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## Introduction: Local/Global Shakespeare

Shakespeare, alias the Bard of Avon, is the poet and playwright of the English Renaissance, but we sense that he is still now alive around the globe. He is accepted by the non-English-speaking people, and his drama and poetry are translated into a lot of different languages, adapted, performed and appropriated in many corners of the world. Therefore, he is not only the possession of the West but that of the East. In other words, he is a cultural icon traveling the globe, as well as a national hero in England.

The First Folio, the earliest edition of Shakespeare's plays, is the world's most famous book. The year 2023 was our 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first edition of the First Folio which was entered into the Stationers' Register on November 8 in 1623. When it was displayed at the Guildhall Library in London only one day on April 24 in 2023, a long line of people were waiting to see it. Moreover, an original copy of the First Folio known as the Ashburnham Folio was exhibited at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon from April to November. Furthermore, the Senate House Library in London digitized the First Folios, the Durning-Lawrence copy and the Sterling Library copy so that these digital copies may allow scholars to consult the Folios remotely.

The First Folio was produced by John Heminges and Henry Condell, Shakespeare's friends and fellow actors in the King's Men. The volume contained 36 plays, half of which had not been published before. Without the First Folio, we could not have read some of the masterpieces we read today. In 1623, there were probably more than 750 copies printed, and each copy was offered for sale at a price of 1 pound. They say that only 233 copies are extant now, but each copy is excessively expensive. I hear a copy of the First Folio was sold at auction in New York for 9,970,000 dollars in October, 2020. Probably the price is the highest in the history of literary works.

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In the First Folio, Heminges and Condell wrote their epistle, “To the Great Variety of Readers,” in which they said Shakespeare was a happy imitator of Nature and a most gentle expresser of it and that his mind and hand went together. They said, “Read him, therefore; and again, and again: And if you do not like him, surely you are in manifest danger, and not to understand him.” In addition, Ben Jonson, Shakespeare’s rival poet and friend, prefixed the encomium, “To the memories of my beloved, The Author Mr. William Shakespeare: And what he hath left us,” in which he said, “He was not of his age, but for all time!” In this way, Shakespeare’s universality and timelessness were expected by his professional colleagues several years after he passed away in 1616.

It is noteworthy that Shoyo Tsubouchi also referred to Shakespeare’s universality and timelessness in nineteenth-century Japan. Tsubouchi is a dramatist and novelist called “the father of Japanese literature,” and the first translator of Shakespeare’s complete works into Japanese as well. He wrote in his essay, “Shakespeare at Random,” as follows:

Shakespeare, you wrote for the general public. You must live longer than other modern dramatists, for you didn’t write as a slave to the thought, problem and ideology of times, but wrote as an excellent authority of unchangeable and everlasting truths of human nature and its law of causality. (372-373, trans. Kawachi)

Shakespeare obviously wrote about human beings, human nature and the universe. But he always looked upon them with detachment. Therefore, we should receive his subliminal message. In 1978, Iris Murdoch said in “Literature and Philosophy, “Think how much original thought is in Shakespeare, and how divinely inconspicuous it is” (171). I consider this is one of the key points to capture the essence of Shakespeare’s works.

Shakespeare, a man of the theatre, has made a strong impact on the page and the stage all over the world. Nowadays, there are tendencies among practitioners to rewrite his drama in order to adapt to the changing contexts of society, culture and even politics. Moreover, his drama is successfully adapted to the traditional stage of each country in Asia. It is frequently fused with Noh, Kabuki, Kyōgen and Bunraku in Japan, Peking Opera in China, Pansori in Korea, Kathakali in India and so forth. In Europe, Shakespeare is sometimes utilized to promote nationalism. In Germany, for instance, Bertolt Brecht founded the Berliner Ensemble and appropriated Shakespearean drama for political purposes. Under his influence, Heiner Müller performed his subversive text, *Hamletmachine*, in 1977.

Why can Shakespeare be so startlingly transformed? In *Prospero’s Staff*, Charles Marowitz said, “Classical reinterpretation, particularly in Europe, has become something of a trickster’s art” (39). If so, Asian practitioners must

become shrewder tricksters because they have to try to fill the linguistic and cultural gaps between the East and the West. They should reinterpret Shakespeare's original texts as classics in diverse cultural and social contexts and adapt them skillfully for the Oriental stage, while probing Asian psyche.

Translating and adapting is rewriting the original text and transforming it into another text. In addition, translation and adaptation afford an opportunity for the non-English-speaking people to discover the limitless possibility of performing Shakespeare's playtexts. Therefore, practitioners attempt various experiments and propose their unique methods of staging his plays; besides, they are exerting every possible effort to remake them. As the result, today's audience can enjoy looking at "new Shakespeare" as the hybrid of source culture and target culture.

It is still fresh in our memory that 37 Shakespearean plays were performed in 37 different languages at the Globe's Globe Festival in London in 2012—the Olympic year. The audience must have understood the possibility of cultural transformation of his drama. I believe the Festival produced the most conclusive proof that his playtext is a global text and that he is a local/global icon.

Shakespeare's playtexts are elastic and flexible enough for staging intercultural performances. It is notable that three Directors of the Shakespeare Institute at Stratford-upon-Avon approve of the interculturalism of Shakespearean drama. The late Professor Philip Brockbank, who attended the Chinese Shakespeare Festival in 1986, wrote in his essay, "I enjoyed what I have come to think of a Shakespearean renaissance in China, remarkable for the scale, plenitude, and variety, distinctively Chinese and yet lucidly in touch with the England of Elizabeth and James" (195).

Even in the United Kingdom, there have been many adaptations and offshoots of Shakespeare since the Restoration. The pioneer of adaptation was Sir William Davenant, and one of his most successful followers was John Dryden. Moreover, Naham Tate, Colly Cibber, and David Garrick rewrote Shakespeare. It is worthy of attention that Ruby Cohn examined modern dramatic offshoots in English, French, and German in *Modern Shakespeare Offshoots*.

Sir Stanley Wells, the former Director of the Shakespeare Institute, says:

Yet in a sense the plays have constantly shown themselves amenable to cultural translation every time they have been performed, even in English, since Shakespeare's time, and it may be felt that geographical difference poses no greater obstacles to translation into foreign cultures than the passage of time to their performance in England. (10)

Recently Professor Michael Dobson, the present Director, says, "[...] in Asia there is another world of Shakespeares coming into being" in an afterword to *Asian Interventions in Global Shakespeare* (230).

In my view, intercultural performances will contribute toward changing Shakespeare's play-text into a global text and making him survive around the world. We should fully realize that interculturalism helps considerably in promoting one's native culture overseas as well as mutual understanding between the nations.

I am vitally interested in the reason why Shakespeare has become a local/global icon as well as a cultural icon. Therefore, I have arranged a plan to collect the articles discussing this issue extensively. Luckily, domestic and foreign scholars supported my project and contributed their essays on Shakespearean translation, stage adaptation, film adaptation, political and ideological appropriation, cultural transformation and so forth to this special volume. I deeply appreciate the hearty cooperation of the article contributors.

In "New Interpretation and Adaptation of Shakespeare's Plays in Japan from 2020 to 2023," Shoichiro Kawai, a scholar, translator, adapter, and director, gives up-to-date information on Shakespeare performances in Japan. He describes in detail how *Hamlet* was staged in March, 2023 by Mansai Nomura, a Kyōgen player. Kyōgen is a short farce giving light relief to the audience within Noh plays which have been built on Zen techniques of suggestion and stylized implication. Kawai has worked in close collaboration with Nomura in the development of the project of Japanizing Shakespeare. His article supports Nomura's re-examination of the original text of *Hamlet* and his new interpretation of the relationships among Claudius, Gertrude and Hamlet.

The author also writes on "Kawai Project" initiated in 2014. He tells about the difficulties in acting plays during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic and his own production of *Villainous Company*. This is an adaptation of Shakespeare's history plays, *Henry IV* and *Henry V*, which represents the disastrous state of Ukrainian civilians during the war. Kawai's aim must be to reflect his opinion on today's international situation.

Moreover, he writes about Shakespearean stage adaptations recently presented in Japan, and he discusses how the original text is transformed. To sum up, his essay covers the two different types of Japanizing Shakespeare, that is, to fuse Shakespeare with Japanese traditional drama and to modernize Shakespeare to an extreme extent. Furthermore, he points out that Koki Mitani's TV drama, *Thirteen Vassals of Kamakura Shogun*, is under the influence of Shakespeare.

*Hamlet* is one of the most popular plays in Japan, and it has been performed in different styles since the nineteenth century. Miyagi Satoshi's production of *Hamlet* is absolutely unique and experimental in particular. In "Hamlet (Un-) Masked: SPAC's *Hamlet* under the COVID-19 Restrictions," Tomoka Tsukamoto and Ted Motohashi thoroughly discuss Miyagi's production of *Hamlet* mounted at the Shizuoka Performing Arts Center in 2021, when the COVID-19 pandemic spread worldwide.

Calling the play “COVID-19 *Hamlet*,” the authors write about the dramatic effect of the colourful masks which players wore on the stage. They say, “The masked Hamlet made us acutely aware of our existence as linguistic animals that were controlled by the use of voices, words and narratives.” From this fresh perspective, they argue about what Miyagi tried to add to the original text and how he succeeded in using his artful and clever device. For instance, Miyagi, who was inspired by John Dower’s book *Embracing Defeat* describing the Japanese reactions to American occupation, added the voice of Emperor Hirohito to the final scene of the play in which Hershey’s bars of chocolate dropped from the ceiling. In this manner, Miyagi attempted to re-examine and reevaluate Japan through his radical adaptation of a Western classical play.

The authors’ viewpoint is that Miyagi’s presentation of *Hamlet* “revealed the decline of Western modern hegemonies to fix the history of the victors as the official discourse, while erasing the history of the defeated; but, on the other hand, the politic, economic, military and cultural institutions were maintained by the surviving populace.” In their opinion, the final image of this drama suggests that the theatre’s eternal capacity is to embrace the pandemic. It is worth noticing that they discuss how the theatre can react in the face of a crisis.

In 2015 the Royal Shakespeare Company launched “Shakespeare Folio Translation Project” aiming to produce new “theatrically viable, actor friendly and audience accessible” translations of Shakespeare for the present-day stage. Li Jianming, the translator of *Hamlet 1990* directed by Lin Zhaohua, got the commission from the RSC to translate *Hamlet* for the Chinese stage. His version was performed under the direction of Li Liuyi in 2018. Cong Cong argues about the RSC’s Chinese *Hamlet* in her paper, “‘Words, Words, Words.—Between Who?:’ Alterations and Interpolations in the RSC Chinese Translation of *Hamlet*.”

Recognizing the value of Li Jianming’s version which contributes to the diversity and acculturation of Shakespeare for a special intellectual community in a different culture in the first two decades of twenty-first century China, Cong demonstrates textual interpolations and alterations of plot, cuts of scenes and roles, lines and words translated in an “audience friendly” way into an alleged Chinese context.

To translate a text into another language involves creating another text written in the target language. It is a translator who can vitalize the source text in the new linguistic, cultural, and social context. Interestingly, Cong poses these questions: “What is translation?,” “What is adaptation?,” and “Are we reading the true original Shakespeare?.” In her view, every translation and every adaptation is original, and it is a “dialogue” with Shakespeare’s original play in a new historical and cultural space. In addition, she asserts that a variorum approach should be encouraged in translation and rewriting and that textual

notes and explanatory notes should be made accompanying the translation and displaying the differences between the translated text and the base text to give a full picture of the “original Shakespeare.”

The author considers the RSC’s Chinese translation of *Hamlet* is “far gone” from such the First Folio as the RSC advertised “loyal” to the “original copy.” She proposes this version should be entitled the “RSC’s Chinese stage *Hamlet*” rather than the “RSC’s Chinese Folio *Hamlet*” so as to help avoid the possible misconception of “acknowledged authority” that Chinese readers and audiences may conceive under the halo of the RSC and the misleading tag of “Commissioned Folio Translation.”

Paul Innes’ essay, “Rank Intersectionality and *Othello*,” argues about the importance of an approach to intersectionality that integrates concerns of race and gender in *Othello* with social rank in Shakespearean Venice and Cyprus. He asserts that this approach is helpful for understanding the social dynamics and characters of the play. Borrowing Toni Morrison’s idea, he discusses the structured interplay among gender, rank and race. Morrison, a black novelist and the Nobel Prize winner for Literature in 1993, published *Desdemona* in 2012, in which Barbary, her mother’s maid who was envisaged as an African woman, gave Desdemona an emotional connection with African people. Adopting Morrison’s term, “Africanism,” Innes regards *Othello* as “Africanist.”

The author attempts a critical analysis of *Othello* through various perspectives which include postcolonialism, psychological interpretation, cultural materialism, and other theoretical perspectives, but he does not carry out a psychological analysis of character; he insists on the primacy of social definitions available to the characters in the play instead. Treating the characters as constructs that reflect pre-modern structures and ideologies, he regards *Othello* and *Desdemona* as ideological constructs. In his opinion, *Othello* is “made” to enact the fundamental tragic dilemma.

Innes’ approach is grounded on Louis Pierre Althusser’s idea of “interpellation.” In his view, ideologies—our attitudes toward gender, class and race—should be thought of more as social processes. Innes declares his concept of interpellation helps to examine how *Othello* and *Desdemona* are positioned within the societal frameworks of gender, rank and race.

The author considers an intersectional methodology needs to incorporate the politics of rank. His viewpoint is that the reason why so much destruction is wrought in the tragedy is the social standing of *Desdemona* as an upper-class heiress and that of *Othello* as the necessary outsider needed by the Venetian state because of his prowess. He regards *Othello* as a more powerful military commander since he is not Venetian.

Moreover, Innes underlines that intersectionality allows for an awareness of the historical and cultural location of the audience as different from the moment of the production of the play and that intersectionality satisfies

a need within global Shakespeare reception studies. He says, “The reason for this is the way it permits cross-currents between conceptions of race and gender in particular; it also allows for an awareness of the historical and cultural location of the audience or reader as distinct from the moment of the production of a particular play.”

Guixia Xie’s article entitled “To Go ‘into’ My ‘Dialect:’ Jane Lai’s Translation of *King Lear* and the Historical Context of Its Performance in Hong Kong,” provides a comprehensive context of Shakespeare translation in China, and it conducts a comparative analysis of Cantonese translation with its English source text and the corresponding Mandarin translation. Cantonese is one of the Chinese dialects that is spoken by people in Hong Kong and the southern region of Guangdong province. In the 1970s and the 1980s, Cantonese translations and adaptations increased in number. Jane Lai is a translator, professor and native of Hong Kong. She translated *King Lear* into Cantonese specifically for theatrical performance. Xie discusses the social and historical factors that exerted a significant influence upon the performance of Lai’s Cantonese *King Lear* in Hong Kong in the 1980s.

Showing examples selected from the source text and Lai’s translation which achieved its theatrical success on the stage, Xie carefully analyzes the translation strategies and techniques employed by Lai in her Cantonese version. She also makes a close examination on how these strategies ensure the acceptability of the play to local culture, and how they help the translation to resonate with local sentiment. She reaches the conclusion that “the rise of Cantonese-translated plays has demonstrated how vernacular rendition of Shakespeare could gain acceptance in both academia and theatre, how Shakespearean plays could foster local appreciation and how their translation and appropriation contributed to elevating the status of the Cantonese dialect during the pivotal period in Hong Kong’s history.”

In “Indian Supplements to Shakespeare: *The Hungry* and *We That Are Young*,” Poonam Trivedi poses a serious problem about the survival of Shakespeare as a local/global icon freely and rationally. Her article proposes, as a theoretical framework, the critical perspective of “supplementarity” as enunciated by Jacques Derrida. She considers supplement is “a surplus, a plenitude enriching another plenitude,” “a proposition which seems to approximate the global traffic in Shakespeare and provide us with a critical perspective of supplementarity as an intervention in the debate on the proliferating versioning of Shakespeare.” From this point of view, she discusses lucidly the issue of the interventions made to globalize Shakespeare for the contemporary audience.

India is a multilingual country. There are hundreds of translations and adaptations in various languages such as Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, Tamil, Kannada and so forth. Practitioners have changed drastically Shakespeare’s plots and themes in order to adapt them to the social, cultural and political conditions in

India. *The Hungry* (2017) is a film adaptation directed by Bornila Chatterjee, of *Titus Andronicus*, and *We That Are Young* (2017) by Preti Taneja is a novel based on *King Lear*. Applying her own theory to these Indian adaptations, Trivedi revets her attention on how they offer fresh perspectives and engage with contemporary issues in Indian society, especially concerning themes like patriarchy, corruption and feminism. She says these two versions from India fulfil the function of supplementarity and add to the plenitude of Shakespeare and that they make his works and ideas come alive and resonate with the young by their relocations in a new time and space. Moreover, she asserts that reduction/versioning of Shakespeare from all over the world is performing a vital function and that it brings him up to date for the modern audience.

In the Victorian age, Shakespeare and the Bible were taught in the classroom in India as one of the colonial policies, but, on the other hand, there were the challengers trying to reject the imperial policy. In “Historicizing the Bard of Avon: Shapeshifting Shakespeare and the Constitution of Gujarati Literary Culture,” Hemang Ashwinkumar writes about Shakespeare reception, translation, adaptation, performance, and transformation in India. After discussing the Hindu theatre and the Parsi stage company which performed Shakespearean drama in the nineteenth century, the author traces the histories of Gujarati theatre and literature.

Gujarati is Mahatma Gandhi’s hometown; besides, it is the cradle of the Indian nationalist movement. The author considers how the histories of Gujarati theatre and literature reflect the evolution of Gujarati literary culture along caste, ethnic, and communal lines, and he explains that they have been a witness to the Bard’s localization as well as his non-localization. In addition, he points out that they have engendered the elitist and monolithic ideas, and identities that Gujarati literary culture suffers from still now. As he discusses both colonial Shakespeare and postcolonial Shakespeare, readers may collect a lot of information on Indianized Shakespeares and know how and why the Bard has been transformed in India as well.

Aeschylus is an Athenian tragic poet. He was hardly known in England before Thomas Stanley’s edition of the plays in 1663. His true popularity dates from the nineteenth century when Romantic writers were interested in his play, *Prometheus Bound*. Although there is no evidence that Shakespeare borrowed dramatic techniques from Aeschylus, it is well-known that Gilbert Murray wrote *Hamlet and Orestes: A Study in Traditional Types*. Interestingly, Duluo Nie argues about the connection between Shakespeare and Aeschylus in “Blood and Revenge: Animal Metaphors and Nature in *Macbeth* and the *Oresteia*.”

The *Oresteia* is a trilogy of plays, *Agamemnon*, *Choephoroe*, and *Eumenides*. The author considers there is much affinity between the *Oresteia*, especially *Agamemnon*, and *Macbeth*. He asserts that both plays feature spectacular representations of animals, both bestial and avian, in displaying the



necessity of violence in human nature. Examining the theme of blood-shedding, the perpetual cycle of violence and revenge and the strong presence of animal symbolism in both plays, he suggests that Shakespeare borrowed multiple dramatic techniques from Aeschylus. Nie tries to reveal *Macbeth* as a play fundamentally concerned with the classical theme of blood-shedding and revenge and assumes that *Macbeth* is a purposeful “translation” and “revision” of the great theatrical tradition of Attic tragedy to some extent.

The author asserts that the animal metaphors seen in both plays contribute effectively to the consistency of plot development and that they significantly deepen the process of revealing the affinity and conflicts between the world of human beings and the world beyond it. In his view, the natural world functions as a mirror of the human activities. He states that the transformation from docility to savagery demonstrates the ultimate area of interest of *Macbeth* and the *Oresteia* and that the striking resemblance should offer essential clues on their reliance on the same subject of how nature, human nature and human beings work.

In “Shakespeare Engraved: Frontispiece and Bardolatry,” Kazuki Sasaki tries to show a link between the publishing business of Shakespeare’s works in eighteenth-century England and the evolution of the worship of Shakespeare. Taking *The Tempest* as an example, he examines each engraved frontispiece printed in Nicholas Rowe’s first edition (1709), his second edition (1714), Thomas Hanmer’s edition (1742-1743), John Bell’s edition (1774) and Alexander Chalmer’s edition (1805). Consequently, he notices that there is a marked difference in the artistic design of the engraved frontispieces inserted in these editions. Moreover, he observes the process of making a change in describing several scenes of the play.

Shakespeare is sometimes called the Bard of Avon. In 1769 David Garrick held the Jubilee, his pioneering festival of bardolatry at Stratford-upon-Avon. Bardolatry is a term for the uncritical worship of Shakespeare’s genius, particularly in its Romantic and nineteenth-century variants. This term was allegedly coined by George Bernard Shaw. Sasaki points out that Bardolatry should be reinterpreted as a product that was created by various theatrical cultures of eighteenth-century England.

In *Discoveries* Ben Jonson remarked that he loved Shakespeare and honored his memory “on this side idolatry as much as any” (5-6), but on the other hand he described Shakespeare as having ‘small Latin, less Greek’ in his verse prefixed to the First Folio. Shakespeare, however, wrote Roman plays such as *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus* in which Rome is much of the scene. His “classical” drama is Roman and not Greek because the English Renaissance theatre knew Greek drama second-hand through Roman adaptations. But Wu Yarong and Hao Tianhu suggest to justify the addition of “Greek plays”

as a subgenre to classify his works in their article, “Greece Reinvented: Shakespeare’s ‘Greek Plays’ as a Subgenre.”

It is worthy of attention that the authors bring this neglected subgenre “Greek Plays” into the discussion and highlight the importance of the Greek elements in Shakespeare and that they focus not only on the revival of ancient Greek culture in England but also on the interactions between early modern England and the East Mediterranean. They conduct a comprehensive survey of the six Greek plays, *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Timon of Athens*, *Two Noble Kinsmen*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Pericles*, and *Troilus and Cressida*, within their historical context. They consider these plays are defined as the adaptations of ancient Greek literature, staged in Greek or closely related settings, and featuring characters from Greek mythology and history.

Geographically, Greece serves as a “threshold” connecting the East and the West. The authors’ viewpoint is that Greece is caught in the dilemma of “between” and that it is regarded as a land of ambiguity in Shakespeare’s Greek plays. Examining the ambiguity of Greece through the perspectives of translation, trade and travel, and exploring the features of several Greek or pertinent cities, for instance, Athens, Ephesus, Tyre, Troy and so forth, they conceive that Greece is a multifaceted entity, a confluence of Eastern and Western influences, classical and contemporary elements, and pagan and Christian aspects.

The authors declare Shakespeare reinvents a Greece characterized by its liminality and hybridity. They state that “he characterizes it by a mixture of humanistic admiration for the grandeur of ancient Greek civilization, a cautious respect for and alertness to its pagan origins, a profound desire for commercial benefits in the Eastern Mediterranean, and apprehensions and anxieties in Englishmen’s encounters with the Turks.” In addition, they assert that Shakespeare juxtaposes ancient Greece with its early modern counterpart, a territory of difference and of the Other, on the very edge of Europe penetrated by the alien East and Islamic cultures. Their proposal will be helpful in not only enhancing our understanding of Shakespeare’s portrayal of “a world elsewhere” from different cultural perspectives but also expanding our scope of Shakespeare studies.

I heartily hope these articles will provide a valuable opportunity for readers to catch diverse aspects of Shakespearean acceptance, appropriation and transformation on the earth. Moreover, I wish this volume will give them a good chance to see Shakespeare’s “rough magic” performed in different languages and cultures and to contemplate the future of his dramatic art. Furthermore, I am expecting that readers will understand the reason why the Bard of Avon and his message to human beings are timeless and universal. The query, “Why can Shakespeare be astonishingly transformed?,” may be connected with another question, “Why can Shakespeare be alive today?”

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