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Global Shakespeares as Methodology

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Having reached a critical mass of participants, performances and the study of Shakespeare in different cultural contexts are changing how we think about globalization. The idea of global Shakespeares has caught on because of site-specific imaginations involving early modern and modern Globe theatres that aspired to perform the globe. Seeing global Shakespeares as a methodology rather than as appendages of colonialism, as political rhetorics, or as centerpieces in a display of exotic cultures situates us in a postnational space that is defined by fluid cultural locations rather than by nation-states. This framework helps us confront archival silences in the record of globalization, understand the spectral quality of citations of Shakespeare and mobile artworks, and reframe the debate about cultural exchange. Global Shakespeares as a field registers the shifting locus of anxiety between cultural particularity and universality. This article explores the promise and perils of political articulations of cultural difference and suggests new approaches to performances in marginalized or polyglot spaces.

Keywords: globalization; localization; liminality; deterritorialization; archival silence; cartographic imagination; censorship; self-censorship; touring performances; digital humanities; appropriation; Globe; World Shakespeare Festival; Globe to Globe

How did “global” and Shakespeare become near synonyms? Festivals, performances, courses, research centres, and faculty positions are proliferating, and rewritings of Shakespeare have evolved from “an interesting and harmless occupation” for a marginalized group of scholars two decades ago (Ewbank 1) to a genre that occupies a prominent position in many parts of the world today.¹ As a social lynchpin, “global Shakespeares” seems to be able to answer competing demands that artists and scholars become more transnational in outlook while simultaneously sustaining traditional canons. Globalization as a catchword has penetrated many sectors of cultural life so thoroughly that the once centrifugal political force of performing otherness (a force that fostered writing from the margins) is being replaced by a centripetal economic force in which artistic activities revolve around select metropolitan, neo-liberal axes of rotation. Just as the cultural prestige of Paris enables the operation of a “universal bank of foreign exchange in literature” in the city (Casanova 24), so too does the dense concentration of funders, archives, festivals, and high-profile performance venues in Tokyo, London, and New York turn these cities into capitals for international Shakespeare. Global Shakespeares has reached a critical mass of participants from the arts, academe, and public and private

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sectors whose work is visible in publications, at conferences, at festivals, and in institutions. Thus, global Shakespeares operate as a transnational brand and as cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu) in what might be called “liquid modernity,” a phase of globalization that is driven by transitory and flexible circulation of ideas and labour rather than hardware-focused transactions (Bauman). As a result, one of the common lines of criticism of global Shakespeares focuses on its potential to exploit some artists and cultures, disseminate similarly structured contents, and even perpetuate global inequality through the imposition of hegemonic culture. Echoing the Frankfurt School’s suspicion of commercial cosmopolitanism (Horkheimer and Adorno 135–36), this approach tends to denounce global Shakespeares as a cultural industry, but fails to explain how literary prestige and the influence of other cultures shape the financial prospects and artistic visions of festivals, studios, and companies.²

We therefore face new questions. Are global Shakespearean performances too familiar (in terms of their ubiquity) to be properly known (Hegel 35)? Is the explanatory power of global Shakespeares overshadowed by popular discourses of globalization? What values and ideas does Shakespeare’s cultural work sustain or undermine? What is local (Huang “Shakespearean Localities” 186–187), metropolitan (Massai 10), racialized (Thompson 50–51), marketable (Burnett 11; McLuskie), or cosmopolitan about performances of Shakespeares that pass through different historical and cultural spaces? Are global Shakespeares a product of Anglo-European intervention and complicity? Answering some of these questions can help us transform global Shakespeares from centerpieces in exotic displays into critical methodologies. Out of the endless array of genres that range from manga to YouTube, I would like to focus on film and theatre here.

“The great globe itself”

The idea of global Shakespeares has caught on in the past decades because of site-specific imaginations involving early modern and modern Globe theatres that have aspired to perform the globe (presenting diverse localities, characters, performers), post-Cold War campaigns for soft power, and postcolonial reworkings of polyglot cosmopolitanism.

Since the late 1590s, Shakespeare’s work and name have been closely associated with the cultural institution known as the Globe in Southwark (even though it is not the only venue associated with the playwright) and many of the ideas and tropes it has generated. For example, the Globe was seen as the *theatrum mundi*, and it was worldly and cosmopolitan; Shakespeare’s works and motifs travel well, are ubiquitous, serve as a gentleman’s and a nation’s calling cards, and are seen as bearers of universal truths. Shakespeare is larger than life in all time zones and time periods (Jonson). The list goes on. Before Shakespeare’s plays – many of which are informed by global imaginaries – became widely performed outside England and Europe, international visitors brought a global flair to performances in London. European visitors such as Thomas Platter witnessed the plays on stage at the Globe in 1599 and left behind diary records. While visiting London from the “new world” in 1710, the King of the River Nations Etow Oh Koam himself became a spectacle that competed with a performance of *Macbeth* on stage at the Queen’s Theatre.

Buoying the fascination with the idea of containing the world within the “wooden O” (*Henry V* prologue 13) was the fact that using globes and maps was part of the

early modern gentlemen's education, as Shakespeare reminds us in *The Comedy of Errors*. Dromio of Syracuse compares a serving girl who is "spherical" to a globe and says that he "could find out countries in her" (3.2.116–17). By the late 1590s, courts, grammar schools, and colleges were regularly adorned by globes and maps such as Gerhard Mercator's world maps. While there are a number of theories about why the Lord Chamberlain's Men named their playing space "the Globe" in 1599, it is likely that they did so to tap into the English enthusiasm for terrestrial and celestial globes such as the renowned 1592 globes by Emery Molyneux (Cohen).

Later generations tapped into the appeal of a globally conceived playhouse and canon. When I visited London in 1996, work was under way to reconstruct Shakespeare's renowned Globe Theatre near its original site on the South Bank, a project that would open in July 1997. I gleefully donated a brick to the project. In the mind of an undergraduate student from Taiwan, a small island nation that has not been recognized by the UN and most countries since 1971, that brick was a material connection to the West that went beyond international politics to a fascinating historical space and to the intangible cultural heritage of a "brave new world," as Miranda would say in *The Tempest*. What I was not aware of as I stood at the construction site of the London Globe was that globalized arts means business (Singh) and that global Shakespeares would emerge as an international business model in the twenty-first century. Since its inception, the London Globe has actively sought global partnerships and opportunities to present performances from different parts of the world. The intercontinental jets flying over the Globe – audible and visible on clear afternoons – reinforce the idea of a global stage. The Globe is a sign of the cultural rebirth of London's once-shady South Bank. Various reconstructed Globe theatres have also opened in Neuss, Germany; Dunedin, New Zealand; Tokyo, Japan; San Diego, California; and Regina, Saskatchewan, among other places, and are being planned in Brazil and China. The production value represented by the Globe inspired the EuroGlobe, a cultural revitalization project funded by the European Commission (2008–2009). The project brought touring performance workshops and events to Ljubljana, Strasbourg and Prague (European Policy Evaluation Consortium). The initial plan, which fell through, called for a replica of the Globe to be shipped from country to country along with the touring productions.

The word "global" in global Shakespeares does double duty: it is an attributive genitive naming the stakeholder and playwright of the Globe Theatre (a local event) and it is a descriptive adjective signaling the influence and significance of that theatre and of Shakespeare (a global affair). Shakespeare became both an author of the Globe and a playwright of global stature. This would not have been the case "if the playhouse had been given a different name such as the Rose or the Curtain, for the local and historical embeddedness of the Globe is balanced by its being at the same time a reference to the world as a whole" (Donaldson, "Shakespeare, Globes" 183).

Why is the figure of the globe so powerful? Images of the earth are deeply connected to both narratives of conquests and ideas about the common good for humanity. Organizers of the 1964 World's Fair in Queens, New York, commissioned a 12-story high, stainless steel "globe" called the Unisphere. The steel sculpture, along with three orbit rings, represented both the earth and the fair's theme of global interdependence. There are plenty of other similarly symbolic uses of the globe. Human fascination with the "great globe itself" reached a new peak and turning point in the twentieth century when commander Frank Borman saw earthrise from



Figure 1. Global dream space. A four-engine jumbo jet airliner flying over the London Globe during a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (dir. Yang Jung-ung) by South Korea's Yohangza Company on 30 April 2012. Photograph by Alexander Huang.

the dark side of the moon on Christmas Eve 1968 during the Apollo 8 mission. Earthrise, seen for the first time by human eyes in space, marked a pivotal moment in history. Whole earth photographs, including the renowned “blue marble” taken by Harrison Schmitt on the way to the moon aboard Apollo 17 in 1972, helped launch Earth Day and environmental movements and brought a renewed focus on the earth itself (Poole). The ripple effects of these events are still being felt in religion, culture, politics, and the arts. One of the Fundación Shakespeare Argentina’s advertisements in 2013 featured a globe with the Droeshout and Janssen portraits of Shakespeare filling the boxes between lines of latitude and longitude. Humanity’s ability to see the whole earth from different angles revitalized and complicated the totalizing concept of one world. While they do not explicitly evoke whole earth photographs as sources of inspiration, Mary Louise Pratt, Walter Mignolo, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak have used the astronomical metaphor of planetary consciousness to theorize alterity and human universals. Spivak, for example, envisions planetarity as a mode of displacing globalization (16, 97) that fosters “planetary subjects rather than global agents” (73).

If the early modern globes and theatricalizations of global imaginations put human glory and vanity in perspective, images of the whole earth in our times contextualized cultural relativity and connectedness. The earth featured prominently in the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival’s (WSF) publicity material. Its logo, for example, was the earth seen from over the North Atlantic, showing Britain nearest the centre of the world. A promotional trailer began with a low-orbit shot at sunrise. The curvature of



Figure 2. View of the earth as seen by the Apollo 17 crew travelling toward the moon on 7 December 1972. The photograph shows the Mediterranean Sea, the African continent, the Arabian Peninsula, the Malagasy Republic off the southeastern coast of Africa, the Asia mainland, and the south polar ice cap. Courtesy of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Visible Earth team.

the earth looms large as tagline fades in: “The biggest celebration of Shakespeare starts now.” These images are suggestive of an infinitely mobile Shakespeare in orbit, signifying across geographic spaces and capturing the human conditions on earth. These metaphors are of course problematic, because texts do not float above history, politics, and local difference. However, the topos of the globe continues to delight and fascinate. To mark the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare in 2016, the Shakespeare Theatre Association is launching an initiative to have performances, readings, and commentary on Shakespeare’s legacy streamed live from every time zone and in different languages as the earth rotates.

“What dreams may come”: performing the globe

All that Shakespeare and his modern collaborators inherited from imaginations of “the great globe itself” did not dissolve into thin air and are far from an insubstantial pageant (*The Tempest* 4.1.154–55). During his lifetime, Shakespeare’s plays were performed in Europe and were subsequently taken to corners of the globe that seemed remote from the English perspective, including colonial Indonesia in 1619

(Winet 172). The idea of global Shakespeares is informed by these intriguing facts, but it has also been complicated by the myth of a national poet who signifies globally. The desire for a globalized Shakespeare is so strong that a forgery has emerged in the nineteenth century that has been propagated through recent performance histories, namely the myth that Captain William Keeling arranged a performance of *Hamlet* in 1607 on board the *Red Dragon* off the coast of Sierra Leone (Kliman). Enthusiasts of Shakespeare, this author included, may very much want the anecdote to be true, as it encapsulates a dreamscape in which Shakespeare is making a difference. However, as Martin Orkin observes, we must problematize the homogenizing tendency to use global Shakespeares as a de facto “alternative, consolatory, or liberatory reference point” (10).

There are many reasons why global Shakespeares are often accompanied by a celebratory tone and much fanfare. Presentations of Shakespearean motifs, quotations, and plays on the world stage have often been construed as a source of legitimation of cultural value. Since 1876, when a recitation of the speech “to be or not to be” was transmitted via telegraph wires, as reported by Sir William Thomson, Shakespeare has repeatedly provided demonstration or “launch content for new communications technologies” and modern media. These have included silent film, television, and the World Wide Web (Donaldson “*The King’s Speech*”). Shakespeare becomes both the medium and the message.

In our century, global presentations of Shakespeare are sometimes a matter of national pride with a hint of nationalist sentiment. Chinese premier Wen Jiabao’s visit to Shakespeare’s birthplace on 26 June 2011, during his state visit to Britain, drew much media attention. He sat for a photo opportunity with Stanley Wells, CBE, Chairman of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, during a performance in the garden of the birthplace. Wen alluded to his boyhood love of Shakespeare in his conversation with British Prime Minister David Cameron. British culture secretary Jeremy Hunt enthused: “I am hoping that a billion Chinese might see some pictures on their TV of their premier coming and visiting the birthplace of Shakespeare” and flock to Britain in droves (Satter). Like other Chinese Communist Party leaders who quote Shakespeare, Wen touts his cultural sophistication, but he also reclaims a universal Shakespeare to deflect thorny questions about the two countries’ relations. Filtered by the writings of Marx and Engels, Wen’s Shakespeare is clearly not the Shakespeare of Cameron or Wells. Wen’s use of Shakespeare may be part of the rhetorics of his country’s “peaceful rise,” a strategy he has been using since 2004 (Scott 47–48).

In 2012, international politics arrived in London along with the Olympics. At the curtain call of Dhaka Theatre’s *Tempest* at the London Globe on 8 May, during the Globe to Globe festival, one of the actors appeared onstage wrapped in the Bangladeshi flag. Caliban’s eloquent description to newcomers of his world, an “isle full of noises” (*The Tempest* 3.2.138–46), was quoted in several significant venues. It was recited by Kenneth Branagh dressed as Isambard Kingdom Brunel during the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics (directed by Danny Boyle). While this event may not be aesthetically coherent or interesting, it bears statistical significance as an instance of global Shakespeares because, along with other sport and cultural events, Branagh’s performance was broadcast live, taped, and in 3D on television, radio, and the Internet with subtitles or voiceover to an estimated 4.8 billion viewers and listeners in more than 200 countries and territories (International Olympic Committee). Several athletes recited Caliban’s speech in video commercials



Figure 3. Scan this QR code with your smart phone to go directly to video clips related to the London Olympics and the Globe. Alternatively, search online for “Global Shakespeare MIT” and within the project for “Globe Theatre”.

for the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival. The closing ceremony again echoed the “Isles of Wonder” theme (see [Figure 3](#)). Timothy Spall’s Winston Churchill recited the same passage Branagh had spoken earlier. These quotations are taken out of context. The enchanted isle full of noises refers to the British Isles that are gearing up to welcome guests from afar. Caliban has been recruited to represent Britain’s cultural others as well as the others within the greater London. Branagh’s and Spall’s use of Caliban’s speech is a clever but ethically problematic repossession of a colonial narrative and figure. Multilingual and global Shakespeares represented a step toward consolidating the underdefined post-Imperial British identity and creating new international identities for touring companies from outside the UK.

Global Shakespeares matter because their concerns are inherently local even as they travel. A recent example that has received a great deal of publicity is the “Robben Island Bible,” a copy of the *Complete Works* that was discretely circulated among 34 political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela, in the South African prison during the 1970s. The prisoners’ annotations form clear connections between prison experiences and Hamlet’s tribulations ([Schalkwyk](#)). The case sparked imaginations of global Shakespeares, and was part of several prominent exhibitions at Nash House in Stratford-upon-Avon in 2006, the British Museum in 2012, and the Folger in 2013. Appropriations of Shakespeare are also used as a form of empowerment in agenda-driven cultural diplomacy, and global Shakespeares are often made to work in domestic and foreign affairs. The homepage for the 2012 Globe-to-Globe season, for example, suggests that the festival “will be a carnival of stories,” including inspirational stories by companies “who work underground and in war zones” ([Dromgoole](#) and Bird). Indeed, the Roy-e-Sabs Company had to rehearse their production of *The Comedy of Errors* in Delhi after having narrowly escaped being killed in a Taliban attack on the British Council building in Kabul. The comedy helped the company take shelter from harsh Afghan politics. These redemption narratives about global atrocities and Shakespeare’s healing power seem to echo Caliban’s comment about his isle full of exotic sounds and sweet airs that “give delight and hurt not.” Global Shakespeares provide not only entertainment but also what seems to be a moral high ground amid anxieties about globalization. If nothing else, these stories helped to sell performances of war zones to audiences in a carnival zone.

Other instances of global Shakespeares are more controversial and show that international artistic exchange is not always a rosy undertaking. During the 2012 festival, the Globe's founding artistic director, Mark Rylance, joined the calls to boycott the Israeli company Habima Theatre's performance of *The Merchant of Venice*. The company did safely arrive in London, but audiences had to make their way past pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian street demonstrations and airport-style security. International politics always intervene in the process of meaning-making, and in this instance the Globe failed to contain cultural difference for worry-free consumption. Critics can sometimes become complicit when they privilege politics over aesthetics or when artists versed in the postcolonial vocabulary feed critics what they want to hear.

“Give me the map there”: liminality and the location of Shakespeare

Global Shakespeares seem to be all over the map. Films and stage works become global when they travel outside their “native” habitat, rely on transnational networks of funding or talents, or borrow from other cultures, but the variegated cultural terrains through which they travel can make their meanings seem all over the map. How might global Shakespeares be moved beyond serving as cultural markers and fomenters of revolution when the dichotomies between nations and between traditions are not always meaningful? How can we more effectively map and understand performances that are not routed through the US and UK as traditional gravitational centre of things Shakespearean? What are the cultural coordinates of such stage works as Sulayman Al Bassam's *The Al-Hamlet Summit* which has been accused of reinforcing and benefiting from Western prejudices against the Arab region; Karin Beier's *Der Sommernachtstraum* in nine languages (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Düsseldorf, 1995; Berliner Theatertreffen, 1996) that espouses an unabashedly utopian vision of “ein europäischer Shakespeare”; Ricardo Abad's *Otelo* (Manila, 2008) that appropriates the Philippine *komedya*, a legacy of the Spanish colonial period; and Ninart Boonthong's *When I Slept over the Night of the Revolution* (Bangkok, 2007) that is haunted by the restless ghosts of Hamlet and Thaksin Shinawatra, the ousted Thai prime minister? Other works challenge the binary of Anglo-American cultures and “rest of the world.” The German poet and director Michael Roes' Arabic–English film *Someone is Sleeping in My Pain: An East–West Macbeth* (2001) was set and shot mostly in Yemen and performed mainly by Yemeni tribal warriors who were not professional actors. How do works like these complicate the notion of globalization as merely “global Westernization” (Roes)? These are some of the questions this special issue explores.

The world map as a metaphor plays an important role in the rise of global Shakespeares as a field that is animated by political and aesthetic distances between cultures. Maps appear in *King Lear* (quarto 1.1.38–39; folio 1.1.37–38) and *Henry IV Part 1* (3.1.67–68) as stage props that direct attention away from themselves to what they signify; they are intended as tools to use for dividing kingdoms rather than as navigational aids. Similarly, one of the obstacles global Shakespeares faces as it strives to develop from a catalogue of exotic objects into a critical methodology is in fact the polity-driven historiography – narratives about Shakespeare in global contexts that rely on national political histories. Maps are used as markers of geopolitical power, which is why we have detailed histories of national Shakespeares,

but many non-mainstream films and productions remain unclaimed goods. For example, “Shakespeare in India” is sometimes used as unproductive shorthand for a passage to India through well-known Shakespearean and Indian motifs. Attending to the dynamics between Shakespeare and India will help us develop critical tools to study the interactions between these two icons rather than subsuming Indian history under Shakespeare criticism, or vice versa. Geopolitical maps and foundational knowledge of the Shakespeare tradition in India were certainly valuable in the discovery cycle when the study of global Shakespeares was just being established as a field, but the traffic of global Shakespeares constitutes a postnational space – venues where national identities are blurred by the presence of touring performers, transnational corporate sponsors, and theatre companies with international team members. Critics are ill-equipped to analyze works that do not fit neatly in geopolitical maps, such as the RSC’s Stratford-upon-Avon production of *Much Ado About Nothing* (dir. Iqbal Khan, 2012), which was set in contemporary Delhi. Performed in English by a cast of second-generation British Indian actors to Bollywood-inspired music, the production received mixed reviews because the press compared it to two productions from the Indian Subcontinent at the London Globe during the same time period: Arpana Company’s *All’s Well That Ends Well* in Gujarati and Company Theatre’s *Twelfth Night* in Hindi. The touring productions carried with them the cachet of ethnic and cultural authenticity. Khan’s *Much Ado* had rough edges and was not quite polished, but the diasporic identity of the British Indian actors also complicated the reception of their performance. However, the transposition of Messina to contemporary Delhi worked well for Clare Brennan of the *Guardian*, because “the hierarchical structuring of life in India...map[s] effectively on to similar structuring in Elizabethan England.”

World maps and metaphorical maps are central to the organization and reception of one of the highest profile twenty-first century instances of global Shakespeares: the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival that presented 74 productions in the UK. At the time of writing, there are two forthcoming books dedicated to this festival (Bennett and Carson; Edmondson, Prescott and Sullivan). According to festival director Tom Bird, the members of the organizing staff crisscrossed the globe to see and commission productions and marked their progress on large world maps on the wall, turning their office at the Globe into something that resembled a war room in a military headquarter. This is in fact a common way for journalists to map global Shakespeares, one that suggests that “third world” performances are fascinating because of their sociopolitical rather than aesthetic values.

The landing page of the website *A Year of Shakespeare* (The Shakespeare Institute of the University of Birmingham, the University of Warwick, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and Misfit Inc.), an online forum that documents the productions during the WSF, is similarly organized around a world map with an instruction in large capital letters: select a continent on the map. Before a user does anything, dialogue balloons appear randomly over different cities showing the title and performance dates of the production that represents that country. When one moves the cursor over a continent, a drop-down menu appears, listing all the plays from that region. As visually appealing as the map is as a navigational tool, it does not draw the users’ attention to one important fact: unless a production tours to the UK (37 of the productions were at the London Globe), the production and the country it represents will not be on the map. Such a map of cultural diplomacy suggests one

specific direction of travel from different continents to the UK rather than rhizomatic connections (Deleuze and Guattari) among various locations. As such, the map does not seem to promote an appreciation of transnational cultural flows or the fact that while Lotfi Achour's *Macbeth: Leila and Ben, a Bloody History* hailed from Tunisia, the Franco-Arabic company APA's production – with a French translation of Heiner Müller's German translation – resisted a unified identity. It incorporated the traditions of the European experimental theatre, the Arab Middle East, and Africa. There are many other similar cases of hybrid performances. The notion of “country of origin” is not very useful here.

There is a slight hint of heroic narratives of conquest in Bird's comments and in the way the map is used in the digital project, which is perfectly understandable given the unprecedented nature of this massive undertaking for both the festival organizers and the scholars involved in *A Year of Shakespeare*. More problematic is the unexamined assumption about the inevitability for global Shakespeares to “return” to the UK and the lack of perspectival information. This is in large part the London Globe's global Shakespeare. The complexity of the APA's cultural trajectories is too long winded for the short attention span of journalists looking for a headline-worthy story about Shakespeare in post-Jasmine Revolution Tunisia. There is no place for such a work on a world map with neat borders. The uses of world maps in this case – informed by a metropolitan bias – reify a sense of British ownership of Shakespeare – both global and English.³

Likewise, the disciplinary and cultural locations of critics also play important roles in the field of global Shakespeare studies. One of the challenges the field has faced is the native informant model of reportage that is fueled by a sense of entitlement or assumptions of cultural ownership. While no living scholar today will claim the status of a natural inhabitant of early modern England or the fictional world of *Hamlet*, some participants in global Shakespeares claim cultural authority over the history of particular locations based on their ethnicity or residency rather than on intellectual credentials. The pattern has sometimes been encouraged by other scholars' deferral to self-appointed or media-sanctioned native informants. Geographical proximity to one's object of study does not always translate into reliable knowledge. Mental maps of the world that are informed by divisions between nation-states and by area studies models inadvertently create unknowable objects by flattening the artworks against national profiles.

Global Shakespeares needs different kinds of maps, maps that are based on mobile cultures and can account for the liminality of the aesthetics and politics of performing Shakespeare. A mental map of the world that is based on transnational cultural flows rather than nation-states will show that global Shakespeares is not antithetical to English-language Shakespeare traditions; instead, compelling performances in English or other languages create their own cultural coordinates that can be best understood in a comparative context. In *The Forest of Symbols*, anthropologist Victor Turner expands Arnold van Gennep's notion of liminality to discuss the ambiguous time and place of withdrawal from normalcy. Turner uses liminality to refer to individuals who are “betwixt and between” two phases in a transitional state before being reincorporated into a new social order (93–97). Global Shakespeares as a genre thrives in a similarly suspended interstitial space, and some performances resist being reincorporated into a new cultural territory. While cultural identities may dissolve to some extent and while travellers may feel disoriented, many

artists embrace this space of humility and fluidity, as exemplified by Trinidadian playwright Davlin Thomas. In this issue, Giselle Rampaul considers the development of Caribbean subjectivities in the liminal space created by Thomas' plays *Lear Ananci* (2001) and *Hamlet: The Eshu Experience* (2002). Thomas' use of the figure of the African trickster complicates the oppositional Caribbean stance in relation to colonial cultures. Shakespeare is not the only empowering agent here to enable the subaltern to speak.

Global Shakespeares have deterritorializing and reterritorializing effects (Deleuze and Guattari) that unmark the cultural origins of intercultural interpretations because they work against assumptions about politically defined geographies; the productions tend to see such geographies as artificial constraints that no longer speak to the realities of globalized art. Global Shakespeares can be best understood through theatrically defined cultural locations. Examples include the hybrid musical landscape of Lin Zhaohua's production of *Richard III* (2001), which was made in Beijing but was presented in Berlin, and the performance of Priam's fall in the Ryutopia Company's production of *Hamlet* (2007), which is in dialogue with both *The Aeneid* and *The Tale of the Heike*. The Ryutopia *Hamlet* is the subject of Peter Donaldson's article in this special issue. He examines the cohabitation of Japanese and European epics in the Japanese production in Niigata. Donaldson worked with his students and used various online resources to formulate an argument about how overlapping cultural locations inform theatrical innovation and cross-cultural readings of *Hamlet* as a foundational national epic, an angle of interpretation that lays dormant in Western critical traditions. Donaldson's description of this collaborative process of discovery helps readers see how they too can incorporate performative cultural locations of global Shakespeares in their teaching and research.

Consideration of liminality leads us to diasporic and minority Shakespeares – rewritings that are distinct from national Shakespeares. These include the works of Robert Lepage, Djanet Sears, Ong Keng Sen, and other less frequently studied artists who work with more than one language or situate their performances in the diaspora. In some instances, these artists mounted performances on foreign shores to showcase a piece of an imagined homeland. In other cases, travellers were treated to foreign plays and sometimes inadvertently became exotic spectacles themselves. This is an area that calls for more scholarly attention, and analyzing these works can help us counter the binary oppositions that were formalized by World War II and the Cold War. Kinga Földvály's article in this issue examines the cross-cultural double entendres in *Life Goes On* (dir. Sangeeta Datta, 2009), a British–Indian film adaptation of *King Lear* set in contemporary London among an immigrant family of Hindus from Bengal. The film creates a cultural location that is neither here nor there. Földvály's study of the motherly figure and of the pastoral in the film and in *King Lear* opens up questions about global heritage and the concept of a “mother country.”

“Nothing will come of nothing”? Archival silence

Attempts to map the itineraries of Shakespeare as a perpetuum mobile reveal that there is a limit to Shakespeare's global reach, but global Shakespeares as a field can bring our attention to what is not there (yet): silenced or redacted stories, missing links in the archive, sensitive or subversive texts that are removed from sight. These

archival silences place entire avenues of thought beyond our reach. There are plenty of countries and regions where Shakespeare does not figure prominently. This is archival silence. As a repertory of knowledge, archives are filled with voices. The stories an archive tells may be curated, censored, and distorted by native informants and global producers, or otherwise filtered by financial circumstances or ideological preferences. Why do some works travel farther than others and as a result populate more archives? Some critics use the notion of cultural discount to explain the phenomenon. It has been argued that a work with “degree zero” cultural specificity will travel farther than one that requires extensive decoding (Hoskins and Mirus). The assumption behind the cultural logic of nil particularity is clearly problematic, for “signs of cultural specificity may be precisely the qualities prized by international audiences” (Acland 34), but the global circulation of Shakespeare, Ibsen (Fischer-Lichte, Gronau, and Weiler), Cervantes (Childers), or Greek tragedy (Mee and Foley) is connected to a degree of textual transparency that allows audiences to tell their own stories and thereby shape our knowledge base of world cultures. I have previously discussed the implications of the availability of global Shakespeares on the World Wide Web and how this increasingly dispersed canon challenges and affirms the notion of “liveness” in performance studies and the digital humanities (Huang “Global Shakespeare 2.0”). Here I would like to focus on the archival silence in broader terms.

There are three implications of silences in the archive. First, silences or gaps in a body of records may reflect certain realities in the world the archive is trying to map. There seems to be no significant Shakespeare traditions in the Antarctic, Iceland, Greenland, Fiji, Tristan da Cunha, Mongolia, Iran, and in large swaths of Sub-Saharan Africa except for South Africa. Materials from these areas are therefore sparse or missing in “global Shakespeares” as collective memory and as a repertoire of cultures. These gaps may well reflect an actual dearth of Shakespearean performances in those places, but the gaps may also be a result of the field’s limited linguistic repertoire and historical knowledge at the present moment to track activities in those places.

Second, authorities may deny scholars full access to sensitive or censored archives for any number of reasons. Censorship not only impedes access to archives but also compromises academic freedom. For example, even when scholars are able to locate politically sensitive materials pertaining to performances of *Hamlet* in post-Arab Spring Egypt and in China in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, they may not be able to discuss them in public because of concerns for the safety of their collaborators and interviewees who are still living in those countries. They may not be able to publish their findings because they are concerned that they will be banned from entering those countries on future research trips or will not receive funding from those governments. Some materials are simply more challenging to access for scholars, such as wartime performances. The condition of preservation can create another obstacle. This kind of archival silence is created not by the absence of materials but by accessibility issues.

Third, silences in the historical records may be a manifestation of power struggles between researchers and their objects of study. Some groups, including the RSC and Ninagawa Studio, resist the concept of digital open-access comprehensive archives in their effort to preserve the production value of their live, ephemeral performances. The necessarily selective processes of archiving and meaning making also have a

silencing effect. Under financial and space constraints, an archive may have to purge some materials to make room for more desirable artifacts, though values change over time. Before Shakespeare on film became a field, the Folger Library discarded film scripts and other materials sent to them by film studios. Sir Thomas Bodley, founder of the Oxford library, dismissed “idle books, riff raff,” and “baggage books” (222) in instructions to his librarian in 1612.

From a scholarly point of view, the archival silence constitutes productive negative evidence in the archaeological and anthropological senses. Archival silence is useful because it compels us to rethink our criteria and frame of reference. On the one hand, while postcolonial critics commonly privilege works that critique the role of Western hegemony in the historical record of globalization, the meanings of Shakespeare in such places as South Africa, Brazil, and India are not always determined by colonial frames of reference. On the other hand, the absence of a coherent, constructed Shakespeare tradition in a certain place does not mean there are no local engagements with Shakespearean material. For example, while there are rich references and allusions to Shakespeare and his characters in Mexican cinema and in Argentinian theatre, there is no sustained scholarly tradition of Shakespeare studies in these localities.

Global Shakespeares as a concept is challenged by the competing pull of tendencies to privilege local histories over grand narratives and to counteract provincialism with a broader, if global, perspective. Take Shakespeare’s uneven presence on stage in Spain and Latin America, for example. The dearth of high-profile Spanish productions has traditionally been attributed to a compelling local canon of Spanish Renaissance drama or to competing colonial allegiances. Staking his claim against the Anglo-centric assumptions about a purported link between Britain’s absence as a colonial power and the absence of Shakespeare, Juan F. Cerdá historicizes a different aspect of feeble or silenced voices in the archive of global Shakespeares. In his article on itinerant French- and Italian-speaking touring stars in early-twentieth-century Spain (in productions directed by Spanish actor-managers), including Sarah Bernhard and Ermete Zacconi, Cerdá situates the rarity of a “doubly foreign” and highly selective canon (*Hamlet*, *Othello*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Merchant of Venice*) in the Spanish actor-managers’ quest for cultural distinction.

Reception is an equally important part of the historical record of global Shakespeares, and therein lies another kind of archival silence. Some works are purged from the archive, while others are not considered worthy of a place there. These works lack a full record of reception because they are not yet on the map. Nely Keinänen tackles the reception history of the Finnish film *Eight Days to the Premiere* (2008), a romantic comedy about a theatrical production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Finnish critics objected to the film’s failure to offer enough Shakespearean elements. The film is virtually unknown outside Finland, because Finnish is a language that is neither part of the English or world Englishes communities, nor part of cultures that are more diametrically opposed to the West. Even though the local did not go global, the local film was judged according to criteria that were born out of imaginations of the global. Keinänen thus raises important questions about local audiences for “global” Shakespeares and the place of minority cultures in this wave of globalization.

Likewise, the performance reviews in this issue map a range of global Shakespeare stage productions not only in hybrid cultural spaces but also in different historical

moments. Some productions are being reviewed for the first time in English, while others have a longer track record. To avoid the metropolitan bias, I have included performances in rural areas. These include an intriguing Greek performance entitled *Othellos* in Cyprus; a Portuguese company's *La Tempestad* in Castilian Spanish in Almagro, a small town that is two hours by train from Madrid; the Clowns de Shakespeare's *Richard III* in Curitiba, Brazil; the Tadpole Repertory's promenade performance of *The Winter's Tale* in New Delhi, India; Sulayman Al-Bassam's *The Speaker's Progress* in Boston, which featured a Gulf Arab version of *Twelfth Night* as a play within a play; Nikolay Georgiev's metadrama *Hamlet or Three Boys and One Girl* in Sofia, Bulgaria; and the Tunisian company Artistes, Producteurs, Associés's *Macbeth: Leila and Ben, a Bloody History* in Newcastle, UK, during the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival. Rounding out the review section are two reviews of little-known earlier productions that engage with American leftist and post-communist Romanian politics: Robert Lewis' *Red Hamlet*, a left-wing theatre performance in New York City, 1933; and the National Theatre in Craiova's *Titus Andronicus* in 1992. These reviews contribute to a broader and longer history of global Shakespeares. By reading against the grain and by attending to archival silences, the contributors to this issue give voices to silenced stories.

Coda

Assessment of the limitations of a concept is an important step in the construction of a critical methodology. Is there anything global about global Shakespeares? Are current Shakespeare-related activities global in the same way cancer epidemiology ([Mukherjee](#)), high-grossing musicals such as *The Phantom of the Opera* (\$5.6 billion worldwide since 1986, "[The Tills Are Alive](#)"), blockbuster films such as *The Titanic* (1997), and British popular cultural icons such as Susan Boyle and J.K. Rowling are able to cause global concern or draw worldwide interest and investment? "Global" Shakespeares reveals just how intensely local all performances are. The ideological encodings of all performances, including Anglo-American ones, should be studied within, rather than in isolation from, this broader context. As for the second question, Shakespeare alone would not be able to fill the Olympic Stadium in London, and a majority of the 4.8 billion worldwide viewers probably could not have cared less for Branagh's recitation of Caliban's speech or the reference to it in Underworld's "Caliban's Dream," preformed as the Olympic flame arrived and the Olympic cauldron was lit. The drawing power of Shakespeare as a cultural institution pales in comparison to popular cultural icons, but it has a more ubiquitous global presence and impact on more aspects of modern life in the *longue durée* of cultural history. That presence has also been mined for a wide range of purposes over a much longer period of time of centuries than the relatively short burst of, say, a few decades for a popular musical.

Insofar as global Shakespeares connote a body of travelling cultural texts and a liminal space where migrating people and ideas meet, the phenomena have important methodological value to the field of Shakespeare, performance, and film studies. The field of global Shakespeares may never have theories that all critics agree upon, because publications about global Shakespeares emphasize different aspects of intercultural work for different audiences. As most readers of this journal are in Shakespeare and early modern studies, they may be more interested in the impact of

globalization on Shakespeare than the cultural history of a location except for details that pertain to a particular film or performance. Discussions of Shakespeares in journals such as *Adaptation* and *The Asian Theatre Journal* will be governed by different disciplinary parameters. What is clear, however, is that available theories of postcolonialism or current discourses about globalization cannot adequately deal with the issues of multiculturalism, multilingualism, diaspora, and identity raised by global Shakespeares. Nevertheless, the plethora of activities and the plurality of perspectives themselves constitute an important methodology that can shed new light on liminality, archival silence, Shakespeare in diaspora, and other topics. Global Shakespeare as a methodology will continue to be energized by the sheer multiplicity of genres, cultures, representations of diverse time periods, and artistic and academic investments in performances as multilingual affairs, but its richness and breadth also present unique challenges. One of the pitfalls of sweeping narratives about a Shakespeare of global stature is their tendency to produce deterministic, linear, teleological histories that are oriented toward preconceived end points. The early modern and modern fascination with performing the globe will also continue to haunt the study of Shakespeare. Recognizing these limitations and realities can also help globetrotting Shakespearean artists, sponsors, and scholars engage in equitable cultural exchange.

The articles and reviews in this special issue reveal that global Shakespeares is not as romantic as some anecdotes may suggest. Many films and productions may not be distributed or toured widely and may never have a truly worldwide audience. Other works suggest that Shakespeare's global career is far more complex than a binary model of colonial expansion from, say, England to India or from the US to the Philippines, and postcolonial "return" to those centres via nostalgia or political corrective. Instead, the framework for global Shakespeares is rhizomatic. The recognition of the importance of whence and whither texts travel in this special issue, however, should not be taken as an endorsement of the simple binary of local versus global.⁴ The rhizomatic networks of collaboration encourage cultural flows to be re-routed around disruptions, and foster productive interactions between Caribbean and African or between East Asian and Soviet traditions. In light of the need to create and attend to multiple hubs of activities, this special issue presents research articles that adopt contrasting approaches and styles of scholarship in different parts of the world, including studies that are driven by theoretical questions and studies that are historical and evidence-laden.

Videos of some of the works that are discussed and reviewed in this special issue are available on *Global Shakespeares*, an open-access video archive; some of these films and productions have annotations and English subtitles. I invite you to take advantage of the archive's offerings and the online forum to facilitate further discussion, to investigate the archival silence, and to take the history of global Shakespeares to task.

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Notes

1. There are now national and regional Shakespeare research associations on every continent. The Fundación Shakespeare Argentina was founded in 2012, and the Asian Shakespeare Association in 2013. Some countries have more than one association: India has two; China has three, including a national and two provincial associations in Sichuan and Jilin. Global Shakespeare has been a prominent thematic focus of several institutions and projects, including the Global Shakespeares open-access digital video archive at MIT, the World Shakespeare Project (a teaching collaboration led by Emory University), the Global Shakespeare Curriculum Initiative at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, NYU Abu Dhabi, NYU Shanghai, Centro Shakespeariano of the Università degli Studi di Ferrara (which celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2013), digital projects to track Russian and French Shakespeares, respectively, at Moscow University for the Humanities and Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier III, SHAKREP: Shakespeare in Spain Performance Database, George Washington University Dean's Scholars in Shakespeare (an honors program), and Shanghai's Donghua University that established a Shakespeare Institute in 2012. Over the past years, an increasing number of junior and senior faculty positions specifically in global Shakespeares or with a preference for expertise in the subject have been advertised by North American and UK institutions that included Stanford University; New York University; the University of California, San Diego; the City University of New York; and the University of Exeter. Courses on global Shakespeare are currently being taught at college and graduate levels in several countries and in some US high schools (mostly as advanced placement courses), because these courses can fulfill multiple requirements at once. The Fulbright Commission has established a new Distinguished Chair in Global Shakespeare in the UK, and Queen Mary, University of London and the University of Warwick will launch an ambitious centre for global Shakespeare in late 2013 with David Schalkwyk as its director. The Arts and Humanities Research Council in Britain has sponsored several projects that sought to examine cultural globalization or reclaim local multiethnic histories, including a project led by Tony Howard that studies performances of Black and Asian British artists in the UK. In 2009–2010, the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC hosted an exhibition entitled "Imagining China: The View from Europe, 1550–1700" with a video exhibition on Chinese and Sinophone Shakespeares. The British Council and the British Library are currently developing a major exhibition on the global afterlife of Shakespeare (1564–1616) and possibly Tang Xianzu (1550–1616) and Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616) that will open in 2016 at the library. International theatre and film festivals and conferences focusing on global Shakespeares are so well known that they do not have to be listed here.
2. Conceived in Ariane Mnouchkine's studio in Paris, Wu Hsing-kuo's solo performance *Lear Is Here* helped revived his company Contemporary Legend Theatre from a hiatus in 2001. International touring and his own brand of global Shakespeare saved and revitalized Wu's group. While some companies play at international festivals for the prestige rather than for measurable financial gain, the Brazilian company Grupo Galpão earned enough income from its UK and European tours to establish its own rehearsal and performance space on their home turf. South African playwright Welcome Msoomi's 1970 adaptation of *Macbeth*, entitled *uMabatha*, went from a little-known work to a canonical work in the repertoire of "African" Shakespeare because of tours to the Royal Shakespeare Company's Aldwych Theatre in 1972 and to the London Globe in 1997. The global strategies of the London Globe's successful Globe-to-Globe season in 2012 have been emulated by other festivals aiming to attract a larger, more diverse, and international audience, such as the Prague Shakespeare Festival, the Romanian International Shakespeare Festival in Craiova, the Stratford Festival (see [Prosser](#)), and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.
3. In the spirit of full disclosure, I have participated in both projects in various capacities and believe in their missions. The WSF performances are compelling, and the reviews on *A Year of Shakespeare* are cogent and critically alert. Further, as a scholar and educator who works with and takes students on annual study trips to several of these institutions, including the Globe, I have a vested interest in seeing the rise of a global Shakespeare based out of London, but we must attend to the field's short- and long-term intellectual gain.

4. As Arjun Appadurai observed, “today, when we hear the word global, the word local is rarely far behind. But it is not always clear what the local means, except it is widely considered an endangered space” (231).

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