MAKARYK AND McHUGH

> SHAKESPEARE AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

EDITED BY IRENA R. MAKARYK AND MARISSA McHUGH



SHAKESPEARE AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

MEMORY CULTURE IDENTITY



'This ambitious anthology makes a real contribution to Shakespeare studies and the Second World War, both topics of continuing interest. It is guaranteed to find an appreciative readership among those interested in theatre, cultural history, and the history of the twentieth century.'

Marvin Carlson, PhD Program in Theater, The Graduate Center, The City University of New York

'This collection devoted to the appropriation of Shakespeare before and during the Second World War fills a gap in research — there is no other book which concentrates on Shakespeare during this historical period. With essays of high quality and originality, Shakespeare and the Second World War may well become a standard reference volume.'

Ton Hoenselaars, Professor of English Renaissance Literature, University of Utrecht, and 2012 Sam Wanamaker Fellow, Shakespeare's Globe

CONTRIBUTORS

Zeno Ackermann Simon Barker Mark Bayer Peter Billingham Tibor Egervari Werner Habicht Alexander C.Y. Huang Nancy Isenberg Tina Krontiris Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney Katarzyna Kwapisz Williams Irena R. Makaryk Marissa McHugh Ryuta Minami Anne Russell Aleksei Semenenko





UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS

utppublishing.com

9 'Warlike Noises': Jingoistic *Hamlet* during the Sino-Japanese Wars

ALEXANDER C.Y. HUANG

Some of the most fruitful interactions between the 'airy nothing' of a literary motif and its 'local habitation' – a physical and felt presence in a community - can be found in the radical adaptation of Shakespeare to the local exigencies. In particular, wartime theatre puts the relationship between politics and art in flux. How should the politicization of aesthetics be historicized in relation to an academic culture that distrusts the notion of *l'art pour l'art* and insists on reading literature politically? How do theatre artists adapt Shakespearean localities to enhance the perceived value of the performance and its venue? Literary meanings, especially those associated with wars, are created between the locality where various conventions of authenticity are derived and the locality where the performance takes place. The unexpected twists and turns of history can give significant meanings to these localities, including the performance venue, the setting of the plays, and the audience's cultural locations. While Hamlet (unlike Antony and Cleopatra or Henry V) does not feature war as a thematic focus - except for occasional mentions of war in Horatio's and Claudius' comments such as 'that fair and warlike form,' 'this warlike state,' and Hamlet's last question before his death: 'What warlike noise is this?' - it has been staged in a wide variety of methods in many countries in the times of war. This chapter investigates a mid-twentieth-century site-specific interpretation of Hamlet: Jiao Juyin's production (1942) in a Confucian temple in China when the country was resisting the Japanese military invasion, and before the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) gained power. Figuring prominently in this case are collective cultural memory, local readings of Shakespeare informed by wartime ideologies, and the particularities of the site of performance.

The aesthetic practices of mid-twentieth-century China were punctuated by a keen sense of the political, and Shakespeare performances were increasingly informed by local knowledge. This is a period when Chinese theatre was in search of safe 'apolitical texts,' and also when the political turn in literary culture was alternately seen by different constituencies of the society as a left turn, a right turn, and a wrong turn, as Communist China began to lay claims of local 'ownership' on select sets of foreign ideas including Marxism, the Stanislavskian acting method, and Soviet social and cultural institutions. The dual canonicity of Shakespeare as an author widely read and performed gained additional purchase through Karl Marx, who cites Shakespeare at length to support his arguments, and through the Russian and Soviet traditions of political Shakespeare.²

Torn between various wars, mid-twentieth-century Chinese theatre artists opted for topicality and social relevance in their work. While literary production and theatre as public entertainment continued to thrive and acted as a repository for collective cultural memory, the preference for topicality came to define much of the artistic activity during this period. After two decades of improvisational performance, Shakespeare's plays were fast becoming part of the Chinese repertoire to train spoken drama actors in the 1930s, hence their popularity in drama academies and conservatories. Spoken drama (also known as huaju) is a new, Western-influenced theatre genre that emerged in early twentieth-century China but remains popular only among urban residents. Huaju may seem unintelligible, viewed from a distance in the West and separated by what seem to be insurmountable cultural differences, but this theatrical genre has been used as a tool for vocal training and articulation for a long time. It does not simply emphasize the corporeal or presentational fanfare - more common in Chinese opera - that has caught the attention of Western scholars.3 Yu Shangyuan (1897-1970), the founding principal of the National Drama School, included Shakespeare in the repertoire of his new school and theatre, obviously following his Anglo-European contemporaries in eulogizing Shakespeare. He maintained that the reason to stage Shakespeare in China was that 'performance of Shakespeare has been an important criterion to measure success for theatres worldwide and not just in England' (28). Each graduating class was required to stage a Shakespeare play. During wartime, the requirement was not enforced every year, but the first, second, fifth, and fourteenth graduating classes did perform Shakespeare plays (Cao and Sun 99), including The Merchant of Venice

(1937), Othello (1938), and the production of Hamlet (1942) that is discussed in this essay. It is of interest to note that The Merchant of Venice is one of the most popular Shakespearean plays in China, and it was among the first Shakespearean works to be staged and filmed. When the Royal Shakespeare Company toured China for the first time in 2002, the play selected for the tour was The Merchant of Venice, in a production directed by Loveday Ingram. As noted by other contributors to the present volume, The Merchant holds the attention of twentieth-century audiences around the world for very different reasons. The play's reception in China follows the region's history of social and cultural modernization. Chinese directors and audiences have been attracted not to Shylock as an embodiment of ethnic and religious tensions in the modern world, but rather to Portia as a figure of the new woman. The local concerns revolving around cultural reform, the women's rights movement, and the emerging capitalist market in Shanghai have created a new lens for reading the play. Above all else, the outlandish plot involving a pound of human flesh also became a main draw, which is why some Chinese productions and translations were given such titles as A Pound of Flesh or A Bond of Flesh (Huang, Chinese Shakespeares 17, 69-70, 115-18; Fei and Sun 59).

Like The Merchant, Hamlet has had a long history of translation, rewriting, and performance in China. Two recent examples are The Banquet (2006, a martial arts period drama film in Mandarin, directed by Feng Xiaogang, and released in North America as The Legend of the Black Scorpion)⁴ and The Prince of the Himalayas (2005, a Tibetan-language film, directed by Sherwood Hu, set and shot in Tibet, and later adapted for the stage in Mandarin in Shanghai). A recent documentary by the China Central Television Channel 10 even traces the Chinese tradition of performing *Hamlet* to Jiao's wartime *Hamlet*. It is important to recognize the iconic status of Hamlet, the Ghost, and Ophelia in China. Contrary to what some scholars have assumed, Chinese moviegoers watching The Banquet or The Prince have had a great deal of exposure to Shakespeare and particularly to Hamlet.6

As helping to educate vigilant and patriotic citizens (according to whatever ideology was current) became the dominant mission of theatre, the locality of Chinese audiences was given primacy. One case in point is a Hamlet performance set in premodern Denmark and staged in a Confucian temple, directed by Jiao Juyin (1905-75). The production, first staged in Jiang'an in rural Sichuan for general audiences during the second Sino-Japanese War in June 1942, and later revived in

Chongqing, the provincial capital, married the foreign setting to local theatrical and allegorical spaces in a dialectical process that testified to the reciprocal impact on both the target and source cultures. The unique circumstances of this production may prompt two questions: Why theatre during the war, and why Hamlet? During a time when theatre was suspect, the Shakespearean canon was an obvious choice to avoid censorship by the Nationalist government. Theatre's function as a site for social education and its potential for propaganda were seen as compelling reasons to stage public performances that could provide entertaining relief, raise funds for military operations, and boost the audience's morale. These site-specific objectives derived from the performance venue and the cultural location of the production were inaccessible to American critics of the time. When the New York Times reviewed Jiao's production in 1942, the feature that drew Brooks Atkinson's attention was the actors' Western makeup and prosthetic noses, but what he missed was exactly what made the performance viable in the wartime environment in China. His review states that the actors 'have built up a series of proboscises fearful to behold. The king has a monstrous, pendulous nose that would serve valiantly in a burlesque show; Polonius has a pointed nose and sharply flaring mustache of the Hohenzollern type; Hamlet cuts his way through with a nose fashioned like a plowshare.' Atkinson concluded that 'sincere and painstaking though this *Hamlet* may be, it is not yet ready for Broadway' (38).

In addition to the prestige of performance associated with Shakespeare's stature, the ability to stage and attend plays during a time of war, when the entire town of Jiang'an had no electricity, was itself perceived as a victorious gesture. What was made propagandistic was not always only the play's allegorical dimension but also the act of staging the play itself. Wartime theatre can be highly allegorical in nature, representing the battlefield as a site where rival ideologies encounter each other, or presenting stereotypical caricatures of the enemy. In the context of a backwater community, the determination and ability to stage a theatrical production was itself an encouraging sign for the local residents running from Japanese bombings day in and day out. As Fu Xiangmo, a Jiang'an native and a journalist for the Guomin gongbao [Citizen's Gazette] and Yishi bao [Social Welfare], pointed out in his review of the Jiang'an performance, though he was a huaju lover, he had not seen many recent productions because 'nine out of ten amounted to nothing more than a piece of war propaganda.' He noted what a precious opportunity it was to be able to see a non-propaganda play dur-

ing a time of war, and a good huaju production of Shakespeare in small town Jiang'an 'in a remote corner of China's hinterland' (115).

Jiao's Hamlet was staged in 1942 with playwright Cao Yu – often regarded as the father of modern Chinese drama - as the consultant, five years after the fall of Nanjing to the Japanese. Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi, 1887-1975) and his Nationalist government moved the capital to Chongqing, which triggered a nationwide migration. Elites, bankers, scholars, artists, and members of other social classes who could afford to move all relocated to Sichuan Province, as did schools and universities. The realities of the new locality – backward economic conditions and frequent Japanese aerial attacks – lowered the morale of these Chinese refugees who had been uprooted from their hometowns and now found themselves in the Japanese occupation zone. Live theatre became a symbol of cultural life, and the presence of cultural life helped to maintain their dignity. The National Drama School, which had been founded in Nanjing in 1938, was relocated to Chongqing and to Jiang'an the following year, and then moved to Chongging in 1945 before returning to Nanjing in 1946. The unexpected connection between the small town of Jiang'an and the National Drama School during its formative years marked an important phase in the history of modern Chinese theatre history, and has been commemorated by the National Drama School Museum and Archive, established in Jiang'an in 1988 (see fig. 9.1).

Yu, among his contemporaries, was invested in the symbolic value of wartime theatre. With his revival of the Jiang'an Hamlet, he wanted the performance to achieve two goals:

[1] The social significance of Hamlet [to us] is Hamlet's progressive and revolutionary [geming jinqu] spirit, which is what the Chinese people need during the Anti-Japanese War ... Prince Hamlet resisted the destiny arranged by Fate, countered feudal oppressions, and sought liberation from an environment filled with licentious and corrupt individuals.

[2] Those countries that produce the most high-quality Shakespearean productions are the countries with the highest cultural prestige ... Performing Shakespeare is a crucial step for our country to catch up and to join the countries with world-class cultural achievements. (Cao and Sun 105)

The pro-colonialist assumption of Yu's comments is striking. On the one hand, his goals demonstrate the imperatives of the cultural renewal project to establish Chinese self-esteem. As has been noted by scholars



9.1. 'The Cradle of Modern Chinese Theatre.' National Drama School Museum and Archive. Reproduced courtesy of the People's Government of Jiang'an County, China.

working on celebrations of Shakespeare in times of war, the domestication of Shakespeare's plays involves a dialectical process between the Bard's reception in Britain and elsewhere (Habicht 441). On the other hand, the assumption about the prestige of any Shakespearean performance defeats its purpose to celebrate indigenous Chinese values and exceptionality. The competing pull of admiration of Western theatre and Chinese nationalist sentiment constitute a local Shakespeare in the emerging postcolonial world. It is worth noting that this sentiment dominated mainland Chinese productions until as late as the 1980s. Zhang Qihong, director of the Chinese Youth Art Theatre's production of The Merchant of Venice (1980), made a similarly pro-colonialist comment at the first Shakespeare Society of China meeting in 1985. She invited Shakespeare, a 'god' of England, to descend to China and to display his 'profound critique of feudalism, great realism, humanism, and moral power' (Zhang 7; trans. Shen 29–30).

Yu's comments invite further speculation. The many contradictions and ideological positions have made Yu's reading of *Hamlet* opaque. For example, the destiny that Hamlet resists and the prince's 'revolutionary spirit' are never made clear. Instead, Yu's adaptation focuses on wartime exigencies. Unlike the rewriting of Hamlet by Lin Shu (1852–1924), which made the play conform to Confucian ethical codes (Huang, Chinese Shakespeares 82-4), Jiao's performance generally followed Shakespeare's text while turning the moral question into a wartime directive to the Chinese people. While Yu's interpretation was informed by the pre-1940s Chinese critical tradition of a 'Confucian Hamlet,' its primary task was to draw political analogies between a dislocated and historically undefined Denmark and modern China in crisis. Hamlet's virtues (his disdain for corruption), filial piety (demonstrated by his grief over his father's death), and patriotic spirit (as evidenced by - in various Chinese versions - his concern over the fate of Denmark) were regularly highlighted in the criticism of the period.

In their consideration of Hamlet, theatre artists and literary critics in mainland China have concentrated on selected themes that resonate with traditional Chinese literary culture and with Confucianism, such as usurpation, filial piety, and legitimacy of rulership. As Lu Gu-sun observed, 'to some of the early Chinese readers and critics of Hamlet, the ... theme of the play was ... conveniently in compliance with the Confucian ethical code demanding filial piety ... and constant chastity, and with Buddhist tenets of karma' (56). For example, Tian Han (1898-1968), who wrote the first Chinese translation of Hamlet (1922), associated Hamlet's melancholy with 'patriotic' concerns ('The time is out of joint: O cursed spite / That ever I was born to set it right!' [1.5.188–9]) with On Encountering Sorrow (Lisao) by the Confucian poet Qu Yuan (ca. 339-ca. 278 BC) in his postscript to his translation (Cao and Sun 49). As with English-language Shakespeare scholarship and editions in the 1960s, Chinese scholarship emphasized moral criticism, though the Chinese preoccupation with morality lasted almost an entire century. As the first Shakespearean play to be translated into Chinese in its entirety, Hamlet holds a special place in Chinese visions of Shakespeare. There have been numerous Chinese adaptations and spin-offs, including Lao She's novella 'New Hamlet.' There were also non-Confucian engagements with Hamlet, including the play Shamlet by Lee Kuo-hsiu (Huang, 'Comical Tragedies,' 163-6), that challenged the tradition of Confucian criticism of Chinese and Western literary works.

This is not the first instance of a nation associating itself with positive or negative traits of various characters in Hamlet. Poets in other countries have taken to Hamlet for various reasons. For example, German poets and intellectuals have repeatedly identified Germany with Hamlet since the nineteenth century. In 1800 the Shakespeare transla-

tor Ludwig Tieck indicated that what was needed to begin Germany's own golden age of poetry (to follow in Shakespeare's footsteps) was a Fortinbras-like figure (Tieck; trans. Bate). In Ferdinand Freiligrath's poem 'Hamlet' (1844) the German dissident, poet, and Shakespeare translator declares, 'Germany is Hamlet!'7 This analogy became so widely accepted that Horace Furness was compelled to dedicate the Hamlet volume of his 1877 New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare to the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft on behalf of 'a people whose recent history has proven once and for all that Germany is not Hamlet,' alluding to the rise of the German empire under Bismarck as an indication that Germany was no longer hindered by self-doubt (Zimmermann). In China Hamlet's alleged Confucian virtues and nobility had become such a cliché by the 1930s that prolific writer Lao She (1899–1966) satirized the 'Chinese Hamlet syndromes' in his novella 'New Hamlet.' The story problematized the prince's 'self-righteous moral criticism' (Huang, Chinese Shakespeares 87–8).

This, however, is where the similarity ends. Director Jiao also highlights procrastination as the most important aspect of Hamlet's character, but he explains the negative trait away by arguing that 'Hamlet's hesitation is not caused by cowardice but his love for truth.' Jiao then turns to China's Hamlet syndrome: 'We Chinese people are often too cautious about everything, and as a result we lose courage. In the end we can do nothing' (107). But as Hamlet was being held as a negative example in China, he was also commended for his 'patriotism' and filial piety. In Jiao's production, Hamlet fully accepts the revenge mission as his undeniable duty as a son. The competing interpretations in the Chinese case complicate the reading of Hamlet. For Jiao and his audience, the Danish prince was at once a positive and a negative example. On the one hand, Hamlet's patriotic concern over the corrupt court made him particularly at home in a culture of filial duties and political loyalty. On the other hand, his inaction and irresolution resonated in the Chinese psyche. Jiao gave his wartime Hamlet a call-to-arms tone, but he did not resolve the essential paradox in these competing narratives. The pull of admiration for Hamlet as seeker of truth is countered by the production's localist bias and contextual underpinnings.

In this context, the wartime performance was already loaded with decidedly local connotations. Yu remarked that even though Hamlet is a tragedy, its wartime production was actually an uplifting experience, because the spirit was 'exactly what the Chinese people needed to resist the Japanese invasion' (qtd in Tian 453). This attitude reminds same period, Laurence Olivier's Henry V (1944). Compared to Olivier's jingoistic and nationalist film, which was dedicated to the 'commandos and airborne troops of Great Britain,' however, the choice of a hesitating Hamlet motivated by personal causes – rather than a traditionally patriotic Shakespearean hero - is not surprising at a time when China, like Olivier's England, was at war. While Olivier's Henry V may exemplify what Walter Benjamin called 'the aestheticization of politics' (Rothwell 51), Jiao's Hamlet is an exercise in what Benjamin theorized as the politicization of art (Benjamin 235). In his essay on art and technology, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' Benjamin focuses on the perils of fascist appropriation of the instrumental power of art, but his notion of the usefulness of art aptly captures the context of Jiao's wartime production. Hamlet became useful for the formulation of wartime demands and cultural politics. As the present volume shows, similar interpretive strategies inform the Hamlets in Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, and other traditions.

The fortuitous site of performance added unexpected layers to the question of politics. This production was first staged in the temple in Jiang'an rather than Chongqing, because the school was located in Jiang'an. Located at a distance from the metropolitan culture of the provincial capital, this small town was tucked away in a pastoral other place where alternative political readings of *Hamlet* could find a ready home. The Confucian temple was chosen as the performance site not because it was attractive or more culturally significant than other temples or venues, but because, like many village temples in rural China, it functioned as a convenient and traditional gathering space in the town.8 It was financially not feasible to construct a theatre during the all-out war of resistance against the Japanese, and the Confucian temple was one of the readily available architectural spaces to be found in many Chinese towns. The temple's architectural structure and allegorical space provided a ready site for such a performance and was used as a makeshift stage. In other words, the choice of performance venue inherited the accidents of history. In historical hindsight, the temple bears the marks of wartime exigencies and limitations. While temples and teahouses, among other informal performance spaces outside playhouses, were regularly used for public performances in China up to this time, the courtyards and the central halls of Confucian temples were used almost exclusively for dedicatory ritual performance (see fig. 9.2). Temples serve as sites for collective memories and gathering places, but



9.2. The courtyard of a Confucian temple in Zizhong, Sichuan. (This is one of the better-preserved Confucian temples in the province today). Reproduced courtesy of the People's Government of Jiang'an County, China.

the Confucian temple in particular has been regarded as a sacred site for Chinese intellectuals. Therefore, Jiao's Hamlet became a major public event not only because of its innovative stage design, but also because of its unconventional performance space for a Western-style spoken drama. Since the potential audiences in the small town could not afford theatre tickets but the National Drama School still needed some form of support to put on plays, many of the productions in Jiang'an during this period adopted an innovative scheme that allowed the audiences to gain admittance by donating daily necessities from household items to groceries (pingwu kanxi).

This is the historical context of Jiao's Hamlet. The production, accompanied by music (Handel's Largo and Beethoven's Minuet in G major), ran for three performances in Jiang'an but left a lasting impression on the audience, many of whom came from nearby rural areas for their first huaju experience (Atkinson 1:38). The communal experience also provided collective emotional support and reprieve from the Japanese

The performance was based on a popular translation, with cuts, rather than on a Sinicized adaptation. Jiao Juyin was a French-trained

Chinese director who would become one of the major figures in modern Chinese theatre. Having earned a doctorate from the Université Paris Sorbonne in 1938 with a thesis on his contemporary Chinese drama, Jiao returned to China just as the Sino-Japanese wars broke out. As one of the co-founders of Beijing People's Art Theatre (BPAT), he worked closely with Cao Yu, Ouyang Shanzun, and Zhao Qiyang to create the aesthetic style of BPAT. Modeled after the Moscow Art Theatre, BPAT established itself as one of the most important models for Chinese theatre artists interested in the huaju genre, and continues to hold the leadership position in today's China. Under Jiao's directorship, BPAT performed both Chinese huaju and Western realist plays with elements taken from the Stanislavsky system and from Jiao's own 'theory of mental images,' in which actors were trained to develop mental images of dramatic characters and situations before creating stage images. In addition to adaptations, Jiao is recognized for his productions of canonical modern Chinese plays such as Lao She's Chaguan [Teahouse], which was revived by the BPAT as part of a centennial celebration of Jiao's birthday in 2005. Premiered by the BPAT in 1958, this play is set in a traditional Beijing teahouse where conflicts among characters from all social classes arise. It is commonly regarded as one of the most successful plays offering a cross-sectional view of Chinese society from the end of the Qing dynasty in late nineteenth-century to the wars and revolutions in the mid-twentieth century.

Scripted rather than improvised as many early twentieth-century Chinese performances had been, this drama-school-initiated production was one of the earliest complete stagings of Hamlet in the spoken drama format.9 The performance thus attracted both intellectuals and villagers, leading to a revival later that year in a formal indoor theatrical space (rather than a temple) in Chongqing, the biggest city in the province. The revival was part of the Ministry of Education's '[wartime] social education' campaign (Shehui jiaoyu kuoda xuanchuan zhou) in Chongging, which was both the provincial capital of Sichuan and the temporary capital of China during the war. The slightly different title, Danmai wangzi Hamuleite [Danish Prince Hamlet], was likely chosen for its proximity to Shakespeare's title in the First Folio and for the purpose of attracting larger audiences who might otherwise not be familiar with Hamlet. The Chongquing performances took place at the Huangjiayakou Experimental Theatre on 17 November and in the Guotai Theatre [Guotai Da Xiyuan] 9–19 December 1942.

The 'social education' in this context was a wartime patriotic cam-

paign. The choice to perform Hamlet, a work thought to represent Anglophone cultures (including China's ally, the United States), would certainly encourage support of China's Western allies. However, extant historical documents show that the director and promoters of the production were more interested in Hamlet's symbolic capital and in the perceived prestige and significance of being able to stage Shakespeare under challenging wartime material conditions. It seems that they, and their audiences, had no investment in Hamlet's cultural connection with China's Western allies during the war, athough the production, in the context of Yu's drama school, had a pronounced purpose to boost morale and confidence of the Chinese.

Much of the production's vitality lies in its ingenious use of the temple as an allegorical space under poor material conditions, including frequent power outages. The action took place on the balcony in front of the shrine to Confucius, while the audiences were seated in the courtvard looking up to the balcony at the end of a stone staircase. The temple had two wings and a central hall. The stage design took advantage of this preexisting structure, covering the red pillars with black cloth. The stage was nearly two hundred feet, with twenty-four-foot curtains on each side hanging between the pillars. These curtains were used to conceal or to reveal a combination of pillars and scene depth in order to dramatize the twists and turns and the haunted atmosphere in 'the sinful and perilous Danish court' (Cao and Sun 104). For example, Polonius gave his blessing and his advice to Laertes - 'Neither a borrower nor a lender [be]' (1.3.57-81) - as he followed Laertes back and forth around different pillars, moving toward the back of the hall, which, for lack of lighting, was dark. Similar movements around the pillars were used for his other scenes, highlighting his ill-received lengthy speeches and the unseen twists and turns of court politics. The performance area thus acquired the depth of a proscenium stage. The ghost entered from the deep and dark end of the path lined with pillars and curtains. The minimalist stage design – two chairs, a bed, and a table – worked well with the dim open space in creating a sense of mysteriousness.

The most striking instance in which the localities of *Hamlet* and of the performance venue were brought to confront each other was seen in the emotionally charged nunnery scene. Hamlet (played by Wen Xiying, age 17) was infuriated by the fact that Ophelia was sent by Polonius and that Polonius might be present during their conversation. The scene culminated in Hamlet's passionate outburst and retreat to the back of the stage (3.1.142-9). He exited slowly towards the end of the



9.3 Shrine and statue of Confucius in a Confucian temple in Zizhong, Sichuan. Reproduced courtesy of the People's Government of Jiang'an County, China.

hall, with the gradual drawing of the curtains following the rhythm of his heavy footsteps. The lonely Hamlet, moving in the dim two-hundred-foot corridor (Jiang 106) was only visible to the audience through a two-foot gap between the curtains. 10

The shrine of Confucius, located at the end of the corridor, was not part of the set but was not removed for this performance (see fig. 9.3). The shrine was well known to the local audience and it intruded into the performance. Thus the temple existed simultaneously in different temporal and spatial dimensions of the fictional and real worlds, an existence that was complicated by the desire to produce an 'authentic' Hamlet in an authentic Confucian temple. Buried in his thoughts, Hamlet appeared to be heading toward the shrine – a space that existed outside both the Danish setting and the stage set – as if he now was seeking advice from the Chinese sage. It is not clear whether or how he found an answer, but the director and the audience eagerly provided a number of inspiring but sometimes conflicting answers to the question of wartime theatre. If nothing else, the shrine's accidental intrusion into the dramatic world signalled an emotional investment in the Chinese tradition that stood as a sign of the viability and vitality of the country.

Posed against the backdrop of the exigencies of this particular location, Hamlet's question - 'To be, or not to be' (3.1.55) - acquired personal and political urgencies for wartime Chinese audiences who rushed to air-raid shelters on a daily basis, seeking protection from Japanese aerial attacks. Attending theatre in the temple, much like time spent in air-raid shelters with neighbours and families, became a communal experience that provided temporary relief through entertainment and at the same time as a sober moment of reflection in the midst of the chaos of war. The remote world of Denmark, Fortinbras' resounding footsteps, and Hamlet's ontological question crossed the vast historical and cultural distance to form a 'patriotic' play. Performed for Chinese audiences against the backdrop of a Confucian temple, the 'foreignness' of Hamlet and his outlandish yet oddly familiar story became an apt expression of wartime anxieties about losses. On one hand, the play was peculiar because of the admonition of the Ghost and the revenge mission that has never been clearly defined. On the other hand, a gentleman prince torn between prioritizing his duties to the state and his emotional ties to his mother is not an unfamiliar dilemma in the Confucian classics. The ongoing Sino-Japanese War prompted Jiao to look for moral messages in Hamlet. In an essay written on 12 December 1942, before the revival of the production in Chongqing, Jiao related Hamlet's problems directly to the Chinese situation, highlighting the lessons to be learned from Hamlet's procrastination. He pointed out that in this context the aesthetics of the performance could only be secondary to the political message of the production:

The character of Hamlet [contains] a lesson for us who are living in the period of the Anti-Japanese War ... and a stimulus to those who do not have faith in our ultimate victory. The Danish prince has seen clearly what he needs to do when confronted by political and familial crises; however, he hesitates and does not put his thought into action. This leads to ... failure and destruction. The victory of the Anti-Japanese War hinges upon immediate and synchronized actions by all the [Chinese] people. This is why we introduce Hamlet to the Chongqing audience. The success of [the troupe's performing skills is secondary. (2:167–8)

This statement is intriguing because the intellectuals' apparent sympathy for Hamlet did not translate into admiration for his inaction. Hamlet's procrastination thus constituted a negative lesson in moral

Jiao seemed to contradict himself when he tried to explain Hamlet's hesitation. Recognizing procrastination as Hamlet's most important characteristic, Jiao argued that Hamlet hesitated because of his 'love of truth,' not because of cowardice (Jiang 107). Yet, desperate to draw connections between the localities of Hamlet and his production, Jiao brushed aside Hamlet's 'love of truth' and asked his audience to heed the moral of the performance: procrastination and inaction pave the road to failure.

The Confucian moral contexts in this production appeared first by accident but were subsequently consciously deployed by both the director and the critics. But how could Hamlet be at once a Confucian hero, with an exemplary 'spirit' fit for a time of war, and a negative example of procrastination, teaching the Chinese audience a good lesson for war? Much ink has been spilt in the history of Chinese Shakespearean criticism over Hamlet's character and the qualities shared by Hamlet and the typical Confucian gentleman. Despite the popularity of earlier Confucian interpretations of Hamlet, Jiao's production was the first documented performance to take place in a Confucian temple. Up to the 1940s, before the Chinese Communist Party took over China and institutionalized Marxist-Leninism, most interpretations aligned Hamlet with historical and quasi-historical political figures who took it as their responsibility to set aright 'the time ... out of joint' (1.5.189). Their frustration at not being able to communicate or realize their moral and political ideals led to their melancholic state. Mainland Chinese criticism of the period did not give much attention to the problem of Hamlet's procrastination. When it was mentioned at all, Hamlet's insistence on seeking truth was used to explain away the inconsistency. Performed against the backdrop of a Confucian temple and a tradition of 'Confucian Hamlets,' Jiao's production might have downplayed Hamlet's procrastination were it not for the demands of wartime theatre. The obvious contradiction in the untimely death of a truth-seeking noble Confucian Hamlet prompted Jiao to extrapolate a moral lesson from Hamlet's negative example.

Most theatre historians agree that performance 'deserves to be

judged by the impact it has in its own time, unaffected by changes in fashion - in styles of costume and haircuts, of vocal and gestural techniques' (Wells xx). This is especially true of interpretations that engage at once the fictional, cultural, and actual sites embedded within and beyond the plays themselves. The audience can become so invested in nostalgic enthusiasm that they refuse to accept changes in fashion or gestural techniques. The site-specific meanings have come to be fully embedded within the historical performance, which has been turned into an event itself.

Although certain meanings of the production will be associated with the performance style and plot, other meanings are produced by the clash of the associated cultural localities. In the case of the wartime Hamlet performance in a Confucian temple, the choice was accidental, imposed by historical exigencies or material conditions, gaining accidental additional purchase on the production value.

Notes

I thank Columbia University Press for permission to use material from chapter 5 of Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange. The present essay is an expanded and updated study of Jiao Juvin's Hamlet.

- 1 'As imagination bodies forth / The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen / Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing / A local habitation' (A Midsummer Night's Dream, 5.1.14–17).
- 2 Karl Marx often quotes from Aeschylus, Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Goethe. For example, Marx quotes the Schlegel-Tieck German translation of Timon of Athens (4.3) to support his argument about the power of money in bourgeois society. Marx's daughter Eleanor recalled in 1895 that 'Shakespeare was the Bible of [their] house, seldom out of our hands or mouths.' By the time she was six, she 'knew scene upon scene of Shakespeare by heart' (147). See also Tucker 80-1 and Marx and Engels, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844.
- 3 'The fundamental difference between Shakespeare's dramaturgy and the theatrical systems of many Asian theatres is the respective emphases they place on the verbal and the corporeal' (Kennedy and Yong 17).
- 4 Multimedia essays with film clips are available in 'Asian Shakespeares on Screen: Two Films in Perspective,' Special issue, ed. Alexander C.Y. Huang, Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation 4.2 (2009). http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/.

- 5 The episode can be viewed freely online: http://v.youku.com/v_show/ id_XNTg1NDMzNjg=.html.
- 6 Ingo Berensmeyer erroneously assumes that Chinese moviegoers 'have had little or no exposure to Shakespeare's Hamlet.' Ingo Berensmeyer, 'Cultural Ecology and Chinese Hamlets,' New Literary History 42.3 (2011): 419-38, see 429.
- 7 Ferdinand Freiligrath, 'Deutschland ist Hamlet,' Werke, ed. Julius Schwering (Berlin: Bong, 1909) 2:71–3; English translation in Horace Howard Furness, ed., Hamlet: A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare (London: Lippincott, 1877) 376-8. See also Poems from the German of Ferdinand Freiligrath (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1871) 201-4.
- 8 Cf. Sichuan wenmiao [Confucian Temples of Sichuan], ed. Sichuan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiu yuan [Sichuan Provincial Archeological Institute] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008).
- 9 The first documented performance of *Hamlet* in Chinese was a Chinese opera, rather than a spoken drama, staged by Ya'an Chuanju (Sichuan Opera) Theatre in 1914.
- 10 A short interview by Wen on how he played Hamlet and recollections by graduates of the School (such as director Xu Xiaozhong) of their days in Jiang'an are available in '3. Xiju yaolan' [Episode 3. The Cradle of Modern Chinese Theatre] of the China Central Television Channel 10 documentary Guoli juzhuan zai Jiang'an [The National Drama School in Jiang'an]. The documentary can be viewed freely online at http://v.youku. com/v_show/id_XNTg1NDMzNjg=.html or at http://www.tudou.com/ programs/view/anS4qHeVCnI/.
- 11 This is a view shared by the former US Secretary of State George Schulz, who, in the 1980s, warned that the United States had become 'the Hamlet of nations, worrying endlessly over whether and how to respond' to terrorism (Johnson).

Works Cited

- Atkinson, Brooks. 'The Play.' New York Times 18 December 1942: n.pag. Benjamin, Walter. 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.' Illuminations. Ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zorn. London: Pimlico, 1999. 211-44.
- Cao, Shujun, and Sun Fuliang. Shashibiya zai Zhongguo wutai shang. Harbin: Ha'erbin chubanshe, 1989.
- 'Episode 3. Xiju yaolan.' Guoli juzhuan zai Jiang'an. Dir. Chen, Fan. China Central Television Channel 10, China, 2008.

- Fei, Chunfang, and Sun Huizhu. 'Shakespeare and Beijing Opera: Two Cases of Appropriation.' Shakespeare in Asia: Contemporary Performance. Ed. Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 57-70.
- Fu, Xiangmo. 'Guan Sha weng de shijie da beiju.' Guoli xiju zhuanke xuexiao xiaoyou tongxun yuekan 3.8 (18 June 1942). Reprinted in Zhongguo zaogi xiqu huakan. Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2006. 37:115.
- Habicht, Werner. 'Shakespeare Celebrations in Times of War.' Shakespeare Quarterly 52.4 (Winter 2001): 441-55.
- Huang, Alexander C.Y. Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- 'Comical Tragedies and Other Polygeneric Shakespeares in Contemporary China and Diasporic Chinese Culture.' Shakespeare and Genre: From Early Modern Inheritances to Postmodern Legacies. Ed. Anthony R. Guneratne. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 157–72.
- Guoli juzhuan: Jiang'an. Ed. Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Sichuan sheng Jiang'an xian weiyuanhui and Wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuan hui. 1994.
- Jiang, Tao. 'Lun Zhongguo Shaju wutai shang de daoyan yishu.' Xiju 3 (1996): 107.
- Jiao, Juyin. 'Guanyu Hamuleite.' Jiao Juyin wenji. Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1988. 2:167–8.
- Johnson, Boyd M. 'Executive Order 12333: The Permissibility of an American Assassination of a Foreign Leader.' Cornell International Law Journal 25 (1992): 421, n. 129.
- Kennedy, Dennis, and Yong Li Lan. 'Introduction: Why Shakespeare?' Shakespeare in Asia: Contemporary Performance. Ed. Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 1–23.
- Lao She. 'Xin Hanmuliede.' Lao She xiaoshuo quanji. Ed. Shu Ji and Shu Yi. Wuhan: Changjiang wenyi chubanshe, 2004. 10: 443-59.
- Lu, Gu-sun, 'Hamlet Across Space and Time,' Shakespeare Survey 36 (1988): 56. Marx, Eleanor. 'Recollections of Mohr.' Marx and Engels on Literature and Art: A Selection of Writings. Ed. Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski. St Louis: Telos Press, 1973.
- Marx, Karl, and Frederick Engels. Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844. Trans. Martin Milligan. Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1988.
- Rothwell, Kenneth S. A History of Shakespeare on Screen. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Tian, Benxiang, Zhongguo xiandai bijiao xiju shi. Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1993.

- Tieck, Ludwig. 'Bemerkungen über einige Charaktere im 'Hamlet', und über die Art, wie diese auf der Bühne dargestellt werden könnten.' *Kritische Schriften*. Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1848–52. 3:243–98. Trans. in *The Romantics on Shakespeare*. Ed. Jonathan Bate. London: Penguin, 1997. 326–35.
- Tucker, Robert C., ed. The Marx-Engels Reader. New York: Norton, 1972.
- Wells, Stanley. Foreword to *Shakespeare*, *Memory and Performance*. Ed. Peter Holland. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. xx.
- Xie, Zengshou and Zhang Tuoyuan. Liuwang zhong de xijujia yaolan: cong Nanjing dao Jiang'an de Guoli juzhuan yanjiu. Chengdu: Tiandi chubanshe, 2005.
- Yu, Shangyuan. Yu Shangyuan xiju lunwen ji. Wuhan: Changjiang wenyi chubanshe, 1986.
- Zhang, Qihong. 'Rang shangdi jianglin renjian: Zai Zhongguo Shashibiya Yanjiuhui chengli dahui shang de fayan.' *Qingnian yishu* 1 (1985): 7. Trans. Fan Shen. 'Shakespeare in China: *The Merchant of Venice.' Asian Theatre Journal* 5.1 (Spring 1988): 29–30.
- Zimmermann, Heiner O. 'Is Hamlet Germany? On the Political Reception of *Hamlet.' New Essays on Hamlet*. Ed. Mark Thornton Burnett and John Manning. New York: AMS Press, 1994. 293–318.

Contributors 317

Tibor Egervari, born in Budapest into a Jewish family before the Second World War, escaped the fate of many members of his family who perished during the Shoah. He studied stage directing in Strasbourg where he began his career. Since 1960 he has been directing and teaching in both Canada and France. He is currently emeritus professor of theatre at the University of Ottawa.

Werner Habicht is a professor emeritus of English at the University of Würzburg, Germany, and the author of studies on medieval literature, Renaissance and modern drama, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century Shakespeare reception in Germany. He is a former editor of the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* and *English and American Studies in German*, and the co-editor of a literary encyclopedia (*Literatur Brockhaus*) and several volumes of essays.

Alexander C.Y. Huang is associate professor of English and director of the Dean's Scholars in Shakespeare Program at George Washington University, and a research affiliate in literature at MIT. He is the general editor of *The Shakespearean International Yearbook* and a co-founder and co-editor of *Global Shakespeares* (http://globalshakespeares.org/). His recent book, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange* (Columbia University Press, 2009), received the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize (MLA) and an honourable mention for the Joe A. Callaway Prize (New York University).

Nancy Isenberg is associate professor of English literature at the Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Italy. Her research on Shakespeare focuses mainly but not exclusively on his dramatic works in relation to dance and to early modern culture. She is co-editor of *La posa eroica di Ofelia* (Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2003), essays on female characters on the Elizabethan stage, and *Questioning Bodies in Shakespeare's Rome* (Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht Unipress, 2010). In relation to her other main area of research, Italian-English connections in the eighteenth century, she published *Caro Memmo, mon cher frère* (Elzeviro, 2010), a critical edition of love letters by the Anglo-Venetian writer Giustiniana Wynne to Andrea Memmo (1758–60).

Tina Krontiris is professor of Renaissance literature and drama at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in northern Greece. She has published internationally on Renaissance women writers and Shake-

speare's reception in Greece. Her publications, local and international, include *Oppositional Voices* (London, 1992), *Shakespeare in Wartime*, 1940–1950 (Athens, GR, 2007; in Greek) and (ed.) *Shakespeare Worldwide and the Idea of an Audience*, vol. 15 of the journal *GRAMMA* (2007).

Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney is associate professor at the University of Łódź, Poland, where she chairs the British and Commonwealth Studies Department and serves as vice-dean at the Faculty of International and Politological Studies. She has authored numerous articles and monographs on Shakespeare, is a member of the World Shakespeare Bibliography, and a co-editor of *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation, Performance.* Her latest two monographs (in Polish and in English) are devoted to Ira Aldridge (2009).

Katarzyna Kwapisz Williams is an adjunct at the British and Commonwealth Studies Department at the University of Łódź, Poland, and the managing editor of the international journal *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance.* Her research interests include literary theory, Renaissance culture, and utopian studies. Her recent monograph is entitled *Deforming Shakespeare: Investigations in Textuality and Digital Media* (2009).

Irena R. Makaryk is professor of English, cross-appointed to Theatre, and Vice-Dean, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, at the University of Ottawa. Among her many publications are *Modernism in Kyiv* (2010, with Virlana Tkacz) and *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism* (2006, with Joseph G. Price). *Shakespeare in the Undiscovered Bourn: Les Kurbas, Ukrainian Modernism, and Early Soviet Cultural Politics* (2004) was the runner-up for the Raymond Klibansky Prize for the best book published in the humanities in Canada (ASPP) and, in translation, was Book of the Year in the category of literary criticism in Ukraine (2010). She was named Professor of the Year, Faculty of Arts (2010), and received the F. Konowal V.C. Award for Lifetime Achievement in Ukrainian Studies (2009).

Marissa McHugh is a PhD candidate and a sessional instructor at the University of Ottawa. Her dissertation focuses on contemporary Canadian plays about the First World War. Other research interests include Canadian adaptations of Shakespeare and Canadian theatrical representations of war.

EDITED BY IRENA R. MAKARYK AND MARISSA MCHUGH

Shakespeare and the Second World War

Memory, Culture, Identity

© University of Toronto Press 2012 Toronto Buffalo London www.utppublishing.com Printed in Canada

ISBN 978-1-4426-4402-1



Printed on acid-free, 100% post-consumer recycled paper with vegetable-based inks.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Shakespeare and the Second World War: memory, culture, identity / edited by Irena R. Makaryk and Marissa McHugh.

Includes bibliographical references and index. ISBN 978-1-4426-4402-1 (bound)

1. Shakespeare, William, 1564–1616 – Appreciation. 2. Shakespeare, William, 1564–1616 – Stage history – 1800–1950. 3. World War, 1939–1945 - Literature and the war. I. Makaryk, Irena R. (Irena Rima), 1951- II. McHugh, Marissa, 1980-

PR2970.S53 2012 822.3'3 C2012-903357-X

University of Toronto Press acknowledges the financial assistance to its publishing program of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council.



Canada Council Conseil des Arts



University of Toronto Press acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund for its publishing activities.

Contents

List of Illustrations vii Acknowledgments xi

Introduction: Theatre, War, Memory, and Culture 3 IRENA R. MAKARYK

- 1 German Shakespeare, the Third Reich, and the War 22 WERNER HABICHT
- 2 Shakespearean Negotiations in the Perpetrator Society: German Productions of The Merchant of Venice during the Second World War 35 ZENO ACKERMANN
- 3 Shylock, Palestine, and the Second World War 63 MARK BAYER
- 4 'Caesar's word against the world': Caesarism and the Discourses of Empire 83 NANCY ISENBERG
- 5 Shakespeare and Censorship during the Second World War: Othello in Occupied Greece 106 TINA KRONTIRIS
- 6 'In This Hour of History: Amidst These Tragic Events' Polish Shakespeare during the Second World War 122 KRYSTYNA KUJAWIŃSKA COURTNEY

vi Contents

- 7 Pasternak's Shakespeare in Wartime Russia 143 Aleksei semenenko
- 8 Shakespeare as an Icon of the Enemy Culture in Wartime Japan, 1937–1945 163
 RYUTA MINAMI
- 9 'Warlike Noises': Jingoistic *Hamlet* during the Sino-Japanese Wars 180

 ALEXANDER C.Y. HUANG
- 10 Shakespeare, Stratford, and the Second World War 199 SIMON BARKER
- 11 Rosalinds, Violas, and Other Sentimental Friendships: The Osiris Players and Shakespeare, 1939–1945 218

 PETER BILLINGHAM
- 12 Maurice Evans's *G.I. Hamlet*: Analogy, Authority, and Adaptation 233

 ANNE RUSSELL
- 13 The War at 'Home': Representations of Canada and of the Second World War in *Star Crossed* 252

 MARISSA MCHUGH
- 14 Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice in Auschwitz 274 TIBOR EGERVARI
- 15 Appropriating Shakespeare in Defeat: *Hamlet* and the Contemporary Polish Vision of War 286

 KATARZYNA KWAPISZ WILLIAMS

Appendix: List of Productions 309 Contributors 315 Index 319

Illustrations

- 2.1. Werner Krauss as Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, directed by Lothar Müthel, Burgtheater, Vienna, May 1943. 37
- 2.2. Fritz Kortner as Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, directed by Max Reinhardt, Theater in der Josefstadt, Vienna, 1924. 45
- 2.3. Detail from program for production of *The Merchant of Venice*, directed by Paul Rose, with Georg August Koch as Shylock and stage designs by Wolfgang Znamenacek, Rose Theatre, Berlin, 1942. 49
- 2.4. Werner Krauss as Shylock and Ferdinand Maierhofer as Tubal in *The Merchant of Venice,* directed by Lothar Müthel. Burgtheater, Vienna, May 1943. 53
- 4.1. Fascist parade in the Avenue of the Empire, Rome, 1930s. 84
- 4.2. Cover illustration for the book *Giulio Cesare* by Lyno Guarnieri showing a profile of Mussolini as a shadow of a well-known bust of Caesar. 89
- 4.3. Production photograph of the funeral scene from *Giulio Cesare*, directed by Ferdinando Tamberlani, Basilica of Maxentium, Rome, Italy, 1935. 92
- 4.4. Production photograph from *Giulio Cesare*, directed by Ferdinando Tamberlani, Basilica of Maxentium, Rome, Italy, 1935. 93
- 4.5. Production photograph of map scene from *Cesare*, a play by Giovacchino Forzano and Benito Mussolini. Teatro Argentina, Rome, Italy, 1939. 99
- 4.6. Mussolini addressing a crowd from the balcony of Palazzo Venezia, Rome, Italy, 1940. 101
- 4.7. Marlon Brando as Mark Antony in the oration scene from film of *Julius Caesar*, directed by Joseph Mankiewicz, 1953. 101