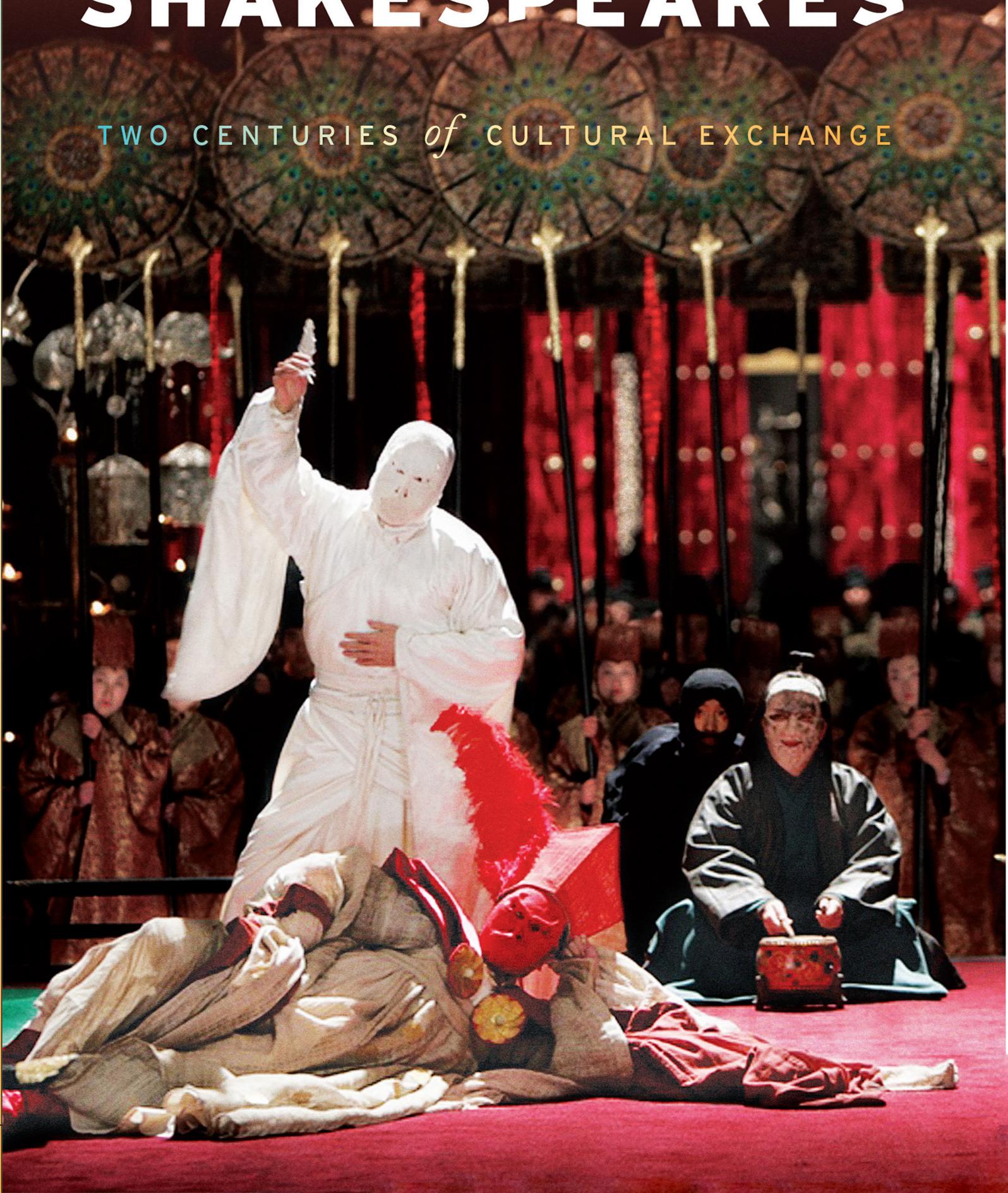


Alexa Alice Joubin

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ALEXA ALICE JOUBIN is professor of English, international affairs, and East Asian languages and cultures at George Washington University, where she co founded and co-directs the Digital Humanities Institute. Her other books include *Shakespeare and the Ethics of Appropriation*.

COVER IMAGE: Daniel Wu as Prince Wu Luan (the drummer) in a pantomime in *The Banquet* (inspired by *Hamlet*), directed by Feng Xiaogang, 2006. (Courtesy of Media Asia Distribution)

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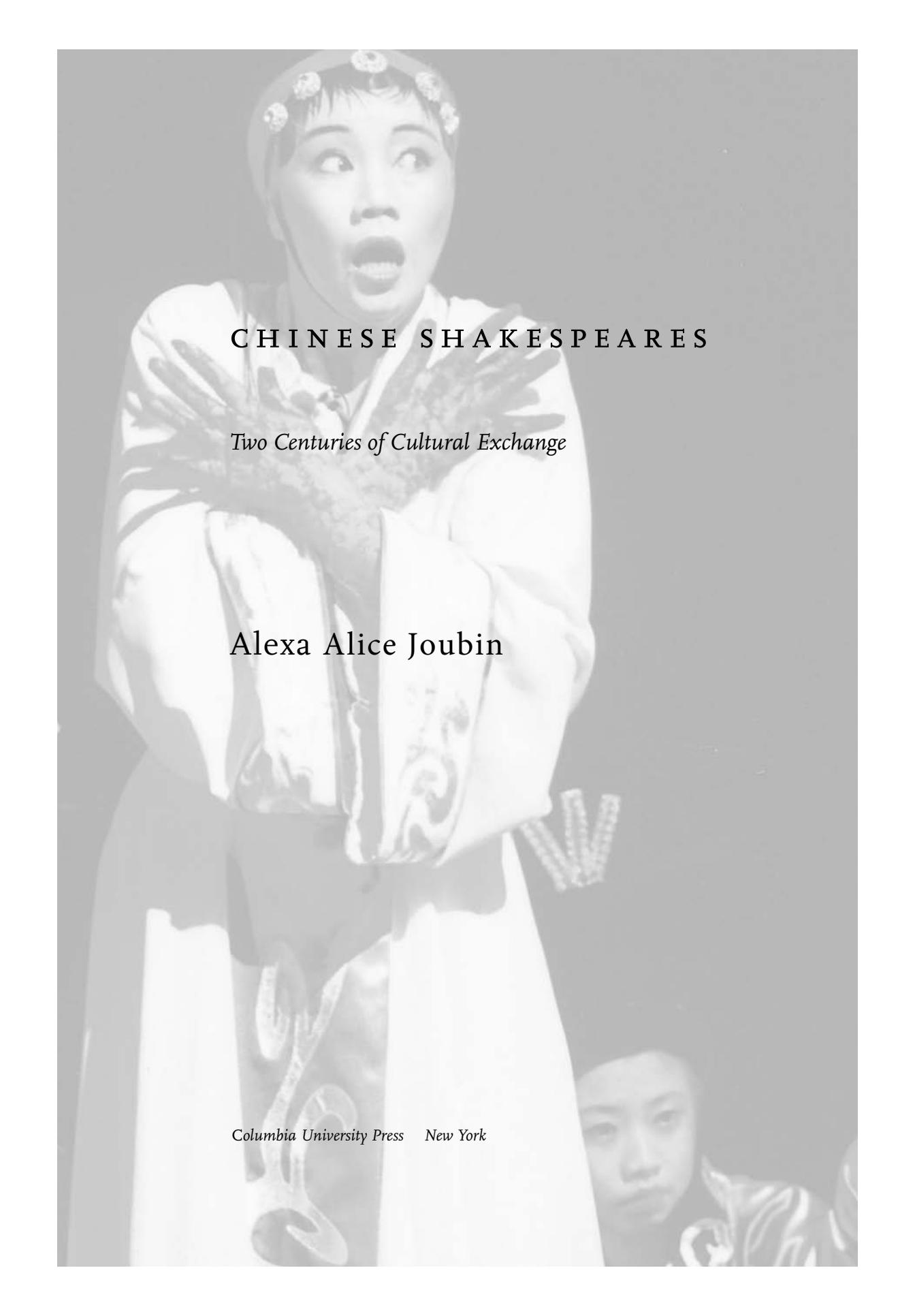


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Title page: Lady Macbeth, a solo Sichuan-opera performance (Berlin, 2006) by Tian Mansha.
(Image courtesy of Tian Mansha)



CHINESE SHAKESPEARES

Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange

Alexa Alice Joubin

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A Note on Texts and Translation

Scene and line references of Shakespearean plays are keyed to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., edited by G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), with modernized spelling and punctuation. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted. I have adopted the *pinyin* romanization system for Chinese throughout, except for names or phrases that are commonly known in a different form. Historical or official names are also preserved (for example, Canton and Peking University).

Further transcriptions, translations, and critical notes for selected works (accompanied by streaming videos and photographs) will be available online through “Shakespeare Performance in Asia,” a multilingual, freely accessible digital database at <http://web.mit.edu/shakespeare/asia/>.

Readers not familiar with the history of Shakespeare performance, Chinese cultural history under discussion, or the critical discourses in either field are invited to consult the select chronology and chapter notes.

Prologue

Readers travel. Texts are passed to new territories. But myths tend to stay, which is why the space between China and Shakespeare as cultural tokens is exhilarating and frustrating in equal measure. These days, English-speaking metropolitan audiences and jaded cultural tourists have grown used to a Shakespeare who figured prominently in other national cultures, particularly that of Germany, where the notion of *unser Shakespeare* (our Shakespeare) needs no more illustration than the wedding march that Felix Mendelssohn composed for Ludwig Tieck's celebrated production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1843). The story of Shakespeare's worldwide appeal may go like this: In Shakespeare's times, shortly after appearing on London stages, his plays migrated to foreign shores. The English Comedians toured Europe in the late sixteenth century, staging semi-improvised performances frequently attended by both the locals and British travelers who became outsiders to the once familiar plays.¹ In 1607, Shakespeare's plays were sailing east. *Hamlet* and *Richard II* were performed on a makeshift stage on board an English East India Company ship, the *Red Dragon*, anchored near Sierra Leone; *Hamlet* was performed again in 1608 on the island of Socotra, at the entry to the Gulf of Aden (now part of the Republic of Yemen).² The *Red Dragon* arrived in colonial Indonesia in 1609. Shakespeare's name and works spread rapidly

to other parts of Asia. Prompted by the worldwide cultural phenomena that have materialized around Shakespeare's name and dramas, many directors and scholars have recognized the malleability and collaborative nature of Shakespeare's play texts.³ Named the Writer of the Millennium, Shakespeare has come full circle and become a cliché, embraced by marketers and contested by intellectuals.⁴ Similar narratives about China's rise in global stature have been told with equal gusto, championed and denounced in turn by optimists and critics.⁵

This seems to be old news. On the positive side, Shakespeare seems to belong to the whole world, representing the metropole and the Global South. But that sense of belonging is immediately problematic. Shakespeare's global career was not tied entirely to the spread and retreat of the British Empire or the rise of intercultural performance. Even in contemporary Anglophone culture, the persistence of Shakespeare's plays as popular material for the entertainment industry is an odd phenomenon.⁶ While in our times the presence of Shakespeare in world cultures appears to be ordinary and commonplace, the global history of Shakespeare's afterlife reveals the limit of the universal as an artistic concept. If Shakespeare now has worldwide currency, how is the sense of belonging and betrayal configured chronologically and spatially? The old news—our journalistic familiarity with Shakespeare's provenance in global contexts—calls for careful reconstruction of a historical foundation for theorization.

Many people have seen one or more Asian performances, but few are aware that for almost two centuries, East Asian writers, filmmakers, and theater directors have also engaged Shakespeare in their works in a wide range of contexts. The ideas of Shakespeare and China have been put to work in unexpected places. Every year, hundreds of works emerge in Mandarin and a wide range of Chinese dialects, performing styles, and genres, including fiction, theater, cinema, and popular culture. The exchange goes both ways. Outside China, Asian theatrical idioms such as Beijing opera (*jingju*) are becoming more common in English- and European-language Shakespeare productions.⁷ International productions have appeared in the Chinese-speaking world with increasing frequency, ranging from British burlesques in nineteenth-century Hong Kong and Soviet–Chinese productions in mid-twentieth-century China to a truly global array of approaches in contemporary Taiwan and rich intraregional citations in East and Southeast Asia. As more and more Chinese productions tour in Great Britain, the United States, and Europe, Shakespeare has evolved from Britain's export commodity to an import

industry in the Anglo-European culture, giving birth to Asian-inflected performances outside Asia.

If meaning is shifting and debatable, what does “Shakespeare” *do* in Chinese literary and performance culture? Conversely, how do imaginations about China function in Shakespearean performances, and what ideological work do they undertake—in mainland China, Taiwan, and other locations?

It is best to begin with stories. In 1942, when China was at war with Japan, a Chinese-language production of *Hamlet*, set in Denmark, was staged in a Confucian temple in Jiang’an in southwestern China. The director, Jiao Juyin (1905–1975), wed the foreign setting to the allegorical space of the temple and the historical exigencies of the time. The balcony in front of the shrine of Confucius was used as a makeshift stage, and the audiences were seated in the courtyard—with a clear view of the shrine and the action on stage. The temple thus becomes both a fictive space of performance and a context for the reading of China and Hamlet’s Denmark. This extraordinary moment has several implications. The meanings of this wartime *Hamlet* were complicated by the intruding presence of the Confucian shrine on the makeshift stage and the setting of the temple. Jiao insisted on the primacy of his locality, and the performance created a communal experience during the war intended to stir patriotic spirit in Confucian, moral terms. The production subscribed to a national agenda during a time that witnessed a deteriorating economy, intensified conflicts between the Chinese Communist (CCP) and Nationalist (KMT) parties, and major setbacks in the Chinese resistance to Japanese invasion. While Laurence Olivier’s similarly jingoistic *Henry V* (1944) has been considered as an example of what Walter Benjamin called “the aestheticization of politics,” Jiao’s *Hamlet* is an exercise in the politicization of art. Shakespeare has been absorbed into the political life during times of war.⁸

While the temple *Hamlet* readily connected Shakespeare with the connotations of the local venue, other directors used allegory to reconfigure Shakespeare and Asian identity multinationally. In Ong Keng Sen’s multilingual *LEAR* (1997), staged with English subtitles, actors from several Asian countries and their characters were poised for a search of cultural identities as the pan-Asian production played to full houses in Singapore, Tokyo, other parts of Asia, and Europe. The power-thirsty eldest daughter (performed cross-dressed), who spoke only Mandarin and employed *jingju* chanting and movements, confronted the Old Man (Lear), who



FIGURE 1 Umewaka Naohiko as the Japanese-speaking Old Man (Lear) and Jiang Qihu cross-dressed as the Mandarin-speaking Older Daughter (conflated from Regan and Goneril) in the multilingual *LEAR*, directed by Ong Keng Sen, TheatreWorks and Japan Foundation Asia Center, 1997. (Courtesy of TheatreWorks, Singapore)

spoke only Japanese and walked the stage in the solemn style of *nō* performance (figure 1). The subtitles defamiliarized (in Victor Shklovsky's sense) the Shakespearean lines and decorporealized Asian performance practices at once.⁹ The sensual overload of the performance overwhelmed its international audiences, who, despite their best effort, would always miss something. While this uniquely multilingual performance recast the questions of race and nation in a new light, its bold experiments of hybrid Asian styles were controversial. The performance physicalized, in linguistic and dramaturgical terms, the promise and perils of globalization and the uneasy coalition among participants of this transnational project.¹⁰ Seen afar from the European perspective, the contrasts between the Asian languages and styles were flattened by their similarities. However, seen from an Asian perspective, the difference between Asian cultures was accentuated by the performance. The production highlighted the discrepancy between Asian languages and styles, and between Chinese and Japanese perspectives on World War II.

Both Jiao's and Ong's intercultural productions stage contradictions and raise complex issues related to cultural politics and international touring. They register similar concerns about shifting localities. Jiao

relates Shakespeare unabashedly to the Confucian tradition evoked by the temple. Ong notes that his project, a “multicultural playground,” is a platform for him to “work through his ambivalence about tradition.”¹¹ Are such theatrical encounters with a foreign-language Shakespeare and with a Shakespeare-inspired Asian director symptomatic of cultural tourism rather than the logics of internationalism? Does watching Shakespeare with subtitles overcome or simply redraw cultural boundaries? Shakespeare has been used to construct political relevance for Ong’s project, local urgency for Jiao’s, and many other meanings in Asia since the nineteenth century.

These intriguing cases constitute only the tip of an iceberg of larger questions and pervasive cultural practices that have yet to be admitted to the scholarly discourse on Shakespeare and Chinese modernity. Standing behind these practices is a long history of constantly reconfigured relationships that have connected and disconnected Shakespeare and China. The currency of Shakespeare in the modern world is partly determined by political and historical forces that are often located outside the plays but that have been claimed to be located within or derived directly from the text itself.

Special to Chinese Shakespeares and unexpected for English-language readers are not only the edgy or dissident voices but also Chinese artists and audience’s unique (ab)use of cultural authorities and insistence on “authentic” Shakespeares in various forms. To say so is not to suggest that the Anglocentric view of Shakespeare ought to be replaced by a Sinocentric one, as in some nationalist imaginary or de rigueur celebration of ethnic authenticity. Much of this work will undermine the fantasies of cultural exclusivity of both “Shakespeare” and “China,” attending to the fact that even though every reading is a rewriting, more rewritings of a canonical text do not always translate into more radical rethinking of normative assumptions. It is with this conviction that I examine the transnational imaginary of China in Shakespearean performance *and* Shakespeare’s place in Chinese cultural history from the first Opium War in 1839 to our times.

Sites of Fixation

A long view of history will reveal the multidirectional processes that contribute to the mutually constructive grammar of the global and

the local. Over a century of cross-fertilization has firmly rooted Shakespeare in Chinese cultural production and Chinese performance idioms in twentieth-century Shakespeare traditions.

The transmission of Renaissance culture in China began with the arrival of the first Jesuit missionaries in 1582, followed by the Dominicans and Franciscans in the 1630s.¹² Illustrated British travel narratives record British emissaries' experience attending theatrical productions in Tianjin and Beijing during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor (1736–1795), including the mission of Lord George Macartney.¹³ Even though there are records of Europeans attending theatrical and ritual performances in the Chinese court, drama and literature was not a major concern for them. This is the case for a number of reasons.¹⁴ The missions of Matteo Ricci (1562–1610), Nicolas Trigault (1577–1628), and Niccolò Longobardo (1565–1655) focused on understanding and converting religious differences into cross-cultural connections. The missionaries and their Chinese collaborators such as Xu Guangqi (1562–1633) were preoccupied with devotional writings, cartography, Renaissance objects (prisms, clocks, astronomical instruments), mathematics, the calendar reform, and the failed project to introduce Aristotelian philosophy into the Chinese education system. The focus on material culture and the prospect of trade persisted into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁵ One diary entry briefly comments on the similarity between an unnamed Chinese play and Shakespeare's *Richard III*.¹⁶ More references in Chinese to Shakespeare as the English national poet emerged during the first Opium War (1839–1842), a transitional period greatly different from the earlier eras.

With the decline of the Qing dynasty in the nineteenth century, Chinese interests in Western modes of thinking and political systems intensified. In the previous centuries, the Chinese had conducted exchanges with European merchants and missionaries almost solely in Chinese—with the exception of a few Chinese educated for the priesthood. The burden of learning a foreign language rested on the Europeans. But the dynamics changed in the mid-nineteenth century when the Western hegemony took the form of military power. Literary production was marked by the complicity and complexity of Chinese engagements with the imperial West in a time of transition when intellectuals questioned both the traditional and modern formations of Chinese culture. This was also a time when the West was both reviled and admired.¹⁷ Early Chinese reactions to Shakespeare were informed by the double bind of the recourse to the West—a mode of thinking that was at once obligatory and detested.

Both Shakespeare and China were “translated”—to use the word to mean “transformed” or “metamorphosed,” as Peter Quince does in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*—in the late nineteenth century according to powerful and at times mutually exclusive ideologies.¹⁸ At this point in history, translation was freely practiced in China with little cultural differentiation between an “original” and a rewrite. Within China proper, intellectuals and reformers alternately saw the demands of cross-cultural understanding and the reassessment of Chinese values as a blessing and a curse. Along with John Milton and other “national” poets, Shakespeare’s name entered the discourse of nationalism. Shakespeare was first mentioned in passing in 1839 in a compendium of world cultures translated by Lin Zexu, a key figure in the first Opium War. By the time Chinese translations became available and substantive critical engagements with Shakespeare were initiated, there was already over half a century of reception history in which Shakespeare was frequently evoked to support or suppress specific agendas—in the writings of both missionaries and Chinese reformers—all in the name of modernity and cultural renewal.

Two major literary events of the early twentieth century are the publication of a Chinese rendition of Charles and Mary Lamb’s *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807) and the serialization of Shakespeare’s history plays in a popular literary magazine. The Lambs’ text was translated orally by Wei Yi and rendered freely into classical Chinese by Lin Shu as *An English Poet Reciting from Afar* (*Yingguo shiren yinbian yanyu*, 1904). Also influential in the early reception of Shakespeare in Korea and Japan, the *Tales* were reframed in China as a text intended for the male elite class that operated according to moralizing principles. Although Shakespeare’s history and Roman plays were excluded from Lin’s 1904 text, they were serialized as prose novels, also “translated” by Lin, in *Short Story Magazine* (*Xiaoshuo yuebao*) in 1916. While no full line-by-line translation of any play was available yet, these rewrites popularized “representative” plays in each of the Shakespearean genres by creatively transforming them into prose narratives.

In terms of performance style, Shakespeare has figured prominently in the shaping of modern and contemporary Chinese theater, where the genres of *xiqu* (stylized theater with more than 360 regional variations in dialect, aria type, and technique; commonly known as Chinese opera outside China) and *huaju* (post-1907 Western-influenced spoken drama theater, including obsolete subgenres) coexist.¹⁹ Competing narratives about Shakespeare and China in *xiqu* and *huaju* theaters reflect a series of

crises of representational practice that are complicated by ethics, aesthetics, politics, and the contingencies of live theater. Shakespeare has given occasion for innovations in both these performance genres, as well as other forms of representation.

While the initial spread of Shakespeare's reputation was connected to the Chinese elite who studied or traveled in Japan, Europe, or the United States, and to the presence of Anglo-European cultures in most coastal cities of the Chinese mainland, two cities stood out. Nineteenth-century Hong Kong saw more regular Shakespearean performances in English, while Shanghai remained the hub of much of the early Chinese-language publications and performance activities that initiated subsequent debates about old and new forms of drama.

The Merchant of Venice was a site of fixation of the Chinese imagination, as it provided inspiration for both the earliest documented cinematic and *huaju* Shakespeares, including *Shylock; or, the Merchant of Venice Preserved*, a travesty by Francis Talfourd (1828–1862) staged in 1867 and revived in 1871 by the Hong Kong Amateur Dramatic Club. The cover of the play contains a brief statement that it is “an entirely new reading of Shakespeare . . . printed from an edition hitherto undiscovered by modern authorities.”²⁰ The choice of a mercantile-themed play in a trade colony may be coincidental, but the nostalgia and not-so-subtle reference to the modern “West” were articulated through the production and a number of other performances.

Gender roles in *The Merchant of Venice* and other plays were also reimagined. A silent film, *The Woman Lawyer* (also known as *A Bond of Flesh* [*Rou quan*]), premiered in Shanghai on May 29, 1927. Another notable cinematic Shakespeare from the same era was *A Spray of Plum Blossom* (*Yi jian mei*, 1931), a 110-minute silent film based on *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* in a hybrid genre of chivalric adventure and classic love story. While these films rescripted both the Shakespearean plays and modern Chinese ideals of womanhood to project cosmopolitan desires and to endorse the new woman's movement (in the context of education reform that allowed women to attend college and to enter the legal profession), other interpretations of *The Merchant of Venice* suppressed the racial and religious conflicts in the play that might have been relevant to early-twentieth-century Chinese audiences and instead highlighted China's revitalized yet, because of continuing wars, constantly threatened global trade. Rather than the questions of Jewishness or religious values, the

play mirrored the emergence of women lawyers in Shanghai and new demands of the global trade.²¹

Hamlet, though, captured the Chinese imagination of a modern nation-state. A number of literary works addressed the supposed deficiencies of national character, such as procrastination and inaction, and problematized the place of the ghost in the new corpus of a national literature. Some of these concerns found expression through rewrites of Shakespeare's works. Lao She's short story "New Hamlet" (Xin Hammuliede, 1936) follows a college student through a series of reverse cultural shocks after he returns home to face the decline of the family business. It reinvents the theme of procrastination, not revenge, to suit its purpose as a commentary on the Chinese imagination of Hamlet's intellectualism. Couched in coded ethical terms and bearing the imprint of the intellectual mandate of the time, such rewrites and early performances trouble the boundary between moral criticism and sociopolitical dimensions of artistic works. The ethical terms dictated not only the reception of many literary works—both Chinese and foreign—but also its attendant evaluative moves.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Shakespeare and Chinese writers alike were reinterpreted through the Soviet-Marxist critical lens. Marxist-Maoism dictated the construction of a Chinese self-image, which was accompanied by alternating periods of active cultural activities, setbacks, and revitalization. The Soviet influence throughout China's social infrastructures and Stanislavskian realism contributed to the politics of Soviet-Chinese Shakespeare in the first three decades after the founding of the People's Republic. Even though no foreign dramas and very few Chinese dramas were performed during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), Shakespeare and other authors were read privately in labor camps. The private life of once public plays politicizes and aestheticizes personal experiences. After the Cultural Revolution, Shakespeare again returned to the core of actor-training institutions as part of a boom in *huaju* and *xiqu* performances of Western dramas.

The situations in the other parts of the Chinese-speaking world were and still are different from those in mainland China. Kawakami Otojirō's (1864–1911) *Othello* in 1903 recast Taiwan as the outpost of the colonial Japanese Empire, moving Venice to Japan and Cyprus to the Penghu Archipelago, west of Taiwan.²² When Muro Washiro (the *Othello* figure), a dark-faced Japanese colonial general in Taiwan, commits suicide at the

end of the play, he compares himself to an “uncivilized” Taiwanese aboriginal inhabitant (*seiban* [raw savage]).²³ An island off the southeast coast of mainland China, Taiwan has had complex relationships with the dominant “fatherland” (*zuguo*) across the strait and with Japan to the north.²⁴ While not directly responsible for the scarcity of Western dramas from the early to the mid-twentieth century, the island’s intense focus on the essentialized aspects of Japan and China prevented the growth of translated dramas from European languages.²⁵ In the first half of the twentieth century, tours of Japan’s all-female Takarazuka performances to Taiwan occasionally included Shakespeare. The earliest-documented Chinese-language performance of Shakespeare in Taiwan was *Clouds of Doubt* (*Yi yun*), staged by the Experimental Theater of Taipei (Shiyan xiao juchang) in February 1949 and based on *Othello*. A few other performances followed, but until martial law was lifted in 1987, Taiwan’s theater remained shaped by political censorship in significant ways, first by the Japanese colonial cultural policy and then by the anti-Communist cultural policy of the KMT regime.

The presence of Shakespeare at theater festivals in Taiwan in the 1980s and 1990s took a different form from mainland China’s postrevolutionary Shakespeare boom, which was initiated by state-endorsed and government-sponsored Shakespeare festivals in 1986 and 1994. The month-long “Shakespeare in Taipei” festival (May 2003), for instance, focused more on providing a platform for artistically innovative and commercially viable experimental works. As a multilingual society (Mandarin, Taiwanese, Hakka, and aboriginal languages), Taiwan has produced a significant number of mainstream performances either entirely in a dialect or with a mixture of Mandarin and a local dialect or English. Some of these works reflect Taiwan’s multiply determined history, while others question that history and the much-contested “Chineseness” of the island’s identity. These tendencies provide interesting contrasts to the ways in which mainland Chinese artists imagine China. By the same token, while mainland China is certainly multilingual, it is Taiwan and Hong Kong that have established strong traditions of Shakespeare performances in one or more dialects. The few mainland Chinese performances of Shakespeare in local dialects were commissioned and sponsored by the government for festivals or produced by ethnic minority students in actor-training programs. The linguistic diversity of Taiwan and Hong Kong theaters fosters distinctive views of “Shakespeare” and what counts as “Chinese.”

With strong dual traditions of English and Cantonese Shakespearean performances in *huaju* and *yueju* (Cantonese opera), Hong Kong theater reflects the tension between southern Chinese culture and the British legacy. After Hong Kong was ceded to Britain for 150 years in the Treaty of Tianjin (1842), Englishness became an important element throughout the social structure. Under the British government, theater was supported and encouraged as “a wholesome diversion from the tedium of military life.”²⁶ English literature was established as a subject of study in Hong Kong’s school system, and in 1882 students began to study Shakespeare for exams, initiating a form of “domination by consent.”²⁷ Shakespearean drama became part of the repertoire of the Hong Kong Amateur Dramatic Club, which was active in the 1860s and 1870s. The so-called amateur theater was in fact noncommercial theater rather than nonprofessional. Such performances entertained British expatriates and brought “a touch of the British culture” to Hong Kong residents.²⁸ As in Japan, nineteenth-century China and Hong Kong saw sporadic performances of “authentic” Shakespeare in English that exposed local residents to the contemporary English culture. What was meant by authentic Shakespeare was a performance style that purported to present Shakespeare as he was conceived to have been played in his lifetime. Shakespeare festivals (April 23, 1954; April 1964; January 24–29, 1984) and experimental Shakespearean performances emerged in the mid-twentieth century. Since the 1980s, a considerable amount of energy has been directed not toward the post-colonial question but toward Hong Kong’s global status and its Chinese heritage, as evidenced by the productions of Hong Kong Repertory Theatre (founded in 1977), the largest professional theater in Hong Kong, and performances by students of Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and other universities.

Despite the association of Shakespeare and Englishness, Shakespeare was not resisted as an image of colonization. Political changes have hardly affected him. Some contemporary Hong Kong scholars are surprised to find that “local experimentations with Shakespeare in post-modernist and Chinese styles have continued to flourish [in Hong Kong].” This continued prominence, they argue, shows that “Shakespeare has transcended his British heritage and become part of the Hong Kong Chinese tradition.”²⁹ While partly true, this view blurs the historical conditions surrounding early performances. One crucial reason why Shakespeare seems to transcend his British heritage is that Britain never colonized Hong Kong the

way it did India. This special historical condition—an indirect colonial structure that Mao Zedong later called semicolonialism—informed Hong Kong's performance culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁰ If the practitioners of the new theater were resisting anything, it was the Chinese past. The same is true of other treaty ports, such as Shanghai, that were home to a host of European concessions but had no overarching colonial institution.

The first decade of the new millennium was for Asian cinematic Shakespeares as the 1990s had been for Anglophone Shakespeare on film. Shakespeare has been a part of the Chinese-speaking popular culture since the late twentieth century, with *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* at the center of cinematic imaginations. Anthony Chan's *One Husband Too Many* (*Yiqi liangfu*, Hong Kong, 1988) weaves *Romeo and Juliet* into a contemporary urban comedy, while Cheah Chee Kong's *Chicken Rice War* (*Jiyuan qiaohe*, Singapore, 2000), another comic film, engages such films as Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996) and John Madden's *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) from an ironic distance.³¹ Huo Jianqi also shifts *Romeo and Juliet* into comedy in *A Time to Love* (*Qingren jie*, China, 2005). Starring television idol-stars Zhao Wei and Lu Yi, the film bears a Chinese title with witty puns that can read as either *Valentine's Day* or *Valentine's Knot*.³² More recently, two feature films with all-star casts experiment with the genre of period film. *The Banquet* (*Yeyan*, China, 2006), a martial-arts film in Mandarin Chinese, gives Gertrude and Ophelia, traditionally silenced women characters in *Hamlet*, a strong presence. *The Prince of the Himalayas* (*Ximalaya wangzi*, China, 2006), in Tibetan, reframes *Hamlet* in ancient Tibet.³³ More films are being planned. It remains to be seen if any of these films can achieve the circulation and status of Kurosawa Akira's (1910–1998) well-known *Ran* (1985) and *Throne of Blood* (*Kumonosu jō*, 1957), based on *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, respectively. The rash of new Shakespeare films from Asia may be the result of increasingly aggressive transnationalizing strategies in East Asian cinema since the 1990s.

Other Sights

The complexities of the cultural institution of Chinese opera and artists' and critics' philosophical investments in the visual sign in stylized performances warrant separate investigation. While there are stage

productions that focus, however creatively and distantly, on Shakespeare and are done in the way Western audiences tend to think of a stage play, there are also performances in traditional Chinese theater that borrow a bit of Shakespeare to reinvent and expand the Chinese performance idiom. Chinese-opera performances of Shakespeare have provided “other” sights for both Chinese and non-Chinese audiences. The varied styles found under this umbrella term are further reconfigured by the “premodern,” physicalized, nonillusionist, and actor-centered languages of the Chinese operatic stage. The Solo Experimental Chinese Opera Festival in Hong Kong (2002) and its sequel in Taipei (2003), where a number of influential solo performances were staged, offer an example of this relational approach to theater. As such, Chinese-opera Shakespeare performances often initiate heated debates over Shakespeare and Chinese theater.

The earliest-documented *xiqu* Shakespeare, *Killing the Elder Brother and Snatching the Sister-in-Law*, was based on *Hamlet* and performed in *chuanju* (Sichuan-opera) style.³⁴ Other artists followed suit. The Custom Renewal Society staged *A Pound of Flesh* (*Yi bang rou*) in the *qinqiang*-opera style in 1925 in Shaanxi Province in northern China.³⁵ Although stylized performances of Shakespeare in different genres of Chinese opera have existed since the early twentieth century, the 1980s were a turning point, when Shakespeare became more regularly performed in different forms of stylization in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and elsewhere, and entered the collective cultural memory of Chinese-opera performers and audiences. The revived interest in Chinese-opera Shakespeare was encouraged by increased exchanges among performers based in mainland China and in the Chinese diaspora. These exchanges were fueled by Deng Xiaoping’s Open Door Policy (announced in 1978) and by the increasing economic ties among China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the rest of the world. After a few successful international tours in the 1980s of productions such as Huang Zuolin’s *The Story of Bloody Hands* (*Xie-shou ji*, Shanghai Kun Opera Company) and Wu Hsing-kuo’s *Kingdom of Desire* (*Yuwang chengguo*, Taiwan’s Contemporary Legend Theatre), both inspired by *Macbeth*, the complexity of Chinese-opera styles was increasingly regarded by the performers and their sponsors not as an obstacle but as an asset in creating an international demand for visual creativity.

Chinese-opera performers were not the only ones experimenting with Shakespeare and expanding the repertoire of Chinese theater. Both at home and abroad, directors and performers of *huaju* and other theatrical genres have deployed *xiqu* elements in their works, although they tend to

privilege *jingju*—among the many Chinese-opera forms—as the representative genre. Ariane Mnouchkine’s *Richard II* (Paris, 1981) and Ong’s *LEAR* appropriated traditional Chinese and Japanese theaters. William Huizhu Sun and Fan Yisong codirected an English-language *jingju Othello* at the “Shakespeare Through Beijing Opera Workshop” at Tufts University in 1994.³⁶ Tracy Chung directed an English-language *jingju The Taming of the Shrew* at Denison University in 2003 as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar-in-Residence.³⁷ While English-language Chinese opera as a hybrid form is not new, these productions introduced an alien theater form to American audiences through both a local language (English) and a “local” playwright (Shakespeare).³⁸ The additional purchase gained through the rhetorically created unfamiliarity of Chinese opera helped to offset the potentially disorienting experience. Chinese opera has also been used in other types of productions. In Taipei, a rock musical version of *The Taming of the Shrew* titled *Kiss Me Nana* (*Wenwo ba Nana*, 1995) was staged in 1997 (contrary to what the title suggests, it had no relation to Cole Porter’s *Kiss Me Kate*). The production incorporated Chinese-opera techniques, cross-dressing, modern dance, and rock music. Ta-lung’s (Petruchio) servants become three androgynous acrobats tumbling *jingju* style on stage.³⁹

Beyond Chinese opera, performances of Shakespeare that involve China at their center of imagination frequently highlight linguistic differences. Languages served as markers of ethnic differences in a bilingual Taiwanese–Mandarin *Romeo and Juliet* at the Shakespeare in Taipei festival in 2003.⁴⁰ The Montagues and the Capulets are each assigned a different language, complicating the experience of artists in the Chinese diaspora and the play’s capacity as a national allegory. Key scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* were staged in two plays-within-a-play in Ning Caishen’s *Romeo and Zhu Yingtai*, directed by He Nian and produced by the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center (May 2008), in which French, Japanese, English, and Mandarin Chinese were spoken. In what Ning called “a tragedy told in comic manners,” the star-crossed lovers traversed 1937 Shanghai and present-day New York in search of new personal and cultural identities. Other bilingual or multilingual performances have taken place in the Chinese and Asian diaspora. The Pan Asian Repertory Theatre staged a bilingual Mandarin–English *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (New York, 1983) directed by Tisa Chang, in which Mandarin was reserved for kings, queens, and Puck, while other characters spoke mainly English except in moments of stress.⁴¹ British-Chinese director David Tse’s futuristic Mandarin–English *King Lear* reframed the epistemological gap between Lear and Cordelia



FIGURE 2 Matt McCooey (Edmund) and Daniel York (Edgar) duel in the Mandarin-English *King Lear*, directed by David Tse, Stratford, 2006. (Courtesy of Yin Xuefeng and Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center)

in linguistic difference. Part of the Royal Shakespeare Company's (RSC) Complete Works Festival (2006–2007), the production traveled to Shanghai, Chongqing, Stratford-upon-Avon, and other cities in Great Britain.⁴² With British-Asian performers from Tse's London-based theater company, Yellow Earth (founded in 1995), and performers from the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center, the production embodied the anxieties of diasporic artists. Regan and Goneril spoke fluent and elegant Chinese, but Cordelia—a member of the Chinese diaspora—spoke no Chinese and could say only *meiyou* (nothing). The idea of China was also symbolized in Tse's use of Chinese opera. The highly stylized duel between Edgar and Edmund was staged to *jingju* percussion beats (figure 2). Here Chinese opera functioned in a way similar to the video-game rhythm and music of RSC's *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Nancy Meckler during the same season, providing a symbolic space for violence in productions that reframed Shakespeare's plays in contemporary settings.

Between 1839, when Shakespeare was part of a war of ideology, and the present time, when Chinese Shakespeares have become a vital force in many cultural locations, the distance between world cultures has shrunk (because of colonialism and globalization) and grown (because of war and misunderstanding). These intercultural readings continue to fascinate.

When performed in non-Anglophone countries in the twenty-first century, Shakespeare no longer seems to be “talking to himself” but has become “the substance of a global conversation.”⁴³ Chinese Shakespeares contain some of the most interesting parts of these conversations.

Coda

There are three coexisting modes to engage ideas of China and Shakespeare. First, a trend to universalize rather than localize Shakespeare has produced plays performed “straight,” with visual and textual citations of what was perceived to be authoritative classical performances (such as Laurence Olivier’s versions). Early performances in Shanghai tended to follow this pattern. If the play seems foreign, according to advocates of this approach, that only guarantees its aesthetics have been preserved in a way that benefits the audience.

A second trend, to localize the plot, setting, and meanings of a play, assimilates Shakespeare into the fabric of local worldviews and representational practices. An example is Bu Wancang’s *A Spray of Plum Blossom*. At the heart of this approach is a moral evaluation of the utility of the ideas contained in literature and arts—local or foreign. In nineteenth-century China, the motives for using Shakespeare’s name to construct the Chinese dream of modernity was detached from Shakespeare’s texts and attached to the perceived ethical insights of the modern represented by Shakespeare. Sufficiently familiar and valuable to local communities, Shakespeare’s texts have been cited in varied ways by politicians and other cultural celebrities in mainland China and Taiwan, where there is no English heritage. Some Shakespeare allusions emphasized the moral lessons allegedly contained in the plays; others invoked a sense of cultural belonging and a shared recognition of values that were in an unspecified sense “universal” in the public life. On December 2, 1992, Jiang Zemin, then chairman of the Central Military Commission of the People’s Republic of China, quoted from *Timon of Athens*, a play known to CCP cadres through Karl Marx’s writing, during his address to the People’s Liberation Army officers at the National Defense University:

TIMON: Gold? Yellow, glittering, precious gold? . . .

Thus much of this will make black white, foul fair,

Wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant. (4.3.26–29)

Jiang urged the cadres to heed the lesson about the corrupting power of money in order to remain loyal and useful members of the party.⁴⁴ In March 1999, Chinese premier Zhu Rongji used *The Merchant of Venice* to endorse the legitimacy of market law for post-Deng Xiaoping China, glossing over the ontological, religious, racial, and ethical implications of the contract of a pound of flesh.⁴⁵ In November 2006, Taiwan's premier, Su Tseng-chang, quoted *Julius Caesar* at length to demonstrate his loyal support for President Chen Shui-bian, who was at the center of a political storm.⁴⁶ When other politicians responded enthusiastically by quoting other parts of the play to argue for or against Su's proposal, a highly allegorical discussion of *Julius Caesar* and Taiwan ensued.

The third tendency has prompted artists to truncate and rewrite Shakespeare's plays so as to relate them to images of China. An example is Lao She's "New Hamlet." Such a re-creation is deconstructive in the sense that it focuses on multiply determined localities in a polycentric world. Similar works from other parts of Asia have been hailed as "welcome developments" and as a liberating "free" form (pastiche or multilingual theater).⁴⁷ In the Chinese context, although such rewriting may be a means to counter stereotypical construction of local and foreign cultures, they do not always translate into effective resistance of the authority of Shakespeare and Chinese cultural forms. As retro as "straight" performances (the first trend) may seem, they do not always succumb to the perceived textual authorities as the artists embracing the third approach tend to argue. Although English-speaking audiences recognize the otherness or alternativeness of Chinese Shakespearean performances, many of these performances are far from alternative. They are commercially successful and regarded as mainstream productions in their local communities. Fredric Jameson's critique of the monopoly of late capitalism leads some scholars to hold a more pessimistic view of the interpretive capacity of commercially successful intercultural performances because, as they argue, these works often institutionalize cultural differences.⁴⁸ It may not always be the case. Each of the three approaches has produced interpretations that effectively complicate the conventions of authenticity and authority claims.

Underlying my study are three related lines of inquiry united by what might be called locality criticism—that is, analyses that focus on shifting localities that cluster around the artists, their works, and their audiences. The case studies in this volume examine the interplay between the locality where authenticity and intentionality is derived and the locality where

differences emerge, as evidenced by the works of intellectuals, theater artists, filmmakers, and writers, such as Lin Shu (Lin Qinnan, 1852–1924), Lu Xun (Zhou Shuren, 1881–1936), Liang Qichao (1873–1929), Lao She (Shu Qingchun, 1899–1966), Huang Zuolin (1906–1994), Li Jianwu (1906–1986), Ruan Lingyu (1910–1935), Jiao Juyin (1905–1975), Yevgeniya Konstantinovna Lipkovskaya (1902–1990), Stan Lai (Lai Sheng-chuan, b. 1954), and Wu Hsing-kuo (b. 1953). Given the complexity of this cultural history, it is important not to lose sight of the temporally and geographically expansive patterns of cross-cultural engagement. Therefore, the opening chapter, “Owning Chinese Shakespeares,” pursues the critical concept of localization and critiques the fidelity-derived discourse about cultural ownership. How were Chinese Shakespeares used as a kind of staged utopia of modernity?

Part of the answer to this question is found in chapter 2, in which I investigate the varied and often paradoxical cultural logics of constructing a hypercanonical presence of Englishness in China in the absence of Shakespeare’s texts from the first Opium War in 1839 to the turn of the century. Leading Chinese thinkers valorized Shakespeare *before* any of his plays were translated or performed in Chinese. Liang Qichao wrote a play, *New Rome (Xin Luoma)*, that featured Shakespeare as a character; Lu Xun, Xu Zhimo, and other writers searched in vain for a “Chinese Shakespeare,” a national cultural figure; and reformers turned “Shakespeare” into a fiction of moral space in which they found a ready home. In the twofold defamiliarization of Shakespeare and China, utopian visions of universal figures of modernity (Shakespearean or Chinese) were used to construct cultural and political worthiness. While largely written out of the master narrative of cultural history, the patterns of these early encounters are part of the multiply influenced local Shakespeare tradition that emerged after 1900. Chapter 3 takes stock of the rapidly stretching ripples of these encounters in the early twentieth century, when translation was turned into ethical acts of interpretation. Shakespeare and his plays were useful imported cultural packages that facilitated visions of a new China in relation to the ongoing cultural reform. This moralistic and allegorical mode of reading has influenced the next generation of readers in the mid-twentieth century, but Lin Shu’s and Lao She’s works have been side-stepped by the paradigm of evolutionary model in the field.⁴⁹

The rhetorical strategies to articulate a cultural modernity also defined the transformation of the “new woman.” Chapter 4 analyzes the roles of women and urban elites in the construction of the usefulness of

Shakespeare in naturalist theater and silent films of the 1930s and 1940s. These works bear the traces of the shifting gender hierarchy and the anxieties of Western influence and, in the process, overlook the racial issues that have come to define Anglo-European productions and criticism of such plays as *The Merchant of Venice*. The new woman's movement is central to the self-identity of China's cosmopolitan urbanites and their imagination of Shakespeare's women characters.⁵⁰ The hopeful yet unattainable gaze directed at Shakespeare's ambiguous Western values was replaced by an intensified interest in the cosmopolitan identity of China's urban centers, which leads us to the question of historicity. Chapter 5 addresses the intricate interplay between presentism and historicism through a comparative analysis of Jiao Juyin's *Hamlet*, staged in a Confucian temple in 1942; Wu Ningkun's reading of *Hamlet* in a labor camp during the Cultural Revolution; and a purportedly apolitical Soviet–Chinese production of *Much Ado About Nothing* (premiered in 1957 and revived in 1961 and 1979).⁵¹ In all these cases, locality and the site of reading played major roles in the interpretation of Chinese history and Shakespeare. In the case of the Soviet–Chinese venture, although the influence of the well-known Russian tradition of filming such Shakespearean plays as *King Lear* and *Hamlet* is not immediately evident, the Stanislavskian method and Soviet ideologies helped Chinese theater artists to find a safe text.

That text acquired more diverse meanings in the next decade. Chapter 6 examines the ways in which the visual currency of Chinese opera and Shakespeare's textual authority were imagined, visualized, and consumed since the 1980s, a decade that saw a boom of *xiqu* Shakespeare performances and a revived interest in, if not obsession with, the ocular dimension of interculturalism. *Xiqu* has frequently been seen as an antithesis to *huaju*. I argue to the contrary; modern *xiqu* theater has always been a hybrid form of representation, incorporating idioms and styles from other traditions, including *huaju*. This chapter also touches on colorblind casting in China, an issue rarely discussed by theater historians. Chapter 7 delineates the theoretical and political consequences of disowning “Shakespeare” and “China” in the present time. Part of the question of consequence necessarily remains open-ended, as international circumstances continue to change. However, a number of new trends in performance since 1990 have gained momentum. Stan Lai's *Lear and the Thirty-seven-fold Practice of a Bodhisattva* (*Pusa zhi sanshiqi zhong xiuxing zhi Li'er wang*) and Wu Hsing-kuo's *Lear Is Here* (*Li'er zaici*) exemplify performances that are framed by the artists' autobiography and religious

discourse. They signal the arrival of a new Asian identity in the global marketplace of cultures. The grand narrative of East meets West now coexists with an account of the living, contemporary directors' personal engagement with Shakespeare, and with new but equally elusive categories such as "I" and "Shakespeare." The epilogue tackles the ramifications of these new modes of inscribing temporally and visually ambiguous articulations of Shakespeare and China into a global vernacular in theater (Lin Zhaohua's *Richard III*) and cinema (Feng Xiaogang's *The Banquet*). A paradox of infatuation with Asian visuality and rejection of ethnic authenticity emerged in the asymmetrical cultural flows.

It is my hope that *Chinese Shakespeares'* localization of the meanings of Shakespeare and China will break down the critical impasse surrounding cross-cultural entanglements, a crucial step toward reinventing the interpretive energy that has been dulled by ideological investments in various conventions of authenticity informed by notions of the original and the derivative. The scholarship that seeks to cross borders loses its intellectual punch when it is able to consider only one perspective, or when it merely seeks to add to, say, the already long list of Shakespeare's global reincarnations. It is important that Chinese Shakespeares as a new interpretive subject be analyzed so as to dislodge what China means and how Shakespeare is customarily interpreted, because multilocation perspectives bring to light the unpredictable and exciting fabric of cultural life that rarely conforms to institutional divisions of knowledge production. This displacement is necessary to keep roads passable and bridges open between different forms of cultural production and knowledge.

Notes

Prologue

1. Ernest Brennecke, *Shakespeare in Germany, 1590–1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 5–6; Simon Williams, *Shakespeare on the German Stage*, vol. 1, *1586–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 27–45; William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Harold Jenkins (London: Methuen, 1982), 118–22.

2. Graham Holderness, introduction to *The Al-Hamlet Summit: A Political Arabsque*, by Sulayman Al-Bassam (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2006), 9. The English sailors' performances of *Hamlet* on September 5 and *Richard II* on September 30, 1607, were recorded in Captain William Keeling's journals. The performance of *Hamlet* was mentioned by Frederick Boas in 1923 and Ania Loomba in 1997 but not dealt with in depth until 2001 by Gary Taylor. *The East India Company Journals of Captain William Keeling and Master Thomas Bonner, 1615–1617*, ed. M. Stachan and B. Penrose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 24; Frederick S. Boas, *Shakespeare and the Universities and Other Studies in Elizabethan Drama* (New York: Appleton, 1923), 95; Ania Loomba, "Shakespearean Transformations," in *Shakespeare and National Culture*, ed. John J. Joughin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 111; Gary Taylor, "Hamlet in Africa 1607," in *Travel Knowledge: European "Discoveries" in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna G. Singh (London: Palgrave, 2001), 223–48; E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930) 2:334–35; "Excerpts from the Journals of John Hearne and William Finch,

Merchants, Aboard the *Red Dragon* in 1607, en route from England to India,” reprinted with annotations by Gary Taylor, in *Travel Knowledge*, ed. Kamps and Jyotsna, 211–22.

3. “Actors and directors are no longer regarded as betrayers and violators of Shakespeare’s sacred texts, but are treated with respect, even deference, by academics” (Robert Shaughnessy, *The Shakespeare Effect: A History of Twentieth-Century Performance* [New York: Palgrave, 2002], 5). Stephen Greenblatt used the phrase “the dream of the master text” to critique the urge to “link certain admired scripts to a single known playwright” (general introduction to *The Norton Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean Howard, and Katherine Maus [New York: Norton, 2008], 67–72).

4. Scholars and journalists have recently named a number of English writers as potent and palpable rivals of Shakespeare’s global fame, including Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, and Samuel Beckett. Governments also compete for primacy on the global stage through cultural celebrities. Norway declared 2006 “The Year of Ibsen” and sponsored various festivals and conferences throughout the world, including a series of stage productions, radio and television shows, and a new Ibsen documentary film in Dakka, Bangladesh, in May 2006. The Bangladesh Ibsen Society was founded the next month. The year 2006, the centennial of Samuel Beckett’s birth, also witnessed festivals, symposia, performances, and exhibits around the world. Dickens has a theme park dedicated to him in Chatham, England (Dickens World). Reporting on the release of British actress Emma Campbell Webster’s *Lost in Austen: Create Your Own Jane Austen Adventure*, an interactive fiction game with the reader as the main character, David Gates writes, “Austen is the Virginia Woolf of 2007: a certifiably great novelist starring in books and films, yet one who might go to the same manicurist as you. Shakespeare and Dickens were pop-culture entertainers in centuries past, but as familiar as they remain, they’ve sunk into venerability” (“True or False: Jane Austen Outsell Alice Walker and Ann Coulter,” *Newsweek*, June 23, 2007, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/19390924/>). According to statistics, Austen, Tolkien, and Hardy ranked among the most borrowed classic authors in public libraries in Britain from 1991 to 2003, beating Shakespeare in every year. One of the possible interpretations of this data is that Shakespeare has been so fully incorporated into the British education and public life that most readers own copies of his plays and did not need to use the library. Marjorie Perloff, “Presidential Address 2006: It Must Change,” *PMLA* 122, no. 3 (2007): 652–62; Chung Shin-jyh, “Cong Nanya kan Ibusen” [Ibsen Commemorated in South Asia], *Xiju xuekan* [Taipei Theater Journal] 4 (2006): 145–53; for the statistics, Annika Bautz, *The Reception of Jane Austen and Walter Scott: A Comparative Longitudinal Study* (London: Continuum, 2007), 131.

5. Among many popular narratives in the American media, see “China’s Century,” *Newsweek*, May 9, 2005.

6. In the twenty-first century, even those Shakespearean plays that express a distinctively Renaissance notion of social hierarchy continue to fascinate audiences “otherwise long ago seduced by the rival claims of middle-class social realism, of post-modern minimalism or of sheer escapism” (Michael Dobson,

introduction to *Performing Shakespeare's Tragedies Today: The Actor's Perspective*, ed. Michael Dobson [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 1).

7. For example, Ariane Mnouchkine (b. 1939) appropriated both Shakespeare and Asian representational practices (*jingju*, kabuki, *nō*, *kathakali*) in Théâtre du Soleil works such as *Richard II*, *Henry IV Part I*, and *Twelfth Night* in the 1980s. Her interculturalism in these high-profile productions has attracted both praise and criticism. Dennis Kennedy, for example, finds her “tasty oriental Shakespeare” and the “enormous cultural dislocation” problematic (“Afterword: Shakespearean Orientalism,” in *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance*, ed. Dennis Kennedy [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993], 294). Dominique Goy-Blanquet, meanwhile, justifies Mnouchkine’s approach in “Shakespearean History at the Avignon Festival,” in *Shakespeare's History Plays*, ed. Ton Hoenselaars (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 228–43.

8. Kenneth S. Rothwell, *A History of Shakespeare on Screen: A Century of Film and Television*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 51; Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Pimlico, 1999), 235.

9. Victor Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” trans. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 1988), 16–30.

10. Throughout this study, the term “globalization” refers to the global dissemination and circulation of cultural goods and what Pierre Bourdieu has termed “cultural capital” (*Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984], 2, and *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson [New York: Columbia University Press, 1993]). Although those in possession of the cultural capital may not recognize its value in the same way as those who do not, it played a major role in mobilizing the asymmetrical cultural flows around the globe. See also Fredric Jameson, preface to *The Cultures of Globalization*, ed. Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), xi.

11. Ong Keng Sen, personal interview, Singapore, August 8, 2007.

12. Nicolas Standaert, “The Transmission of Renaissance Culture in Seventeenth-Century China,” in *Asian Travel in the Renaissance*, ed. Daniel Carey (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 42–66.

13. Lord Macartney’s mission has emerged as a major issue in recent studies of imperialism. James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), and *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003), 156–92; Lydia Liu, *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

14. Evert Ysbrants Ides, ambassador of Russia, and his secretary, Adam Brand (d. 1713), each recorded their experiences. Their journals were translated into English in the eighteenth century and into Chinese in modern times. Evert Ysbrants Ides, *Three Years Travels from Moscow Over-land to China* (London: W. Freeman,

J. Walthoe, T. Newborough, J. Nicholson, and R. Parker, 1706); Adam Brand, *A Journal of the Embassy from Their Majesties John and Peter Alexievitz, Emperors of Muscovy over Land into China* (London: D. Brown and T. Goodwin, 1698).

15. Claudia Schnurmann, “Wherever profit leads us, to every sea and shore . . .”: The VOC, the WIC, and Dutch Methods of Globalization in the Seventeenth Century,” *Renaissance Studies* 17 (2003): 474–93; Robert Markley, *The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600–1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 64, 70–79.

16. Li Tiangang, ed., *Da Qing diguo chengshi yinxiang* [*Impressions of Nineteenth-Century Chinese Cities, Allom's Painting*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), 144.

17. Theodore Hutters, *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 3.

18. After seeing Bottom's transformation, he says: “Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee! Thou art translated” (3.1.118–19).

19. Often lauded as a theatrical integration of multiple art forms and choreographed gesture, *xiqu* theater is commonly known as Chinese opera in the West. The word “opera” in the translation reflects a concept based on Richard Wagner's idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a total artwork of music, dance, poetic, and dramatic arts. However, Chinese opera is not an accurate translation. Wang Guowei (1877–1927) defines *xiqu* as a theater in which “stories [are] imparted by singing and dancing” (“Xiqu kaoyuan” [The Origin of Traditional Theater], *Wang Guowei xiqu lunwen ji* [*Collected Essays on Drama by Wang Guowei*] [Taipei: Liren shuju, 1993], 233). As Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak and Trevor Hay define it, “literally [meaning] theatre of sung-verse, . . . *xiqu* actually represents a complex, multifaceted conception that defies the use of a simple translation” (*Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre*, ed. Samuel L. Leiter, 2 vols. [Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2007], 2:853).

20. It further states: “[I]t is hoped [the play] may be received as the stray leaves of a Jerusalem hearty-joke. To which are added a description of the costume and the whole of the stage business” (Francis Talfourd, *Shylock; or, The Merchant of Venice Preserved* [London: Lacy, 1853]).

21. Barbara Mittler, “Defy(N)ing Modernity: Women in Shanghai's Early News-Media (1872–1915),” *Jindai Zhongguo funü shi yanjiu* [*Research on Women in Modern Chinese History*] 11 (2003): 215–60; Sun Huimin, “Minguo shiqi de nü lüshi (1927–1949)” [Women Lawyers in Shanghai in Republican China (1927–1949)] (paper presented at the XVth Biennial Conference of the European Association of Chinese Studies, Heidelberg, August 25–29, 2004).

22. Emi Sui'in, “Osero,” *Bungei Kurabu* 9, no. 3 (1903).

23. The Japanese play was adapted by Lu Jingruo as *Spring Dream* (*Chun meng*) and staged in Chinese by the Spring Willow Society in China, a group founded by Chinese students studying in Tokyo in 1906. Zheng Zhengqiu, ed., “Xiyang xinju” [New Western Plays], in *Xinju kaozheng baichu* [*Studies of One Hundred New Plays*] (Shanghai: Zhonghua tushu jicheng gongsi, 1919), 24; Ayako Kano, *Acting Like a Woman in Modern Japan: Theater, Gender, and Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 107; Siyuan Liu, “Adaptation as Appropriation: Staging Western

Drama in the First Western-Style Theatres in Japan and China," *Theatre Journal* 59, no. 3 (2007): 411–29.

24. Marshall Johnson, "Making Time: Historic Preservation and the Space of Nationality," in *New Asian Marxisms*, ed. Tani E. Barlow (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002), 105–71; Leo T. S. Ching, *Becoming "Japanese": Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

25. Both the Japanese colonial government and the early Chinese Nationalist regime made it a priority to assimilate Taiwanese society culturally, as evidenced by the Japanization campaign (Kominka or *huangminhua yundong*, 1937–1945) during the colonial period, the KMT-led national language (Mandarin) campaign, and the anti-Communist movement in the 1950s and 1970s.

26. Carl T. Smith, "The Hong Kong Amateur Dramatic Club and Its Predecessors," *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of Royal Asiatic Society* 22 (1982): 218.

27. Dorothy Wong, "'Domination by Consent': A Study of Shakespeare in Hong Kong," in *Colonizer and Colonized*, ed. Theo D'haen and Patricia Krüs (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 43–56; Ng Lun Ngai-ha, *Interactions of East and West: Development of Public Education in Early Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1984), 74.

28. Dorothy Wong, "Shakespeare in a Hong Kong Frame," in *Shakespeare Global/Local: The Hong Kong Imaginary in Transcultural Production*, ed. Kwok-kan Tam, Andrew Parkin, and Terry Siu-han Yip (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2002), 63.

29. Kwok-kan Tam, Andrew Parkin, and Terry siu-han Yip, eds., preface to *Shakespeare Global/Local*, ed. Tam, Parkin, and Yip, ix.

30. Semicolonialism and semifeudalism are part of the Chinese Communist rhetoric deployed to signal the oppressive structures in China. Semicolony (*ban zhimindi*) was used by Mao Zedong and other Chinese Communists to describe late-nineteenth-century Chinese social formation in the shadow of Anglo-European imperialism. Shanghai, for example, was not under complete colonial domination or claim of sovereignty by the nations that had fractured colonial presence in the concessions. Recent scholarship has problematized such a dichotomized view of the dynamics of late Qing and early Republican Chinese society. Mao Zedong, "Zhongguo geming yu Zhongguo gongchandang" [Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party], in *Mao Zedong xuanji* [Selected Writings of Mao Zedong], ed. Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1967), 589; Xia Xiaohong, *Wan Qing nüxing yu jindai Zhongguo* [Late Qing Women and Modern China] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2004), 1–6; Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 31, 34–36.

31. Adele Lee, "One Husband Too Many and the Problem of Postcolonial Hong Kong," in *Shakespeare in Hollywood, Asia, and Cyberspace*, ed. Alexa Huang and Charles Ross (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2009); Yong Li Lan, "Romeo and Juliets, Local/Global," in *Shakespeare's Local Habitations*, ed. R. S. White and Krystyna Courtney (Poland: Lodz University Press, 2009).

32. *A Time to Love* (*Qingren jie*) starred Zhao Wei as Hou Jia and Lu Yi as Qu Ran; it is based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and An Dun's *Endless Shakespeare* (*Zhi wujin de Shashibiya*).

33. For a discussion of *The Banquet* (*Yeyan*), see the epilogue. Featuring an all-Tibetan cast, *The Prince of the Himalayas* (*Ximalaya wangzi*) was screened at the AFI Los Angeles Film Festival, Palm Spring Festival, Adelaide Festival, and elsewhere.

34. *Killing the Elder Brother and Snatching the Sister-in-Law* (*Sha xiong duo sao*) was performed in 1914 by the Ya'an Chuanju Company.

35. *A Pound of Flesh* (*Yi bang rou*) was written in 1925 by Wang Fucheng. *Qinqiang*, or Shaanxi opera, is one of the oldest forms of Chinese opera, originating in the Qin dynasty (221–207 B.C.). The Custom Renewal Society (*Yisu she*) was founded on August 13, 1912. Its constitution stipulated that the mission of the society was to “produce and stage both new and classical traditional Chinese theater works, to supplement social education through theater, and to [modernize and] change the local custom through dramatic works.” Wang Fucheng, “*Yi bang rou*” [*A Pound of Flesh*], in *Qinqiang: Shaanxi chuantong jumu huibian* [*Qinqiang Opera: A Compendium of Shaanxi Traditional Theater Repertoire*] (Xi'an: Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture, 1959), 23:9023–108.

36. Faye Chunfang Fei and William Huizhu Sun, “*Othello* and Beijing Opera: Appropriation as a Two-Way Street,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 50, no. 1 (2006): 120–33.

37. For its American reception, see Lisa J. McDonnell, “Begin the Beijing: Shakespeare's *Shrew* in Jingju,” in *Staging Shakespeare: Essays in Honor of Alan C. Dessen*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin and Miranda Johnson-Haddad (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 199–226.

38. Daniel Yang and Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak have promoted English *jingju* in university contexts in the United States.

39. *Kiss Me Nana* (*Wen wo ba Nana*), directed by Liang Zhimin (James Chi-min Liang), Godot Theatre Company, toured various cities in Taiwan from August 1 to December 19, 1997; it was revived in May 1999. The production targeted an audience under the age of thirty. Chang Yusheng, a pop star in Taiwan, composed and led the musical performance. For an in-depth review in English, see Nanette Jaynes, “Taming the Taiwanese Shrew: *Kiss Me Nana* at the Godot Theatre,” in *Shakespeare Yearbook*, ed. Holger Klein and Michele Marrapodi (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999), 10:490–505.

40. The experimental production, originally designed for a small theater space (with Shakespeare's setting retained), was subsequently revised to become *Yumei and Tianlai* (*Yumei yu Tianlai*) for a major stage in Taipei in 2004.

41. Mell Gussow, “A ‘Dream’ Set in China,” *New York Times*, April 20, 1983, and “The Many Visions of Shakespeare's ‘Dream,’” *New York Times*, January 17, 1988. The Pan Asian Repertory Theatre's artistic and producing director, Tisa Chang, discusses her philosophy in “Sustaining the Project,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 38, no. 2 (1994): 64–71.

42. The production starred Zhou Yemang (Lear), a Chinese movie star, and incorporated video and music. Alexa Huang, “Review of David Tse's *King Lear*,”

Shakespeare: The Journal of the British Shakespeare Association 3, no. 2 (2007): 239–42.

43. Holderness, introduction to *Al-Hamlet Summit*, by Al-Bassam, 19.

44. “Jiang Zemin guanxin Guofang Daxue peiyang gao suzhi xinxing junshi rencai” [Jiang Zemin’s Addresses to National Defense University], CCTV International, December 5, 2002, <http://www.cctv.com/news/china/20021205/100064.shtml> (accessed June 2008).

45. Zhu Rongji referred to the story of *A Pound of Flesh*, which he read in high school, when responding to a question about the bankruptcy of China’s Guangdong International Trust and Investment Corporation (GITIC). Zhu went into such details as the three thousand ducats that Antonio borrows from Shylock. Since 1978, a line-by-line translation of the courtroom scene of *The Merchant of Venice* has been part of the standard high-school curriculum in China. Zhu warned: “Although these days if you fail to repay debts, you will not face the risk of losing one pound of flesh, creditors will not let you go easily” (“Interview with Reporters,” *China Daily*, March 16, 1999). For the play in Chinese textbooks, see Meng Xianqiang, *Zhongguo Sha xue jianshi* [*A Concise History of Shakespeare Studies in China*] (Changchun: Dongbei shifan daxue chubanshe, 1994), 48.

46. Chen’s son-in-law, the first lady, and other members of his family and entourage were indicted for corruption and forgery.

47. For example, Poonam Trivedi finds Royston Abel’s bilingual *Othello: A Play in Black and White* (1999) to be a powerful assertion of “postcolonial confidence to cut, critique, and rewrite the text of Shakespeare” (introduction to *India’s Shakespeare: Translation, Interpretation, and Performance*, ed. Poonam Trivedi and Dennis Bartholomeusz [Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005], 18). Abel’s production won “the best entry prize at the Edinburgh festival.”

48. Dennis Kennedy, “Shakespeare and the Global Spectator,” *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 131 (1995): 50–64.

49. Among the many examples is such a statement as “Lin’s classical Chinese translations of Western works of fiction were a joke. Especially unforgivable is his prose translation of Shakespeare’s plays” (Zhu Chuanyu, *Tan fanyi* [*On Translation*] [Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1973], 17).

50. American culture of the same period has also witnessed a tremendous anxiety over the female body in public display, as evidenced by the controversy over *Cleopatra*, directed by Cecil B. DeMille in 1934 (Claudette Colbert as Cleopatra).

51. The presentist inclination of reading the present into the past has arguably given rise to some timeless and universal classics such as Shakespeare. These canonical works are said to be ahead of their times; many premodern works are said to be postmodern in design. Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes take one step further and argue that “we can never . . . evade the present. If it’s always and only the present that makes the past speak, it speaks always and only to” ourselves and about ourselves (“Introduction: Presenting Presentism,” in *Presentist Shakespeares* [London: Routledge, 2007], 5).