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traditional performance or the role of the woman warrior in Chinese literature and popular culture.

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**BERNARD SHAW AND CHINA: CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS.**

By Kay Li. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007. xviii + 285 pp. Cloth \$59.95.

In 1933, Bernard Shaw went to China during his world tour. It is not difficult to recognize what seems to be a global commonplace—that cultural celebrities travel well, as do their ideas and texts. What is challenging is how to think thorny issues of cross-cultural encounters through this phenomenon productively. Kay Li's book is a study of Shaw's "comic cultural disconnects" with modern China (1). Li sets herself the task to trace Shaw's "passage to China" through its two paradoxes: "No matter how much the people of China had wanted to meet Xiao Bo-na [Bernard Shaw] in person, he had never intended such an encounter. . . . On the other hand, over time the Chinese have managed to reach Xiao Bo-na" (3). The loosely organized eight chapters of the book attempt to cover a vast ground: Shaw's first visit to China, Chinese-inspired characters in Shaw's own plays and translation, and stage productions and films of his plays in Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Beijing. Despite the reservation outlined below, *Bernard Shaw and China* usefully opens up many avenues of future research into the global circulation of cultural and literary texts. The book will interest students and scholars of theatre studies.

The first chapter chronicles early Chinese reception of Shaw and proposes a number of reasons for the emphasis of his English rather than Irish identity. The thesis is that the gap of knowledge made it possible for Shaw to interpret China freely and for Chinese intellectuals to enjoy greater latitude when introducing Shaw's works into China. Here Li attends to the crucial fact that such figures as Ouyang Yu-qian and Chen Tu-hsiu (which should be Ouyang Yuqian and Chen Duxiu for the sake of consistency) considered Shaw not in isolation but in relation to other figures such as John Dewey and Bertrand Russell. Chapter 2 aims to examine Shaw's appropriation of China—on "the imaginary level . . . in *Back to Methuselah* and on the real-life level in *Buoyant Billions*" (17). Chapters 3–5 are devoted to the challenges to translate and perform Shaw's plays in Chinese. Li makes a distinction between what she calls literal and cultural translations: the former could be carried out without consideration of the cultural context of the incoming culture, while the latter ("a translation of experience" [50]) could give "agency to the host culture by making the incoming culture relevant to the local context" (46). These chapters mull over the same aspects of *Mrs. Warren's Profession* in Chinese translation and performance. There is a brief section on how Wang Chung-hsien (Wang Zhongxian) solved "the unsuitability of a Western play [*Mrs. Warren's*

*Profession*] being performed in a Chinese context to a Chinese audience” in his Shaw-inspired play *The Good Son* (129). Chapter 6, titled “Shaw’s Passage to China,” revisits Shaw’s 1933 trip to China discussed in the prologue, while chapter 7 jumps back and forth in time to describe a vast array of productions of *Widowers’ Houses*, *Major Barbara*, and *Pygmalion*, collapsing several different historical and cultural contexts. The last chapter is a succinct, though somewhat arbitrary, compilation of Shaw’s presence in popular culture, “serious examinations,” and the Internet.

One of the interesting topics the book touches upon is the Chinese emphasis on Shaw’s English rather than Irish identity. According to Li, two major factors contributed to this shift: “young Chinese intellectuals chose to use Shaw’s anti-Englishness in their discourse to counter British and other foreign powers’ colonial and imperialist encroachment into China” (7), and “China’s limited global consciousness” and “the great geographical distance between China and England” allowed “the national difference between the Chinese and the English” to override the “regional difference” (6). These claims are contestable, as the analysis glosses over the important and ambiguous roles of Japan and what was constructed as China’s Confucian tradition in early twentieth-century Sino-Western relations. References to key figures such as Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss (or Susan Bennett, within theatre studies) are curiously absent when reception theory is invoked and critiqued (11).

The global circulation of Shaw’s plays is an important topic, but it calls for critical analysis of a kind not offered within these pages. Though the book proposes several interesting ideas, its framework and arguments are hard to follow, because the same ideas are often rehearsed verbatim only a few pages apart (see pp. 218 and 220, and elsewhere). Further, though ill defined, the term “cross-cultural encounters” has been allowed to dominate the book’s subtitle and chapters; neither does the repeated use of “cross-cultural” as section headings (10, 240) give a clear sense of direction. Chapter 1 claims that “cross-cultural encounters are less encounters of form than encounters of content” (4), but by the last chapter “cross-cultural encounters” are defined as “meetings of form and meaning” (240). The formulation also begs the question of which form of cultural production it is that does not create new form and meaning.

Neither does it help when, at several key sections, the book’s analysis inherits its objects’ tendency to argue from vague terms that ironically deepen the very problems Li attempts to critique. Chapter 1 is unconvincing where it argues that the Chinese phrase *zhanlue* (strategy) “has a mythic resonance” (4). “Inverse cultural appropriation,” a key term in chapter 1, is not defined at all (17), and the assertion that it is “not mere appropriation but a strategy of cultural encounter” (22) does not solve the problem. The same tendency to generalize seems to govern the selection of illustrations in the book, which are often irrelevant to the analyses. For example, a photograph from Li’s family archive of an unidentified section of the Great Wall from an unknown time period (20) accompanies a critique of the “fictive global homogeneity” in Shaw’s account of his experience seeing the Great Wall from a biplane in

1933, which only serves to remind readers of the danger of ignoring cultural specificities in a book that aims to be a “historical-empirical” study (11). Last, but not least, the book could have benefited from careful editing; for example, it is odd to call the Great Wall a “cultural item” (22) or *Pai-hua* (vernacular)—should be *baihua*—a “plain language” (62).

Though there are problems with use of critical terms and the kinds of choices detailed above, the book does pull together much material on Shaw and his Chinese interpreters and will be of use to those who wish to explore this topic. While some arguments are contestable, there is a wealth of information from Chinese sources.

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**ZEAMI: PERFORMANCE NOTES.** By Tom Hare. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008. 528 pp. 28 illus. Cloth, \$45.00.

How does one write inclusively about theatrical performance that layers visual and aural components with its literary and kinetic aspects? A discussion of *nō* performance compounds the problem with its layers of traditional poetics, nuances derived from the specificity of costume choices, rhythmic modes, and song styles. Practitioners and scholars alike struggle with these issues. Even in *nō*'s infancy as *sarugaku*, these multiple aspects of performance, layered and combined, made writing about the art a daunting task, even for Zeami, one of the founders of the art that became *nō*.

In *Zeami: Performance Notes*, Thomas Hare reveals Zeami's self-reflection on writing about his art, his hesitancy to put his notes on paper although he knew the art thoroughly, and his concern with not only his own writing but the succession of his style of art as it passed to the next generation. Hare firmly grounds Zeami's work in its sociopolitical context in his introduction. He maintains this contextualization in the individual translations of each text, not only relating the political climate of the period but also relating the text to Zeami's own path through life, including the growth and development of aesthetic theories and the depth of his religious understanding that infused his work. Hare's meticulous translation delves into the texts, translating even the notes in the margins that Zeami made after the work had been completed, to give the most complete picture to date of Zeami's work.

Hare's work is notable first for the comprehensive translation of all of Zeami's texts, which he prefers to term “performance notes” instead of “theories” or “treatises.” The great strength of the work overall is Hare's ability to personalize Zeami's work, giving us a clear sense of the developing person, a vision of the young Zeami setting down his thoughts on performance, correcting and amending them as his artistry deepened and he grew to a venerated elder performer. Hare accomplishes this by thoroughly analyzing each text, foregrounding it, and explicitly annotating the work. The translations are