piece of touring theatre, while other adaptations of the Western canon—which were no less high profile in their Asian contexts, such as Wu Hsing-kuo’s solo performance of *Lear*—did not quite “work”? Through their exemplary power, the intersections of Asia and Shakespeare provide a set of important issues for repositioning theatre studies in the wider field of globalization studies. As scholars and artists have imported ideas and exported their works across national borders with greater frequency, they have become more self-aware of their practices and spectators within local and global communities, as evidenced by recent publications that take stock of the theatricalization of globalization.<sup>9</sup> How does Shakespeare make Asian theatre legible in the British context? What roles have Asian performance styles played in the rise of Shakespearean theatre as a “global” genre and to postimperial British identity in the world? More specifically, what does it entail for Asian theatre artists to

perform Shakespeare in Britain and for the British press to judge these touring productions?

These are some of the questions that artists and audiences of Asian Shakespeares have to confront. The following analysis of British reception of intercultural Shakespeare performances over the past decades showcases the dilemma and fantastic character of global Shakespeares on tour, on the one hand, and, the opportunity, on the other, to use touring performances to interrogate Asian and Shakespearean idioms as cultural signifiers in theatre historiography. Asian performance styles are highlighted here because of their increasing prominence at recent international festivals.

#### DOUBLE ENTENDRES: INTERCULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS

Touring theatre is a place where theatre studies and globalization come into contact. I have offered broader metacritical interventions elsewhere, and here I would like to focus on the production and reception of Shakespeare and Asianness in postnational spaces—festival venues where national identities are blurred by the presence of such entities as transnational corporate sponsors.<sup>10</sup> Some of these touring theatre works are produced under circumstances that may prove challenging or alienating to even the most cosmopolitan audiences. Asian Shakespeares outside Asia and in the diaspora put pressure on some of the theoretical models theatre historians have privileged in their documentation of the Western sources of non-Western performances. We might stay aloof and distrust any intercultural ventures because they are inevitably fraught with colonial mentality, as Rustom Bharucha does in his criticism of intercultural theatre practice.<sup>11</sup> However, I suggest that the alienating experience serves important sociocultural and aesthetic functions, and capturing the experience as it unfolds in its shifting cultural location can help us move from narratives driven by political geographies to histories informed by theatrical localities—the variegated locations embodied by touring performances. Global cultural flows are an organized and intensified cluster of activities that thrive on multidirectionality. As Fredric Jameson puts it in his working definition, globalization is “an untotizable totality which intensifies binary relations between its parts.”<sup>12</sup> Select cultural values are often ascribed to Asia. They are set against values associated with Shakespeare when Shakespearean characters are translated into palpable flesh-and-blood performers who may or may not be recognizable figures to the audience—for example, Kalamandalam Padmanabhan Nair’s stylized Lear in the Kathakali dance drama adaptation at the London Globe in 1999.

The European tour of Oh’s production and its reception embody several recurrent themes in touring performance. First, the cultural and political conditions of a venue or a production intervene in reception and undercut the work of artistic intent. This genre of stage works is shaped by forms of agency that are not rooted in intentionality. Second, in Shakespearean performance, language is often granted more agency than the materiality of performance, leading to the tendency to privilege certain modernized and editorialized versions of Shakespearean scripts and their accurate reproduction in foreign-language performances. The humanities

over the past century have witnessed the so-called linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, and the cultural turn, all of which operate on assumptions about the substantial and substantializing power of language as opposed to the materiality of cultural representation. As opposed to other forms of embodiment, language as a marker is deeply ingrained in identity politics. Language is a tool of empowerment to create solidarity, but it can also be divisive at international festivals where audience members who do not have access to the immediacy of the spoken language on stage might feel alienated or excluded. Third, Shakespeare productions that tour to the United Kingdom reflect shifting locational terrains of performative meanings that—unlike nationalist imaginations of Shakespeare—do not always correspond to the performers’ and audiences’ cultural affiliations. The systemic mutations in the politics of cultural production and compression of time and space engender variegated, layered subject positions. Oh’s works on tour are anything but typically Korean in style and theme. Other directors also make revisions to accommodate the performance space and audiences of international festivals, dictated by the cultural prestige of the exporting nation. Feng Gang, who wrote *The Revenge of Prince Zi Dan*, a *jingju* (Beijing opera) adaptation of *Hamlet*, told the *Daily Telegraph* that he and his colleagues “designed this play for foreign audiences.” While it would be ideal to take traditional *jingju* plays overseas, he added, they would be “incomprehensible to foreigners” no matter how “eye-catching” the performance might be.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC)—occupying a more privileged position in the Shakespearean circle—does not usually localize its productions for the purpose of international tours (e.g., Ian Judge’s *The Comedy of Errors* in Taipei in 1993, Lindsay Posner’s *The Taming of the Shrew* in Taipei in 2000, and Loveday Ingram’s *The Merchant of Venice*, starring Ian Bartholomew, in Beijing and Shanghai, 2002).

These three issues of politics, language, and performative cultural affiliations informed the reception of Oh’s *Tempest*. The production was capable of restoring a sense of wonder because Oh concocted a fictional ancient Korea through his antiquated, hybrid style that was unfamiliar to the Korean expatriate, British, and international audiences in Edinburgh. The sheer energy of its musical and physical expressions of a wide spectrum of emotions effectively bridged the gap between this Korean production and an audience that was accustomed to a more Anglo-European flair and was more familiar with a modern, Westernized Korea. The spoken language (Korean) and textual presence of English surtitles further demarcated the actors’ and audiences’ discrete linguistic communities. In this ninety-minute production, the spoken language involved a great deal of elision and often omitted subjects. While the emphasis on visual signifiers may seem at first to be a strategic move to enter global circuits of cultural production by way of touring from a marginal location, the abbreviated phrases that omitted verbs or nouns were in fact necessitated by the acting style. The actors wore masks to perform physically demanding dance pieces and movements, and as a result could not speak full lines simultaneously, though the English surtitles offered deceptively complete speeches translated and rewritten to serve British and international audiences.

One of the most refreshing features of the production was its attempt to create an enchanted isle full of noise but not politics. With a liberal sprinkling of

humor, Oh's version of *The Tempest* shifts the focus away from the almost de rigueur postcolonial approach to Caliban's struggles against Prospero to the tension between Prospero and Miranda. This Prospero seems more interested in moral and artistic agency and harmonious domestic affairs than in regaining political power. It is notable that Oh chose to depart from the postcolonial angle that has been perceived to be universal. Buoyed by postcolonial critical traditions and such prominent works as Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête* (1968), *The Tempest* has been institutionalized as a de facto postcolonial intervention and has become one of the most widely deployed canonical plays in revisionist allegories of local empowerment and anticolonial narratives. Beyond Anglophone performances, Caliban's language becomes even more powerful when the play is redacted in different languages, some of which have closer ties to Western colonial practices (such as Spanish) or Asian colonialism (such as Japanese) than others (such as Mandarin Chinese).<sup>14</sup>

The overworked allegory can fail onstage, depending on the context. An example is the 2009 pan-African *Tempest* coproduced by the RSC and Cape Town's Baxter Theatre Centre, directed by Janice Honeyman. In this allegory of colonialism, Antony Sher's white, dominant Prospero had John Kani's black Caliban—who bears traces of a South African shaman—on a tether, but in the final scene, Prospero delivers the epilogue to Caliban as an acknowledgment of his crimes. Shakespearean scholar Anston Bosman, a South African native, argues that the production “signaled the exhaustion of *The Tempest* as a vehicle for that allegory and the urgent need for South African theater, now fifteen years into democracy, to appropriate Shakespeare in freshly imaginative ways.” Bosman mused that the tired allegory notwithstanding, the production, with its dramatis personae precisely keyed to “the complex ethnic patterns of South African society,” could “easily be the winner of a competition whose challenge was to create the perfect specimen of a ‘glocal’ Shakespeare production.”<sup>15</sup> However, when this production went on tour “on the global stage,” it received more favorable reviews in Britain. The worthy and politically correct allegory about the Third World was recruited to help British critics justify enjoyment of the African carnival. Kate Bassett found Prospero's final speech “universally poignant,” and Michael Billington was struck by how the performance's combination of “racial politics with visual playfulness liberate[d] this all-too-familiar play” and turned it into “a deeply moving cry for forgiveness of the colonial past.”<sup>16</sup> In his analysis of the divergent British and South African responses to Honeyman's production, Bosman locates the overseas success of the performance in its apolitical nature: the production is “political only in the most predictable sense—as a call for anticolonial insurrection and indigenous self-governance—which, in 2009, is no longer very political at all.”<sup>17</sup>

Oh Tae-suk took a completely different approach to the questions of agency, coloniality, and the play's political undercurrents. For a company from South Korea, one option seems to be using the dramatic material to launch topical discourses about the not-so-distant history of Japanese colonial rule of Korea (1910–45) and the complicated emotional and political relationships between contemporary Korea and Japan. After all, the traditional theatre *ch'anggyŏk* (an opera

form) and national history of Korea tend to draw their energy from a narrative that focus on “resistance to foreign penetration”; so a play such as *The Tempest* might work well for Oh’s project of constructing and popularizing traditional Korean values.<sup>18</sup> However, Oh focused on the revitalization of traditional Korean aesthetics, a story whose subtlety is unfortunately lost to the British press. Oh, the founder and artistic director of Mokwha Repertory Theatre Company (founded 1984), began playwriting in 1968. Similar to his *Tempest*, his more than sixty original plays are rooted in Korea’s cultural archetypes. He has established a unique theatre methodology based on traditional Korean aesthetics, language, and expressions. His *Romeo and Juliet* toured to the Barbican Centre in 2006.

Oh’s extensive international touring experience has given him a unique vantage point. Opening with the music of the *taegŭm*, a horizontal Korean bamboo flute, Oh’s production evoked Korean myth, music, and the Confucian tradition. Throughout the storm scene, music that drew on rural Korean percussion styles provided the rhythmic foundation for the actions, and some characters such as the spirits took on animal roles, echoing the traditional mask-dance drama *t’alch’um*. Oh transformed *The Tempest* into a romantic comedy. The Daoist magician King Zilzi (Prospero) rules the island and orchestrates the shipwreck out of revenge, but he brings the men to his island partly because it is high time his fifteen-year-old daughter “met somebody.” The Korean Miranda later reminds her suitor that the question about her purity is preposterous; after all, she has grown up on “a desert island.” Oh’s version is not exactly a rollicking comedy, but it extrapolates something extraordinary from both the Elizabethan genre of romance and the Korean tradition of hybrid theatrical genres (such as *ch’anggŭk* and the masked dance drama *kamyŏn’guk*). The production shows a new path through Shakespeare’s material and *The Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms* that restores the comedic elements with a sense of “lightness and wit.”<sup>19</sup> Oh is more interested in establishing a space of his own in the teeming global marketplace than he is in speaking on behalf of nations. A similar strategy was adopted by another Asian *Tempest* that recently toured to Britain during the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival at the London Globe. Nasir Uddin Yousuff’s Bengali adaptation steered clear of postcolonial angst to embrace a colorful and vibrant comedy. Folk dance and Bangladeshi songs framed much of the action, and Prospero’s charms were evoked by Manipuri drummers with double-headed hand drums.

For good reason, Western critics are often more attentive to works that criticize global inequalities, but the European premiere of Oh’s *Tempest* demonstrates that productions that are critical of the geopolitical status quo represent but one approach to the play. Some theatre critics could not resist the urge to read Asian performances politically or imagine necessarily political agendas in these works. Toward the end of the production, the spirits ask the Prospero figure to liberate them from years of servitude and, in a surprising turn, add that they wish to be turned into ducks so that they can “go sightseeing in the north.” Along with the *Chronicles’* teleological view of an eventually unified kingdom of Korea and the fact that Oh’s company comes from South Korea, this line opened up a can of worms in Edinburgh. At a postshow discussion at the Hub, an audience member pressed Oh about his intentions, but the director reiterated several times that he did

not have North Korea or the conflicts on the Korean Peninsula in mind.<sup>20</sup> Although Craig Singer does not pursue the issue in his review, he does highlight the idea of a unified Korea.<sup>21</sup> Paul Gent is more conclusive in his assessment of the political message in this “fine pageant” (Figs. 1 and 2):

The biggest change of all, though, is that Caliban is a monster with two heads in constant disagreement. In the final scenes, Prospero grants them their freedom by splitting them—undoubtedly a reference to North and South Korea.<sup>22</sup>

The dynamics of British reviews of intercultural performance are symptomatic of the tendency to read contemporary Asian arts in political ways in the West. The patterns in the reception history of touring productions also point toward a lingering ideological investment in fixed notions of cultural authenticity. We have excellent histories of individual theatrical traditions, but touring productions have remained unclaimed goods outside of journalistic discourses. While there are in-depth studies of national Shakespeares, the same cannot be said of the history of performances imported from one region into another, partly because of the sheer multiplicity of cultural and political variables.<sup>23</sup>

Headlines about Asian countries converge on the notion that politics in Asia dictate cultural life, a notion that leads to routine praise and the expectation of dissident, subversive, or political undertones in Asian theatre. Stories of oppression must be told, and indeed some Asian performances strive to make known the unspeakable acts. However, other cultural stories must also be told. Oh’s comedic presentation also poses some obstacles. In his otherwise positive review, Mark Fisher writes that the “playful” adaptation is better for its lack of



**Figure 1.**

Ariel about to saw apart the two-headed Caliban as granted by Prospero in Oh Tae-suk’s *The Tempest*, Edinburgh, August 2011. Courtesy of Mokwha Repertory Company.





**Figure 2.**

The two-headed Caliban separated and freed by Prospero in Oh Tae-suk's *The Tempest*, Edinburgh, August 2011. Courtesy of Mokwha Repertory Company.

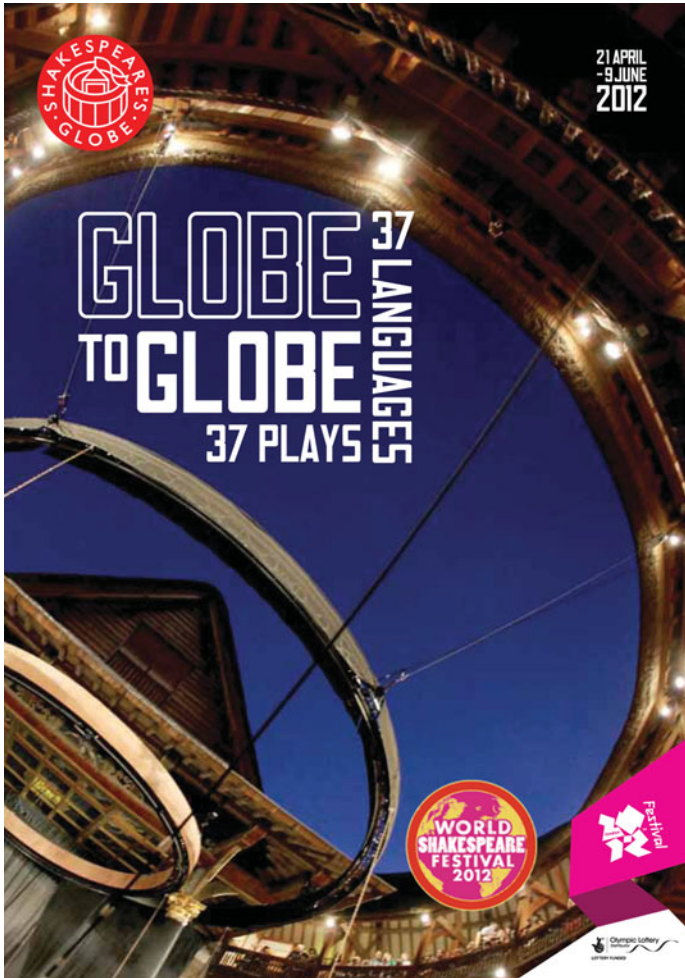
depth, because it is “the kind of thing you can imagine appealing to the groundlings in the Globe.”<sup>24</sup> Other critics go through a laundry list of parallels and departures from Shakespeare, noting that it is “hard for a British audience not to feel that Shakespeare’s play has been diminished” and that the “greatest loss . . . is the word-magic.”<sup>25</sup> Many of the journalistic discourses about the production and interviews with the director focused on how the thematic parallels and transhistorical connections suggest palatable compatibility between Shakespeare’s and Oh’s visions of dramatic spontaneity that creates more with less by inviting the audience to “deck [their] kings” with their thoughts (*Henry V*, Prologue, 29). Gent reverts to the crude convention of authenticity in which performances of Shakespeare in English must necessarily be more effective onstage. He writes that “the poignant and troubled relationship between Prospero and Ariel . . . goes for nothing” in the Korean rewriting. He is right that the “acting style” of “one-note declamation”—a departure from psychological realism—may take some getting used to, but his reaction to the production as a whole suggests that when confronted with unfamiliar works, critics often use various versions of Shakespearean regionalism and cultural ownership as anchor points.<sup>26</sup>

All this is a result of a complex network of cultural exchange that makes the paradigm of West to East, North to the Global South, or any “built to order” model meaningless, though some critical studies of Asian Shakespeares continue to emphasize the issue of compatibility between different theatrical traditions and marvel at the ease with which Asian performance idioms cross borders. They seem to suggest that Asian Shakespeare performances are valuable because they are “collectively distinguished . . . by the force of their visual, aural, and corporeal strategies . . . and can be enjoyed, irrespective of how well one understands them.”<sup>27</sup> Other works, such as *The Routledge Companion to Directors’ Shakespeare*, are guided by a priori criteria (such as “innovation” and “influence”) that exclude the likes of Suzuki Tadashi.<sup>28</sup> When Shakespeare’s plays are performed with Asian motifs (either by Asian or Western artists), they form a body of work that defies existing conventions based on divisions of cultures according to the boundaries of nation-states. Similar to the response to Honeyman’s production on tour in Britain, the reception of Oh’s production compartmentalizes the politics and aesthetics of *The Tempest* in racialized terms based on nation, culture, and the British relations with North and South Korea.

These articulations of difference and sameness are constructed in terms provided by Anglophone theatre historiography. As geopolitically situated citations of other Shakespeares and other Asias, these touring productions and how they are received reveal the unequal power relations naturalized by values associated with the Western canon. To combat the predictable expectations of topicality, Oh uses Shakespeare to revive a sense of traditional Korea that is distant even to his hometown audience and to polish his signature style of bringing contemporary sensibilities to bear on traditional aesthetics.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately, what is at stake is not how best to preserve Shakespeare’s text but how to reconnect Oh’s Korean audience with the lost realm that is traditional Korea.<sup>30</sup> His production of *The Tempest* not only sharpens but also expands our auditory sense of the Shakespearean and Korean texts at work.

#### WORLD SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL AND GLOBE-TO-GLOBE

The politicized reception of Oh’s *Tempest* is not an isolated instance. To understand the British patterns of reception of Asian performances, we must put them in a broader historical context. Organizers of the 2012 London Olympics and the Cultural Olympiad proclaimed Shakespeare, once again, the bearer of universal currency. Much more ambitious than the Royal Shakespeare Company’s 2006 Complete Works festival, the 2012 Globe-to-Globe (part of World Shakespeare Festival) was an integral part of the Cultural Olympiad to celebrate the Olympics. The festival was presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company, the EIF, and the Globe to Globe program. Opened on 21 April, it brought theatre companies from many parts of the world to perform Shakespeare in their own languages (“37 plays in 37 languages”; Fig. 3) “in [the London] Globe, within the architecture Shakespeare wrote for.”<sup>31</sup> In fact, thirty-eight Shakespearean plays were performed in languages ranging from Lithuanian to sign language. This is arguably one of the most important festivals since David Garrick’s



**Figure 3.**

Cover of the program for the World Shakespeare Festival 2012. Courtesy of the London Globe.

Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769 that jump-started the Shakespeare industry and tourism in Stratford-upon-Avon. Billed as a “great feast of languages,”<sup>32</sup> the Olympiad season featured Rachel House’s *Troilus and Cressida* in Maori, Nasir Uddin Yousuff’s *The Tempest* in Bengla, Haissam Hussain’s *The Taming of the Shrew* in Urdu, Wang Xiaoying’s *Richard III* in Mandarin, Tang Shu-wing’s Cantonese *Titus Andronicus*, Yang Jung-ung’s Korean *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and Motoi Miura’s *Coriolanus* in Japanese, among other plays. The Globe-to-Globe’s website suggests that the festival “will be a carnival of stories,”

including inspirational stories by companies “who work underground and in war zones.”<sup>33</sup>

The festival planners made choices about the languages to include in the festival and the companies to invite (usually one company for each language including Welsh, though Ninagawa Yukio’s *Cymbeline* was staged at the Barbican and Motoi Miura’s *Coriolanus* at the Globe), but they worked with the visiting companies to decide on the Shakespearean plays to perform. The World Shakespeare Festival, unlike the previous RSC Complete Works Festival, included almost exclusively non-English-language performances. The WSF also made an effort to cover Africa, the Americas, Russia, Asia, Europe, and New Zealand. In terms of geographical distribution during the WSF, European companies alone offered fifteen touring productions to the festival including British Sign Language performances. Asian companies offered eight productions (not counting the Maori *Troilus and Cressida*), African companies six, and Middle Eastern companies six. Groups from Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and the US also brought productions to the WSF. The 2012 Globe-to-Globe, a core component of the WSF, had a few conditions (“the artists will play the Globe way”),<sup>34</sup> including running time under two-and-a-quarter hours, synopsis surtitles, minimal stage set and technology, and no lighting. Some of these limitations are part of the unique architectural space of the London Globe and the need for quick turnaround time among 37 productions in rapid succession, but other conditions are related to the festival’s goal to celebrate Shakespeare and world cultures, such as enforced linguistic authenticity, though there were a few exceptions to the ban on English on stage.

Some productions tapped into geopolitical imaginaries. To the Globe’s credit, they had an inclusive policy and issued open calls for proposals. Some companies were interested in geopolitical alignment, as evidenced by the Globe’s promotional language for Teatro di Roma’s production: “Where else but from Rome for *Julius Caesar*?” Andrea Barraco’s *Julius Caesar* touts its cultural bona fides: it is set in “a dreamlike yet contemporary Rome.”<sup>35</sup>

Some companies approached the Globe with plays already in production. For example, Yohangza Company’s (*yohangza* means travelers) Korean adaptation of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* has toured internationally to critical acclaim. The Globe also commissioned some productions, such as the National Theatre of China’s *Richard III*. In still other instances, the Globe suggested plays for the companies to consider, and the companies’ rationales for choosing a specific play ranged from interest in creating escapist fantasies and experimenting artistically to a desire to participate in political activism. The Roy-e-Sabs Company of Kabul roundly rejected *Richard II*. *The Comedy of Errors* performed in Dari suited them better because they wanted to have a laugh amid realities of harsh Afghan politics, according to director Corinne Jaber. The themes of exile and darker aspects of the comedy were not lost on the company and their audiences. The play opens with a merchant from Syracuse telling his life story in Ephesus, where he is about to be executed for violating the travel ban between the two warring cities. Jaber’s group had to rehearse in Delhi for the Globe-commissioned production after having narrowly escaped being killed in a Taliban attack on the British Council building in Kabul.<sup>36</sup> Ashtar Theatre of Ramallah gladly took on *Richard II* because, according

to Globe to Globe festival director Tom Bird, the “Palestinians were desperate to tell their stories” through the Arabic adaptation.<sup>37</sup>

Beyond international politics, the World Shakespeare Festival is also conceived of as a festival of languages that celebrates and recruits London’s diverse ethnic communities, some of which have historically been marginalized. Major world languages, as defined by the number of speakers, were obvious choices, including Spanish, Mandarin, Russian, and Hindi, and languages that are important to London communities such as Bengali were also included. For 83 percent of the audience members who were members of these communities, it was their first visit to the Globe.<sup>38</sup>

The festival at the Globe concluded in early June, but other foreign touring productions continued to arrive in Stratford-upon-Avon and elsewhere in the United Kingdom throughout the summer. Saturated with foreign-language productions, the festival was both boldly experimental and reassuringly British, anchored by the production that both closed the festival and opened the Globe’s own season: Dominic Dromgoole’s English *Henry V*, which, according to the Globe’s marketing material, “celebrates the power of English, or any other language, to summon into life courts, pubs, ships and battlefields, within the embrace of ‘the wooden O.’”<sup>39</sup> The World Shakespeare Festival therefore served multiple purposes. First, it has successfully expanded its clientele by inviting London’s ethnic communities to occupy the Globe’s space. Second, the multilingual Shakespeare festival was a step toward consolidating the underdefined cosmopolitan British identity that was created at the inception of the Globe. Third, it celebrates diversity within the United Kingdom. (Welsh and British Sign Language were among the languages represented).

Finally, though, the festival was directed at the international audience who are the consumers of the South Bank’s culture-driven tourism.<sup>40</sup> The timing of the festival coincided with the 2012 summer Olympics, and the productions were offered in a model of one play per language in quick succession (each production ran for only two to three days). This provided enough diversity to allow tourists who had come for the Olympics to see several different plays during a short stay. The Globe appealed to these particular tourists by offering packages that were named after sporting events: biathlon for two shows, triathlon for three shows, decathlon for ten shows, and Olympian for all thirty-eight shows.

#### “AS HUGE AS HIGH OLYMPUS”<sup>41</sup>

Both the Olympics and the Globe’s festival focused on participants from many nations and on brands in promotional efforts. The parallels between sports and performance have been explored in various studies. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht attributes the fascination with watching sports to a very literal sense of aesthetic experience, namely the nature of athletic beauty. J.P. Singh argues in *Globalized Arts* that “creative products” can be incorporated into local and global markets to address cultural discomfort and anxieties about globalization.<sup>42</sup> For our purpose here I focus on national identities and Shakespeare’s symbolic capital at the festival. Some visiting companies and audience members who spoke the

languages the companies used in their productions saw the festival at the Globe as an opportunity to assert identity. Cultural festivals are often held before and during the Olympic Games.<sup>43</sup>

Both the Olympic Games and the Cultural Olympiad are international events that draw a great deal of media attention and scrutiny. They share a common goal of promoting mutual understanding among countries, but they also fuel nationalism in various guises. Despite the London Globe's effort to market the international Shakespeare productions by focusing on the languages of the plays and the cities of origin of the companies rather than their countries (e.g., a Hebrew *Merchant of Venice* from Tel Aviv; *The Comedy of Errors* from Kabul), national flags appeared online and were brought onstage while enthusiastic crowds of expatriates cheered on. Similar to international sporting events, the multicultural celebration of languages inevitably fueled nationalist sentiments in various guises that ranged from political protests to celebration of independence. For instance, a 12 × 4.5-inch image of a crowd waving flags of the Republic of South Sudan (est. 2011) adorns the Globe's Web page advertising the South Sudan Theatre Company's *Cymbeline* in Juba Arabic.<sup>44</sup> At the curtain call of Dhaka Theatre's *Tempest* at the Globe on 8 May 2012, one of the actors appeared onstage wrapped in the Bangladeshi flag. The gesture connected an artistic achievement with national pride. More controversial were the street demonstration outside the Globe Theatre and calls to boycott the Israeli company Habima's performance of *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>45</sup>

However, unlike the Olympic Games, which focus attention on individual star athletes even when they participate in team sports, the World Shakespeare Festival at the London Globe seemed to have sidelined individual artistic identities: the festival promoted a Bengali *Tempest* (rather than a *Tempest* directed by Nasir Uddin Yousuff), a Turkish *Antony and Cleopatra* (rather than director Kemal Aydoğan's production), and so on. It is not always easy to locate the names of participants and further information in English about the director and cast. The Globe did away with programs altogether and instead provided a bilingual leaflet for each production that provided only scanty information. The same is true of their Web site. By contrast, much more information is readily available for the Royal Shakespeare Company's or the Globe's productions in English. The Globe's strategy of emphasizing the languages of the productions (Fig. 4) suggests that the main selling point is national or political Shakespeares rather than the backstories of artists, for which festival audiences may not have patience.

#### BOOMERANG SHAKESPEARE COMES HOME

Prominent in the marketing language of the World Shakespeare Festival (of which Globe to Globe was a part) was Viola's aforementioned question in *Twelfth Night*, now made rhetorical: "What country, friends, is this?" appears with an image of a marooned ship on the WSF's website to advertise the RSC's "shipwreck trilogy" (*The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Tempest*) and to serve as a tongue-in-cheek reaction to the deliciously confusing festival.<sup>46</sup> The idea seems to be that if each country's artists fully embody the essence of their

“What Country, Friends, Is This?”

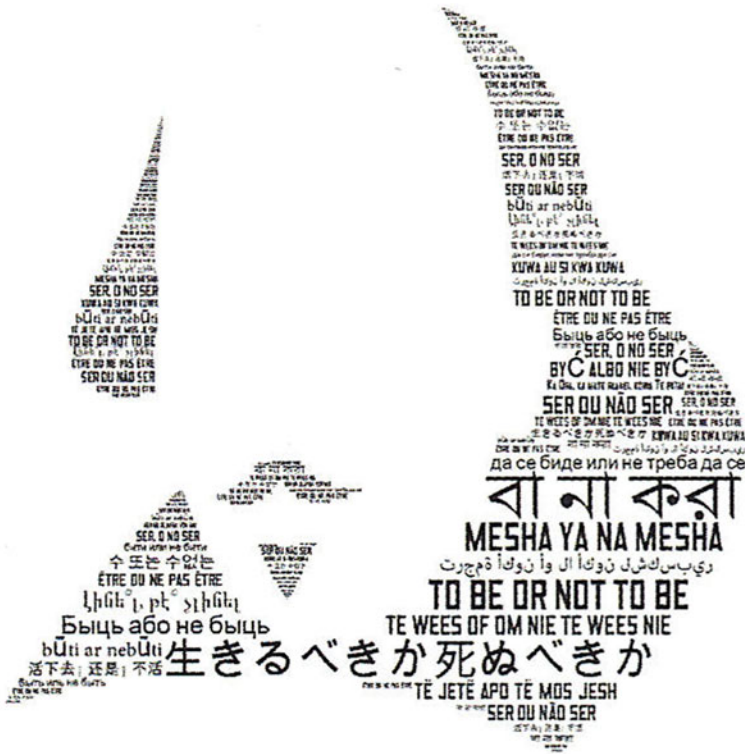


Figure 4.

Cover of the lecture series program for the World Shakespeare Festival 2012. Courtesy of the London Globe.

culture, the audience would be able to tell which country it is at first blush. The Q Brother’s ninety-minute hip hop *Othello: The Remix* was invited to represent the U.S. at the Globe. Set in modern-day U.S., the story about the reigning king of hip hop was acted and narrated by a cast of four men in jumpsuits, with a DJ up in the balcony. The production was among the first show to be sold out, and attracted a large number of young audiences.

There were moments in several productions when questions about cultural and geopolitical identities ceased to be rhetorical and became pressing in a productive way. The Belarus Free Theatre's production of *King Lear* was refreshing and challenging, partly because few audience members were familiar with Belarus and its culture. The facetious performance treated the play as a comic folktale that spirals into tragedy. Lear wobbled onstage with a thatch of white hair atop his slender frame, only to throw off the wig and reveal his jovial self. The play did not seem to need a Fool. The division-of-the-kingdom scene was presented as something akin to a reality TV show involving a rival striptease among the daughters. It is a different story with other troupes. When the National Theatre of China's *Richard III* opened at the Globe on 28 April 2012, the container that was carrying their exquisite set and costumes was still languishing on the North Sea. The Globe's support team and the Chinese actors quickly assembled substitute costumes and props from the Globe's storage room and the company pulled off a stellar, stylized performance without their full-face masks. They used simple but effective Western costumes, including Richard's red gloves, according to the conventions of the two primary styles the production employed, *jingju* and *huaaju* (spoken drama). This is arguably intercultural theatre at its best, because both the hosts and visiting company turned contingencies into opportunities while on the road. Despite the overwhelming success of the performance in London, which was partly due to the effectiveness of the improvisation, director Wang Xiaoying and his crew were not entirely happy about the missing costumes and props.

While the production seems to hail from China, multiple intercultural elements indicate that it is born in a fluid, heterotopic space created by stage designer Liu Kedong. One of the most visible elements is calligraphy. The title "Richard III" is written with English letters morphed into pseudo Chinese written characters in the style of square word calligraphy pioneered by the artist Xu Bing. The letter R for example is fused with the Chinese character for human (*ren*) and placed on top of a triangular structure that contains the remaining letters of Richard. This is an instance where Viola's question takes on an interesting dimension. For English speakers who cared to look closely, they would realize they could actually read the writing that seemed foreign at first glance. For Chinese speakers who assumed they could claim insiders' knowledge, they would quickly discover that the pseudo Chinese characters are inscrutable except for individual radicals and elements (such as *ren*) that made up the square word calligraphy.<sup>47</sup> During the performance in Beijing with full stage set and costumes, names of characters that would be killed by Richard appeared in the same fashion on the back-drap of the stage. Buckets of blood were poured down on the names, gradually devouring them and Richard's kingdom.

One of the contributions of touring productions and theatrical contingency is that Viola's question will be asked with increasing urgency and will prompt more reflections on cultural identities that have been taken for granted. "Shakespeare" is a canon that is supposedly familiar to educated English speakers, but it is increasingly alien to the younger generation. If the Belarusian *Lear* estranged Shakespeare in linguistic and artistic terms, the hip hop *Othello* made Shakespeare more familiar and relevant.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the Globe to Globe seasons



and other similarly structured festivals including EIF and the Barbican International Theatre Events pitched Shakespeare as global celebrity against Shakespeare as national poet and created a new brand with contemporary currency and vitality.

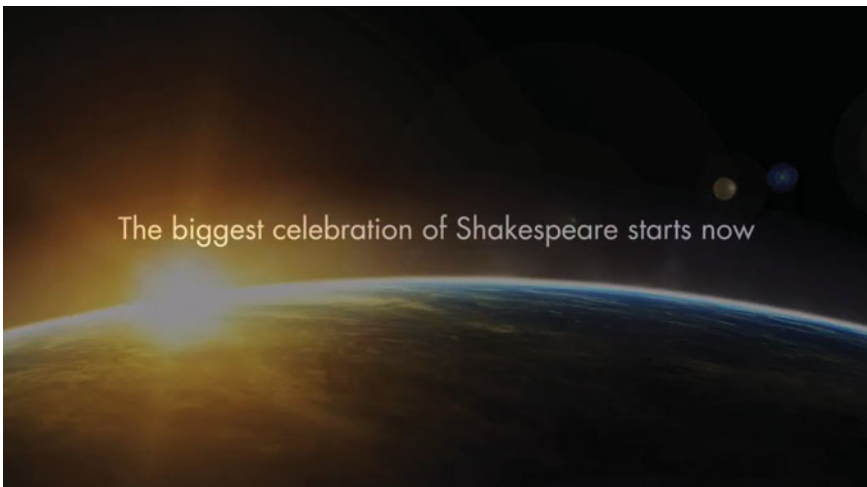
Also prominent in the marketing language was the slogan “Shakespeare’s coming home,” either evidence of lingering parochialism or an inside joke that riffed on a refrain in “Three Lions,” the anthem of the England football team. The song’s chorus proclaims that “It’s coming home, it’s coming home . . . football’s coming home,” suggesting that the honor of football comes home to England, where the modern game was invented.<sup>49</sup> Shakespeare seems to be a prodigal son who has traveled the world and finally returned to England.

The meaning of this “return,” however, is ambiguous. International performances of Shakespeare date back to the early seventeenth century; the practice of touring productions to international festivals is not new. What *is* new is the transformation of Shakespeare from a British export to an import industry and, since the 1950s, the emergence of intercultural or coproduced performances in England. As a business model and a cultural project, global Shakespeare has been used to reinforce the idea of Shakespeare as a world heritage that connects disparate local cultures. At a conference at the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon, Tom Bird told a crowd of Shakespeareans that “Shakespeare is less and less comprehensible in English, so it is good to see him working so well in translation.”<sup>50</sup> Likewise, Neil Constable, chief executive of the London Globe, remarked at the reception after the performance of the Hong Kong director Tang Shu-wing’s minimalist *Titus Andronicus* on 3 May 2012 that “We don’t own Shakespeare anymore here on Bankside at Shakespeare’s Globe. I don’t think the UK owns Shakespeare. Actually the world owns Shakespeare now.” What is left unarticulated, however, is how foreign Shakespeares have been deployed to validate and elevate the status of English Shakespeare performances, especially at a venue such as the London Globe.

Constable’s remarks were part of the Globe’s efforts to reach out to the ethnic and expatriate communities in greater London and to international visitors, but and the celebratory tone (“The world owns Shakespeare now”) contradicts the Globe’s other message about global Shakespeare’s return to England. That language has been in incubation since the construction of the modern Globe, though it was amplified during the Olympics. A playwright who belongs to the world is useful for campaigns that seek to enhance cross-cultural understanding on the playwright’s home ground. The London Globe’s 2010 season, entitled “Shakespeare Is German,” “celebrate[d] Germany’s special affinity” with the playwright.<sup>51</sup> Celebrating Shakespeare’s affiliations with world cultures in London carries special cultural and political meanings. As part of the festival, the German actor and director Norbert Kentrup, who was the modern Globe’s first Shylock in 1998, discussed his experience performing in Shakespeare’s plays in English and in German. *The Guardian* enthused that the season was an opportunity for the audience to rethink Shakespeare: “We tend to think of William Shakespeare as wholly ours. But Stratford’s greatest son has a rival fan club across the North Sea.”<sup>52</sup> Cosponsored by the Germany Embassy in London within the framework

of its “Think German” campaign to promote German culture, the season created an avenue of self-knowledge and understanding of foreign cultures within a relatively familiar framework. Sabine Hentzsch, director of the Goethe-Institut London, proudly cited the fact that the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, one of the first Shakespeare societies in the world, was founded in 1864 in Weimar.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, in the context of the 2012 London Olympics, Shakespeare as an icon in a postnational age was made to work in domestic and foreign affairs.

The worldwide diffusion of Shakespeare’s plays (Fig. 5) in ever-more-complex networks of exchange has made the division between national and foreign Shakespeares a moving target. Although World War II and the Cold War helped formalize binary oppositions of many kinds, setting select Western powers against the Soviet bloc, Shakespeare’s global career is far from a simple story of colonial expansion and postcolonial reorientation. In 1957, one Chinese commentator remarked that “Shakespeare’s real home is in the Soviet Union,” despite knowledge among the Chinese that Shakespeare was a British cultural icon.<sup>54</sup> It is worth noticing that the formation of global Shakespeare is not a linear process of transmission from Shakespearean texts to foreign-language performative texts and back to English surtitles as part of tours or coproductions in Britain. The plays often take winding routes through various performance traditions and cultural marketplaces. Ideological and artistic requirements and marketing considerations further complicate the picture. Significantly, the dissemination of Shakespeare was “not coextensive with the advance of English” as a colonial or global language.<sup>55</sup> In some instances, Shakespeare’s text was relegated to the backstage. East Asian cultures first encountered Shakespeare through local



**Figure 5.**

“The biggest celebration of Shakespeare starts now,” proclaimed a promotional trailer for the World Shakespeare Festival 2012.

translations of Charles and Mary Lamb’s *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807), a Victorian prose rendition of select comedies and tragedies.<sup>56</sup> Even Shakespeare’s fortunes in colonial India are far more complex than postcolonial criticism tends to allow. As Poonam Trivedi usefully points out, “while the study of the English language and Shakespeare [in India] was an imperial imposition, the performance of Shakespeare was not,” because he was regarded first and foremost as an entertainer and was not necessarily connected with English values.<sup>57</sup> Other similar stories of multiple levels of filtering demonstrate that cultural exchange did not occur in a hub-and-spoke paradigm. I will not belabor the point here, since the history of worldwide transmissions of Shakespeare is well documented and readily available.

With such a complex history, it is only fitting that when transnational performances finally arrived in Britain in full force, they came under many different guises and in all stripes. Performance styles borrowed from other cultures can help retool some plays and aid directors in search of new values. British directors began employing hybrid performance styles as early as the 1950s; Peter Brook is a notable example. A director who regarded theatre as iconographic art, Brook worked from a set of compelling images for each production as if he were a designer.<sup>58</sup> His *Titus Andronicus* (1955), starring Laurence Olivier, is one of the landmark productions that rehabilitated the play. It transformed *Titus* from an undervalued melodrama to a study of primitive forces that can be taken seriously. Realistic but heavy-handed portrayals of horror and violence were replaced by abstract, elegant, Asian-inspired stylization that was supplemented by minimalism and the contrast between aural and visual signs: scarlet streamers flowing from Lavinia’s mouth and wrists to symbolize her rape and mutilation; harp music to accompany her entrance; simple costumes that shared the “universal red of dried blood.” Not only did Brook’s “Asian symbolism” made *Titus* into “a piece of visual and performative virtuosity” but it also tapped into the kinetic energy of the play as ritual and inspired Jan Kott when it toured to Warsaw.<sup>59</sup> Brook produced *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in 1970, which was an instant classic, and he adapted the Indian epic *Mahabharata* in 1985. His *Titus* is significant in the context of global Shakespeare, as it anticipates the use of red ribbons as symbols of blood and gore in Japanese director Ninagawa Yukio’s 2006 production of *Titus* in Stratford as part of the RSC’s Complete Works festival. Ninagawa treated the play as myth, because recurring ritual is a cycle that is best understood through symbolism.

There is a gap between Brook’s 1955 and Ninagawa’s 2006 versions of *Titus*. Few British directors followed in Brook’s footsteps, though the RSC organized the World Theatre Seasons from 1964 to 1973 under Peter Daubeny’s leadership. This brief but spectacular decade at the Aldwych Theatre in London welcomed companies from Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. During this decade, the U.K. premiere of South African playwright Welcome Msomi’s 1970 adaptation of *Macbeth*, entitled *uMabatha*, took place; at the time, it was a little-known work. Msomi’s play was revived in 1997 at the newly opened Globe. The trend of regularly featuring foreign productions did not take off until the 1990s. The belatedness of the emergence of “foreign” and particularly Asian Shakespeares in

Britain was conditioned by wars and circumstances of globalization. In addition, the RSC's "powerful routines," which asserted "the centrality of the [English] text" and textual-analysis-based acting, did not create a receptive environment for the appreciation of non-Anglophone or experimental performances.<sup>60</sup> Commenting in 1988 on his experience of directing Shakespeare, Peter Hall quipped: "Unless what's on the stage looks like the language, I simply don't believe it."<sup>61</sup> Free from such self-imposed linguistic limitations, global Shakespeare thrives in the contact zone between different traditions.

#### INTERCULTURAL BORROWINGS

Both homegrown and touring companies have staged Shakespearean performances in Britain that may sometimes seem foreign to the sensibilities and linguistic repertoire of the local audiences. Whether made in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, these performances have compelled their audiences to negotiate the unfamiliar iterations of the familiar and "local" canon that is Shakespeare. Foreign cultures enter the English stage through three interconnected channels.

The first channel is intercultural borrowings. In connection with the Paris intercultural movement of the 1980s and Brook's works, African, Asian, and Latin American theatrical idioms, including costumes, set, visual culture, performance styles, and music, became more common in directors' and designers' visions. While the performances may have been in English, the language of presentation could be perceived to be exotic. As these elements found their way into the *mise-en-scène*, global Shakespeare divided both critics and audiences. It is not uncommon for a work to be criticized for its penchant for orientalism or Eurocentrism and praised for its global currency, and the phenomenon is not limited to stage productions. There are clearly some risks associated with domesticating foreign materials for consumption by a local audience, but the biggest payoff is a fresh perspective on a "local" canon whose edge has been blunted by the audience's assumed familiarity with it. Echoing the spirit of Peter Brook's 1990 production of *La Tempête* in Paris with a multiracial cast, Tim Supple's multilingual *Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2006 was lauded by the *Guardian* as "the most life-enhancing production" of the play since Brook's 1970 version.<sup>62</sup> Inspired by his trip to India in 2005 on a British Council grant, Supple used a Sri Lankan and Indian cast in the production. Featuring Hindi, Bengali, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil, Sanskrit, and English, his production recast the relationship between the play and "India" as a layered concept. The songs and acrobatics enchanted the audience and critics. Even critics such as Nicholas de Jongh who had reservations about the use of multiple languages and the actors' accents ("the intermittent English speaking is not up to much") embraced the visual feast. In de Jongh's opinion, Supple's real contribution lies in recovering "that sense of magic and enchantment of which the play has been purged by Anglo-Saxon directors."<sup>63</sup> This kind of global Shakespeare laid the foundation for the next mode of engagement: touring.

WORKING WITH AND AGAINST THE SURTITLES

A second channel has led to surtitled touring productions. Here, the selling point is not necessarily exoticism but rarity—new works or what is not otherwise unavailable. Festival organizers have a curatorial function in bringing together and presenting works by diverse groups. Touring Shakespeare productions share some features with international spectator sports; both require international travel, both are capable of garnering media attention, and both thrive on the unpredictability of the outcome. The theatre audience is simultaneously an outsider (to the foreign style) and an insider (familiar with certain aspects of Shakespeare). Festivals and special events have played an important role in bringing touring productions to London, Stratford-upon-Avon, Edinburgh, and other U.K. cities. In 1994, the Barbican Theatre hosted a festival entitled *Everybody's Shakespeare* that offered performances by the Comédie-Française (Paris), the Suzuki Company of Toga, Tel Aviv's Itim Theatre Ensemble, Moscow's Detsky Theatre, and the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus. Of interest is how the organizers turned Shakespeare on tour into “consumable chunks of popular culture” in a workshop of metonymic equivalences (the cherry blossom for Japan, drumming for Africa, the carnival for Brazil, and so on).<sup>64</sup> As is the case with many touring productions, the reception of this festival was characterized by conflicting strands of what Peter Holland has aptly summarized as “xenophobic suspicion at the sheer unEnglishness of the work” and cultural elitism that assumes that the novelty of Shakespeare in Japanese is superior to English Shakespeare conventions.<sup>65</sup> For some critics, the language barrier proved to be an insurmountable obstacle, as Charles Spencer commented: “There we sit, following [the] surtitles while listening to the performers delivering the matchless poetry in an incomprehensible tongue.”<sup>66</sup> He wrote with a sense of national pride, and many critics operated under a similar assumption of cultural exclusivity, though few voiced their disapproval in such a radical form.

Interestingly, while these performances may offer rich opportunities for engagement with other cultures through the displacement of the spectator and of familiar signs, such engagement does not always happen. On the contrary, in some cases the reception of touring Shakespeare reveals a great deal about the British attitude toward culture. Theatre reviews are sometimes informed by a sense of self-sufficiency when it comes to touring productions: “Although it is stimulating to be exposed to different views of Shakespeare, there is something coals-to-Newcastle-ish about importing foreign-language productions to England.”<sup>67</sup> At work behind the attitude is the assumption that global Shakespeare is colonial mimicry. While it may be almost Shakespeare, it always falls short in some respect.

During the World Shakespeare Festival in 2012, the Globe devised a strategy to divert attention away from the surtitles to the action onstage and applied it uniformly to all of the productions in different languages. The purpose was to remove language as a distraction, if not an obstacle, in order to allow for certain degree of improvisation. One obvious limitation is that the architectural space of the Globe is not ideal for line-by-line surtitles because of the pillars and the thrust stage. Only short summaries of the scene—written by the Globe staff in

consultation with the visiting companies—were projected on the two screens next to the stage. According to Tom Bird, the synopsis surtitles were meant to avoid the elitism associated with line-by-line translations of Shakespearean texts.<sup>68</sup> The plot summaries are based on Shakespeare's script most of the time rather than performative choices or improvisational elements. Obviously no synopsis can be neutral whether it is based on narrative or dramaturgical structure, because it involves interpretive acts. As the actors worked with and against the surtitles, the synopsis surtitles redirected the audience's attention to the tension between the plot and dramaturgical structures, highlighting the "Brechtian narrative tension and elements of mediation," as British scholar and artistic director of the Pantaloons Stephen Purcell observed.<sup>69</sup> In the Mandarin *Richard III*, short English phrases were inserted by actors playing the two murderers for more immediate comic effect. In another production, the actors mocked the surtitles. The audiences were told not to trust what was being projected "up there." In the Hindi production of *Twelfth Night* by Company Theatre, the yellow tights Saurabh Nayyar's Malvolio wore onstage provided an interesting contrast with the textual presence of cross-gartered yellow stockings. Such moments of textual resistance became more noticeable through the synopsis surtitles.

For certain productions with large expatriate communities in London, such as the Hindi *Twelfth Night*, the Korean *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the Mandarin *Richard III*, few audience members seemed to miss the surtitles, since a majority of them spoke the language. The strategy of projecting summaries rather than fully translated surtitles was not always successful, as the productions had to be designed to work visually and musically against the crude plot summaries. Some productions worked well for the extremely mixed international audiences, such as audience for the Yohangza Company's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (which had toured to the Barbican in London a few years before in 2006 with a full set of surtitles—a line-by-line translation of the adaptation from Korean into modern English). Other companies played to the expatriate community and neglected audience members who were not versed in the language, such as the Company Theatre's *Twelfth Night* in Hindi, directed by Atul Kumar. Citing "a Hindi-speaking woman sitting next to [him]," Peter Smith applauded the accessible translation in modern prose but lamented the fact that the English-speaking audience had no access to parts of *Twelfth Night* "that cause the emotions to well up: the delicacy of Viola's 'patience on a monument' (2.4.114) or Olivia's pathetic self-abasement as she offers herself to the ungrateful boy (3.4.212)."<sup>70</sup>

Some touring or intercultural productions were seen as showcases for the exotic beauty of unfamiliar performance traditions for cultural elites. Targeting audiences who are bored by an overworked Shakespeare through the education system, the BBC, and the Royal Shakespeare Company, these productions are not for purists. A few strands dominate in the narratives surrounding this type of productions, ranging from celebration of other cultures' reverence of Shakespeare (e.g., the "Shakespeare Is German" season at the London Globe in 2010) to suspicion about delightful but bewildering (for the press at least) productions that are fully indigenized. The Globe has played host to numerous such productions, and the RSC often sets English-language performances by British actors in non-British locations.

Directors face a dilemma, as they are caught between pursuing authenticity and “selling out.” For example, the RSC’s recent English-language productions of two plays, one Chinese and the other Shakespearean, have reignited debates about cultural authenticity. The first is Gregory Doran’s adaptation of *Orphan of Zhao* with an almost exclusively white cast of seventeen. British actors of East Asian heritage have spoken up against the practice of “non-culturally specific casting,” in Doran’s words, or colorblind casting.<sup>71</sup> The politics of recognition can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, intercultural theatre is important testing ground for ethnic equality and raises questions of equal employment opportunity in the UK. On the other hand, can an all-white cast not do justice to the *Orphan of Zhao* just as an all-Chinese cast performed *Richard III* at the London Globe and in Beijing? Why would an English adaptation of a Chinese play have to be performed by authentic-looking East Asian actors?<sup>72</sup> The second is Iqbal Khan’s *Much Ado About Nothing* that is set in contemporary Delhi and staged at the Courtyard Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon in August, 2012. Performed by a cast of second generation Indian British actors to Bollywood-inspired music as part of the WSF, the “postcolonial” production (in Gitanjali Shabani’s words)<sup>73</sup> was quickly compared by the press and reviewers to the two more ethnically authentic productions at the Globe from the Indian Subcontinent (Arpana Company’s *All’s Well That Ends Well* directed by Sunil Shanbag in Gujarati and Company Theatre’s *Twelfth Night* directed by Atul Kumar in Hindi). In her essay in the program, Jyotsna Singh reminds the audience that “the romantic, sexual and emotional configurations underpinning the centrality of marriage in Shakespeare’s romantic comedies” are elements that “richly resonate within the Indian social and cultural milieu.”<sup>74</sup> Clare Brennan, writing for the *Guardian*, believes that the transposition of Messina to contemporary Delhi works well, because it “plays to possible audience preconceptions about the communality and hierarchical structuring of life in India that map effectively on to similar structuring in Elizabethan England.”<sup>75</sup> However, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic pedigrees are part of the picture, too.<sup>76</sup> Other critics question the RSC’s form of internationalism. Birmingham-born director Khan’s treatment of Indian culture is seen as too simplistic. Kate Rumbold wishes the production had not ignored but “ironized the company’s inevitable second-generation detachment from India.”<sup>77</sup> Taking issue with the production’s “pastiche of ‘internationalism’, with apparently second generation British actors pretending to return to their cultural roots in a decidedly colonial way,” Kevin Quarmby states that the production offers “the veneer of Indian culture, served on a bed of Bradford or Birmingham Anglicized rice.” He concludes that “as the World Shakespeare Festival and Globe to Globe seasons have shown, ‘international’ is best understood in the context of the nations who embrace Shakespeare as their own.”<sup>78</sup> The more difficult part of these debates concerns commercialized cultural and ethnic identities. Obviously art and commerce are not antithetical activities, but they have become inescapable predicates in the debates about the sociological and expressive values of touring Shakespeare.

On the other hand, some productions run into the obstacle of an overdetermined locality. *Kathakali King Lear* challenged the audience while offering unique visual delights. Performed in the traditional theatre form of Kerala, the

production offered few clues the audience could use to decode the complex patterns of stylization. Struggling to naturalize and localize the meanings of these performances, some critics become sensitized to cultural contexts and the lack thereof. In response to *Kathakali King Lear* at the Globe, Lyn Gardner was concerned about the risk of turning the Globe to Globe season into a fair “showing off a rare animal,” because, she argued, once removed from their cultural context, these productions cease to make sense, at least for the uninitiated.<sup>79</sup>

How efficiently a director presents digestible visual signs has therefore become a factor that determines the fate of touring Shakespeare. At the 2011 Edinburgh Festival, Oh Tae-suk’s adaptation of *The Tempest* was more favorably received than Taiwanese Beijing opera actor and director Wu Hsing-kuo’s striking, semiautobiographical solo performance *Lear Is Here* (which has an impressive history of worldwide tours since its inception in Ariane Mnouchkine’s workshop in Paris in 2000). Wu’s *Lear* received mixed reviews because of its more protracted (though equally poignant) backstory about Wu’s theatre career and the declining popularity of Beijing opera. Both plays use theatrical stylization and a live orchestra in their respective traditions, and both are “foreign” to both hometown and U.K. audiences. Whereas Prospero’s (King Zilzi) island gives Oh a platform for revitalizing traditional Korean cultural milieus that are lost on modern Koreans, *King Lear* is a springboard for Wu’s intense self-reflection. Oh followed Shakespeare’s script more closely while offering a two-headed Caliban played by two talented actors in a suit with a pouch. It takes much more extensive background information, especially Wu’s life story, to appreciate his treatise of patriarchal authority and its failure in his solo performance. Michael Billington, speaking for most critics, could not grasp Wu’s *Lear* but applauded Oh’s creativity.<sup>80</sup>

Similar patterns of thought informed the reception of Ninagawa’s samurai-era *Coriolanus* at the 2007 Barbican International Theatre Event, his *kabuki Macbeth* at the National Theatre in 1987, and several other productions. Conceptualized by Ninagawa as “dialogues with the dead”<sup>81</sup> but also a dialogue with Nature, *Ninagawa Macbeth* acquired divergent meanings during its performances at Nissei Theatre in Tokyo in 1980 and later in London. As Macbeth wades through blood, spring turns to autumn and the petals fall. The encroaching Birnam Wood in the final scene is represented by moving branches onstage. For the Japanese, cherry blossoms symbolize both beauty and death (and the repose of the soul), but Ninagawa’s decision to use a direct translation rather than a localized adaptation of the script of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* introduced unfamiliar narrative patterns into the Japanese audience’s horizon of expectation. Inspired by Motojiri Kajii’s (1901–32) widely circulated phrase, “dead bodies are buried under the cherry trees,” the production associated death with a cherry tree in full blossom. There can be no consolidated truth about the theatrical traditions of Asia or any part of the world. There was something for everyone in this production when it was staged in Japan and abroad, but it also challenged audience members to grapple with their limitations. Initiated audiences may gain a passing acquaintance with a wider array of performance idioms and cultural themes when enough clues are available, but audiences may also force new meanings on the works that cannot



be ignored. The framework of *Macbeth* offers audience members who are familiar with the play some semblance of control over the exotic performance event. On the other hand, the sheer grace of a backdrop of cherry blossoms can serve up shocking twists and contrasts to the dark tragedy and blood. Audience members who are unfamiliar with the association of cherry blossoms with death in Japan might see the cherry blossoms as an expression of beauty and a marker of Japanese identity, which is one way to read Ninagawa's production.

#### JOINT ENTERPRISES

The third channel leading to touring Shakespeare is shaped by coproductions by U.K. and foreign artists or companies, a growth area of theatre practice. Initiated by the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) in 2009, the three-year Bridge Project brought together actors from both sides of the Atlantic—from BAM, the Old Vic, and Neal Street Productions—to stage *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Winter's Tale* in New York and London. Another example is a British–Chinese coproduction of *King Lear* in Mandarin and English, with bilingual surtitles, directed by David Tse (Tse Ka-Shing). This was jointly produced by the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center and Tse's London-based Yellow Earth Theatre for the RSC Complete Works Festival in Stratford-upon-Avon in November 2006. Here, too, the audience and even the artists seemed to emphasize recognizing the “Shakespeareanness” in unfamiliar territory at the expense of other key issues. Peta David, for example, wrote in a review that “it is uncanny that even though I don't have a word of Mandarin to my name I could still tell it was Shakespeare.”<sup>82</sup> Lear, a Shanghai-based business tycoon who solicits confessions of love from his three daughters, spoke fluent Mandarin Chinese, as did Regan and Goneril. However, the English-educated Cordelia was a member of the Asian diaspora who was no longer proficient in her father's language. *Meiyou*, which means nothing, is the only Chinese vocabulary Cordelia shares with Lear. The absence of meaning became the meaning of absence.

Each of these touring Shakespeares met with different fates that reflect dominant views about cultural others, and the reception of these works was equally revealing of British attitudes toward national and international theatre. Some works thrived on exotic local production values, while others gained additional purchase from the cosmopolitan venue of performance. The perception of agency and efficacy in all three modes of touring Shakespeare is structured around a break, a symbolic abandonment of mainstream English theatre practices. This gap between knowledge of a culture and ignorance of another sometimes contributes to the tendency to read foreign Shakespeare politically, ascribing artistic and moral agency to works that seem to contend with the status quo.

#### SITES OF ORIGIN AND CULTURAL PRESTIGE

At the core of the touring phenomenon is the idea of returning to Britain as a geocultural site of origin (performing “within the architecture Shakespeare wrote for”), as an imaginary site of authenticity (e.g., the Shanghai Kunqu Opera's

adaptation of *Macbeth*, entitled *The Story of the Bloody Hand*, performed in Scotland in 1987),<sup>83</sup> and as a privileged site for performative acts (both original practice and international Shakespeares are now the Globe's main products).<sup>84</sup> It is interesting to note that the logo of the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival (see lower right in Fig. 3) is the Earth seen from over the North Atlantic, showing Britain nearest the center of the world. This "return" is part of the organizing principle of some festivals, and the narrative surrounding it is informed by internationalism and (paradoxically) a form of nationalism. As part of the cultural festival to celebrate the 2012 London Olympics, the multilingual World Shakespeare Festival evoked such a "return." According to festival director Tom Bird and the Globe's artistic director, Dominic Dromgoole, the festival brought Shakespeare's plays—"plays which have travelled far and wide"—"back home" to London's South Bank, "dressed in the clothes of many peoples."<sup>85</sup> Touring Shakespeare is an integral part of Britain's campaign for soft power and self-identity. As the *Guardian* put it, Britain may be "the birthplace of Chaucer, Milton, Austen, the Brontë sisters and Dickens," but the country has only one "dominant calling card [Shakespeare] on the global cultural scene."<sup>86</sup> Lyn Gardner's candid statement in the *Guardian* aptly sums up the assumption of a homecoming Shakespeare: "One of the best ways of coming to terms with the Globe to Globe season might be less in measuring the success of each individual production, [and] more [in] how it provides an illustration of how Shakespeare has travelled to every corner of the globe and boomeranged back as something familiar and yet strange."<sup>87</sup> Part of the touring boom is created by festivals, internationally renowned films, and visiting companies, and part of it is shaped by British directors who incorporate non-Western performance styles into their productions, such as Peter Brook and Tim Supple, or who work with artists from other parts of the world, such as David Tse, and thereby raise awareness of a broader range of performative possibilities among British audiences.

Many theatre artists rely on international spectators to disseminate their decidedly local works, and some festivals thrive on the ideological purchase of being "global." For example, the Edinburgh International Festival was established in 1947 to "enliven and enrich the cultural life of Europe, Britain and Scotland" after World War II and to "create a major new source of tourism revenue" for its host city.<sup>88</sup> Touring has also been an integral part of the trajectories of some Asian and African companies. The 1990 tour of *The Kingdom of Desire* (a Beijing opera play inspired by Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Kurosawa Akira's *Throne of Blood*) to the Royal National Theatre in London played a decisive role in shaping the international trajectory of Taiwan's Contemporary Legend Theatre and catapulted it to the center of the international theatre scene.<sup>89</sup> Msomi's 1970 adaptation of *Macbeth* would not have achieved international recognition without the 1972 production at Aldwych (as part of the RSC's World Theatre Season) and the 1997 revival at the London Globe.<sup>90</sup> U.K. tours are equally important for local companies. Thelma Holt Ltd.'s partnership with Ninagawa since 1990 has benefited both sides and made the Japanese director a mainstay on the English stage, and in 2004 Thelma Holt CBE received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays and Rosette at the Embassy of Japan in the

UK in recognition of her contribution to mutual understanding through theatre exchange.<sup>91</sup>

While these productions may celebrate polyglot cosmopolitanism, their reception is governed by the logic of cultural prestige. In the case of the 2011 Edinburgh International Festival, a bridge was built between Europe and Asia, as EIF director Jonathan Mills had hoped, but Asia's economic prowess did not quite translate into cultural prestige or meaningful ways to intervene in Western cultural hegemony. Oh Tae-suk expressed a strong desire to validate the cultural value of Korea through his production in Edinburgh.<sup>92</sup> The Korean press took pride in the British approval of Oh's production by noting how it captured the imaginations of the demanding audiences in Shakespeare's home country, as was reported the *Donga News*,<sup>93</sup> and the *YTN News* referred to the British media's attention: “Oh Tae-suk's *Tempest* drew critical interest from England's prominent newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *Telegraph*, and *The Financial Times* and was given four out of five stars.”<sup>94</sup> One of South Korea's major newspapers noted, when the production visited Russia, that the “Korean *Hamlet* works well on international stages” because Shakespeare could help condense select aspects of Russian and Korean cultures and facilitate an otherwise challenging cross-cultural encounter.<sup>95</sup> This kind of sentiment enabled high-profile touring productions to receive government support and become part of South Korea's branding effort. Along with corporate sponsors such as HSBC and Shell UK, several Asian government agencies cosponsored the tours of productions to Edinburgh, as they did again for the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival, in the hope of elevating of the status of their cultural productions. The PRC's Ministry of Culture supported *The Peony Pavilion* and *The Revenge of Prince Zi Dan*, and its rival Republic of China in Taiwan backed *Lear Is Here*. Public unease about these sources of funding led Mills to clarify for the *Scotsman* that “there was no pressure placed on the Festival by either government agencies” and to stress that “it is extremely important to remain connected in China, . . . but it is not an attempt to be a Chinese festival in any way.”<sup>96</sup> During the World Shakespeare Festival 2012, the London Globe did not share box-office income with the guest artists, but it gave each company a fixed fee, local accommodation, and fifteen round-trip tickets to London.<sup>97</sup> Despite the Globe's offer, most companies had to rely on other sources of funding. Rawiri Paratene, the producer of the Maori *Troilus and Cressida*, launched a fund-raising campaign on YouTube to bring his cast of twenty-two to London. Like the aforementioned Asian companies, he appealed to his patrons' sense of national pride: “[I]f you are a proud New Zealander . . . who believes that this company will fly our flags strongly. . . .”<sup>98</sup>

#### ACTING ASIAN, THINKING GLOBALLY?

Let us return to the earlier question: “What country, friends, is this?” Whose friends? Where and during what time? When it comes to Asian touring productions, can one act Asian while thinking globally today? What are the consequences, given the reality that Asian identities are not always local to Asia proper in our age of global diaspora? British writer Evelyn Waugh mused in

1930 that “I should like to see [the Chinese-American actress Anna May] Wong playing Shakespeare. Why not a Chinese Ophelia? It seems to me that Miss Wong has exactly those attributes, which one most requires of Shakespearean heroines.” Waugh’s fantasy of a performance of Ophelia by a renowned Chinese-American actress put a human face on Asian American acting and on a traditionally silenced Shakespearean character. Without the well-known Shakespearean character as an intellectual prosthetic, it would probably have been challenging for Western thinkers to appreciate Asian acting. He went on to say, “I cannot see her as Lady Macbeth, but she seems to me perfectly suited for the role of Juliet or to any of the heroines of the comedies.”<sup>99</sup> The implications of divergent star systems and cultural hierarchies notwithstanding, this process of embodiment raises issues of surrogation in drama and substitution in adaptation strategies. Waugh’s imaginary casting also reflects the representational merits and values assigned to the Asian female body, which is often framed by passivity and domesticity.<sup>100</sup> Familiarity and stereotypes can breed boredom in the arts, which is why Asian and Shakespearean theatres thrive in the contact zone that nurtures acts of defamiliarization. However, the expectations of ethnic markers that accompany the rise of this contact zone can be problematic. Singaporean director Ong Keng Sen’s drives home this point during an interview with Mok Wai Yin:

We have to be careful not to stereotype what is meant by “Asia”—that it has to be traditional or that it has to be filled with history. These definitions of Asia would immediately exclude you and I [*sic*] in the sense that we are English-speaking and completely contemporary.<sup>101</sup>

His idea of being perpetually in transit and being both an insider and an outsider echoes the renowned feminist filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha’s theory of “elsewhere, within here.”<sup>102</sup> These thinkers reject binary thinking about cultural identities and difference. What is at stake is not merely the need to recognize internal diversity but also how to see through the discursive veil of national theatre that is being produced by governments or festival organizers for various reasons.

Asian Shakespeares have a deterritorializing effect, in the anthropological sense, that unmarks the cultural origins of intercultural productions because they work against assumptions about politically defined geographies in theatre historiography—artificial constraints that no longer speak to the realities of theatre making. Touring productions can also reterritorialize the plays upon arriving in a new location.<sup>103</sup> In a world constantly in motion, representations of certain aspects of culture transcend territorial boundaries. These touring works can be best understood through theatrically defined cultural locations (e.g., a French–Japanese *Richard II* in Paris and on tour, a “culturally neutral” *Richard III* made in Beijing but presented in Berlin) rather than through political boundaries (e.g., when “Shakespeare in India” is used as unproductive shorthand for literary universalism). Simplified notions of the universal can be self-deceptive and even self-effacing, as Marvin Carlson points out in his study of Brook and Mnouchkine, because it “den[ies] the voice of the Other in an attempt to transcend it.”<sup>104</sup> Locality criticism, as I have suggested elsewhere, focuses on the multilayered

cultural localities within and around a production (and its venue) so as not to impose on the work the nation-state as a critical criterion.<sup>105</sup> Theatre can produce and redefine visible and invisible cultural localities. Recent publications in *Theatre Survey* have begun to explore these fronts to show that theatrical cross-fertilization and mobility is the norm, not the exception. As Steve Tillis points out in his study, theatre history is currently driven by polity, by periodization, and by continental divisions, and as a result it inadvertently creates myths of multiple unknowable objects.<sup>106</sup>

While Asia may be an “impossible interpellation,” in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s words,<sup>107</sup> because of its inherent diversity and incongruity, and Shakespeare may be a repository of endless cycles of recursive mimesis and theatrical repetition, each of these cultural conglomerates can be configured to operate as a local canon and simultaneously project a self-image in new contexts of signification. This is particularly true at international festivals and in touring productions. Artists and festival organizers have used Shakespeare and Asia as geopolitical and visual markers in past decades to propagate their worldviews. The recent touring history of Asian and Asian-themed performances of Shakespeares complicates the notion of globalization as necessarily just “global Westernization” or Americanization.<sup>108</sup> For people who support Taiwanese independence, Sinicization (i.e., being seen as affiliated with mainland China in terms of politics and culture) is much more worrisome than Americanization. Similarly, Japanization is a real threat for Koreans who have lived through Japanese colonization. Directors of touring Asian Shakespeare performances often emphasize their own cultural contexts rather than the binary modes of the local and the foreign that are favored by popular discourses and the marketing language of festivals.

In this second decade of the twenty-first century, touring foreign productions of Shakespeare have emerged as a new brand in Britain, competing side by side with British productions. Asian performance history is a paradox in theatre historiography. On one hand, it seems to have no place there because it is rendered invisible and inconsequential by essentialist narratives. On the other hand, Asia is frequently evoked to signify that which is inscrutable or cannot be contained, and as a result “Asia” is all over the map. Asian Shakespeares can uncouple speech and writing and problematize various conventions of authenticity and the kind of dramaturgical stability that dulls the edge of theatre. They can unsettle assumptions about the referential stability of Shakespeare as a textual and verbal presence and about Asia as a privileged, unified, visual signifier of alterity.

## ENDNOTES

1. William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, 2d ed., ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997). Unless otherwise noted, references to Shakespeare’s plays are to this edition.

2. Full videos or highlights of Oh’s *Tempest* and other productions discussed in this article can be accessed at the *Global Shakespeares* digital archive, <http://globalshakespeares.org/>. Select productions from the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival are available on <http://thespace.org/>.

3. Virginia Vaughan, "Introduction," in *The Tempest* (The Arden Shakespeare), ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (London: Thomson Learning, 1999), 3.
4. Patricia Parker, "Was Illyria as Mysterious and Foreign as We Think?" *The Mysterious and the Foreign in Early Modern England*, ed. Helen Ostovich, Mary V. Silcox, and Graham Roebuck (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), pp. 209–233.
5. Michael Dobson, "Shakespeare and Korea," in playbill of the Mokwha Repertory Company's *The Tempest*, Edinburgh, 13–16 August 2011.
6. Kim Pu-sik, *Samguk Sagi*, 2 vols., ed. Yi Kang-nae (Seoul: Han'gilsa, 1998).
7. Lee E-Wha, *Korea's Pastimes and Customs: A Social History*, trans. Ju-Hee Park (Paramus, NJ: Homa & Sekey Books, 2001), 205–6.
8. Chung, who received the Dong-A Award for Best Actor in 1993, has appeared in *My Love DMZ*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, and numerous other Korean plays and adaptations. All quotations herein from the English performance text are taken from those surtitles.
9. These include special issues of *Theatre Journal* (57.3, 2005) and *Contemporary Theatre Review* (16.1, 2006) as well as the present issue of *Theatre Survey*.
10. Alexander C. Y. Huang, "Global Shakespeare 2.0 and the Task of the Performance Archive," *Shakespeare Survey* 64 (2011): 38–51; Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 29–38.
11. Rustom Bharucha, "Foreign Asia/Foreign Shakespeare: Dissenting Notes on New Asian Interculturality, Postcoloniality, and Recolonization," *Theatre Journal* 56.1 (2004): 1–28.
12. Fredric Jameson, "Preface," in *The Cultures of Globalization*, ed. Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), xii.
13. Malcolm Moore, "Edinburgh Festival 2011: *The Revenge of Prince Zi Dan*—The Secret of Hamlet in Chinese," *Daily Telegraph*, 15 August 2011, [www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/edinburgh-festival/8701649/Edinburgh-Festival-2011-The-Revenge-of-Prince-Zi-Dan-The-secret-of-Hamlet-in-Chinese.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/edinburgh-festival/8701649/Edinburgh-Festival-2011-The-Revenge-of-Prince-Zi-Dan-The-secret-of-Hamlet-in-Chinese.html) (accessed 10 June 2012).
14. Alexander Huang, "Commentary on 4.1.148" and "Commentary on 1.2.364" in *The Tempest for iPad*, eds. Elliott Visconti and Katherine Rowe. Luminary Digital Media, 2012.
15. Anston Bosman, "Cape of Storms: The Baxter Theatre Centre—RSC *Tempest*, 2009," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 61.1 (2010): 108–17, at 109 and 113.
16. Kate Bassett, "*The Tempest*, Courtyard, Stratford; *Othello*, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds," *The Independent*, 22 February 2009, [www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/reviews/the-tempest-courtyard-stratfordbrothello-west-yorkshire-playhouse-leeds-1628609.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/reviews/the-tempest-courtyard-stratfordbrothello-west-yorkshire-playhouse-leeds-1628609.html) (accessed 23 June 2012); Michael Billington, "*The Tempest*: Courtyard, Stratford-upon-Avon," *The Guardian*, 19 February 2009, [www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2009/feb/19/review-tempest-stratford-upon-avon](http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2009/feb/19/review-tempest-stratford-upon-avon) (accessed 23 June 2012).
17. Bosman, "Cape of Storms," 114.
18. Andrew Killick, *In Search of Korean Traditional Opera: Discourses of Ch'angguk* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 173.
19. Michael Billington, "*The Tempest*: King's, Edinburgh," *The Guardian*, 15 August, 2011, [www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2011/aug/15/the-tempest-review](http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2011/aug/15/the-tempest-review) (accessed 20 September 2012).
20. The conversation took place during the event entitled "Continental Shifts: All the World's a Stage," with Oh Tae-suk, Michael Billington, and Alexander Huang, at The Hub on Castlehill, Edinburgh, 15 August 2011.
21. Craig Singer, "The Tempest (EIF)," 15 August 2011, WhatsOnStage.com, 15 August 2011, [www.whatsonstage.com/reviews/theatre/london/E8831313399539/The+Tempest+%28EIF%29.html](http://www.whatsonstage.com/reviews/theatre/london/E8831313399539/The+Tempest+%28EIF%29.html) (accessed 20 September 2012).
22. Paul Gent, "Edinburgh Festival 2011: The Tempest, King's Theatre," *The Telegraph*, 15 August 2011, [www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/edinburgh-festival-reviews/8701748/Edinburgh-Festival-2011-The-Tempest-Kings-Theatre-review.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/edinburgh-festival-reviews/8701748/Edinburgh-Festival-2011-The-Tempest-Kings-Theatre-review.html) (accessed 20 September 2012).
23. See, for example, Peter Holland, *English Shakespeares: Shakespeare on the English Stage in the 1990s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Huang, *Chinese*

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*Shakespeares*; Minami Ryuta, Ian Carruthers, and John Gillies, eds., *Performing Shakespeare in Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Zdeněk Stříbrný, *Shakespeare and Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Wilhelm Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage*, vol. 2: *The Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Work is being done to establish the diversity of Shakespearean performance traditions within the U.K. The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) recently funded a project entitled “Multicultural Shakespeare,” led by Tony Howard, that studies the history and practice of Shakespearean performances in the UK by Black and Asian artists from World War II to the present day.

24. Mark Fisher, “Festival Reviews,” *Edinburgh Festivals*, 21 August 2011, [www.edinburgh-festivals.com/viewreview.aspx?id=3001](http://www.edinburgh-festivals.com/viewreview.aspx?id=3001) (accessed 20 September 2012).

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan, “Introduction: Why Shakespeare?” in *Shakespeare in Asia: Contemporary Performance*, ed. Kennedy and Yong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1–23, at 17.

28. Only two Asian directors (Deguchi Norio and Ninagawa) are included among the thirty-one directors in John Russell Brown, “Introduction,” in *The Routledge Companion to Directors’ Shakespeare*, ed. Brown (London: Routledge, 2008), ix–xiii, at x–xi.

29. Alexander Huang, interview with Oh Tae-suk, Washington, DC, 5 November 2012.

30. Young-Key Kim-Renaud, Chair, East Asian Languages and Literatures, George Washington University, personal communication, 15 September 2011.

31. Dominic Dromgoole and Tom Bird, “O for a Muse of Fire . . .” (statement about the festival), Globe to Globe home page, <http://globetoglobe.shakespearesglobe.com/> (accessed 29 September 2011); see also the program schedule for the World Shakespeare Festival 2012 [hereafter, WSF Schedule] (available at <http://globetoglobe.shakespearesglobe.com/schedule>), 3. According to the BBC, this Globe to Globe season would feature performances in Afrikaans, Albanian, Argentine Spanish, Armenian, Bangla, Belarusian, Brazilian Portuguese, British Sign Language, Cantonese, Castilian Spanish, Dari Persian, English, French, Georgian, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Hip-Hop, IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Italian, Japanese, Juba Arabic, Korean, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Mandarin, Maori, Mexican Spanish, Palestinian Arabic, Polish, Russian, Serbian, Sesotho, Setswana, Shona, Swahili, Turkish, Urdu, and Yoruba.” The productions would hail from Afghanistan, Albania, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, China, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lithuania, Macedonia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Poland, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, South Sudan, Spain, Turkey, UK, USA and Zimbabwe.” Helen Bushby, “Signing and Hip-Hop Shakespeare at 2012 Globe Festival,” *BBC*, 27 September 2011, [www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-15058047](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-15058047) (accessed 28 September 2011).

32. *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, 5.1.32.

33. Dromgoole and Bird, “O for a Muse of Fire,” Globe-to-Globe website homepage, <http://globetoglobe.shakespearesglobe.com/>, accessed September 1, 2012

34. Dromgoole and Bird, “O for a Muse of Fire,” Globe-to-Globe website homepage, <http://globetoglobe.shakespearesglobe.com/>, accessed September 1, 2012

35. “Julius Caesar: I Termini Company” Globe to Globe, <http://globetoglobe.shakespearesglobe.com/plays/julius-caesar/english-33> (accessed 29 September 2011). See also WSF Schedule, 8.

36. Amardeep Banerjee, “Shakespeare in Kabul,” *The Times of India: The Crest Edition*, 26 May 2012, [www.timescrest.com/culture/shakespeare-in-kabul-8009](http://www.timescrest.com/culture/shakespeare-in-kabul-8009) (accessed 30 August 2012).

37. Tom Bird, speaking on “The Globe to Globe Festival” at the International Shakespeare Conference, Stratford-upon-Avon, 9 August 2012 (author’s notes).

38. *Ibid.*

39. “Henry V: Shakespeare’s Globe,” Globe to Globe, <http://globetoglobe.shakespearesglobe.com/plays/henry-v/english-16> (accessed 30 August 2012). See also WSF Schedule, 25.

40. Figures for summer 2012 are not yet available as of this writing, but the number of visitors to the South Bank and the Bankside Cultural Quarter (where the Tate Modern and the Globe are located) jumped from an annual average in the tens of thousands in the 1990s to 13 million in 2011. Nicholas Serota and Donald Hyslop, "Art and Culture in Regeneration: Tate Modern, Bankside and London," *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal* 4.4 (2011), 328–36; see esp. 332–3. I wish to thank Susan Bennett for drawing my attention to this study and for sharing her draft. Her research has shown why humanities scholars have to pay attention to "new economic profiles of how Shakespeare circulates in the world"; Bennett, "Shakespeare at Work in the Global Leisure Market," at the International Shakespeare Conference, Stratford-upon-Avon, 10 August 2012 (quoted with Bennett's permission). See also Bennett, "Shakespeare on Vacation," *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, ed. Barbara Hodgdon and W.B. Worthen (Oxford, Blackwell, 2005), pp. 494–508; Bennett, "Theatre/Tourism," *Theatre Journal* 57.3 (2005): 407–428.

41. *Julius Caesar* 4.3.92.

42. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *In Praise of Athletic Beauty* (Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 2006); J. P. Singh, *Globalized Arts: The Entertainment Economy and Cultural Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), quote at xiii.

43. Richard Schechner regards the Olympics as "globalism's signature performance"; Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 2d ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 292. Versions of the Cultural Olympiad called the LA Festival (1987 and 1990) were held after the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. While no conclusive studies of the cultural impact of the 2012 London Olympics are available at press time, studies of the Asian Olympic discourse surrounding the Tokyo and Seoul Olympics and the impact of the 2008 Olympics on Beijing provide useful contexts. See Guoqi Xu, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895–2008* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008); Paul Close, David Askew, and Xu Xin, *The Beijing Olympiad: The Political Economy of a Sporting Mega-Event* (New York: Routledge, 2007); and Monroe E. Price and Daniel Dayan, eds., *Owning the Olympics: Narratives of the New China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

44. "Cymbeline: The South Sudan Theatre Company," Globe to Globe, <http://globetoglobe.shakespearesglobe.com/plays/cymbeline/english-44> (accessed 30 August 2012).

45. The Globe's founding artistic director Mark Rylance joined the calls to boycott the Israeli company.

46. "What Country Friends Is This?" World Shakespeare Festival 2012, [www.worldshakespearefestival.org.uk/themes/what-country-friends-is-this.aspx](http://www.worldshakespearefestival.org.uk/themes/what-country-friends-is-this.aspx) (accessed 20 September 2012).

47. Shakespearean scholar Andrew Griffin who attended the performance in Beijing with his Chinese-Canadian partner was deeply impressed by the intercultural design, but found it ironic that, despite his lack of knowledge of Chinese, he was able to explain the intricate details of the performance to his partner who spoke Chinese. Alexander Huang, Interview with Andrew Griffin, Victoria, Canada, October 12, 2012.

48. Erin Sullivan observes that "as opposed to the other 'foreign' offerings in the Globe to Globe Festival," the hip hop *Othello* had a "noticeably youthful audience" that thoroughly enjoyed the experience, because the production familiarized Shakespeare through a contemporary genre. Review of *Othello*, in *Year of Shakespeare*, May 6, 2012; <http://bloggingshakespeare.com/year-of-shakespeare-othello>, accessed September 30, 2012.

49. Saffron Walkling of York St. John University and Jacqueline Smith of BBC in London shared their views with me. I am grateful to Smith for inviting me to appear on two BBC World Service programs; those experiences served as catalysts to this article.

50. Tom Bird, speaking on "The Globe to Globe Festival" (author's notes).

51. London Globe, press release, 20 August 2010; available online at [www.shakespearesglobe.com/uploads/ffiles/2011/02/295900.pdf](http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/uploads/ffiles/2011/02/295900.pdf) (accessed 20 September 2012).

52. Patrick Spottiswoode, "Friends, Germans, Countrymen: The Long History of 'Unser Shakespeare,'" blog post to "Theatre Blog with Lyn Gardner," *The Guardian*, 6 October 2010, [www.guardian.co.uk/culture/theatreblog/2010/oct/06/german-william-shakespeare](http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/theatreblog/2010/oct/06/german-william-shakespeare) (accessed 30 August 2011).

53. London Globe, press release, 20 August 2010.



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54. Dong Youdao, “*Wushi shengfei de wutai diaodu—Liepukefusikaya de daoyan shoufa* [The Mise-en-Scène of *Much Ado about Nothing*: Lipkovskaya’s Directing Method],” *Xinmin wanbao* [The New Citizen Evening News], 30 November 1957 (translation mine).
55. Anston Bosman, “Shakespeare and Globalization,” in *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, 2d ed., ed. Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 285–301, at 286.
56. Alexander Huang, “Shakespeare and Translation,” in *The Edinburgh Companion to Shakespeare and the Arts*, ed. Mark Thornton Burnett, Adrian Streete, and Ramona Wray (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 68–87, at 75–6.
57. Poonam Trivedi, “Shakespeare in India: Introduction,” in *Global Shakespeares: Video Performance Archive*, ed. Peter Donaldson and Alexander C. Y. Huang, <http://globalshakespeares.org/blog/2010/03/20/india/> (accessed 10 August 2011).
58. Peter Brook, *The Shifting Point, 1946–1987* (New York: Harper Collins, 1987), 78.
59. Dennis Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 170.
60. Dennis Kennedy, “Introduction: Shakespeare without His Language,” in *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance*, ed. Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1–18, at 14.
61. Peter Hall, interview with Ralph Berry, in Berry, *On Directing Shakespeare: Interviews with Contemporary Directors*, 2d ed. (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1989), 208–16, at 209.
62. Michael Billington, “*A Midsummer’s Night Dream*: Swan, Stratford,” *The Guardian*, 9 June 2006, [www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2006/jun/09/theatre.rsc](http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2006/jun/09/theatre.rsc) (accessed 21 September 2012).
63. Nicholas de Jongh, “An Eastern Enchantment,” *The Evening Standard* (London), 14 March 2007, [www.standard.co.uk/arts/theatre/an-eastern-enchantment-7393569.html](http://www.standard.co.uk/arts/theatre/an-eastern-enchantment-7393569.html) (accessed August 15, 2011).
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65. Holland, 255.
66. Charles Spencer, *Daily Telegraph*, 1 November 1994, quoted in *ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*
68. Tom Bird, speaking on “The Globe to Globe Festival” (author’s notes).
69. Stephen Purcell, presentation at the International Shakespeare Conference, Stratford-upon-Avon, 9 August 2012.
70. Peter Smith, “Year of Shakespeare: Twelfth Night,” *Blogging Shakespeare: Embracing Shakespearean Conversation in a Digital Age*, 1 May 2012, <http://bloggingshakespeare.com/year-of-shakespeare-twelfth-night> (accessed 1 May 2012).
71. Matt Trueman, “Royal Shakespeare Company under fire for not casting enough Asian actors,” *The Guardian*, October 19, 2012; <http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2012/oct/19/royal-shakespeare-company-asian-actors?fb=optOut>, accessed October 21, 2012.
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73. Gitanjali Shahani, “Fighting the Merry War,” RSC program, *Much Ado About Nothing*, n.p.
74. Jyotsna Singh, “Wooing and Wedding,” RSC program, *Much Ado About Nothing*, n.p.
75. Clare Brennan, Review of *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Guardian*, 4 August 2012; <http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2012/aug/05/much-ado-about-nothing-review>; accessed October 21, 2012.

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78. Kevin Quarmby, Review of *Much Ado About Nothing*, *British Theatre Guide*, <http://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/much-ado-about-rsc-courtyard-t-7732>; accessed October 21, 2012.
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80. “Continental Shifts: All the World’s a Stage,” with Oh Tae-suk, Michael Billington, and Alexander Huang, at The Hub on Castlehill, Edinburgh, 15 August 2011.
81. Ninagawa Yukio, *Sen-no Naifu, Sen-no Me* [A Thousand Knives, a Thousand Eyes] (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten, 1993), 107; quoted in Akihiko Senda, “The Rebirth of Shakespeare in Japan: From the 1960s to the 1990s,” trans. Ryuta Minami, in *Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage*, ed. Takashi Sasayama, J. R. Mulryne, and Margaret Shewring (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 15–37, at 24.
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100. To learn more about the actress, see Graham Russell Gao Hodges, *Anna May Wong: From Laundryman’s Daughter to Hollywood Legend* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
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102. Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Elsewhere, Within Here: Immigration, Refugees and the Boundary Event* (New York: Routledge, 2010).
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105. Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, 17.
106. Steve Tillis, “Conceptualizing Space: The Geographic Dimension of World Theatre,” *Theatre Survey* 52.2 (2011): 301–27.
107. Mark Sanders, “Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak,” in Sanders, *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: Live Theory* (London: Continuum, 2006), 104–24, at 121. I wish to thank Erika Lin for sharing her ideas of theatrical mimesis and repetition for a Shakespeare Association of America seminar she is planning.
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