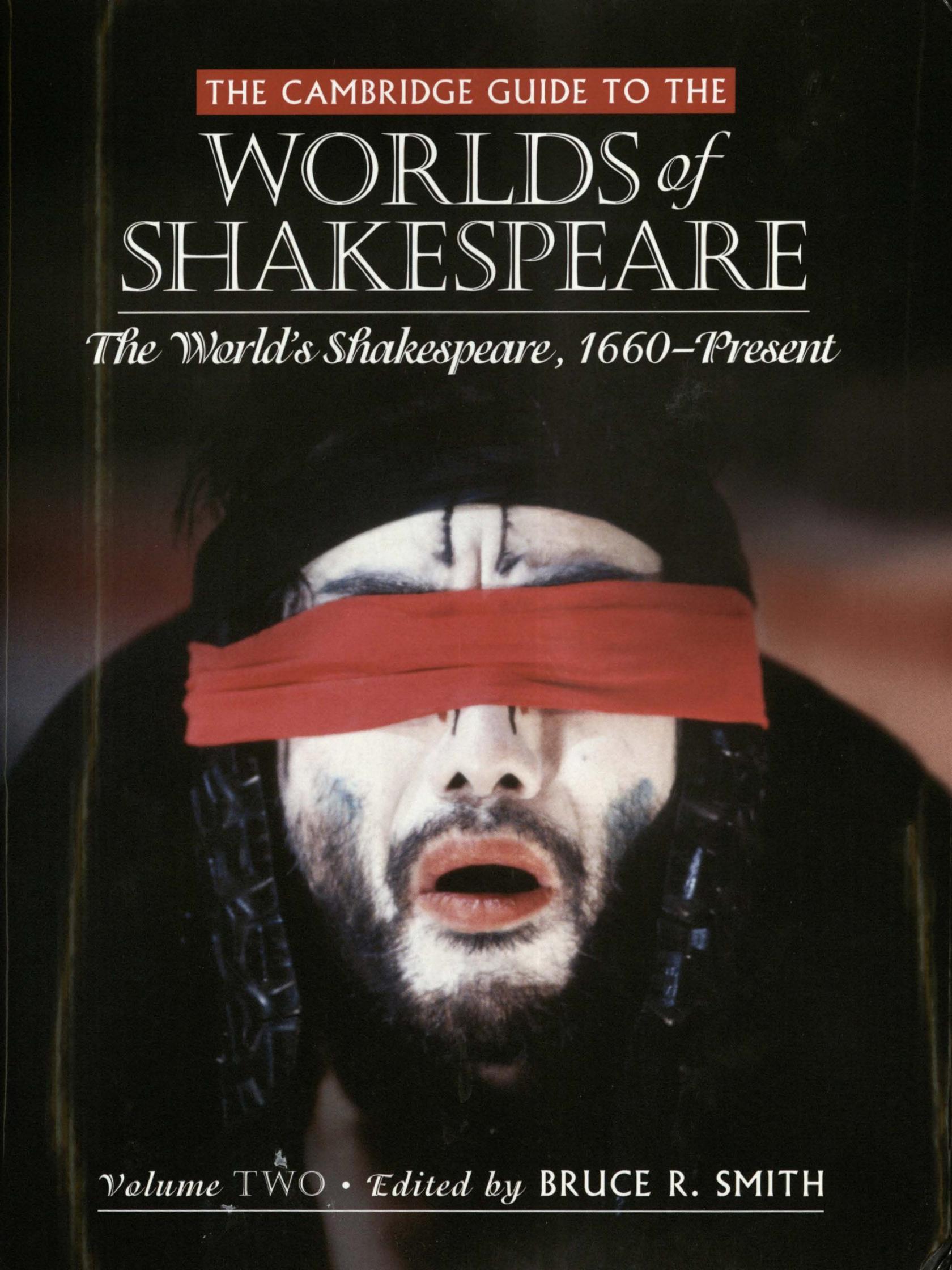


THE CAMBRIDGE GUIDE TO THE

WORLDS *of* SHAKESPEARE

The World's Shakespeare, 1660–Present



Volume TWO • Edited by BRUCE R. SMITH

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145. BOOMERANG SHAKESPEARE: FOREIGN SHAKESPEARE IN BRITAIN

Alexa Huang

*Were I in England now,
as once I was . . .*

(*Temp.* 2.2.25–26)

SHAKESPEARE HAS BECOME A boomerang business in the twenty-first century – a phenomenon that is fueled simultaneously by globalized economic and cultural developments. Plays that have been traveling the world since his lifetime are now returning to Britain with many different hats. The meaning of this "return" is ambiguous because tour productions make the familiar strange and bring home the exotic. UK tours have come to define some of the most memorable productions today, and international collaborations have inspired artists in Britain and elsewhere. Boomerang Shakespeare encompasses a range of events, including non-Anglophone productions, coproductions by British and foreign artists, local events celebrating Shakespeare's global afterlife, and British productions that incorporate elements from more than one culture in their cast, style, or set.

Directors and actors from North America (including Quebec) have brought equally impressive performances to the United Kingdom, but in general professional theaters in the United States and Canada do not tend to tour extensively internationally. The 2011 Edinburgh International Festival (EIF) featured several award-winning Asian performing arts companies and their versions of Shakespeare. To celebrate the 2012 Olympic Games, companies from different parts of the world performed thirty-seven of Shakespeare's plays in their own language within the architecture Shakespeare wrote for as part of the World Shakespeare Festival presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), EIF, and Globe to Globe program (Royal Shakespeare Company). Truly a "great feast of languages," the Olympiad season featured a version of *Titus Andronicus* in Cantonese, *Troilus and Cressida* in Maori, *The Tempest*

in Arabic, and *The Taming of the Shrew* in Urdu, among other plays.

The Cultural Olympiad and, in a broader context, the Globe's annual programming were parallel to the World Cup (which also originated in England) and the Olympic spirit promoted by the International Olympic Committee. Indeed Shakespeare has been transformed from Britain's export to an import industry, which reinforces the idea of Shakespeare as a world heritage connecting disparate local cultures and, at the same time, complicates the notion of globalization as necessarily just "global Westernization" (Sen).

Other national playwrights have also been regularly promoted, and transnational collaboration is an integral part of theater making in other political and cultural capitals such as the Festival d'Avignon, World Expo in Shanghai, and Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Over the past decade, Henrik Ibsen has been promoted by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture as an epitome of Norwegian cultural achievement. Guan Hanqing (c.1225–1302) and Shakespeare's contemporary playwright Tang Xianzu (1550–1616) were proposed as cultural ambassadors for China during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. However, boomerang Shakespeare in Britain has a unique dynamic because of his canonicity, connection to Englishness, and a history of worldwide performance that is longer and richer than that of any other dramatist. More importantly, the worldwide diffusion of his plays in ever more complex networks of exchange has made the division between national and foreign Shakespeares a moving target. In fact, many productions and films are both domestic and foreign in terms of their networks of funding and artistic collaboration and exchange. Even the modern Globe itself,

an indisputably “local” symbol of the playwright’s authentic English bona fide that sits in Southwark, London, owes its existence to transatlantic efforts and particularly to American actor Sam Wanamaker, who founded the Shakespeare Globe Trust. Confronting theatrical collaboration in this “boomerang” context – rather than national Shakespeares – enables us to consider how new dramatic meanings and cultural values are created and circulated in a unique phase of Shakespeare’s afterlife.

Let us begin with a brief history of Shakespeare’s worldwide circulation before moving on to consider some key aspects of boomerang Shakespeare, including the politics of hybridization, reception, and language and performance styles. Tracing reception can be tricky, as Dennis Kennedy has noted, because “a spectator is a corporeal presence but a slippery concept” in theater studies. For the sake of clarity, reception is defined here as formal and informal written responses by professional and amateur theater critics in printed and digital media (Kennedy, *The Spectator* 3). A series of snapshots will offer a broad vantage point.

BOOMERANG PATHS: OUTBOUND

The boomerang business is a relatively recent phenomenon, but Shakespeare’s global career began in his lifetime. Performances in England had a global flair. European visitors such as Thomas Platter witnessed the plays onstage at the Globe in 1599 and left behind diary records. Shortly after appearing on London stages, Shakespeare’s plays migrated to foreign shores. The English players toured polyglot performances to Europe with multinational troupes in the late sixteenth century, which helped to initiate translations of the plays into such vernaculars as Dutch, German, and French, and to spread the plays to Russia and other parts of the world (Delabastita 343–68). *Hamlet* was performed under varying conditions on board the *Red Dragon* near what is now Sierra Leone in 1607, on the island of Socotra in 1608, and possibly in a Dutch fortress in Jayakarta in colonial Indonesia in 1609 (Taylor 223–48; Huang, *Chinese* 1–2). Portuguese translations and European companies stopping by Rio de Janeiro on their way to Buenos Aires or New York introduced Shakespeare to Brazil.

As the centuries wore on, Shakespeare’s plays were made to speak in an even more diverse range of languages and sometimes for and against the same cause. He was appropriated for nationalistic and artistic purposes, and has often been counted as one of the cultural heroes in other nations. The German Romantics claimed him to be their compatriot, and the Soviet and Chinese communists counted him as a comrade while ignoring or even banning him during revolutions. Not all claims are serious, of course. As an April Fool’s joke, the French Ministry of Culture recently told BBC 4 that it planned to “honor the playwright as a member of France’s own pantheon of great writers” (Stanbridge). Modern theater artists and

critics, notably Jan Kott, regarded him as a contemporary of Beckett, Ionesco, and the generation of Theatre of the Absurd (Kott 127–68). Four centuries on, there has been a sea change. Shakespeare has been recruited, exemplified, resisted, and debated in postcolonial encounters, in the international avant-garde led by Ariane Mnouchkine, Yukio Ninagawa, Peter Brook, Tadashi Suzuki, and others, and in the circuits of global politics and tourism in late capitalist societies. To be sure, this snapshot cannot do justice to the truly global scale of transformation and transhistorical uses of Shakespeare.

Shakespeare’s global career is far from a simple story of colonial expansion and postcolonial reorientation. Boomerang Shakespeare is not a linear process of transmission from Shakespearean texts to foreign-language performative texts and back to English surtitles as part of touring 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 (Bosman, “Shakespeare” 286). In some instances, local politics played a more important role than the status of the English language. In the years leading up to the American Revolution (1775–83), Shakespeare was invoked by both sides of the conflict to extol and criticize English values. As colonial America broke away from England, actors and political leaders such as Thomas Jefferson rushed to “own” Shakespeare for pragmatic reasons (Teague 3–4, 32).

In other instances, Shakespeare’s text was relegated to the backstage. East Asian cultures first encountered Shakespeare through local translations of Charles and Mary Lamb’s Victorian prose rendition of select comedies and tragedies (*Tales from Shakespeare*, 1807). In 1957, one Chinese commentator remarked that “Shakespeare’s real home is in the Soviet Union” (Dong). Even Shakespeare’s fortunes in colonial India are far more complex than what postcolonial criticism tends to allow. As Poonam Trivedi usefully points out, “while the study of Shakespeare [in India] was an imperial imposition, the performance of Shakespeare was not,” because he was regarded first and foremost as an entertainer and not necessarily connected with English values (Trivedi). There are many other similar stories of multiple levels of filtering. The French adaptation of *Hamlet* by Alexandre Dumas père, rather than Shakespeare’s text, was the source for Tanyus ‘Abdu’s 1901 Arab version for the Egyptian audience. Other early Arab encounters with Shakespeare were likewise filtered through French translations to suit the taste of Cairo’s emerging middle class (Litvin). Although these aspects of global Shakespeare are not the focus of the present chapter, it is useful to bear in mind, as we think about boomerang Shakespeare, that the cultural exchange did not occur in a hub-and-spoke paradigm.

BOOMERANG PATHS: INBOUND

With such a complex history of globalization, 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, with Peter Brook being a notable example. A director who regarded theater as iconographic art, he worked from a set of compelling images for each production as if he were a designer (Brook 78). 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 portrayal of horrors and violence was replaced by abstract, elegant, Asian-inspired stylization that was supplemented by minimalism and contrast between aural and visual signs: scarlet streamers flowing from Lavinia's mouth and wrists to symbolize her rape and mutilation; harp music accompanying her entrance; and simple costumes sharing the "universal red of dried blood."

Brook's "Asian symbolism" not only made *Titus* into "a piece of visual virtuosity" but also tapped into the kinetic energy of the play as ritual and inspired Jan Kott when it toured to Warsaw (Kennedy, *Looking* 169–70). Brook went on to produce *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1970, which was an instant classic, and adapt the Indian epic *Mahabharata* in 1985. His *Titus* is significant in the context of boomerang Shakespeare, as it anticipates the use of red ribbons as symbols of blood and gore in Japanese director Yukio Ninagawa's 2006 production of *Titus* in Stratford as part of the RSC Complete Works festival. Ninagawa treated the play as myth, as recurring ritual in 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, and the trend of regularly featuring foreign productions did not take off until the 1990s. The belatedness of the emergence of "foreign" Shakespeare 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 of textual-analysis-based acting, did not create a receptive environment for the appreciation of non-Anglophone or experimental performances (Kennedy, "Introduction" 14). Commenting in 1988 on his experience directing Shakespeare, Peter Hall quipped: "unless what's on the stage looks like the language, I simply don't believe it" (qtd. in Berry 209). The patterns of reception of boomerang Shakespeare – both positive and negative – are discussed in greater detail later. For our purpose in this section, it is useful to note that free from such self-imposed linguistic

limitations, boomerang Shakespeare thrives in the contact zone between different traditions.

Both homegrown and touring companies have staged Shakespearean performances in Britain that may sometimes seem foreign to the sensibilities, styles, and linguistic repertoire of the local audiences. Acclaimed directors such as Claus Peymann (Berliner Ensemble, Germany), Robert Lepage (Quebec), and Peter Sellars (United States) and internationally active British directors such as Tim Supple have presented the beauty of estrangement through multinational casts, hybrid performance styles, and the use of one or more foreign languages onstage. With the rise of jet travel and influx of immigrants into Britain, cross-cultural blending became both fashionable and politically correct in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Further, like many developed countries, Britain uses Shakespeare, especially the presence of visiting companies, to flaunt its soft power and cultural heritage. Whether made in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, these performances have compelled their audiences to negotiate the unfamiliar and foreign forms of the familiar and "local" canon that is Shakespeare.

Boomerang Shakespeares have appeared in Britain through three interconnected channels. The first channel is intercultural borrowing. In connection with the Paris intercultural movement of the 1980s and Brook's works, African, Asian, and Latin American theatrical idioms ranging from costumes, sets, visual culture, performance styles, and music became more common in directors' and designers' visions. Although the performances may remain in English, the language of presentation could be perceived to be exotic. As these elements found their way into the *mise-en-scène*, boomerang Shakespeare divided critics and audiences alike. It is not uncommon for a work to be criticized for its Orientalist or Eurocentric penchant and praised for its global currency, and the phenomenon is not limited to stage productions either. Set in Meiji Japan, Kenneth Branagh's 2006 film *As You Like It* is a "dream of Japan," as its prologue reminds us. This "dream" opens with the Duke, Rosalind, Celia, and the courtiers attending a Kabuki performance and closes with a lavish wedding ceremony in a Japanese garden filled with colorful streamers and ornate kimonos. Scott Hollifield bemoaned the film's "irreconcilable ambiguities [that] severely impede its frequent movements toward the promised intercultural verisimilitude," whereas Mark Thornton Burnett theorizes Branagh's concept of "English men abroad" as a necessary move in a global marketplace where the West's economic power is waning (Klett; Hollifield; Burnett 158–60).

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 2007 was lauded by the *Times* (London) as the most original take on the play since Brook's 1970 version. 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 alike. Even critics such as Nicholas de Jongh, who has 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 his 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" (de Jongh). This kind of boomerang Shakespeare laid the foundation for the next mode of engagement: touring.

A second avenue led to subtitled touring productions. The selling point is not necessarily exoticism but rarity – new works or what is not otherwise available. Touring Shakespeare shares some features with international spectator sports; both require international travel, are capable of garnering media attention, and thrive on the unpredictability of the outcome. The spectator is an outsider (to the foreign style) and insider (to certain aspects of Shakespeare) at once. Interestingly, although these performances may offer rich opportunities for engagement with other cultures through the displacement of the spectator and familiar signs, such cross-cultural 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. Theater 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" (Spencer). At work behind such attitudes is the assumption that boomerang Shakespeare is colonial mimicry. Although it may be almost (but not quite) Shakespeare, it always falls short in some respect.

Festivals and special events have played an important role in bringing touring productions to London, Stratford-upon-Avon, Edinburgh, and other cities. In 1994, the Barbican Theatre hosted a festival entitled "Everybody's Shakespeare" that offered performances by the Comédie-Française of Paris, Suzuki Company of Toga, Tel Aviv's Itim Theatre Ensemble, Moscow's Detsky Theatre, and Düsseldorf's Schauspielhaus. Of interest is how the organizers turned boomerang Shakespeare into "consumable chunks of popular culture" in a workshop of metonymic equivalences (cherry blossoms for Japan, drumming for Africa, the carnival for Brazil, and so on) (Mazrui 223–81). As is the case with many touring productions, the reception of this festival is 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 the novelty of Shakespeare in Japanese is superior to English Shakespeare conventions (Holland 254–55). For some critics, the language barrier proved to be an insurmountable obstacle, as Charles Spencer commented: "There we sit, following [the] subtitles while listening to the performers delivering the matchless poetry in an incomprehensible tongue" (Spencer). 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.

Some touring productions were (and possibly still are) seen as showcases of the exotic beauty of unfamiliar performance traditions for the cultural elites. Targeting audiences bored by Shakespeare, these productions are not for purists. There are a few dominant strands in the narratives surrounding this type of production, ranging from celebration of other cultures' reverence of Shakespeare (e.g., "Shakespeare is German" at the London Globe in 2010) to suspicion over delightful but bewildering (for the press at least) productions that are fully indigenized. The Globe has played host to numerous such productions. Lady Macbeth sang a haunting death song, and a Zulu King Macbeth walked the stage clad in a leopard-skin robe in Welcome Msoni's *uMabatha: A Zulu Macbeth*. One cannot read Mazisi Kunene's Foreword to the 1996 edition of the play without sensing the irony today. Although the play has "brought Shakespeare out of the bejeweled theatres of Europe . . . into the open festivals of all people, for all people," *uMabatha* has to establish itself outside its home ground by visiting – with a performance style evoking black culture – the familiar centers of cultural production in Europe where the arbiters of its value reside (Kunene).

Directors such as Ninagawa and Keng Sen Ong, who have drawn on multiple elements from different traditions, face a dilemma as they are caught between authenticity and "selling out." Obviously, art and commerce are not antithetical activities, but they have become seemingly inescapable predicates in the discourses about the sociological and expressive values of boomerang Shakespeare. Take the Anglo-Kuwaiti playwright Sulayman al-Bassam's *The Al-Hamlet Summit* (premiere of English version in Edinburgh in 2002, London in 2004), for example. Through such figures as the arms dealer from the West supplying arms to other characters, including Fortinbras, the political tragedy is firmly anchored in a particular aspect of Middle Eastern local realities that readily connects with Western audiences (al-Bassam). All the known signs of Islam are there: Claudius and Polonius drag up as women in burkas to eavesdrop on the prince and Ophelia. This is an example of locally produced but globally inspired political relevance.

On the other hand, some productions run into the obstacle of an overdetermined locality. The *Kathakali*

Lear challenged the audience while offering unique visual delights. Performed in the traditional theater form of Kerala, the production offered few clues for the audience 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 the *Kathakali 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, productions such as these cease to make sense, at least for the uninitiated (Gardner).

How efficiently a director presents digestible visual signs has therefore become a factor to determine the fate of boomerang Shakespeare. The Korean veteran director Tae-suk Oh’s new adaptation of *The Tempest* was well received at the 2011 Edinburgh International Festival and received the Herald Angel award. On the other hand, the Taiwanese Beijing opera actor and director Hsing-kuo Wu’s striking solo semiautobiographical performance *Lear Is Here* (which has had an impressive history of worldwide tours since its inception in Ariane Mnouchkine’s workshop in Paris in 2000) received mixed reviews. Both plays employ theatrical stylization and a live orchestra in their respective traditions, and both are “foreign” to their hometown and UK audiences. Prospero’s (King Zilzi) island gives Oh a platform to revitalize traditional Korean cultural milieus that are lost on modern Koreans, and 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 spoke highly of Oh’s creativity (Billington, Huang, and Oh). 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.

Likewise, Grupo Galpão’s Portuguese performance of *Romeu e Julieta* found itself in deep water at the Globe. The production deployed the Brazilian street theater tradition in which the company thrived. The troupe entered singing and playing instruments, and performed in and around a retrofitted Volvo station wagon onstage. Grupo Galpão’s generic and cultural roots – *commedia* and street theater – seemed to predicate the British reviews: the mix of tragedy and comedy would “bewilder the tourists,” predicted *Time Out*, because while “sacrificing tragic impact for knock-about comedy” may make sense in “street-theatre terms,” it was not good enough for the modern Globe (Logan 149). As a performance space, the Globe calls for precisely the kind of direct interaction with the audience that is Grupo Galpão’s strength and the theme of *Romeu e Julieta*. What

stood between the production and its London audience? As W. B. Worthen cogently argues, the critics’ insistence on the need to “evoke the artistic integrity of the written authorial script” at the Globe ultimately led to an ideological resistance to Grupo Galpão’s approach.

One issue emerges in this dizzying array of productions and reviews. The reception history has witnessed a unique focus on the visual and sensory dimension of boomerang Shakespeare. Take Oh’s earlier work, *Romeo and Juliet*, for example. Set in Chosong Korea, the adaptation featured *p’ansori* (one-person operetta) and other elements from traditional Korean theater. Both the British reviews of its performance at the Barbican Centre, London, in 2006 and the German reviews of an earlier version of this production at the 2001 Bremer Shakespeare Festival emphasized the sensory power of Asian theater by saying that “every scene is as beautiful as a picture postcard.” The Barbican Centre was compelled to reassure its audience that this production “create[d] a sensual fusion that lacks nothing from the absence of the Bard’s language.” Being marginalized were the innovations in Oh’s production, such as a masculine Juliet (Mun-Jung Kim), who showed off her muscles to the audience as she waited for Romeo. In the balcony scene, Juliet practiced swordsmanship and later threw Romeo (Byung-Cheol Kim) on his back and rode on his stomach, demanding he confess his love. Western expectations of non-Western specularities can make Shakespearean verbalization and boomerang stylization seem to be antithetical practices.

The third trajectory of boomerang Shakespeare is shaped by coproductions between UK and foreign artists or companies, a growth area of theater 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 *Cherry Orchard* and *The Winter’s Tale* in New York and London. Some productions under this category feature more than one language onstage and the surtitles. The entities involved capitalize on their transnational networks of funding and artistic collaboration. They embrace their multiple points of origin.

One recent example is a British–Chinese coproduction of *King Lear* in Mandarin and English, with bilingual surtitles, directed by David Tse. It was a coproduction between the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center and Tse’s London-based Yellow Earth Theatre for the RSC Complete Works Festival in 2006. Here too, recognizing the “Shakespeareanness” in unfamiliar territory seemed to be unduly emphasized by the audience and even by the artists, 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” (David). With a cast of Chinese and British actors, the performance embodied the tensions between different linguistic spaces marked off

by the bilingual dialogues and the bilingual surtitles. Set in 2020 in London and Shanghai, the play opens in the Shanghai penthouse office of the modern Lear's transnational corporation. A Shanghai-based business tycoon who solicits confessions of love from his three daughters, Lear spoke fluent Mandarin Chinese, as did Regan and Goneril. However, the English-educated Cordelia was a member of the Asian diaspora no longer proficient in her father's language. "Meiyou," which means nothing, is the only Chinese vocabulary shared by Cordelia and Lear:

CORDELIA: Nothing, my lord.

LEAR: *Meiyou?* [spoken in Mandarin]

CORDELIA: *Meiyou* [spoken in Mandarin].

LEAR: Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again
[spoken in English].

(*Lear* 1.1.89–92)

In its Stratford performance, where the majority of the audience did not know Chinese, the phrase *meiyou* created an ontological hollow space that embodied "nothingness," key to the conflict in this scene and to Tse's Buddhist interpretation of Lear's redemption later in the play. The absence of meaning became the meaning of absence.

Each of these boomerang Shakespeares was 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 theater. Some works thrive on exotic local production values, whereas others gain additional purchase from the cosmopolitan venue of performance. All three modes of boomerang Shakespeare are structured around a break, a symbolic abandonment of English theater practices. This gap between knowledge of a culture and ignorance of another is a site for productive reading of both Shakespeare and contemporary cultures. As such, the gap has defined the boomerang paths of the productions.

POLITICAL FACES OF BOOMERANG SHAKESPEARE

Boomerang Shakespeare has brought not only new ideas but also foreign dignitaries. China's premier Jiabao Wen's recent visit to Shakespeare's birthplace on June 26, 2011, during his three-day visit to Britain, drew much media attention. He alluded to his boyhood love of Shakespeare in his speech to British prime minister David Cameron. When a company tours a production abroad, it gains cultural capital, but Wen's visit to Stratford-upon-Avon demonstrates that also at stake are international economic relations and political capital. British culture secretary Jeremy Hunt was blunt: "I am hoping that a billion Chinese might see some pictures on their TV of their premier coming and visiting the birthplace of Shakespeare" and flock to Britain in droves (qtd. in Satter). Numerous Chinese and Sinophone performances of Shakespeare

have been staged in Britain since the 1980s, and the Royal Shakespeare Company toured Loveday Ingram's *Merchant of Venice* to Beijing and Shanghai in 2002. A self-confessed admirer of Shakespeare, Wen is a politician at heart. It is true that – like other Chinese Communist Party leaders – he often began his speeches in China with quotations from Shakespeare, but his use of Shakespeare during his visit to Britain was a gesture to tout his cultural sophistication and to deflect thorny questions about the two countries' economic relations. The British press did not miss the point and picked up on the fact that Chinese artists hardly receive any respect or freedom despite Wen's love of the arts. The detained dissident sculptor Ai Weiwei, well known in Britain for his exhibit "Sunflower Seeds" at Tate Modern (2010–11), was released by the Chinese government only a few days before Wen's arrival in Birmingham. As in other areas of the arts, the involvement of nation-states helped to reconfigure the relationships between British and global localities.

As a business model and cultural institution, boomerang Shakespeare reinforces the idea that Britain's national poet belongs to the world. For example, the London Globe's 2010 season, entitled "Shakespeare is German," "celebrate[d] Germany's special affinity" with the playwright. To celebrate Shakespeare's affiliations with world cultures in London carries both 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 German. A playwright who belongs to the world is useful for campaigns to enhance cross-cultural understanding on his home ground. The director of Globe Education, Patrick Spottiswoode, enthused that the season is 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" (Spottiswoode). Cosponsored by the German Embassy in London within the framework of its "Think German" campaign to promote German culture, the season creates 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.

Likewise, the launch of Te Haumihiata Mason's te reo Maori translation of Shakespeare's sonnet 18 at the London Globe was a major cultural event informed by international rivalry. When Dawn Sanders, the CEO of Shakespeare Globe Centre New Zealand, saw the Korean translation of the sonnet hanging in the exhibition during her 2008 visit to the London Globe, she set out to initiate a Maori translation. The deputy high commissioner for New Zealand unveiled the sonnet, which was read by Maori actor Rawiri Paratene, who was also playing Friar Laurence in Dominic Dromgoole's *Romeo and Juliet* at

the Globe (2009). But this was far from an ethnic night out or a celebration of ghettoized cultural diversity. The reception in London reflected a common desire and need to revitalize the Maori language, build a bridge between a “universal” Shakespeare and a lost tradition, and highlight the commonality between different nations. The chief executive of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Maori, Huhana Rokx, indicated that the collaborative effort to bring the Maori translation of the sonnet to London not only celebrated Shakespeare’s legacy but served to “remind us of the singular commonality that binds us all – that the language of love transcends all communication barriers.” Above all else, it was a unique opportunity to showcase “our own Maori language of love,” a tradition of classical narrative that has ceased to be relevant to the present generation (*The Big Idea*).

Boomerang Shakespeare is an integral part of Britain’s campaign for soft power and self-identity in a postcolonial global age. As the *Guardian* (London) put it, Britain may be “the birthplace of Chaucer, Milton, Austen, . . . and Dickens,” but the country has only one “dominant calling card [Shakespeare] on the global cultural scene” (Thorpe). Part of the boomerang phenomenon is created by festivals, internationally renowned films, and visiting companies, and part of it is shaped by British directors, such as Peter Brook and Tim Supple, incorporating non-Western performance styles into their productions or working with artists from other parts of the world, such as David Tse.

RETURNING TO BRITAIN

At the core of the boomerang phenomenon is the idea of returning to Britain as a geocultural site of origin (performed “within the architecture Shakespeare wrote for”), as an imaginary site of authenticity (e.g., Shanghai Kunqu Opera’s adaptation of *Macbeth* entitled *Story of Bloody Hands* in Scotland), and as a privileged site for performative acts (both authentic and international Shakespeares are now the Globe’s main products) (Thorpe). This “return” is part of the organizing principle of some festivals, and the narratives surrounding them are informed by internationalism and, paradoxically, a form of nationalism.

The phenomenon also reflects the desire to tour “local” Shakespeares to high-profile venues, which is why boomerang Shakespeare is often cosponsored by various embassies and government cultural bureaus, such as the Goethe-Institut in the case of the Globe’s 2010 season and Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and Korean Cultural Centre UK for Tae-suk Oh’s *Tempest* at the Edinburgh Festival. Taking part in major festivals and playing at prestigious venues have opened up a new vista for many companies. Tours of the United Kingdom have proven essential for theater companies looking for an international stage. Although some companies played at international festivals for the prestige rather than financial gain in any real sense, the Brazilian company Grupo

Galpão earned enough income from its UK and European tour to establish its own rehearsal and performance space. But exchanging ideas on *commedia* and avant-garde techniques with such figures as Peter Brook and Jerzy Grotowski during the tour provided even greater, intangible, benefits to the Brazilian company (Brandão 75).

The 1990 tour of *The Kingdom of Desire* (a Beijing opera play inspired by Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* and Akira Kurosawa’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. The South African playwright Welcome Msomi’s 1970 adaptation of *Macbeth* would not have achieved international recognition without multiple tours to London since its 1972 premiere in Natal, South Africa. The 1997 revival (which helped open the modern Globe) catapulted it to the center of the international theater scene (Wright 105–30). Tours of the United Kingdom are equally important for local companies. Thelma Holt Ltd.’s longtime partnership with Ninagawa since 1990 has benefited both sides and made the Japanese director a mainstay on the English stage. Although productions such as these celebrate polyglot cosmopolitanism, their reception is governed by anxieties about global inequalities and the logic of cultural prestige.

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, boomerang Shakespeare has emerged as a new brand name in Britain, competing side by side with British productions. The imported boomerang Shakespeares neither represent the Disneyfication of a cultural celebrity’s work (and thereby perpetuate global inequities) nor epitomize subversive, alternative interpretations of the canon to undermine the Western hegemony. “Foreign” Shakespeares are by necessity hybrid cultural products that are both outside and part of the system.

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146. SHAKESPEARE IN IBERIAN AND LATIN AMERICAN SPANISHES

Alfredo Michel Modenessi

You can't spend a lifetime with one single language, watching it sideways, exploring it, running your fingers through its hair and over its belly, without that intimacy becoming an organic part of yourself. Pablo Neruda, *Confieso que he vivido*

(356; this and all translations from non-English sources in this chapter are my own)

THE CAMBRIDGE GUIDE TO THE WORLDS OF SHAKESPEARE
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CONTENTS

VOLUME II

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	page xiii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xvii

PART XV. INTERNATIONAL ENCOUNTERS.	1033
<i>Introduction by Ton Hoenselaars</i>	
138 TRANSLATION, ADAPTATION, AND "TRADAPTATION"	1046
<i>Mark Fortier</i>	
139 TRANSLATION: THE EUROPEAN FORTUNES OF SONNET 66	1050
<i>Manfred Pfister</i>	
140 FRENCH ROMANTICISM: HAMLET AT THE THÉÂTRE DE L'ODÉON, PARIS, IN 1827	1058
<i>Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine</i>	
141 SHAKESPEARE AND NATIONAL LITERATURES	1064
<i>Joep Leerssen</i>	
142 LOCAL, GLOBAL, AND "GLOCAL"	1070
<i>Martin Orkin</i>	
143 SHAKESPEARE SOCIETIES	1077
<i>Nick Walton</i>	
144 GLOBE THEATER REPLICAS	1084
<i>Yu Jin Ko</i>	
145 BOOMERANG SHAKESPEARE: FOREIGN SHAKESPEARE IN BRITAIN	1094
<i>Alexa Huang</i>	
146 SHAKESPEARE IN IBERIAN AND LATIN AMERICAN SPANISHES	1101
<i>Alfredo Michel Modenessi</i>	
147 TERCENTENARY SHAKESPEARE: BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES, 1916	1107
<i>Monika Smialkowska</i>	
148 SHAKESPEARE IN EASTERN EUROPE	1114
<i>Veronika Schandl</i>	

PART XVI. MAKING THE SCENE	1119
<i>Introduction by Bruce R. Smith</i>	
149 ROMEO AND JULIET 2.1: "BUT SOFT, WHAT LIGHT THROUGH YONDER WINDOW BREAKS?"	1129
<i>Mariacristina Cavecchi</i>	
150 A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM 3.2: "LORD, WHAT FOOLS THESE MORTALS BE!"	1136
<i>Patricia Fagundes</i>	
151 HENRY V 3.1: "ONCE MORE UNTO THE BREACH"	1141
<i>Mariangela Tempera</i>	
152 HAMLET 3.1: "TO BE OR NOT TO BE"	1144
<i>Ann Thompson</i>	
153 MACBETH 1.3: "KING HEREAFTER!"	1150
<i>Stephen Orgel</i>	
154 OTHELLO 1.3: "FAR MORE FAIR THAN BLACK"	1156
<i>Tom Cheesman</i>	
155 ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA: INTERVIEW WITH HARRIET WALTER	1161
<i>Paul Edmondson</i>	
156 KING LEAR 5.3: "NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER"	1165
<i>Kobayashi Kaori</i>	
157 RICHARD III 5.4: "MY KINGDOM FOR A HORSE!"	1171
<i>Keith Gregor</i>	
158 THE TEMPEST 4.1	1176
<i>Krystyna Kujawińska</i>	