

proposed solutions” (21). In other words, as she writes later, “French interest in Japan was aesthetic from the outset” (57). This is certainly right as far as it goes, but I do wish it had gone further. The book deftly avoids the pitfalls of any reductive critique of cross-cultural representation—I would indeed have been greatly saddened to reach the end of 500 pages only to discover that the French had misrepresented or misunderstood Japan—but allowing the ideological buck to stop at the aesthetic takes the French tradition too much on its own terms. If all these Japans are really about France, this begs the question of why “Japan” and not some other reserve of cultural topoi (to paraphrase Roland Barthes) assumed such a privileged place in the formulation of the “aesthetic.”

Given the scale and scope of the work, some of the book’s chapters are, inevitably, more successful than others, if only because some authors’ connections to Japan are more compelling than others’. This breadth also means that most readers will find something to disagree with but this is small *sake*, compared to the wealth of literary history and critical thought put forward by the book as a whole. If in many ways this is more a work of history than of argument, it is the cumulative evidence of the facts of that history that is in the end the book’s strongest argument. That is, beyond any disagreements one might have with its particular readings, beyond even the indisputable value of its literary historiography, Hokenson’s book points out the need for, and gets us off to a very good start on, a necessary and long-deferred conversation about the transnational character of “Western” modernity.

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Shakespeare in China. By Murray Levith. London: Continuum, 2004. xv + 156 pp. Cloth, \$ 80.00, Paper, \$ 22.99.

As a new publisher in the field, Continuum has produced a growing list in cutting-edge Shakespeare studies in the past few years, including a handsomely designed new series entitled “Shakespeare Now!” (Douglas Bruster’s

To Be or Not to Be and Lukas Erne's *Shakespeare's Modern Collaborators*, among others). Although it is not part of the Shakespeare Now! series, *Shakespeare in China* by Murray Levith (author of *Shakespeare's Italian Settings and Plays*) shares the compact format with volumes in that series. It provides students and teachers a basic historical overview of twentieth-century stage adaptations of Shakespeare's plays in mainland China, with a personal touch—accounts of the author's trip to China and photographs of the author and Chinese scholars (74 and 59).

In our times, China, like Shakespeare, has become a major international presence. As cross-cultural collaborations and dialogues, Chinese interpretations of Shakespeare are becoming increasingly difficult for Shakespeareans to ignore. The unique dynamics between Chinese and Shakespearean modes of signification provide rich opportunities to explore a wide range of questions for audiences interested in provocative and bold re-imaginings of Shakespeare and for scholars interested in Shakespeare's currency in our world. Although the appropriation of Shakespeare has been the cornerstone of postcolonial criticism that focuses on such locations as India, Africa, and the Caribbean, the history of Shakespeare in East Asia where the local cultures have a more ambiguous relation to the European West is less known by teachers and students of Shakespeare. Ironically, the marginalization of the field does not result from the lack of critical attention per se, but from an overflow of "reports" without theoretical reflection that make Asian interpretations into predictably exotic objects that are never positioned to be properly known.

Levith's *Shakespeare in China* is aimed at a general Anglophone readership and is similar in structure to John Pemble's *Shakespeare Goes to Paris: How the Bard Conquered France* (2005) and Li Ruru's *Shashibiya: Staging Shakespeare in China* (2003). In the preface, Levith contrasts the idea that Shakespeare is "a socioeconomic export product from an imperialist West bent on the . . . exploitation [or] depreciation . . . of unique local cultures" with the possibility that "various peoples [such as] the Han Chinese have happily . . . adapted Shakespeare to . . . serve their own particular ends" (xiii). Chapter 1 rehearses the early history of Shakespeare in mainland China up to 1949, when the People's Republic of China was founded, and concentrates on translation and criticism. Chapter 2, titled "Shakespeare and Mao," pursues Mao Zedong's Marxist-inflected literary utilitarianism and how the tendency has negatively influenced the already complicated process of cross-cultural interpretation. Levith discusses the role of Mao's influential "Talks at the Yenan [should be Yan'an]" in Chinese interpretations of Shakespeare between 1949 and 1966. Chapter 3 contains Levith's musings about the Cultural Revolution and Shakespeare, including observations on

the similarities between *Henry V* and *Taking Tiger Mountain*, a Chinese revolutionary model play (52), Chinese anti-Westernism, as well as American journalists Lois Wheeler Snow's and Edgar Snow's relationships with the Chinese government during and after the times of political crackdown (42; 48–49; 51–54). Readers may benefit from a more systematic account of how these erratic events relate to the topic of this chapter.

Chapter 4 records the revived mainland Chinese interest in Shakespeare after the Cultural Revolution, a well-known story. Levith notes that even after the revolution, Chinese Shakespeare criticism still tended to follow the same “tired and dogmatic models of Marxist criticism” (86) and remained unsophisticated. Levith seems to follow a tired critical paradigm. He quotes He Qixin, a mainland Chinese scholar, at length and agrees with He's judgment that Chinese criticism of Shakespeare “very often miss[es] the essence and dramatic power of the plays” (87). A better course would have been to analyze such misreadings and take readers beyond the facts to understand the many historical and cultural questions in Shakespeare's lengthy but unpredictable affiliation with Marxist ideology.

Further, the challenge remains for scholars to decide how seriously to take claims and the ideological discourses. Going against the grain of China's official Marxist–Maoist doctrines of literary criticism, He Qixin's argument may seem liberating and “brave” (133), but it is flawed by unarticulated ideological assumptions about what and how Shakespeare's plays mean. Not unlike his fellow Chinese critics, He assumes that the meanings of Shakespearean drama are preserved in a pristine state unaltered by historical conditions.

Since the 1990s, theories of cultural translation have inspired sophisticated studies of the dynamics between various truth claims in cross-cultural interpretation rather than catalogues of what is lost in translation. Therefore, one may ask: What are the ideological and cultural forces at work behind such intentional or unintentional misreadings? How should the “essence” of Shakespeare's plays be understood in relation to the time-bound and location-specific processes of interpretation? How does the Soviet-inflected experience of Shakespeare inform the use of Shakespeare in other communist countries? What can we learn from the transnational trajectory of Marxism from Europe to the Soviet Union and the PRC?

In chapter 5, Levith turns to Hong Kong and Taiwan and briefly evaluates Shakespeare translation and performance in the two island societies. He concludes that “Hong Kong stage Shakespeare seems poised to reflect the same professionalism and expertise as British or American Shakespeare in the new millennium” (105), and that contemporary Taiwanese stage adapta-

tions “suggest a post-modern flexibility . . . [and] a sense of global modernity” (113). Chapter 6, entitled “Shakespeare and Confucius,” attempts to argue that contrary to a Westerner’s expectation that Confucianism would have had a “profound effect on Chinese interpretation of Shakespeare,” there is “precious little traditional philosophy informing Chinese Shakespeare commentary” (114).

Chapter 7 argues that the paradox of Shakespeare in the New China is that “the Chinese have mostly adapted . . . the playwright for their own ideological and aesthetic purposes.” Levith compares the situation of Shakespeare in China to “Shylock in Venice, a sometimes useful but potentially dangerous ‘fly through the open door’ that can threaten to disrupt cultural and political values” (137). The author points out that “from the beginning . . . China has had a schizophrenic love/hate relationship with Shakespeare,” but the chapter reiterates a problematic claim that “Shakespeare in China is a twentieth-century phenomenon” (128), overlooking the rich and complex nineteenth-century reception history of Shakespeare in China and Hong Kong. The book does briefly discuss a few nineteenth-century mainland Chinese cases of appropriation (3, 93).

Although the materials covered by the book have already been examined in other English-language studies that Levith relies on (Li Ruru’s *Shashibiya* [2003], Xiao Yang Zhang’s *Shakespeare in China* [1996], and He Qixin’s 1986 dissertation, among others), the book’s synthesis of secondary literature provides a useful introduction to the topic. Despite its contributions, some parts of the book raise questions.

First, the book leaves readers craving for theorization and in-depth case studies utilizing primary research materials to complement the sweeping historical narratives. For example, the author states that “before 1949 . . . it was . . . very difficult for people to see Shakespeare performed, for productions were done mostly in the major cities and for select and limited audiences” (23), ignoring the rich popular tradition of performing Shakespeare in various regional Chinese operas and in semi-improvisational styles in rural areas. Further, in several instances an evaluative tone was deployed (“In this early period, their criticism and analyses were largely unsophisticated, simplistic, and reductionist Marxism,” [32]), substituting critical analysis of the sophisticated operation of Marxist ideological criticism for an unexamined assumption of the referential stability of the ideas of Shakespeare and China.

Second, as the author concedes, “the task of rendering Chinese words and names has presented real challenges” to non-Chinese speakers (xv). Several key phrases are spelled incorrectly, making cross-referencing dif-

ficult. Some examples are Yen'an (should be Yan'an; 29, 46, 143), Jiao Jujin (should be Jiao Juyin; 18–19), *jiejai* (should be *jiezhai*, securing a loan, 15), *mubiao zhi* (should be *mubiao xi*, a genre of modern Chinese theatre, 15), and *f'ien ming* (decree of heaven, 125; the same word, heaven, is transcribed as *tian* and the entire phrase as *tianming* only a few pages earlier, 114). Different transcription systems, sometimes for the same phrases, are used throughout the book without good reasons. There is a similar problem with the bibliography where, against the current scholarly conventions, the titles of some Chinese articles and books are given only in English as if they were English-language publications. Without the romanized Chinese titles, it is difficult to locate these works.

Third, the book does not always engage with current scholarship. For example, although the author concedes that it is dated, he still gives undue credit to He Qixin's 1986 Kent State University doctoral thesis, which he calls "the single best work in English that I know of about Shakespeare in China" without explaining why all the post-1986 studies of the subject—in English, Chinese, French, and other languages—cannot measure up to it (133).

Fourth, the fascinating materials discussed in the book suggest a number of theoretical perspectives, but the structure of the book has not allowed them to be fully articulated. Some readers of this journal may wish for more sustained exploration of theoretical matter. The book opens strongly with the notion of multiple Chinas ("Shakespeare in the Chinas," xiii), but readers may appreciate a fuller incorporation of the term in subsequent discussions and a clearer sense of the differences between the various Chinas. Further, the book repeatedly states that Chinese criticism often misses the "essence" of Shakespeare's plays. The book's contribution to the field should be a critical analysis of the theoretical implication of these interpretive differences. One may wonder what the "essence" of Shakespearean and Confucian aesthetics might be. The author asks, "Why . . . have Chinese critics shied away from [Confucian interpretations of Shakespeare], which seems so natural for them to pursue?" (127). He urges Chinese scholars to take this approach but does not attend to the historical differences between the pre-Qin dynasty context, neo-Confucianism, and the modern hermeneutic traditions of Confucian texts (126–127); *King Lear* fits the bill nicely for being a play about filial piety in this schematic account of representative Confucian virtues (124). The book asserts that "Confucianism . . . is so tied to the fabric of Chinese life and culture, so much part of a national and cultural identity, that the various attempts to stamp it out have not been successful" (117), ignoring

the powerful counter discourses and traditions such as Buddhism, Daoism, and Marxist–Maoism.

Although not all of these problems may matter for the book's intended readers who are neither Shakespeareans nor Asianists, some issues such as the factual errors and the book's unproblematic tone (unchecked assumptions and sources; "most Chinese are still patriotic and loyal to the country's leaders and honour the virtues of modesty, humility, and good manners. Children continue to respect parents and elders" [117]) will mislead the readers. Several signs make it explicit that the book is designed to be a basic introduction to an important and complex topic. Indeed Levith's book will inspire new theoretical works on Shakespeare's afterlife. One of the tasks for the next generation of scholarship is not to furnish more "reports on the scene" that simply add to the already long list of Shakespeare's global reincarnations. Rather, at stake is how to reinvent the interpretive energy by destabilizing conventionalized interpretations of "Shakespeare" and its Others—past, present, and to come.

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The Modernist Response to Chinese Art: Pound, Moore, Stevens. By Qian Zhaoming. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003. Cloth, \$55.00; Paper, \$19.50.

For decades, scholars have posited the notion that American modernism has been influenced by Chinese thought and culture, yet this claim could be no more than speculation when it became clear that most if not all American modernists could not read or speak Chinese. Pound was, of course, the problematic case, because he was not totally ignorant of Chinese, having learned from Fenollosa's edition of the Japanese glosses of Mori Kainan and Ariga Nagao for his *Catbay* (1915), and having the instruction and guidance of the Korean sinologue, Achilles Fang, for his *Confucian Odes* (1959; copyright 1954). Doubts about this speculation can now be put to rest, with Qian