Multicultural Shakespeare:
Translation, Appropriation and Performance vol. 29 (44), 2024
https://doi.org/10.18778/2083-8530.29.13

Book Reviews

Bao Huiyi 包慧怡. *Mirror Maze: The World of Shakespeare's Sonnets*《镜迷宫：莎士比亚十四行诗的世界》. Shanghai: East China Normal University Press, 2023. Pp. 1520.

Reviewed by ***Lin Weijian****

In 2018, Bao Huiyi delivered a lecture on Shakespeare and poetry in Yueyue Bookstore, Shanghai, which later turned out to be a two-year project on teaching Shakespeare and his sonnets via audio courses. Her years of reading and teaching Shakespeare finally prompted the publication of《镜迷宫：莎士比亚十四行诗的世界》[*Mirror Maze: The World of Shakespeare's Sonnets*] (2023), a comprehensive literary encyclopedia conducting a detailed word-to-word analysis of the sonnets written in reader-friendly language, and at the same time providing a useful synthesis of the necessary historical context for understanding the sequence. In this book, Bao combines literary commentary with a review of the current translations, not only interpreting the sonnets to help the readers see the active intellectual society that generates the sonnets, but also leading the readers to cross the linguistic barriers themselves so that they might approach the sonnets as closely as possible. By doing so, Bao produces a literary guidebook into Shakespeare's sonnets not only for scholars from relevant fields, but more importantly, for Chinese readers—however limited their knowledge of sonnets and of the English language might be—who are ready to treasure this particular English golden treasury.

This pocket-sized work is divided into six volumes each titled by a line from a sonnet in that volume, with Sonnets 1 to 21 in volume 1, 22 to 49 in volume 2, 50 to 76 in volume 3, 77 to 104 in volume 4, 105 to 130 in volume 5, and 131 to 154 in volume 6. Bao does not adopt the common categorization of the sequence as the Fair Youth subsequence and the Dark Lady subsequence but

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categorizes it into six themes, namely *carpe diem* poems, metapoems, metaphysical poems, naturalist poems, love poems, and mock love poems (26-27). This thematic categorization, though as Bao herself acknowledges, is "subjective and rough" (27, my translation), serves as an efficient agent for beginners to understand sonnets in a broader scope. Nevertheless, one has to know that this is not to say Bao neglects the two narratives of the Fair Youth and the Dark Lady. Rather, she keeps the unfolding of the narratives always in mind throughout the six volumes.

In addition, all the sonnets are presented with a "title" or "keyword" that best captures the theme of the sonnet—for example, Sonnet 10 is accurately named "Building" despite the absence of the keyword itself in the sonnet. The naming of Sonnet 10 is certainly not arbitrary, as Bao convincingly proves how the latter part of the sonnet uses a series of architectural jargon to establish the connection between suicidal infertility and the demolishment of a house. Also, Bao enhances the effectiveness of the keyword by a typological examination of how the image of "house" is conceived as representing a family in the Bible (116), thus skillfully drawing together the connotation expressed in the keyword, the content of the sonnet, and the overall persuasion pursued by *carpe diem* poems. In her interpretation of Sonnet 10, Bao makes a keen observation on the phonic threads within the alliteration of *roof* with *ruinate* and *repair*, extending her analyses to every aspect of reading poetry. Such attentive spirit of "Every word counts" could also be found in her careful numerological examination of 12 in Sonnet 20 "The Violet," 6 in Sonnet 66 "Weariness," the sonnets that are the multiples of 7, and the like.

As for her categorization of the sonnets, *carpe diem* poems are the first group appearing for the readers, and the only group that appears continuously from Sonnets 1 to 17, rather than being scattered around the sequence. Before the formal interpretation of Sonnet 1 is "The Preface," where Bao specifically explains her motivation in renaming the first 17 sonnets from "procreation poems" to "*carpe diem* poems," claiming that the persuasion to procreate is only the surface theme of this category, while deep within the sonnets there lies a strong concern of perishable beauty threatened by the grim time. Citing both Horace's *Odes* and Genesis, Bao begins her interpretation with how Shakespeare deviates both from the classical epicurean *carpe diem* theme and the Christian doctrine by appealing to the readers to seize the day, "not for fun" (35), nor for an heir that "might bear his memory," but for that "beauty's rose might never die" (36). This interconnection of youth, heir, and beauty is satisfactorily traced in all her analyses of the *carpe diem* poems. For instance, in her interpretation of Sonnet 5 "Distillation," Bao insightfully observes the bridges between the constant circulation of life and death in which beauty could only remain still by being distilled through procreative work.

The widely known Sonnet 18 "A Summer's Day" marks the beginning of the second category, the metapoems which include 25 poems scattered throughout the sequence from 18 to 106.[1] Bao defines metapoems as poems "searching for permanency" (26) and "discussing the arts of poetry, or dealing with the themes or other aspects of writing poetry" by "a self-inspection in the meaning, motive, process, and technique of composing poetry" (191). In this sense, it is exactly because Sonnet 18, for the first time in the sequence, offers poetry as an alternative to procreation in sustaining beauty that this sonnet is categorized as a metapoem. The rest of the metapoems express similar themes. For example, in Sonnet 19 "Time," Bao focuses on examining the poet's confidence in using poetry to fight against Time's consuming energy, while in Sonnet 23 "To Hear with Eyes," Bao (239) examines how the poet expresses the limitation of human language.

Sonnet 22 "Exchange of Heart" is the first love poem that appears in the sequence.[2] In this category, Bao uses a rich variety of ways to approach how Shakespeare deals with the inner play of love and desire. Among the many impressive analyses, it is Bao's genre study of how Shakespeare interweaves the traditional love theme with other literary genres that most attracts the readers. For example, there is a comparative study of Sonnet 27 "Looking on Darkness," extracts of *Romeo and Juliet,* and *The Canterbury Tales* in order to show how Shakespeare wields sacramental vocabulary to sanctify love (279). Also, Bao (289) relocates Sonnet 29 "The Lark" in a medieval complaint/plaint poetry tradition as an expression of unfulfilled love. Or, from the perspective of influence study, Bao (313) sees Sonnet 30 "Elegy" as a middle point that has come all the way from Anglo-Saxon poetry and will continue in modernist works such as Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* and its English version *Remembrance of Things Past* by C. K Scott Moncrieff.

Bao's focus on the genre is not limited by her categorization of the sequence when she specifically points out that elegy also functions lyrically in metaphysical poems[3] such as Sonnet 31 "The Tomb." Bao's analysis of Sonnet 31 focuses on the literary motif of death and how it is expressed in metaphysical fashions in the sequence. The comparison of the present lover to the tomb of the past lovers is seen as a conceit that explores the life and death of love in an elegiac tone (319). While fully acknowledging the fact that Shakespeare is now not seen as a metaphysical poet, Bao (248) still endorses her

[1] Metapoems include Sonnets 18 to 21, 23, 32, 37 and 38, 49, 55, 59 and 60, 63, 65, 76 to 79, 81 to 83, 85, 100 and 101, 103, and 106,

[2] Love poems include Sonnets 22, 27 to 30, 35 and 36, 39, 56 to 58, 61 and 62, 66, 71 to 75, 92, 97, 108 to 110, 115 and 116, 122, 125, 126, and 145.

[3] Metaphysical poems include Sonnets 24, 26, 31, 33 and 34, 43 to 48, 50 to 53, 64, 86, 104 and 105, 107, 111, 113 and 114, 118 and 119, 121, 123 and 124, 141, 146, 148, 151, 153, and 154.

claim that 34 of the sonnets in the sequence are metaphysical—or proto-metaphysical as she cites Helen Gardner's work *Metaphysical Poets*—since they manifest basic characteristics of metaphysical poetry in their confident display of abundant knowledge of fundamental elements of the world, astrology, alchemy, calendar, navigation, botany, and the like.

This proves to be a daring and arduous path because, by treating these sonnets as metaphysical poems, one has to possess an equal amount of knowledge in order to form a sufficient interpretation. Nevertheless, Bao has successfully shown her capability as a metaphysical critic when, for example, she discusses in detail the *aspect* as an astrological term in Sonnet 26 "Courtly Love" (269), or when she talks about how alchemy structures Sonnet 33 "The Sun" through a series of alchemical vocabularies such as *gilding* and *base* (341), or when in Sonnets 44 and 45 "The Elements" she subtly points out the correlation among the four elements, the four colors of the Minor Arcanas, and the four parts of human emotions and characteristics (453-454).

This Shakespearean erudition revives the long-gone world for the readers, striking a perfect balance between academic rigor and reading pleasure. Such a width of knowledge reaches its climax in the next category—the naturalist poems.[4] By definition, this category refers to poems that are not simply about nature, but are studying nature deeply—the plants, the animals, or the scenery. Its original Chinese name "博物" (literally, knowing and learning all sorts of things) also displays such an inquisitive spirit. In her analysis of Sonnet 26 "The Marigold," the first naturalist poem in the sequence, Bao exhibits a vast store of knowledge. Starting from Thomas Hyll's *The Profitable Arte of Gardening* published in 1563, Bao (258) puts with clarity how marigolds come to represent pursuers suffering the fate of desertion in various botanic documents, and how Shakespeare derives his image of marigolds both from the documents before mentioned and from Ovid.

Such a comparative method not only demands a large grasp of the first-hand materials that the Bard was reading at the time, but also requires the interpreter to become a naturalist like the Bard himself so that the interpreter could identify the rhetoric hidden in the poetic manipulation of ordinary-life objects. Examples like these are numerous: The interpretation of Sonnet 68 "Map and Wig" is a combination of Bao's own research on medieval T-O *mappa mundi* with interesting historical anecdotes of the Queen and her favorites (666), while that of Sonnet 87 "The Bonds" provides a detailed list of the history of the bonds as a financial product to help illustrate the relationship between the narrator and the Fair Youth (853).

[4] Naturalist poems include Sonnets 25, 54, 67 to 70, 80, 84, 87 and 88, 91, 94 to 96, 98 and 99, 102, 112, and 120.

The final category is mock love poems, which deal with the dark side of desire and appear mostly in the Dark Lady subsequence.[5] Bao's analyses of these poems first focus on how the negative emotions are lyrically expressed, then move on to discuss how the narrative unfolds itself from the Fair Youth subsequence to the Dark Lady subsequence. It is worth mentioning that her analysis itself becomes a poetic endeavor when Bao (421) writes "the narrator… staggering and swirling in love and loss, trying to find balance in imbalance" after counting the frequency of *loss* and *love* (as well as their variations) in Sonnet 42 "The Art of Loss." In her discussion of the Dark Lady subsequence beginning from Sonnet 127, Bao provides a comprehensive synopsis of current research concerning the identity of the Dark Lady (1257), the depressing rhetoric of lust (1265), the down-to-earth but often-criticized vulgarity in polysemes such as the *will* (1323-1325), and the self-desertion put into a confessional tradition (1483-1484). In an excellent concluding note for the Dark Lady subsequence, Bao claims that the Dark Lady subsequence, like the Fair Youth subsequence, is one unalienable part of the discourse for knowing the self-portrayal of the poet in love, and a universal love lyric the poet prepares for the world.

Overall, Bao's reading of Shakespeare's sonnets includes exhaustive textual analyses and concrete bibliographical studies, focusing not only on the sources of particular poetic images that inspire the Bard, but also on how they are uniquely adapted in both his sequence and plays. Subtle variants in different manuscripts and the editing history are also taken into account to draw a greater picture of the authorial conception in the process of composition, and analyses of these are often convincingly accompanied by an in-depth etymological review. Also, for many of the sonnets, Bao encloses abundant illustrations concerning the subject matter, thus creating a vivid and pleasant reading experience.

Therefore, it is safe to conclude that *Mirror Maze: The World of Shakespeare's Sonnets* is rich in materials, comprehensive in scope, insightful in analyses, and serves a great pedagogical purpose for the study of Shakespeare, and for evoking public interest in this renowned English poet. More importantly, having already presented the sequence bilingually, Bao (27) would often provide her own translation to the key lines for "accurate representation of puns, metaphors or allusions." As a result, this book is friendly to Chinese readers of any linguistic level, and is able to lead them to appreciate the beauty of the sonnets in two languages. Besides, this book makes a strong case for teaching sonnets in China by exhibiting perfect equilibrium in a general introduction of elementary poetic techniques and a line-to-line close reading.

Teaching Shakespeare in a non-English-speaking environment is bound to be a cross-cultural investment (Chiu 129), but there is no doubt that both

[5] Mock love poems include Sonnets 40 to 42, 89 and 90, 93, 117, 127 to 140, 142 to 144, 147, 149, 150, and 152.

Bao's efforts in Yueyue Bookstore and in this monograph are fruitful and promising. Just as Bao writes on the back cover that "Loving Shakespeare is the beginning of a life-long journey of romance," Bao's work shows readers the capability of Shakespearean romance, and at the same time leads them to become part of this romance.

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Jane Kingsley-Smith, and W. Reginald Rampone Jr. (eds.), *Shakespeare's Global Sonnets: Translation, Appropriation, Performance*. Global Shakespeares. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023. Pp. Xx+417.

Reviewed by ***Xiaoye Dong****

Jane Kingsley-Smith and W. Reginald Rampone Jr.'s *Shakespeare's Global Sonnets: Translation, Appropriation, Performance* (2023) is a collection in the Global Shakespeares series, which explores Shakespeare's global influence and adaptation in the 20th and 21st centuries. "The global has exposed the 'constructed' nature of the 'universal' as an accident of history and an introduction of political regions" (Trivedi, Chakravarti, and Motohashi, 4). As the word "global" denotes, this inclusive and intriguing collection covers 22 scholars' academic papers from 15 countries, showcasing the current researches on Shakespeare's sonnets in 19 countries and regions such as Italy, China, and India, which demonstrates the interpretation and relocation of literary classics in shifting historical and political circumstances. The editors categorize the papers under three topics: translation, performance, and globalization. Before the three parts in "Shakespeare's Global Sonnets: An Introduction," W. Reginald Rampone Jr. reclaims the crucial position of Shakespeare's sonnets in the dramatist's creations and in British literature and then summarizes some representative collected papers.

The first part, "Global Translations: Defining the Nation, Refining Poetry" introduces the travel and translation history of Shakespeare's sonnets in different countries from a cross-regional point, as well as the creative translation strategies adopted by translators with various historical, social, and cultural backgrounds. The in-between nature of translation creates new and multifaceted meanings; therefore, the translation of Shakespeare's sonnets, while promoting the study of literary classics and the development of sonnets, enriches the literature of the target language and flings an array of impacts on the poetic language and literary creation of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Jane Kingsley-Smith's "'Mine Is Another Voyage:' Global Encounters with Shakespeare's Sonnets" comprehensively presents the history of Shakespeare's plays and poetry spreading in a worldwide range to analogize the

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circulation of Shakespeare's sonnets and that of his dramas, and to disclose the reception history of Shakespearean sonnets. Line Cottegnies's "The Rival Poet and the Literary Tradition: Translating Shakespeare's Sonnets in French" lists a translation timeline of Shakespeare's sonnets in France from the perspectives of literary history and cultural study over the past 200 years. Allison L. Steenson and Luca Trissino's "A Stylistic Analysis of Montale's Version of Sonnet 33: Translation, Petrarchism and Innovation in Modern Italian Poetry" is a typical case of literary translation, which carefully analyzes the meaning of Sonnet 33 and Montale's translation process. Valerio de Scarpis's "Addressing Complexity: Variants and the Challenge of Rendering Shakespeare's Sonnet 138 into Italian" gives full play to the rhetorical details of Sonnet 138 to testify that Shakespeare revised his sonnets by himself in his latter life. This paper usefully discusses the differences between the existing versions of this sonnet and the reasons for its rich and versatile interpretations. Bálint Szele's "'Far from Variation or Quick Change:' Classical and New Translations of Shakespeare's Sonnets in Hungary" outlines the translation history of Shakespeare's sonnets in Hungary. Melih Levi's "Sonnets in Turkish: Shakespeare's Syllables, Halman's Syllabics" maintains that Talat Said Halman reconsiders and rearranges meter, foot and other rhythmic features when translating Shakespeare's sonnets into Turkish. Anne Sophie Refskou and Tabish Khair's "New Words: Language and Shakespeare's Sonnets in the Global South" deals with Shakespeare's sonnets translation into Bangla, Malayalam, Brazilian Portuguese and other non-anglican languages in the Southern sphere. Reiko Oya's "The Pauper Prince Translates Shakespeare's Sonnets: Ken'ichi Yoshida and the Poetics/Politics of Post-war Japan" tackles the Japanese translation of Shakespeare's sonnets in the reciprocity of poetics and politics. Alexa Alice Joubin's "Translational Agency in Liang Shiqiu's Vernacular Sonnets" investigates the Chinese translation of Shakespeare's sonnets and contends that Chinese and English belong to quite divergent language families whose poetry evinces distinct linguistic, poetic and symbolic patterns. Therefore, English-Chinese conversion poses more challenges than translating English into other Indo-European languages.

With its prolific contents, the first part of the collection pinpoints the issues of the translation of Shakespeare's sonnets all around the world. The translation strategies undergo some common processes of evolution. Initially, translators mainly follow the form and structure of the original work, but the translation effect in terms of imagery, diction, rhetoric, and emotional expressions is unsatisfactory; henceforth, translators of the 20th century are much more influenced by modern linguistics and contemporary translations in emphasizing poetic complexity and adopting alterations in translation strategies. Based on comparative prosody, translators' convergence of Shakespearean traits and native ones molds national characteristics, which accelerates the poetic revolution in their own countries and stimulates the variety of languages and

cultures in a vast panorama. Furthermore, scholars argue that the main difficulties in translating Shakespeare's sonnets include their autobiographical nature, the mysterious identity or identities of "you," complex narrative clues, homosexual consciousness, etc. "Poetry translation presents a very particular gendered dilemma" (Spîsiaková 52). The gender attitudes of narrators and implied authors convey covert meanings, which inspire translation agency. Translating strategies also denote creative purposes. Yoshida resorts to different second person pronouns to distinguish Shakespeare's views on the young man from the ones on the dark lady whom he overtly disgusts. Comparably, Liang Shiqiu uses neutral pronouns to show the fluidity and ambiguity of poetic meanings. Involving as many countries as possible is one of the major contributions of this book.

The anti-imperial and postcolonial stance offers a certain breadth to Shakespeare study. Refskou and Khair concentrate on the language and symbolic representation of racial issues in poetic translation, and put forward the intertextuality between Shakespeare's sonnets and national literature in the examples including Indian Nobel winner, Rabindranath Tagore, Malayalam critic and writer K. Satchidandan, Caribbean writer Una Marson, Brazilian writer Geraldo Carneiro, and others with their translation changing their writing conversely. It is worth mentioning that female, mix-raced, Canadian English writer Sonnet L'Abbé integrates cross regional, cross racial, and cross linguistic features to her feminist rewriting of Shakespeare's sonnets, which renders an incremental gender orientation to the original sonnets. Oya relates linguistic features with social and historical factors and believes that in the context of rapid democratization of Japanese society in the late 1940s, Yoshida's translation to some extent devises a new scheme for contemporary Japanese literature and the westernization of Japanese culture. Identically, Liang's employing classical Chinese as target language in the context of advocating modern vernacular Chinese, reflects his elitist stance and humanistic position, which affirms again that translation mirrors its contemporary social and historical context.

The second part, "Sonnets in Performance: Theatre, Film and Music" is an adaptation of Shakespeare's sonnets in the fields of drama, film, and music from a cross media eye to elaborate the presentation of sound, color, and action in sonnet performance. Filip Krajník and David Drozd's "Playing the Poems: Five Faces of Shakespeare's Sonnets on Czech Stages" juxtaposes five dramatic adaptations and performances of Shakespeare's sonnets in the Czech Republic in the new millennium to inquire the intrinsic dramatic quality of Shakespeare's non-dramatic works. Márta Minier's "'Not [...] for the Faint Hearted:' Volcano Theatre's *L.O.V. E.* as a Physical Theatre Adaptation of Shakespeare's Sonnets" displays a challenging and radical dramatic adaptation of Shakespeare's sonnets by a Welsh experimental theater troupe in 1987 to continuously dig up sexual issues. Jim Ellis's "Homoerotic Counter-Mythology in Derek Jarman's *The*

Angelic Conversation" also pursues the study of homosexuality. Jarman's adaptation of Shakespeare's sonnets in 1985 brings about a latent concern of marginality, including women, Blacks and gays. Nely Keinänen and Jussi Lehtonen's "Institutions of Love and Death: Shakespeare's Sonnets in Elderly Care Facilities," a case study of performing Shakespeare's sonnets in a nursing home in Finland, foregrounds the connection between sonnets and current life. Manfred Pfister's "'Music to Hear...' from Shakespeare to Stravinsky" builds a bridge between history and the present as well as between poetry and music based on the interpretations of Igor Stravinsky's musical adaptation of Shakespeare's sonnets. In the article "William Shakespeare's Sonnets in Russian Music: Traditions—Genres—Forms," Stefan Weiss analyzes musical treatment of poetic emotions. Weiss divides the adaptation of Shakespeare's sonnets in Russia into two periods: Shakespeare's sonnets in Russian and Soviet art song traditions (1900-1970) and the ones in Soviet pop music (1970-1990) to reveal that during World War II, the Soviet government began to accept British culture because of their allied relations, and not until 1974 did sonnet performances become popular. Mike Ingham's contribution "'Moody Food of Us that Trade in Love': Re-Mediations of Shakespeare's Sonnets in Popular Music" illuminates Rufus Wainwright's and Paul Kelly's respective adaptations of Shakespeare's sonnets to popular music.

The cross-media congruence of Shakespeare's sonnets and performance broadens Shakespeare study in the digital age and powerfully promotes their ongoing popularity and influence. First, the collection pioneers new points of view. Feminism dramatizes the dialogue between the poet, the young man, the dark lady, and the audience to bring about the knotty issue on the relationship of complex sexuality. Experimental plays go further by poignantly staging kissing between male characters and the intimate interaction between actors and the audience, which break traditional theatrical conventions and challenge the audience's habitual cognition. Second, the juxtaposition of dramatic scenes including imaginative encounters of Shakespeare and his rewriters or the intertextuality of original versions and adaptations registers multi-faceted self-reflective engagements of desires or politics. Third, it is found that with enormous infectious power, Shakespeare's sonnets can provide entertainment and achieve practical effects such as treating diseases. In addition, elderly people and patients understand Shakespeare's themes of love, loss, and death deeply. Another provocative suggestion is that Shakespeare's sonnets share similarities with both highbrow and popular music, especially hip-hop because rap is closer to oral expression than most other genres. The qualities of melody and rhythm are shared by both music and sonnets. It is the backgrounds of their respective creations, the intertextuality of their hypertexts, as well as the inherent qualities discovered in their sources that make the musical adaptation possible. What's more, musical cultures or actual circumstances mold composers' and nations'

political obsession. The popular features of theatre, film, and music endow Shakespeare's sonnets with a worldwide and profound impact. This section observes the far-reaching dissemination of Shakespeare's sonnets, but a regret is the lack of Asian performance, which is inconsistent with reality. In fact, "Shakespeare has a large audience and a huge performance market in Asia" (Wang 16). Researches on the Asian performance of Shakespeare's sonnets will greatly fuel their global influence.

The third part, "Global Issues in the Sonnets" takes readers into an interdisciplinary realm. Sophie Chiari's "'O'er Green My Bad' (Sonnet 112): Nature Writing in the Sonnets" analyzes Shakespeare's sonnets from the perspective of ecological crises. Through the topics of pain, crises, loss, and decline of love, the paper discovers the affinity between the fair young man and plants for they both require cultivation. Duncan Salkeld's "Black Luce and Sonnets 127-154" combs the tradition of Shakespeare researches on the "connection between black and beauty" and examines the identity of Black Luce. Simona Laghi's "Shakespeare's Sonnets in the ELT Classroom: The Paradox of Early Modern Beauty and Twenty-First Century Social Media" and Katalin Schober's "Pop Sonnets: The Interplay Between Shakespeare's Sonnets and Popular Music in English Language Teaching" take Italy and Germany as examples to probe the role of Shakespeare's sonnets in English language teaching. Walter Cohen's "Afterword: Around the World in 154 Poems, or, How to Do Things with Shakespeare's Sonnets" deploys J. L. Austin's theory of performative utterances to demonstrate how Shakespeare, as a symbol representing history and tradition, revitalizes contemporary life.

The third part provides readers with a wide-ranging vision to appreciate Shakespeare's sonnets and to discover how powerfully they affect literary paradigms and alter readers' presumption of social issues on gender, culture, class, and so on. Images express themes. Ecological studies indicate the inherent disharmony between nature and market to stress that self-interest, money, and ambition envisioned in nature imagery destruct natural beauty and point to the "black pastoral" tendency of the sonnets. Shakespeare's understanding of beauty is complex as well. His portrayal of a series of black images mirrors the influence of colonial fantasy—white men are predators, while black women become prey. Imagery may become the sources for discrimination, and students should be guided to ponder on the significance of life, friendship, love and be vigilant against social stereotypes. The Renaissance discourse on beauty and identity exposed in Shakespeare's sonnets resonates with today's conceptions. The scholars also innovate the pedagogical methods of sonnets to enhance students' understanding and analytical abilities to improve their sensitivity to others' situations or to decode various modes of meanings.

It is concluded that this collection of essays "is a diverse global understanding of 'Shakespeare's Language'" (141) with a wide range of content

and groundbreaking research perspectives. “When Shakespeare enters into the global era, his companions are the inheritors of cross-cultural communication” (Chiu, 134-135). The book reconsiders Shakespeare’s sonnets in a cross-regional, intermedial, interdisciplinary, multilingual, and multicultural background whose scholarly achievements enrich, expand, supplement, and challenge current researches, changing audiences’ understanding of sonnets, especially on the topics of translation, cross media dissemination, and pedagogy of Shakespeare’s sonnets in non-English speaking countries. Overall, the highly innovative and inspiring book is expected to change the way that people read, study, and teach Shakespeare’s sonnets in a global age.

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Cheng Li, *A Narratological Study of Shakespearean Drama*. Chengdu: Bashu Publishing House, 2021. Pp. 285.

Reviewed by ***Yao Yao****

A Narratological Study of Shakespearean Drama by associate professor Cheng Li from Sichuan University of Arts and Sciences, is a pioneering work in China which employs narratology to make a comprehensive study of Shakespeare's plays. By applying the narratological theories and methods, the book analyzes all 37 of Shakespeare's plays, which helps to enrich Shakespearean studies with a fresh perspective. Along the way Cheng explores the intriguing trend of "Sinicization" in the field of narratology.

In the first edition of Gerald Prince's *A Dictionary of Narratology*, there is an important note that narrative is a form of "recounting," indicating narrative's adherence to the principle of "pastness." This idea fundamentally differs from the immediacy of dramatic performances. However, in the subsequent 2003 edition of *A Dictionary of Narratology*, Prince removed this restriction, which demonstrated his further reflection on the principle of past narration. Interestingly, Chinese narrative has always defied this constraint. As Zhao Yiheng pointed out, "Chinese temporal form relies on adverbs such as the one meaning 'once upon a time,' rather than permeating almost all sentences in the entire text. As a result, Chinese novels and dramas, though exhibiting many distinctions, share a common absence of tense" (3). In this sense, *A Narratological Study of Shakespearean Drama*, with its adoption of a narratological perspective, is a significant departure from conventional practices.

In the preface to the "Shakespeare Studies Series" which he was invited to write, Peter Holbrook expressed his hope for the Western Shakespearean researchers to learn from their Chinese counterparts, who place Shakespeare within the broader context of world literature, thus allowing for an exploration of how Shakespeare, as a part of world literature, connects with non-English literary and artistic traditions (qtd. in Yang, 168). Yang Lingui noted that this reflects two fundamental characteristics of Chinese Shakespearean scholarship: "(1) affirming the positive and active value of the classics while acknowledging their limitations, and (2) conducting cross-cultural analyses of Shakespeare's

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works, aiming to open up broader channels for intertextual and gradual interactions between Chinese and Western literature and culture" (168). Cheng Li's *A Narratological Study of Shakespearean Drama* has exemplified these characteristics. Through creative transformations and applications of narrative theory, it facilitates a profound dialogue between Chinese and Western Shakespearean studies based on linguistic characteristics and cultural differences, thereby unveiling the artistic value of Shakespeare's plays in Chinese cultural contexts and promoting the construction of a localized Shakespearean system.

The book is organized into seven chapters, each focused on a unique facet of Shakespearean drama. It introduces the dimensions of time, space, structure, plot, character, subject, and level of Shakespearean drama narration, showcasing Shakespeare's superb narrative artistry.

Chapter One discusses the temporal dimension of Shakespeare's plays. It categorizes and analyzes the widely distributed time designators in Shakespeare's plays, including "chronometric chronyms" (direct time markers) and "figurative chronyms" (customs and background events), as well as "explicit chronyms" (physical time) and "pseudo-chronyms" (time that exists in fantasy plots or differs greatly from reality). The chapter shows the flexibility and diversity in Shakespeare's expression of time by analyzing his treatment of time from three aspects: length deformation, sequence displacement, and frequency. Aware of the difference between drama and novels, the chapter notes that the "break" between acts and scenes in drama, as an implied ellipsis, is the most common form of length deformation in Shakespeare's plays. It also finds that time span, as a unique form of length deformation, is widely used in Shakespeare's plays to balance plot density. The sequencing of events in the plays is not always chronological; instead, it is adjusted through retrospection and foreshadowing to alleviate boredom. And because drama has a fixed structural pattern, such as a recurring narrative of scenes at the beginning of each act, "multi-event multi-narration" often coexists with "summary" as a form of length deformation. What's more, time sometimes appears symbolically as an allegorical character and becomes an important structural factor that highlights the significance of time.

Chapter Two discusses the spatial dimensions within Shakespeare's plays. The chapter argues that drama values spatial narration and, through its analysis of spatial narration in drama, challenges the Western inclination to prioritize time over space in storytelling. The discussion is divided into spiritual space narration and physical space narration. It asserts that Shakespeare's spiritual space is linked to characters' speech, especially soliloquies, as well as dialogues and asides, which reflect characters' mental states. Physical space refers to the setting where the story takes place in the text. It is maintained that Shakespeare's plays are presented through four levels of fictional space narration, with overlapping of levels contributing to the complexity of the plays' spatial narration. The first level includes the indication of the drama title, introduction of characters, and explanation of location. The second level narrates

actions and stories of characters outside the story, including a type of narration similar to the "shuchang," the traditional Chinese storytelling stage. The author calls this fictional space "pseudo-shuchang," where the "storyteller" and "spectator" interact. The third level is almost equivalent to the "scene" of drama and has the characteristic of "immediacy." The fourth level contains narrations of "play within a play," "past" and "future," and "supernatural realms." Additionally, the chapter underscores the "articulation" in Shakespeare's plays—the phenomenon of pause and transition of story scenes, manifested in the explanation of characters' entry and exit, for instance. This chapter also explores ideal, supernatural, and night spaces in Shakespeare's plays, revealing Shakespeare's ways of expressing human desires, driving plots, shaping character traits, etc.

Chapter Three examines the structural dimension of Shakespearean plays. The chapter argues that the genre of drama necessitates a rigorous and intricate structure due to its constraints, and the four structures—"play within a play," circular, religious, and internal narrative—exemplify the drama's feature and demonstrate the sophistication of Shakespearean plays. The author believes that Shakespeare skillfully employs the "play within a play" technique in various ways. When illustrating that the circular structure is often considered the pinnacle of literary structures, the chapter cites Qian Zhongshu as an example. The analysis of the circular and religious structures in Shakespearean drama reveals how they are related to Shakespeare's humanistic and religious ideas. It is particularly examined how these structures manifest in the form of "happy ending" of legendary dramas and the "sin-judgment-redemption" structure in comedies and tragedies. The chapter also analyzes the internal narrative structure centered on the "web weaver," who is often an evil character and assumes the crucial role in driving the plot and determining the fate of characters.

Chapters Four and Five analyze the plot and character in Shakespearean plays, respectively. Chapter Four contends that Shakespearean plots are enriched and enlivened by artistic techniques such as suspense, foreshadowing, coincidences, and misunderstandings. It elucidates that suspense in Shakespearean plays often runs through the entire plot, creating a string of interconnected and advancing events. Foreshadowing, a common device in these plays either obviously or subtly, are expressed through diverse means such as dialogue, dream sequences, illusions, prophetic visions, omens, atmosphere, chants, and lyrics. The chapter further posits that coincidences in these works can be either deliberately made or accidental, occasionally appearing in overlapping or combined forms. Misunderstandings, on the other hand, can induce either comedic or tragic outcomes and are sometimes recurrently embedded within the plot. Both coincidences and misunderstandings can occur simultaneously. Then, the blending of sorrow and joy, coupled with intertextuality, reflect the aesthetic features and allure of Shakespearean plots. Chapter Five demonstrates the characters' clear

"functional" tendency in Shakespearean plays. The "functional" tendency of characters is exemplified in the following ways: characters who primarily engage in dialogue, those described by narrators, plot explainers, and Chorus, as well as those who actively participate in the events of the play, all serve to advance and connect the plot while their inner world and character traits remain unexplored. The chapter asserts that since drama often presents narratives objectively, character portrayal in Shakespearean plays is often indirect. The chapter reveals how the subversion of gender norms and the binary understanding of men and women are accomplished through gender "performance." Notably, this critique is exemplified primarily through "cross-dressing," where women dress as men or take on male roles in the plays, achieving a feminist critique.

Chapter Six explains narrative subjects in Shakespearean plays. The chapter categorizes Shakespearean narrative subjects based on their implicit or explicit states. Implicit narrators are backstage narrators, with stage directions serving as one of the five evidence types of their existence. Explicit narrators include both heterodiegetic and homodiegetic narrators, with the former being outside the story and the latter being characters within the story. The chapter also analyzes two types of narrator intervention in Shakespearean plays. Guiding intervention follows a clear pattern, similar to the Chinese transitional phrase in chapter novel, "to know what happens next, please listen to the next episode," which is a way to engage the audience or reader. Guiding intervention is reflected in stage directions and paratexts. Commenting intervention, the second type, is widespread in Shakespearean plays, extending to the title, stage directions, character introduction, and the narration by both heterodiegetic and homodiegetic narrators. The receivers of the narration are also classified according to the implicit or explicit states. The chapter contends that the emergence of the author's "personae" is a result of the fragmentation of the narrative subject. Characters serve as embodiments of the author, as if the author has assumed various personae to enter the plot. This chapter posits that in Shakespearean drama, both singular and plural "personae" coexist. The use of the plural form implies that multiple "personae" appear in unison to serve a specific ideology. This chapter elaborates on three aspects of realizing authorial subjectivity by associating "personae" with concerns about self, others, and history.

Chapter Seven analyzes the concept of narrative levels in Shakespearean plays. It adopts Zhao Yiheng's criteria and principles for narrative stratification, i.e. through switching between characters and narrators, with higher-level characters becoming lower-level narrators. The chapter contends that the intricacy of the narrative strata in Shakespeare's works rivals that of novels, encompassing no fewer than four distinct levels. They are: main narrative level (such as character dialogue and monologue), sub-narrative level (such as play within a play), over-narrative level (such as stage directions and asides), and over-over narrative level (backstage narrator's narration). The stratification

achieves effects such as giving an entity to the next-level narrator. For instance, the over-over narrative level provides a narrator for the over-narrative level. Moreover, stratification turns the upper narrative level into a means of commentary, and allows characters to express the unspeakable. The chapter further explores various "cross-level" narratives in the plays that transcend the spatial and temporal boundaries of the narrative world.

A Narratological Study of Shakespearean Drama applies narrative theory to Shakespeare's plays and reveals the Bard's mastery of narrative art to us. All the way through the exploration, the author notes the characteristics of the dramatic genre, seamlessly integrating narrative research with drama. Such an integration expands the boundaries of narrative research and sheds new light on the narrative techniques employed in Shakespeare's works. This innovative research has the potential to revolutionize our understanding of Shakespearean drama. Besides, the author incorporates traditional Chinese narratives and aesthetic sensibilities into comparison, thus promoting the "Sinicization" and "localization" of narrative and Shakespearean studies.

If there are any shortcomings, it is that the author's use of narrative theory for analysis falls short of surpassing the traditional analysis of predecessors in some parts. For example, the author's analysis of Iago did not go beyond Spivack's analysis through tracing the Vice. According to Spivack, "Between the emotions Iago says he feels and Iago himself throughout the play there exists a profound disjunction in mood; between his provocations, as he describes them, and the actual premises of his behavior there is a profound discrepancy in logic" (16). Regarding what ultimately causes Iago to do all those vicious things, Spivack believes that it is not out of "resentment or jealousy, or any other motive that [one] can think of in conventional humanity" (22). He thinks that Iago is transformed from the Vice in medieval English morality plays, explaining that:

> a figure out of another, older world is being naturalized into the drama of the Renaissance, and part of the process is to array him in new garments of the prevailing cut. Iago's resentments and his jealousies are, in fact, just such motives as a dramatist might employ to refashion into tragic naturalism a stock figure out of an archaic dramatic convention that had no use for the conventional incitement of human life. (16)

Cheng Li's critique focuses on Iago as the weaver of an intangible web of evil which forms the underlying narrative structure. He generally posits that this character represents evil forces and reveals the grim reality of the era, while bringing out Shakespeare's humanistic aspirations. However, Cheng Li's analysis overlooks the rich tradition of the Vice character in drama and neglects to acknowledge the split between Iago's actions and psychology. This oversight leaves room for further probing.

Likewise, the author's analysis of Portia did not transcend the achievements of female critique. It is maintained by Zeng Yanbing that the cross-dressing by female characters in Shakespearean plays, especially in his comedies, is a tribute to love and femininity which extols the power of love and commends women's intelligence, competence, bravery, wit, purity, loyalty, gentleness, and determination (Zeng 110-113). However, it is important to recognize that the author's male perspective lies beneath the praise. Liu Fang, for example, pointed out that under the influence of the author's gender, Portia's love view is portrayed as compromising with the male position and conforming to male psychology (88). Cheng Li also examined Portia's decision to cross-dress as a subconscious affirmation of the superiority of men in society, but he went no further than arguing that her adept performance as a man is just fleeting and she remains confined within the cage of the power discourse. Cheng Li overlooks the fact that the playwright's representation is itself a manifestation of the patriarchal cultural model.

These flaws aside, the author has made a great attempt on the Sinicization of narrative theory and the construction of a localized Shakespearean system, and has made huge contributions to the conversation between Chinese and Western scholarship. The book's exploration of subject and narrative levels represents breakthroughs both in narratological research and in Shakespearean studies; many of the arguments are ground-breaking.

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Reviewed by ***Min Jiao****

As a world classic, Shakespeare's plays have been the subject of scholarly examination in China for nearly two centuries. Among various artistic forms, theatre is more likely to be disseminated worldwide across linguistic and national boundaries (Wang 3). Previously, Ruru Li already discussed the layers of "filtration" in China's adaptation of Shakespeare and examines how these filters have reflected the ever-evolving dynamics of Chinese politics, society, and culture (Tang 334). Nevertheless, research specifically focusing on Shakespeare's plays on the Chinese drama stage (*huaju*[1] stage) is insufficient, and this gap in the existing literature has been addressed by Sun Yanna's *Shakespeares on the Chinese Huaju Stage.* Sun's book takes the element of time as the main clue, and fuses academic research with stage practice. Through an investigation of the transmutation process of Shakespeare's plays on the Chinese *huaju* stage, the objective of the book is to elucidate the optimal approach for facilitating cultural exchange. Concurrently, the book also offers a comprehensive examination of the differences and similarities observed in Shakespearean productions on the Chinese stage throughout many historical epochs, which functions as a theoretical and practical basis for the advancement of contemporary Chinese theatre.

In Sun's book, Shakespeare's reception on the Chinese stage is classified into six distinct historical periods: civilized drama (1899-1918), early drama (1919-1930), wartime drama (1931-1948), "seventeen years" drama (1949-1966), new era drama (1977-1989), and diversified drama (1990-2021). The book centers on the examination of stage performance style, character development, plot structure, presentation of thematic themes, and aesthetic performance approaches. The employed research methodologies encompass bibliographical research, interpretation and analysis of play texts, play reviews,

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[1] *Huaju* can be literally translated as "plays in dialogue and monologue." It is used to distinguish a new style of drama/theatre from that of traditional Chinese drama/theatre, represented by Beijing Opera, which features singing, dancing and movement of actors on the stage to the accompaniment of music.

and performance videos. Additionally, a historical review is conducted to categorize the analysis into distinct time periods and comparative research is employed to illuminate the similarities and differences in attitudes and reception towards Shakespeare and his plays across different historical epochs. This analysis delineates the evolution of Shakespearean plays on the Chinese stage, encompassing its progression from cultural translation and imitation to cultural weaponization. The book also traces the shift from cultural realism to cultural exploration and adaptation, encapsulating the entire process of cultural exchange. It begins with the initial stage of perceptual awareness, advances towards cultural understanding, and culminates in perceptual sublimation.

Chapter One, "Shakespeare and *Wenming* Drama (1899-1918):[2] **Culture Translation,"** traces the origin of Chinese *huaju* back to 1907, when Chun Yang Drama Society performed an adaptation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, with the awareness that the precise origin of Chinese *huaju* is a controversial issue. This adapted play presented by Chun Yang Drama Society in Chinese marked the first drama performed on Chinese soil, which qualifies it as the first *wenming* drama. Then, in 1912, Tianxiao Bao presented a theatrical rendition of Shakespeare's renowned play, *The Merchant of Venice*, under the title *Woman Lawyer*. This adaption featured an all-female cast. In this adaption, the practice of cross-dressing in Shakespeare was not only a means of celebrating love and the concept of new woman, but also a weapon to expose the dark aspects of society and patriarchal centrism (Zeng 104). *Woman Lawyer* was performed by the Theatre Society Association, which was founded in 1914 by merging six Chinese theatre clubs. During this period, twenty Shakespearean plays, including *Pericles*, *Macbeth*, *As You Like It*, *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *King Lear*, *Cymbeline*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Middle Summer Night's Dream*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, and *Othello*, were performed on the Chinese stage, most of which predominantly relied on the text translations by Shu Lin, as compiled in his work titled *Yin Bian Yan Yv* (Lamb and Lamb).

Chapter Two, "Shakespeare and Early Theatre (1919-1930): Cultural Imitation" introduces the evolving perceptions on the roles of drama in the social context of revolution and anti-feudalism. Advocates of the New Culture Movement, a movement committed to promoting democracy and science, believed that the inelegant plot and monotonous performances commonly found in traditional Chinese theater impeded the dissemination of revolutionary aspirations. Radical theater reformers even held that Western drama was a significant instrument for their agenda. Therefore, the translation and examination of classic Western literary works began to gain significant

[2] *Wenming* Drama can be translated literally as "civilized" drama, an earlier term for Chinese *huaju* drama.

popularity, thereby establishing a strong basis for the development of contemporary Chinese *huaju* in terms of performance theory and playwriting. Notable translators in this context include Shiqiu Liang and Han Tian. In May 1930, *The Merchant of Venice* was staged by the Shanghai Theatre Association under the direction of Yunwei Ying, with Zhongyi Gu's translation serving as the script. Although the staging and craftsmanship were on full display, traces of cultural imitation were discernible. The introduction of Shakespeare's plays into China holds cultural and historical significance primarily in terms of their impact on the dramatic landscape of China, rather than their role in conveying the philosophy of modern China. The incorporation of the theatrical aesthetics of Shakespearean plays, even on a superficial level, is a notable progression in the Chinese *huaju*'s historical development.

Chapter Three "Shakespeare and Wartime Theatre (1931-1948): Cultural Weapon" holds that Chinese *huaju* experienced a significant transformation in this period. This transformation involved a change from being primarily a cultural movement to being a revolutionary one. Additionally, there was a transition from amateur to professional status, as well as a shift from targeting urban to rural audiences. During this period, the realistic approach gained prominence, surpassing the notion of "art for art's sake." The primary objective of the translated plays was to engender a sense of anti-Japanese sentiment and foster patriotic enthusiasm throughout the populace. Prominent staging of Shakespearean plays in this period include Shanghai Amateur Experimental Theatre Society's staging of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1937, which explicitly embraced the Stanislavski theory as a performance model for the troupe, and focused on the realist approach. *Romeo and Juliet* was interpreted as depicting the burning off of the feudalistic shackles by the flame of youthful passion, hence a notable example of realist theatre with an anti-feudalism motif. During this period, the National Theatre Academy, presided over by Shangyuan Yu, consistently advocated the study of Shakespearean drama as its core curriculum. Each class of graduates was obligated to present a report performance on a Shakespearean play. This practice helped to enhance the quality of theatrical performances in China through the medium of Shakespearean drama. The plays staged include *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *Othello*. Subsequently, during the period of Japan's occupation of Shanghai, Jianwu Li adapted two Shakespearean plays, *Macbeth* and *Othello*. Li's adaptations revealed his attempts to localize Shakespearean plays within the Chinese context. In his adaptation of *Macbeth,* Li set the play within the historical context of the Five Dynasties period (about 902-979 AD) in China, and incorporated into the play key Confucian principles such as loyalty, filial piety, and righteousness, as well as elements from traditional Yuanqu Opera, such as the themes of "searching for the orphans" and "rescuing the orphans"

to align with the prevailing values and aesthetic sensibilities of the Chinese audience during that era.

Chapter Four "Shakespeare and Seventeen-year *Huaju*: Cultural Realism (1949-1966)" introduces the changing scenario of Shakespearean drama following the founding of the People's Republic of China. Shakespeare was introduced to China in a more systematic manner after 1954, leading to a more frequent performance of Shakespearean plays, particularly his comedies. *Romeo and Juliet* was the first complete Shakespearean play to be presented on the new Chinese theater stage. In April 1954, to commemorate the 390th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, performances of excerpts from *Hamlet* and the entire *Romeo and Juliet* play were staged. Besides, students from the Central Academy of Drama and Shanghai Theatre Academy staged plays such as *Romeo and Juliet* (1961), *Twelfth Night* (1956), and *Much Ado about Nothing* (1957) in this period. The performances at this point adhered to Stanislavski doctrine. Most of the produced plays, influenced by socialist realism and pursuing a form of character and psychological reality, accurately and faithfully captured the spiritual core of Shakespearean plays in terms of characterization and themes. Famous directors such as Qihong Zhang and Dao Hu played important roles during this period. Qihong Zhang adapted *Romeo and Juliet* in 1961, in which Juliet awakened just before her death to see Romeo. Shakespeare's plays, however, vanished from the literary canon after 1964 due to harsh critiques of Western arts. This included the rejection of Stanislavski theory and Shakespearean drama in the context of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) in China, during which literature and arts were appropriated for political objectives.

Chapter Five is titled "Shakespeare and New Time Drama (1977-1989): Cultural Exploration." After the end of the Cultural Revolution, Shakespeare's plays returned to the Chinese stage and were performed in an expanding repertoire with plays such as *The Tempest* and *Antony and Cleopatra* making their Chinese *huaju* stage debuts. The theatre artists argued for a return to theatrical arts after reflecting on the previous appropriation of literature and arts for political purposes. Plays with themes of humanism and life philosophy supplanted political and moralistic ones, with Shakespeare's plays emphasizing the humanistic spirit of truth, compassion, and beauty becoming the most favored. In 1986, the Shanghai Theatre Academy, the Central Academy of Drama, and the China Shakespeare Research Association collaboratively hosted the first China Shakespeare Festival. A comprehensive repertoire of 29 plays by William Shakespeare were staged, encompassing notable works such as *Titus Andronicus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, all making their debut on Chinese stages. During this particular period, notable productions of Shakespearean plays included *The Merchant of Venice* (1980) directed by Qihong Zhang, which highlighted the conflicts between Shylock, the moneylender, and Antonio, the

embodiment of the rising bourgeoisie. Another significant staging was *Macbeth* (1980) directed by Xiaozhong Xu, which delved into the internal conflicts, contradictions, and struggles of the characters. Additionally, it is noteworthy to remark that a rendition of *Romeo and Juliet* (1981) in the Tibetan language was directed by Qiping Xu, which contributing to the diversification of Shakespearean performances during this time.

Chapter Six is titled "Shakespeare and Diversified Drama (1990-now): Cultural Adaptation." During this period, the Chinese drama stage witnessed a departure from faithful renditions of Shakespeare's plays towards adaptations that predominantly reflected the personal values and aesthetic interests of the directors and manifested their individuality through dramatic concepts and stage practices. The objective shifted from the promotion and popularization of Shakespeare's plays within the public sphere to the utilization of diverse contemporary and postmodern theatrical techniques as a means to convey emotions and humanistic concepts. In the early 1990s, Chinese *huaju* encountered a crisis due to the influence of multiculturalism and mass communication techniques. Consequently, the number of Shakespearean plays performed during this period was limited. However, the visiting of esteemed foreign troupes, directors, and actors to China played a significant role in sustaining the performances of Shakespeare's works in the country. An important milestone was the inauguration of the Shanghai International Shakespeare Festival in 1994, which featured a total of nine theatrical productions based on Shakespeare's works. Notably, three of these performances were presented by foreign troupes. Directors of this era include Zhaohua Lin, renowned for his productions of *Hamlet* (1990), *Richard III* (2001), and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2016), as well as Qinxin Tian, recognized for her adaptations of *Ming* (2008, adapted from *King Lear*) and *Romeo and Juliet* (2014).

This scholarly work critically analyzes the reception and adaptation of Shakespearean plays within the context of the Chinese *huaju* stage. It explores the interconnectedness between Shakespearean performances and the Chinese *huaju* stage, shedding light on their mutual influence and dependence. Consequently, it offers theoretical and practical insights for the advancement of contemporary Chinese *huaju*. Meanwhile, the in-depth analysis of the similarities and differences between the performances of Shakespearean plays on the Chinese drama stage in different historical periods also expands the study of Shakespeare in China.

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Poonam Trivedi, Paromita Chakravarti, and Ted Motohashi (eds.), *Asian Interventions in Global Shakespeare: "All the World's His Stage."* London: Routledge, 2021. Pp. Xx+249.

Reviewed by ***Yu Sun***[*], ***Jiaqing Shi***[**]

The book *Asian Interventions in Global Shakespeare*, edited by Poonam Trivedi, Paromita Chakravarti, and Ted Motohashi, is a collection which features 12 academic papers from different scholars, exploring how Shakespeare has been adapted and utilized in Asian contexts and examining the impacts and interventions of Asian contributions in the global Shakespearean landscape. The collection highlights some Asian milestones in the development of global Shakespeare, such as worldwide tours of Chinese and Japanese theatrical productions, performances by Asian countries at global Shakespeare festivals, and innovations in the digital and graphic realms. It also discusses how Asian interventions in Shakespeare challenge and resist Western performance practices, thereby reshaping the global Shakespearean scenario. The essays reaffirm the significance of Asian contributions to global Shakespeare and expand the discourse on Asian engagements with Shakespeare.

The five essays in the first part "Asian 'Global' and Its Discontents" show that the extensive dissemination of Shakespearean plays in Asia has produced a large number of Asian Shakespeare adaptations. The use of Shakespeare for political and economic purposes is also reflected in the five essays. In the context of globalization, this part explores how Asian adaptations of Shakespeare seek a balance between localization and globalization, defining "Asian" and "global" Shakespeare within the complexities of unequal resources, digital divides, and complex relationships among nations/regions. The part discusses how Asian Shakespeare gains influence globally without explicitly showcasing an "Asian" identity. It also delves into the political issues represented by "Asian" and "global" Shakespeare.

Poonam Trivedi's essay, "Making Meaning between the Local and the Global: Performing Shakespeare in India Today" analyzes three Asian Shakespeare productions performed in Delhi—*Hamlet, I Don't Like It/As You Like It*, and *Dying to Succeed*. The performance has been adapted to keep to the

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original, breaking with tradition in terms of language choice, stage design, and performance dynamics, presenting a version of the Indian Shakespeare. This style of performance has been successful in India and has attracted audiences all over the world. Trivedi points out that these productions reflect contemporary Indian stage practices. The success of the three plays in global performances, especially at festivals in London, highlights India's successful interpretation of Shakespeare with dual attention to local and global concerns. The essay focuses on the evolution of language and performance in these three plays, challenging the concept of "Indianness" and arguing that Shakespeare's relevance in India today constructs a "middle" meaning between local and global concepts.

Ted Motohashi's essay "How could we present a 'non-localised' Shakespeare in Asia? Colonialism and Atlantic Slave-Trade in Yamanote-Jijosha's *The Tempest*" primarily analyzes the political history of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in Tokyo in the context of oppressive European colonialism. The essay questions the concept of Asian adaptations in the trend of contemporary global Shakespeare, emphasizing Japan's dual role as a victim of European aggression in modern colonialism and an aggressor against its Asian neighbors. Therefore, in *The Tempest*, the relevant elements of Japan are removed. And ordinary Japanese people, under the illusion, are westernized, so that we cannot see Japanese or Asian elements in the play. By highlighting colonial issues, reportraying characters, and adapting the end of the play, *The Tempest* ends with a pop song that cuts out Japanese elements. The essay also ends with an open ending that invites the audience to think, calling for a critical examination of "de-localized" Shakespearean interpretations to better understand and reflect on history, culture, and contemporary society.

Mike Ingham's essay "'We Will Perform in Measure, Time and Place;' Synchronicity, Signification and Cultural Mobility in Tang Shu-wing Theatre Studio's Cantonese-Language *Macbeth*" discusses Tang Shu-wing's adaptation of *Macbeth*, focusing on a global and local production at the 2016 Hong Kong Arts Festival, and assessing the significance of a Hong Kong-based adaptation of a "Scottish play" that is globally local. Ingham adopts cultural theory, with particular reference to Raymond Williams's "Structure of feeling" and Stephen Greenblatt's "cultural mobility" paradigm, exploring the relationship between the production and cross-cultural Asian Shakespearean discourse. He also engages in the discussions of Shakespeare in Asian cultures, highlighting Hong Kong's unique position between global and local influences, as well as between Western and Chinese traditions. Ingham highlights the success of the production in introducing Cantonese Shakespeare to the international stage, as well as Hong Kong's unique cultural identity and the uncertain future it faces.

Mariko Anzai's essay "From Cultural Mobility to Cultural Mis-understanding: The Japanese Style of Love in Akio Miyazawa's Adaptation in the Cardenio Project, *Motorcycle Don Quixote*" analyzes the Japanese

contribution to the Cardenio Project, in which 12 dramatists all over the world were invited to write their own versions of *Cardenio*, Stephen Greenblatt and Charles Mee's collaborative work inspired by a lost Shakespeare play. The adaptation is based on episodes in Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, to investigate how cultural mobility works in the case of Shakespeare. Anzai reveals how Miyazawa's interpretation, based on Japanese customs, led to misunderstandings, especially by non-Japanese individuals like Stephen Greenblatt. Miyazawa's adaptation is seen as a deliberate "misunderstood" version, challenging cultural flows and underscoring the dual understanding between two cultures. Anzai interprets the adaptation, presenting Miyazawa's adapting style and explaining the reasons for Greenblatt's confusion. The essay emphasizes that cultural mobility may lead to misunderstandings, stressing the bidirectional nature of understanding between two cultures and providing a unique perspective on the play within the context of Japanese culture.

Andronicus Aden's essay, "Something Rotten in the State of Dankot: *Hamlet* and the Kingdom of Nepal," chronicles, for the first time, the history of Nepalese Shakespeare adaptations focusing on a reworking of *Hamlet* (and *Macbeth*) as *Shri Atal Bahadur* (1906), a unique adaptation which uses Shakespeare to critique the tyrannical regime of the Ranas (1846-1951) and calls for political change. During the Rana autocracy in Nepal, some Nepalese scholars smuggled some of Shakespeare plays as one of the tools to counter the authoritarian stance. Aden analyzes the elements of political unrest in Nepal during the special historical period, by comparing of Shakespeare's works and Nepali literature, using Shakespeare as a tool to express social unrest and political discontent. "Shakesepare's plays are not a simple 'mirror of reality', not a simple reflection of the current reality, but an in-depth look at the cultural psychology behind the reality" (Yang and Lu 162). By adapting and mapping national politics and reality, Aden helps us to see the social reality and dilemmas in these plays.

The first part of the collection *Asian Interventions in Global Shakespeare* examines Asian interventions in global Shakespeare in the context of globalization. From globalization and localization, we can see the innovation of Asian Shakespeare adaptations and the different roles of theatrical adaptations in different regions.

The five essays in the second part "The Asian Cinematic and Digital Sphere: Democratising the 'Global'" focus on the global media, film, television and digital domains, making Asian Shakespeare globally accessible through these borderless spaces. The unique adaptations of Shakespeare, incorporating local elements, are disseminated globally, subverting the cultural hegemony of the Western model of globalization.

Paromita Chakravarti's essay, "Globalising the City: Kolkata Films and the Millennial Bard" explores Shakespeare's influence on the Indian city of

Kolkata. Kolkata embodies the ubiquity of Shakespeare monuments, but locals are indifferent to the signs. Chakravarti analyzes several Kolkata films with Shakespearean plots, which explore the impact of globalization on the Bengali region and the changing perception of Bengali identity. The film adaptations of Shakespeare plays present the evolution of the urban scene, transforming it from a symbol of imperialist or colonial modernity to a place to examine the lives of young urban professionals. Since then, Shakespeare has been integrated into the Bengal region to reflect the diverse history of Kolkata and the communities that have faded away with globalization. Shakespeare plays reflect the importance of Kolkata's diverse history in the context of globalization.

In "Shakespeare's Uses in Chinese Media and Trans-sphere," Lingui Yang explores a diverse range of Shakespearean appropriations which reveal the construction of a new Asian global in the media trans-sphere which is both modern and postmodern, reinforcing yet challenging Shakespeare's hegemonic status in world culture. These adaptations illustrate how the re-creation of Shakespeare has successfully influenced different cultural contexts. Through the analysis of some Shakespearean plays and films, this essay explores modern and postmodern characteristics of Shakespeare adaptations, as well as Shakespeare's different roles in popular culture. Shakespeare's cultural capital has been transplanted and grafted into different cultural contexts, and his value and images have been transmitted and perpetuated in the practice of localization. In conclusion, Lingui Yang emphasizes that the flexible use of Shakespeare can help to spread the humanistic values of China.

Yukari Yoshihara's "Bardolators and Bardoclasts: Shakespeare in Manga/Anime and Cosplay" discusses Japanese transformation of Shakespeare, seemingly as bardoclasts of Shakespeare's authority, but actually as bardolators in disguise. Shakespeare is adapted and translated into manga/anime, transforming literary works into anime/manga forms, and this transformation is accompanied by the commercialization of Shakespeare. "Intermedia metamorphoses are part of the commercialization aimed at profit making, yet commercialization has the potential to make Shakespeare's works pop, in the sense that they are 'democratically' open to everyone" (Yoshihara 120). Commercial use of manga/anime and cosplay have introduced Shakespearean elements into the global market as cultural goods. By erasing local elements, it makes the works more globally appealing. Yoshihara points out that this blurs cultural boundaries and makes it challenge traditional Shakespeare's cultural authority. In short, manga/anime culture has challenged and commercialized the traditional image of Shakespeare, but has also opened up new cultural potential and areas for it.

Thomas Kullmann's essay, "Shakespeare on the Internet: Global and South Asian Appropriations," examines the use of Shakespeare's phrases on the Internet and the areas covered, particularly in the context of South Asia and

India, to see whether Shakespeare's popularity is considered as an impact of globalization and a form of "McDonaldization" and whether Shakespeare's continued existence is a sign of Western cultural hegemony. The essay also explores the background and reasons for South Asian countries citing Shakespearean quotes, suggesting that cultural knowledge, such as quoting Shakespeare, serves as a means of negotiating cultural and political positions.

Judy Celine Ick's essay, "The Performance Archive and the Digital Construction of Asian Shakespeare" explores the crucial role of digital archives in the rise of Asian Shakespeare. These archives, including videos, photos, and texts of Shakespearean performances from the Asian regions, enhance the visibility of these works globally, accessible to anyone interested in the subject worldwide. Ick has a new perspective on Shakespeare, Asia and the world. She believes it's good for Asian Shakespeare to spread and have an impact on global Shakespeare. In addition, the Asian Shakespeare digital scholars draw inspiration from these digital archives to produce more innovative digital archives and repositories that showcase diverse Shakespeare performances, expand Shakespeare scholarship, and then bring Asian Shakespeare performances to global audience through online databases, videos, and photographs.

The second part delves into the diversity of Shakespeare in Asian culture and its global impact. It narrates how the Asian region adapts, intervenes, and reconstructs Shakespeare's works, providing profound insights and emphasizing the influence of globalization and digitization on Shakespearean literature.

The third part "Historicising the Asian Global: Shakespeare as a World Poet," explores Tagore's admiration for Shakespeare, and elucidates that Shakespeare's reputation has exceeded the national boundaries as a world poet. This part also emphasizes the fact that Shakespeare does not belong to a certain nation, but belongs to the world.

Supriya Chaudhuri's essay "Global Shakespeare and the Question of a World Literature" questions the discourse on world literature. Despite Shakespeare having achieved worldwide fame through adaptations and translations, he doesn't appear particularly significant in discussions of world literature. The concepts of world literature and global Shakespeare are relatively independent. Chaudhuri argues that they fail to adequately consider Shakespeare's widespread dissemination and reception worldwide, and that the adaptations of Shakespeare may challenge the category of world literature. Moreover, the global circulation of Shakespeare was driven by imperialistic and colonial knowledge systems, and Shakespeare was intentionally used as a literary template by his subjects. With the spread and interpretation of Shakespeare in the world, many scholars have incorporated him into the world literature system. This view supports Tagore's questioning of the category of "world literature." Therefore, Shakespeare's position in global literature is not only a successful case of dissemination, but also a challenge to traditional literary categories and theories.

Swati Ganguly's essay "Beyond Bardolatry: Rabindranath Tagore's Critique of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*" begins by discussing Rabindranath Tagore's poem "Viśva-Kavi" (World Poet), which is considered to be a tribute to Shakespeare. This poem challenges the nationalist claim over poets, asserting that poets belong to the world rather than a specific nation. Rabindranath Tagore compares Shakespeare's *The Tempest* with Kalidasa's *Sakuntala*. The essay begins with Tagore highlighting the potential external similarities and internal differences between these two plays and then delves into a detailed discussion of these variations. As a literary critic and thinker, Tagore shows unique insights in Shakespeare's literary works, as well as his profound concern for postcolonialism and environmental issues. The essay presents the universal appeal of Shakespeare plays across cultures and eras.

In conclusion, Shakespeare is constantly being translated, interpreted, and adapted in Asia, keeping the bard in a constant cycle of reuse. The various cases presented in the collection showcase the unique adaptations of Shakespeare by Asian dramaturgs, incorporating Asian elements with distinctive perspectives. Moreover, the essays explore the global impact of Asian Shakespeare, emphasizing its special status in world literature. What's more, through Asian adaptations of Shakespeare, "Shakespeare's relationship with Asia is reciprocal: his plays have inspired and propelled the prosperity of Asian literature and arts, while the cultural market in Asia has played a significant role in popularizing Shakespeare plays" (Wang 16). The creative adaptations of Shakespeare in Asia have not only exerted a huge influence on Asia, but also spread Shakespeare to the world to a certain extent. These diverse and innovative Asian adaptations have injected new vitality into global Shakespeare, challenging the hegemony of Western Shakespeare and giving the world a new understanding of Shakespeare.

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