From China to Taiwan:
Occidentalism in Contemporary Sino-Shakespeare

by

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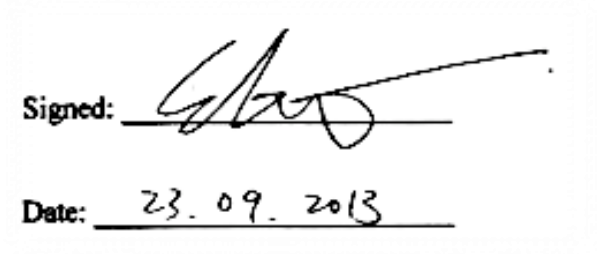
Declaration of Authorship

I, Eko Fiza Laukaban, hereby declare that this thesis, titled 'From China to Taiwan: Occidentalism in Contemporary Sino-Shakespeare', and the work presented in it is entirely my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research. Where I have consulted the works of others, this is always clearly attributed. None of this work has been published before submission.



Abstract

This thesis aims to establish a model for understanding the intricate motivations and significances of Shakespearean adaptations in the twenty-first-century China and Taiwan. While the term Chinese Shakespeare usually includes the Taiwanese adaptations of the Bard's work, it fails to signify the fundamental differences between the two countries. The triangular relationship between China, Taiwan, and Shakespeare's West requires the cross-examination of Sino-centricism and Occidentalism. The Sino-centric perspective denotes the inevitability of referring to China and its culture when discussing countries that share a cultural root with China. The Occidentalist narrative, while set in the Sinophone world, looks at the West through a process of essentialisation, which relies heavily on the historical and ideological development of the Sinophone world where a direct colonial relationship with the Anglophone world does not exist. By examining seven case studies in China and Taiwan, this thesis starts from the historical context from which China gains its modern perspective of cultural centrality, which urges the necessity to understand Chinese Shakespeare through the discourses and competitions between the two authoritative voices of the Chinese culture and Shakespeare's established critical history in the West. Shakespeare in Taiwan, a representative political entity dislocated from the Sino-centric narrative, serves as an imagined space that enables ideological debates otherwise too sensitive to be discussed. The tension between Taiwan's current anti- and pro-China ideologies are offered some relief, and whether the presence or the absence of 'Chineseness' in Taiwanese Shakespeare is always linked with China's political and cultural metanarrative. Set in the context of the recent growing interests in Asian Shakespeares, this thesis thus offers a model for future studies on Shakespearean adaptations in the Sinophone world where a Sino-centric and Occidentalist metanarrative dominates the conversation between the adaptor and Shakespeare.

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Introduction

The Triangular Relationship Between China, Taiwan, and Shakespeare's West

In 2013, two theatre performances from the Sinophone world were brought to the Edinburgh International Festival. One of them was an adaptation of *Coriolanus*, directed by the Chinese avant-garde director Lin Zhaohua, who put two leading Chinese heavy metal bands on stage to accompany the magnificent Shakespearean story of victory. The other production was an adaptation of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, a solo performance in the style of *jingju* (Peking Opera) by the Taiwanese director/actor Wu Hsing-Kuo, who had brought his *King Lear*, also a solo performance, to the same festival in 2011. These performances led BBC reporter Will Gompertz to question the motivation for the Chinese-speaking theatres to choose from a Western repertoire, to which Wu replied that the art agents in the West preferred Western works.[1] The marketability of Western canons, it seems, is recognised by both the West and the East as the most suitable vessel to carry the Eastern theatre to the West; or to the world, if such a gesture is understood as yet another example of Western cultural imperialism, especially when Wu chose to premiere his *Metamorphosis* in Edinburgh before the show was to be staged in Taiwan in December 2013.

However, while it seems to Gompertz that the anxiety of an Orientalist view on the Asianness in these productions is inevitable, the conception of an Orientalist view is deeply problematic. Firstly, an Orientalist view would demand a certain level of exoticism, in this case Chineseness, in Lin's work; however, the characters retained their Western names, the dramaturgy was not a traditional Chinese one but a relatively West-influenced *huaju* (spoken drama), and the heavy metal music played on stage would certainly not have evoked any aesthetic or cultural connection to China's mysterious history amongst the audience in Edinburgh. Secondly, while the Orientalist expectation for Chinese visuality could be satisfied with Wu's work, a danger of mixed identity would have been noticed by a Taiwanese audience: to present Taiwan through a Chinese representation directly confronts Taiwan's political reluctance to be claimed

[1] Will Gompertz, 'Why do Theatre Companies from Asia Perform Western Plays?' interview, 21st August, 2013. BBC News (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-23789997) Accessed on 21st August, 2013.

as part of China. Such an observation thus sophisticates the simple Orientalist problem, which is never easily transferrable to the Orients themselves.

China, a socialist nation firmly rejecting any Western culture not so long ago, is often seen as less internationally liberal when compared with Taiwan. In the 2013 Festival, however, Lin's eagerness was clearly directed to present China with as little preconceived Chineseness as possible, demonstrating a powerful cultural confidence in the face of Shakespeare: a universal cultural icon himself. On the other hand, Taiwan is also keen to promote its independence to the world, and a post-2000 Taiwanese ideology strongly opposed to anything that is politically or culturally linked to China. But as Wu brought Taiwan's name out to the West, it bore all the Chinese cultural expectation to satisfy an Orientalist audience. Of course, Orientalism has been in the Western consciousness for so long that an audience in the West can be expected to avoid such an essentialising perspective at all costs; as such, equalising the marketability of a Western canon to an expectation of a Chinese acrobatic show would be inappropriate. Yet the Taiwanese, claiming a longer history with the West and a more open political atmosphere, often choose to represent their country within the very culture they proclaim to resent, justifying the assimilation of Chinese culture along the way. The cultural confidence of the Chinese and that of the Taiwanese are clearly distinguishable in the global context.

This thesis therefore aims to provide a mode of appreciation for the contemporary Sino-Shakespeare from the point of view of its creators. In the introduction to *Shakespeare in Asia*, Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan pose a question while seeking an answer for Shakespeare's significance in Asian adaptations: 'can intercultural Asian performance, by the simple fact of its non-Western origin, engage from a different position the difficulties posed by the imperialist foundations of orientalism and colonialism?'[2] Kennedy and Yong also propose that there is no all-inclusive answer, and the question has to be examined 'in relation to specific instances, as Asian methods and strategies continue to proliferate and react to each other'.[3] Therefore, by differentiating the Chinese and the Taiwanese approaches to Shakespeare, the Bard's contemporary

[2] Dennis Kennedy and Yong Liu Lan (eds.), *Shakespeare in Asia: Contemporary Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010), p. 11.
[3] *Ibid.*

immediacy to the two Chinese countries that have no direct colonial history with the West can be established for any future study on Sino-Shakespeare.

An Occidentalist Desire for Shakespeare

When one speaks of Chinese Shakespeare, one must first examine why the Chinese want Shakespeare in their culture. Kennedy notes in *Foreign Shakespeare* that 'readers and audiences in linguistically foreign environments have had to *find* a desire for him'.[4] In *Shakespeare in Asia*, Kennedy and Yong come back to this theme and define that foreign desire for Shakespeare as a 'nationalist appropriation, colonial instigation, and intercultural revision'.[5] The first and the second categories are different mainly in the forms through which the governmental mechanism has affected the development of Shakespeare: while colonial Shakespeare involves the direct influence of imperialist colonisers, such as the British Empire in India, the nationalist approach follows a more complicated and indirect route. Whereas intercultural revision can best describe the development of Sino-Shakespeare after the 1980s, the beginning of Shakespeare in China would fall into Kennedy's first category, where 'a nationalist agenda existed that found profit in the dramatist'.[6]

Since Shakespeare was carried over to China during the Western imperial era, Shakespeare's significance for the Chinese can largely be examined by the relationship between knowledge and power: the Western power that has been creating the representative knowledge of the Other. In the introduction to *Shakespeare Without English*, a collections of essays from the Seventh World Shakespeare Congress in 2001, Sukanta Chaudhuri and Chee Seng Lim observe that, in foreign Shakespearean adaptations, Shakespeare's plays are often 'drawn upon for a composite text, combining chosen Shakespearean elements with other elements drawn from the host culture', during which process the plays themselves become a fable.[7] The formation of a Shakespearean fable in China thus began from China's conceptualisation of the West, which Shakespeare represents.

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[4] Kenney ed., *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1993) p. 3

[5] Kennedy, *Shakespeare in Asia*, p. 7.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Sukanta Chaudhuri and Chee Seng Lim, 'Introduction', in *Shakespeare without English* (Delhi, India: Dorling Kindersley, 2006), p. ix.

To understand how China fantasises the West, a comparison might be drawn from Edward Said's *Orientalism*, which has helped - to an extent - bring the discussion of the East to a less biased point of view. While building up his theory, Said mentions a comical story by Gustave Flaubert, in which two characters mention how 'Europe will be regenerated by Asia' and the future of humanity saved; Said further states that this Romantic influence 'frames the specifically modern structures of Orientalism'.[8] The Orient, specifically the Middle East and India for the Europeans, has under this structure become a land of fantasy for centuries, and the counterforce of the Europeans' monopolisation of the fantasy's creation forms the main body of postcolonial studies on Asian Shakespeares.

This study of Shakespeare in the Chinese countries, however, cannot fit comfortably into the frame of a postcolonial discourse. Since China was not and could not be colonised during the imperial era of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, Shakespeare was never forced into any local system for propagandistic or educational purposes. Instead of ridding themselves of Shakespeare as a symbol of Western cultural power, the Chinese have been embracing it as a utopian solution to 'regenerate' China. This study argues that, as in Said's observation of Flaubert's story, the chosen 'Shakespearean elements' pointed out by Sukanta Chaudhuri and Chee Seng Lim are actually based on the more or less biased knowledge of the West. Based on the imaginary nature of such knowledge, then, the discourse of Sino-Shakespeare can be aptly named an Occidentalist view of the West.

Occidentalism is not a new concept, having been used to describe various forms of reaction of the East to the West: two entities that are unable to be easily categorised and defined due to their dynamic nature. In the studies of Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, Occidentalism is invoked to describe the hatred borne by the Orients against the West.[9] While such a view can partially describe the anti-Western ideology during the early encounters between China and the Western imperial powers, the theory of hatred cannot explain China's craving for Shakespeare. James G Carrier and Couze Venn offer a more general description of Occidentalism. Carrier describes Occidentalism as an overt

[8] Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 1978) pp. 113-16.
[9] Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies* (New York: Penguin, 2005).

simplification of the West for the purpose of essentialisation that leads to a more convenient comparison between the familiar and the Other.[10] Similarly, Venn's work is mainly about 'interrogating modernity from the standpoint of a postcoloniality that knows itself to be caught up in the history of modernity, inflected by its discourse, yet conscious of the need to disrupt the limits and the limitations which the modern now signifies'.[11] Venn defines the term Occidentalism as:

> the space of the co-articulation of logocentric reason, technocratic rationality and imperialism by way of an egocentric ontology of being. It inscribes the privilege of the West as the superior locus of world-historical development, and the modern Western subject as the agent of that process.[12]

Both Carrier's and Venn's Occidentalism stems from and is used to examine the Eurocentric point of view, by which the West is still the dominating force in the hierarchy of knowledge. However, regardless of China's unquestioning acceptance of Westernisation in the early twentieth century, the Chinese have never thought of Europe as 'the centre'. A quick look at one of the founding principles of modern China and Taiwan exemplifies the ethnic centrality of the Chinese narrative.

As most former imperial colonies would need to unite the domestic consensus against the Western imperialism, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, the founding father of both China and Taiwan, proposed the Three Principles of the People. These principles, proposed by Dr. Sun at the beginning of the twentieth century as the main revolutionary propaganda of the Republic of China against the Qing dynasty, are still listed at the beginning of Taiwan's Constitution and are one of the bases of the Chinese Communism, denoting the strongest ideology in the Chinese and the Taiwanese consciousness in terms of anything non-Chinese. The first principle is the *Minzu* Principle. Whilst it is commonly translated into 'nationalism' according to its purpose to unite the Chinese against Western imperialism, its literal meaning can better describe its influence in a much broader (thus more commonly accepted) sense. The Chinese phrase *Minzu* stands for race, and the principle (*Zhuyi* in Chinese) denotes an –ism. To call the *Minzu* Principle

[10] James G. Carrier, *Occidentalism: Images of the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
[11] Couze Venn, *Occidentalism: Modernity and Subjectivity* (London: Sage, 2000), p. 1
[12] *Ibid.,* p. 83.

racist may seem to be radical, but the fact that the Chinese Occidentalism works to essentialise everything non-Chinese has a direct antecedent from the equalisation of the *Minzu* Principle with racism. In Dr. Sun's own words, the *Minzu* Principle is 'nationalism, which is suitable in the context of China, but not in that of a foreign country'.[13] Britain, Dr. Sun argues, is racially 'led by the Caucasians, and combined with the brown people and the black people', and Western nations such as the Great Britain are brought together by force, whilst China 'has always been of single-ethnicity since the Qin and Han Dynasties'. The distinction made between China and the Western nations is clear: the defining factor is ethnicity. Therefore, while nationalism denotes a sense of superiority over other countries, China's foremost founding principle dictates the superiority of the Chinese ethnicity.

As such, the Chinese are always seeing the 'logocentric reason, technocratic rationality and imperialism' from a Sino-centric standpoint: the admiration for the West and its modernity co-exists with the unquestionable authority of Chinese cultural superiority; the admiration is often rendered as exoticism because of the Sino-centric sense of superiority, which simultaneously claims the high-end of the hierarchy of knowledge and is challenged by the imposition of Eurocentric superiority.[14] So the Chinese version of Occidentalism does not completely conform to what Venn proposes, as the idea of the West is decentred, presiding the central idea of Chinese culture; and Westernisation is called upon to improve and eventually consolidate Chinese culture's centrality.

The impression of Western imperialism on the Chinese around the late nineteenth and early twentieth century brings the notion of modernity into contemporary Chinese history. Chinese Occidentalism depends largely on the European modernity at the turn

[13] All quotations from Dr. Sun's *The Three People's Principle* are taken from Ning Zhong-Kang's edited *Brochure of the Three People's Principle* at http://www.huanghuagang.org/hhgMagazine/issue09/big5/24.htm. An English version can be found at the website of the Department of History, University of Warwick (http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/undergraduate/modules/hi153new/timetable/wk8/documents/8_sunyatsen/). Both sites accessed on 15th March, 2013.

[14] Centralising a local discourse appears elsewhere for different purposes. While establishing a Chinese Occidentalist discourse, Xiaomei Chen urges the avoidance of a 'binarist and universalist' approach, evident in the discourse of Afrocentricism, which promotes Africa as the centre of world culture as 'a tactic to advance interests and careers in the West'. Such an approach, Chen argues, runs the risk of perpetuating racism 'while making antiracial claims and judgements'. Xiaomei Chen, *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 8-9.

of the twentieth, and then the Western postmodernity at the turn of the twenty-first century. In a study of Chinese Occidentalism, Xiaomei Chen argues that 'what might be considered as a global, "central" discourse of Occidentalism in their (those who follow Said's orientalist guideline) account can also sometimes be used as a locally marginal or peripheral discourse against the centrality of the internal dominant power in a particular culture'.[15] Thus, in the discourse of Chinese Occidentalism, it is not sufficient to examine only the dialogue between China and the imagined/essentialised West, but also to juxtapose the domestic discourse of the West with the more general Occidentalist concept.

While facing foreign invasions in the late nineteenth century, China's needs for military, social, and political reforms were dire, and many Chinese intellectuals believed that only through a completely Westernised political and cultural reform could China's predicament be remedied. Though the imperial powers were not physically colonising China, China's defeats to these imperial powers and the consequent treaties stimulated the Chinese desire to learn from their victors, kick-starting the fantasising aspect of the Chinese Occidentalist discourse. The overthrow of the Qing Dynasty was a first step to China's modernisation, whose equality to Westernisation was confirmed, giving birth to the New Cultural Movement which sought Western literature and theatre as a cultural, political, and technological epitome, according to which the modern Chinese culture must be shaped. Under such a historical context, the Chinese intelligentsia 'had little choice but to assert that the Western Other was in fact superior to the Chinese self', because they were 'accused of being "Western" both by virtue of their cultural status and their political sympathies'.[16] The superiority of the West was established, and the total acceptance of Western ideas brought great changes in Chinese literature and theatre. And Shakespeare the great English classic began to emerge as a cultural fetish craved by the Chinese reformers.

Chen separates the Chinese Occidentalism into two categories: the 'official' Occidentalism, which promotes the West as an oppressive control over civilians; and the 'anti-official' Occidentalism that seeks to liberate the people from political

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

oppression.[17] Shakespeare in China falls into the latter category for its nationalist nature, as discussed above. The absence of a colonial educational instalment that demanded Shakespeare in the curriculum, on the other hand, enabled free literary interpretation of Shakespeare's works. This freedom, combined with the nationalist agenda on creating a new Westernised Chinese culture, localised Chinese Shakespeare from the very beginning of its development: this might be the reason for Kennedy to term it nationalist *appropriation* rather than adaptation. Shakespeare was first brought to China by an oral translation/recreation of Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*; a Chinese translation of the actual text did not appear before 1921, and the first translation of the complete works was published in 1967.[18] The lack of substantial textual knowledge did not keep the Chinese from eagerly putting Shakespeare on stage; instead, the whole history of Sino-Shakespeare seems to depend on the pattern of free appropriation right from the very beginning[19]. As Fei Chunfang and Sun Huizhu rightly observe, the Chinese use of Shakespeare is fairly similar to the way Western artists appropriate Asian culture for their own purposes; and placing the West on the top of the hierarchy of knowledge over the Other, specifically the Orient, has already been the central argument of Said and criticised by his followers such as Rustom Bharucha.[20] In the process of appropriation, Shakespeare is decentred and localised by the Chinese nationalism; and as Said's Orientalism can be called for understanding the European's essentialisation of Asian cultural elements, then Occidentalism as a counter-force will be crucial in the development and significance of Sino-Shakespeare.

This Chinese Occidentalism speaks of such paradoxical transition of power between the two ends of the hierarchy of knowledge, which is crucial in answering Douglas Lanier's question: 'what…to make of Shakespearean transpositions to cultures that

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 3-6.

[18] This translation by Liang Shiqiu has been much acclaimed by the public as well as the academy in the Sinophone world, and has served as the original scripts for many performances and as a major reference for English students to this day. However, the linguistic accuracy is problematic; as the issue of translation would demand another thesis, it suffices to say here that any translation preceding Liang's has a greater chance of including more errors, and performances based on such works cannot, as many early creators of Shakespeare productions have, actually claim to be textually authentic.

[19] The earliest performances of Shakespeare in China, such as the 1904 *A Bond of Flesh* and *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *The Taming of the Shrew* (1914-15) were all based on Lin Shu's rewriting of Lamb's *Tales* (Alexander Huang, 74-75).

[20] Kennedy, *Shakespeare in Asia*, pp. 57-58.

have comparatively little history of Anglo colonialism?' [21] On the one hand, Shakespeare signifies the Western icon of the modernisation imposed upon China's need for regenerating Chinese culture, especially the theatre; on the other hand, the logocentric imposition is actively acquired by the Chinese on the premise that Shakespeare is effective in such regeneration only when, and particularly because, he is an outsider with an authoritative voice, or the representative of the Other. The first three short chapters of this thesis will thus be dedicated to tracing Shakespeare's Otherness in the context of modern Chinese history, which has affected a variety of Chinese approaches to Shakespeare's work, and will be the central idea when examining case studies of recent Sino-Shakespeare productions in later chapters.

Before the main discourse of this thesis can begin, the critical perspective must be clarified (briefly here, and extensively and more clearly in the following chapters). Since the broader concept of 'China' encompasses numerous countries, and even the ideological idea to put China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan together is dangerous as well as inappropriate, this thesis, positioned in the time of maturing academic interest in Sino-Shakespeare, offers a model for understanding the contemporary Sino-Shakespeare from a Taiwanese point of view. Written from a Taiwanese subjectivity, the aim of this research is to complement the existing works in the existing field of Sino-Shakespeare. By elevating Taiwan's significance in the discourse to China's equal, this study aims to establish the necessity of considering Taiwan's counter discourse to China's centricism. From this view, China's ubiquitous influence in Taiwan's Occidentalist attitude towards Shakespeare's Westernness can be more fully understood, and the Taiwanese uncertain ambiguity towards both China and the West will add strength to the appreciation of Chinese cultural assimilation of Shakespeare. This thesis will therefore conclude in the necessary separation between China and Taiwan – two interrelated yet independent cultural entity - whenever Sino-Shakespeare is to be discussed.

[21] Douglas Lanier, *Shakespeare and Cultural Studies: An Overview*, in *Shakespeare* (British Shakespeare Association) 2 (2006), pp. 228-48.

Chapter 1

Three Stages to the Contemporary

From the late 1990s to the first decade of the twenty-first century, scholarly interests in Sino-Shakespeare have seen an explosive growth. This growing trend coincides with the growth of China's political, economic, military, and cultural influence in the world; and yet this power is felt most strongly in Taiwan, whose political and cultural position is literally under the mercy of the Chinese imperialism. For both contemporary China and Taiwan, the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century is a historical turning point. China is regaining the cultural and political dominance in the world, which the country has enjoyed for more than four thousand years; and Taiwan, on the other hand, is caught between assimilation into and struggle against the Chinese ideology, all the while fighting for its very existence. As described in the Introduction, Shakespeare is treated as a representative of the Western canonical influence at work here. While it is dangerous to assume Shakespeare is the cultural messiah to the conundrum between China and Taiwan, the British Bard has been, along with countless western canons, heralded as the saviour for Chinese (and, in a broader sense, Taiwanese) culture from the late nineteenth century. To find a stance for the contemporary Sino-Shakespeare, therefore, the first three chapters will be devoted to the exposition of various cultural and, in particular, Shakespearean scenes that lead to the current study of Sino-Shakespeare, in hope of establishing a concrete study for all future scholarly interest in a Taiwanese interpretation and appreciation of Shakespeare's works.

In the first section of this chapter, all of the major studies on which this thesis is based are briefly listed. The significance of the list, however, extends beyond the research into the theatrical presentations of Sino-Shakespeare. Many of the works listed in the literature reviews are by scholars of different Chinese origins who are working in the US, the UK, China, and Taiwan. While these works provide what Richard Paul Knowles call the 'Conditions of Production' and the 'Conditions of Reception' that are inevitably intertwined with the performance itself in order to generate meanings[1], such context

[1] Richard Paul Knowles, *Reading the Material Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 3.

deserves a much closer scrutiny. Knowles argues that, in order for any theatrical performance (what he calls the 'raw material') and its theatrical and cultural context to be analysed in terms of the meaning being produced both on and off stage, these conditions must be 'together translated into the realms of discourse and understanding, where they come into being for critics and audience alike as "performance texts", and where ultimately their meaning is produced'.[2] Following Knowles's suggestion, this thesis, as well as the works on Sino-Shakespeare, juxtaposes historical accounts with case studies of performances, which will be outlined in the second section of this chapter. The historical accounts selected for this thesis, however, are based on the study's subjectivity that must be clarified before proceeding to the central debate of Occidentalism.

While Knowles mainly examines the Canadian and American theatres and published his book in the UK, his intended audience, i.e. scholars working in the UK and North America, could be expected to be already familiar with, if not entirely so, the subjects of his study, which are set in the locations where language, culture, and values are shared among the theatre practitioners, the critics, the audiences, and the readers. But the studies on Sino-Shakespeare are more complicated. For example, the relationship between Scotland and Shakespeare's Englishness can be similar to that between Taiwan and China; yet the distance between Scotland and Shakespeare cannot be as huge as that between Taiwan and Shakespeare. Calling on a foreign assistance, then, has a unique imaginary nature for the Taiwanese: hence Occidentalism, not merely essentialism. The historicity of Taiwan, put alongside that of China, is therefore necessary for understanding the generation of meaning in Taiwanese Shakespeare.

For works such as those included in Perng Ching-Hsi's books, as they are published in Taiwan, it is expected that historical context is already registered by the intended Taiwanese audience. This is problematic because the Taiwanese are ideologically divided, and such division not only has a powerful implication on the ways by which Shakespeare is perceived and made use of, but is also too sensitive to be publicly discussed. Thus, as Shakespeare is a foreign force for the Taiwanese, these Taiwanese studies consider Taiwanese theatre mainly from the point of view of a Chinese

[2] *Ibid.,* pp. 3-4.

metanarrative (arguably more 'global'): viewing Taiwan and Taiwanese culture as an extension of the Chinese culture.

This view is largely shared by all other works on Sino-Shakespeare conducted in the West. It should be noted that this view is simultaneously 'global', as Singaporean Shakespeare has also been included in discussions of Chinese Shakespeare, and 'Sino-centric', as this notion encompasses all other cultures that have a hint of Chinese origin. However, to put the analysis of a Singaporean production alongside a Chinese one has to foreground the Malaysian influences, as a production from Hong Kong calls for the relationship with Britain. By selecting Taiwan for the Sino-centric Occidentalist discourse, this thesis proposes not an all-encompassing analytical model, but an initiation for emphases on the political and ideological struggles between China and other locations considered to be part of the Sinophone world. For this purpose, Taiwan's direct confrontation with China can best exemplify the Sino-centric ideology by which a Sino-Shakespeare production must be read.

Works such as that of Li Ruru and Alexander C. Y. Huang, whose works form the most important groundwork for this thesis, provide concise historical accounts of the Sinophone world for their intended western readers. While the works of these two scholars do expressively separate the Taiwanese from the Chinese, they nevertheless include the Taiwanese Shakespeare in the master narrative of Chinese Shakespeare. In Li's study of the twenty-first-century Sino-Shakespeare, for instance, the Taiwanese Wu Hsing-Kuo's adaptation of *King Lear* is juxtaposed alongside productions from China and Hong Kong.[3] In her study, the historical differences among these three places are essentialised, because the focus is given to the theatrical significances of the case study. Nevertheless, everything of this production from the choice of the play to the significance of Shakespeare to Wu's Taiwanese audience has to be considered with Taiwan's relation to China and to the Chinese cultural authority, political implications, and historicity.

Such consideration is more clearly presented in Huang's study. As a Taiwanese scholar

[3] Li Ruru, 'Millennium Shashibiya: Shakespeare in the Chinese-speaking World', in *Shakespeare in Asia*, eds. Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 170-187.

working in the US, Huang is privileged with the distance put between his study and Taiwan's political sensitivity with China. This thesis also claims the safe distance from Taiwan in order to, like the case studies discussed in Chapter 5 and 7, discuss the sensitive issue of whether Taiwan is politically/culturally/historically a part of what the world knows as present-day China, and conclude the study by asserting that Taiwan has to be recognised as a culturally and politically independent entity from China. By positioning the study in the West and looking back to China and Taiwan, the following chapters preceding the case studies will thus give a comprehensive historical account that shapes the material context for contemporary Sino-Shakespeare.

The historicity discussed in this thesis is related but not entirely conforming to the two main ideologies in Taiwan. By recognising Taiwan's cultural and political independence, this study is able to further Huang's analysis in Taiwanese Shakespeare. For instance, while Wu Hsing-Kuo's *King Lear* is understood as a personal claim for Shakespeare's play in both Huang and Li's studies, Chapter 5 will further argue that such private assertion is actually shared among Wu's Taiwanese audience. This thesis will also divert from the anti-China ideology heralded by the Taiwanese independence discourse. While independent, Taiwan is always talking back to China; the history and culture between the two nations are as much separated as closely connected. Therefore, this study also differentiates itself from any attempt that denies China's presence in Taiwanese Shakespeare. By simultaneously examining and recognising the historical/ideological developments of China and Taiwan, this thesis thus aims to achieve a more intimate understanding of how Occidentalism works for Shakespeare to have meaning in the contemporary Sinophone world.

Literature Review: Sino-Shakespeare

The historical development of Sino-Shakespeare has already been much discussed in recent years. While Murray J. Levith's *Shakespeare in China*[4] is one of the most concise guidebooks on the subject, monographs such as Zhang Xiaoyang's *Shakespeare in China: a Comparative Study of Two Traditions and Cultures*[5] and Li Ruru's

[4]Murray J. Levith, *Shakespeare in China* (London: Continuum, 2004).

[5] Zhang Xiaoyang, *Shakespeare in China* (London: Associated University Press, 1996).

Shashibiya: Staging Shakespeare in China[6] offer more detailed analyses of the most significant moments and productions in the history of Sino-Shakespeare. These three works, written in English, trace the chronology of Shakespearean performances and their impacts on the Sinophone world (including Mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan) before 2000, where Li and Levith leave space for speculation as to the future of Sino-Shakespeare. In China itself, Cau Shujun and Sun Fuliang's *Shashibiya Zai Shakespeare on the Chinese Stage*[7] is one of the few recent works in China devoted to studying the history of Shakespearean performances in the country, but its coverage is limited to before 1990; in Taiwan, Perng Ching-Hsi's *Discovering Shakespeare: A Collection of Taiwanese Shakespearean Discourses*[8], while focusing on Taiwanese Shakespearean studies, includes essays on the development of Shakespearean history in Taiwan.[9] These works document most of the chronological history of Sino-Shakespeare from the early twentieth century, focusing mainly on how the Chinese approach Shakespearean plays and the cross-cultural appropriation in theatre, films and certain translations.

In 2009, Alexander C. Y. Huang published his monumental *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*, which not only gives the most detailed and history-based account of Sino-Shakespeare in China (and Taiwan after the 1980s), but also highlights the localisation of Shakespeare in the Sinophone world.[10] The locality of Sino-Shakespeare, previously hidden beneath the more technically orientated studies, is brought forth by Huang through the history of its development from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first century, connecting more closely than ever the Chinese society/culture and Shakespeare; the huge difference between these two entities is enlarged by the absence of a direct import from a western corporal colonisation.[11] Huang's notion of locality is that 'the Shakespeare-China interrelations

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[6] Li Ruru, *Shashibiya: Staging Shakespeare in China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003).
[7] Cao Shujun, and Sun Fuliang, *Shakespeare on the Chinese Stage* (Harbin, China: Harbin, 1989).
[8] Perng Ching-Hsi (ed.), *Discovering Shakespeare: A Collection of Taiwanese Shakespearean Discourses* (Taipei: Owl Publishing 2004).
[9] Wang Shu-Hua's *Politics and Theatre: New Discoveries on Chinese Shakespeare* and Wang Wan-Rong's *A Conversation between Shakespeare and the Contemporary Taiwanese Theatre* (Perng, *Discovering Shakespeare*, pp. 321-36, 337-48).
[10] Alexander C. Y. Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: A Century of Cultural Exchange* (New York, USA: Columbia University Press, 2009).
[11] Hong Kong, bearing the colonial influence from Britain, will be exempted from this thesis. This study's focus is on China and Taiwan, where the colonial presence of Shakespeare is not as significant

are determined by interactions between local histories embedded in and superimposed on the works of art, shaping an interchange repeatedly staged since the nineteenth century'.[12] This thesis argues, following Huang's theory, that Shakespeare's place in such locality is an imagined space determined by an Occidentalist point of view unique to the Chinese. Huang concludes that 'Shakespeare's plays have allowed the writers, performers, readers, and audiences to see China through the eye of the Other, but this vision also becomes a projection of the gaze of Shakespeare's Other'.[13] Sino-Shakespeare is not a colonial legacy but a recreation of a fantasy; the process of appropriation is an inevitable result of reinvention, as the Elizabethan playwright must lose his centrality to the Chinese, and then to be reborn through a new artistic creation that is Sino-Shakespeare.

By contrast, this thesis proposes that the Taiwanese Occidentalist discourse must be included in the more general Chinese Shakespeare as distinctive and independent from its larger context. The prefix Sino rather than Chinese in this study (Sino-Shakespeare rather than Chinese Shakespeare) acts as a banner under which China and Taiwan can be discussed together. The complicated history since the late nineteenth century has both culturally and politically separated Taiwan from China, but the bond between these two countries cannot be overlooked; in fact, the bond is so solid that the term Taiwanese can be easily misunderstood as a provincial branch of the general Chinese.[14] The cultural and political differences, reflected in the theatre, can be seen everywhere, especially in the traditional theatre Taiwan inherits from China: in Nancy Guy's *Peking Opera and Politics in Taiwan*, she observes that 'no country believes more deeply in the power of drama or takes greater pains about what is in a play than does the People's Republic of China, and no drama in any country and in history has been so frequently and so directly involved and used in ideological feud[s], political purges, mass campaigns and high-level power struggles as has that of the People's Republic of

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as that in Hong Kong. The Occidentalist approach to Shakespeare in China and Taiwan is, therefore, more dependent on the imagined space discussed in this chapter.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 229.

[14] In Murray J. Levith's *Shakespeare in China*, for example, he speaks of how 'Shakespeare in Chinas' has urged him to write the book. The plural form, however, cannot accommodate the political reality, especially in Taiwan. In 2008, more than 75% of the Taiwanese recognise their country as Taiwan rather than a part of China. (*Changes in the Taiwanese/Chinese Identity of the Taiwanese as Tracked in Survey (1992-2008)*, by the Election Study Centre, National Cheng-Chi University, http://esc.nccu.edu.tw/eng/ data/data03-2.htm).

China', whereas 'in Nationalist Taiwan, *Peking Opera* became like a museum piece with preservation as the main aim', and the overuse of propagandistic purpose accelerated the downfall of the traditional theatre.[15] The 'propagandistic purpose' of using the Chinese traditional theatre to promote Chineseness, however, is distanced by Shakespeare's foreign image in the Taiwanese *xiqu* Shakespeare adaptations; and in the twenty-first century, such Chineseness is actually one of the most exportable cultural assets of Taiwan. Moreover, while Taiwan claims to be more modernised/westernised, the *huaju* Shakespeare in Taiwan is more domestic-orientated, more deeply restricted to a local comprehensibility than that in China. The understanding of the curious change of tide at the turn of the twenty-first century is therefore the most important point regarding Taiwanese Shakespeare.

Before moving on to a thorough examination of the development of Occidentalism in Sino-Shakespeare, it is necessary to note that all of the works mentioned, except Levith's, are researched by scholars with different Chinese origins, and the different angles in their approaches reflect the different political influences coming from the separation between China and Taiwan. As Li and Zhang are of Chinese origin, their works include Taiwanese Shakespeare, which began in 1986 with Wu Hsing-Kuo's *Kingdom of Desire* (*Macbeth*), as a part of Chinese Shakespeare; and it is no surprise that Levith follows such method, since it is the main political agenda of the current Chinese ideology. In Perng's collection of essays, however, Chinese and Taiwanese Shakespeares are studied separately. Wang Shu-Hua's *Politics and Theatre: New Discoveries on Chinese Shakespeare* offers a clear and simplified account of Chinese Shakespeare without bringing the Taiwanese productions into her discussion, and Wang Wan-Rong's *A Conversation between Shakespeare and the Contemporary Taiwanese Theatre* briefly discusses the Taiwanese approach to Shakespeare up to the 1990s; the latter, due to the length of the essays, touches upon only the technical choices of the theatre practitioners in Taiwan. In Huang's *Chinese Shakespeares*, though Taiwan's locality is briefly highlighted in order to discuss Wu Hsing-Kuo's *King Lear* (2000), it is nonetheless treated as a sub-category of Shakespeare in China. In contrast to all of these positions, this thesis argues that China and Taiwan must be seen as different

[15]Nancy Guy, *Peking Opera and Politics in Taiwan* (Chicago, USA: University of Illinois Press, 2005), pp. 8, 161.

branches of a cultural entity.

The distinction between the Chinese and Taiwanese theatrical presentation of Shakespeare is noted in Huang Ya-Hui's PhD dissertation, *Performing Shakespeare in Contemporary Taiwan*, in 2012.[16] Her dissertation recognises the distinction between the two Sino-Shakespeares, and includes a detailed discussion of the adaptive strategies of different theatrical forms - from the Chinese traditional theatre, spoken drama, to the Taiwanese indigenous theatre - of Taiwanese Shakespeare. Claiming a subjective Taiwanese perspective, Huang Ya-Hui speaks through the voice of a Taiwanese islander, distancing herself from the pro-China discourse. Her approach, however, gives only a partial view of the Taiwanese discourse. This thesis argues that the Taiwanese approach to Shakespeare needs to be considered alongside Chinese Shakespeare, as both China and Shakespeare are simultaneously treated by the Taiwanese as the cultural origin against which one must battle, and the Other itself. Moreover, the Occidentalist perspective central to this thesis examines not only the Taiwanese approach to Shakespeare, but also the conceptionalisation of Shakespeare as a Western force that can assist the Taiwanese by providing a secure space for political debate over national identity. Therefore, the history of Sino-Shakespeare must be retraced and re-examined with the Occidentalist discourse to reveal the complex political/ideological/cultural forces behind the formation and future of contemporary Sino-Shakespeare.

Methodology: Three Stages to the Contemporary

In order to establish the Sino-Occidentalist discourse through the interrelationship between the Sinophone world and Shakespeare, and to invite western readers to have a more intimate perspective on Shakespeare's ability to produce meaning on the contemporary Chinese and Taiwanese stage, the first three chapters of this thesis look at the history of Sino-Shakespeare from its earliest development in the late nineteenth century to the 1980s, when Sino-Shakespeare entered its maturity. As mentioned earlier, the Taiwanese scholar Wang Shu-Hua roughly divides the historical development of Chinese Shakespeare into three stages: 'rewrites, adaptations, and translations', describing the first stage of Shakespeare's presence in China from the late Qing era to

[16] Huang Ya-Hui, *Performing Shakespeare in Contemporary Taiwan,* Diss. University of Central Lancashire, 2012.

the late 1940s; the second phase, 'Marxism and Shakespeare,' defines the focus on literary criticism during the 50s, 60s, and 70s, when politics was the paradigm for art, and performances were thwarted or banned during the ten-year Cultural Revolution; and the last stage, 'Shakespeare's Renaissance' which saw a sudden influx of western ideas into China, and the flourishing of new productions in the 80s and the 90s under the influence of the Open Door Policy.[17]

The first three chapters follow Wang's division of these developments by presenting the historical development of Sino-Occidentalism, and its impact on the conception of Sino-Shakespeare. However, while Wang's division conveniently marks the most distinctive change of the political climate affecting the Chinese attitude towards Shakespeare and western literature in general, it leaves out the artistic need for Shakespeare's plays, and the interaction between the two cultures that involves more than politics. The issue of a separation between China and Taiwan must also be considered, since Taiwanese Shakespeare is part of, and would begin to play a major role in, Sino-Shakespeare after the 1980s. Therefore, the recollection and examination of the development of Sino-Shakespeare will begin in the next chapter with Wang's first stage, when it was not Shakespeare's plays that caught the Chinese's attention, but his name; a representative of the West that the Chinese intellectuals were only too eager to embrace, marking the beginning of the Chinese Occidentalism. This was a time when the West was idolised in the context of resistance against the imperial invasions, signifying a cultural, political, military, and ideological challenge for the long-established Sino-centric nationalist confidence.

With the arrival of Chinese translations of Shakespeare's texts during the New Cultural Movement, as intellectuals were pursuing total Westernisation to modernise Chinese culture, the search for a European authenticity became the focus of Shakespeare productions before the Sino-Japanese War. Before and during the War, Shakespeare was used by the Chinese mainly for political purposes: the form of *huaju* was introduced to mould the Chinese theatre to the creation of the new Republic based on Westernisation/modernisation, and Shakespeare's stories were often Sinicised to 'criticise the present time, reveal the ugliness of the society, satirize the officials, or

[17] Perng, *Discovering Shakespeare*, pp. 321-35.

propagate personal political views',[18] conforming to Chen's anti-official Occidentalist discourse described earlier. The first half-century of Shakespeare in China saw Shakespeare as an imaginary place for the newly modernised Chinese theatre, and it is evident that Sino-Shakespeare was a localised creation from the very beginning. On the other hand, as Taiwan was colonised by Japan during this period, Shakespeare and the new theatre in Taiwan were directly transplanted from Japan. Its influence on Sino-Shakespeare, though not obvious yet, would surface after the KMT (Kuomintang, the nationalist party) government (the Republic of China) retreated to Taiwan. Thus, the first stage will focus only on China, since the Taiwanese would later adopt part of the Occidentalist discourse developed.

The third chapter will examine split between the People's Republic of China (China) and the Republic of China (Taiwan). The following Cultural Revolution and the Chinese Cultural Renaissance during the 1960s to 70s define the second stage of Sino-Shakespeare before it entered the mature stage of modern times. At this stage, both China and Taiwan desperately sought international recognition (especially that of the US), as they fought for the legitimate claim to the rule of China. Though the creative development was hindered by the two cultural movements, it was a time when Shakespeare's texts were given more critical attention for the first time.[19] In China, following the establishment of the People's Republic, the CCP (Chinese Communist Party)-led social atmosphere and the close relations with the Soviet Union prompted Chinese intellectuals to read Shakespeare from an extreme Marxist point of view. In Taiwan, the first translation of the complete works by Liang Shiqiu was published in 1967, which would remain one of the most influential yet problematic Chinese references to Shakespeare's texts until the present day. On the other hand, the government oppression of individual theatre would later result in the blossoming of Sino-Shakespeare when the political restriction was lifted in the 1980s.

With the first two stages full of propagandistic purposes, the Chinese and the Taiwanese desire for Shakespeare can be easily fitted into Kennedy and Yong's category of nationalist appropriation. The last stage discussed in the third chapter of this thesis -

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 322.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 323.

post 1980s - presents the third and most complicated category, Kennedy and Yong's 'intercultural revision'. From the late 1980s to the first decade of the twenty-first century, the Chinese and the Taiwanese Occidentalist discourses become entwined with the past and the present, distinguishing themselves from each other, and the narratives of Sino-Shakespeare are shaped into a complicated series of issues involving both international and domestic concerns. Released from the political oppressions of the 1970s, the Chinese and the Taiwanese intercultural revision of Shakespeare can be described as an '[attempt] to move away from political applications into more self-consciously aesthetic realms, though…the aesthetic never loses political nuance'.[20] As both China and Taiwan were establishing their modern national identities, there was more than one force at work in the postmodern development of Sino-Shakespeare: from the 1986 *kunju* (a traditional theatre originated in Sichuan Province) *Macbeth* to the 2012 *Richard III* designed for the Globe to Globe season, the Chinese were turning Shakespeare from an imaginary western material that had helped modernise the Chinese theatre to an intercultural resource to be incorporated into the newly established international image of a new China; and from the 1986 *Kingdom of Desire* (a *jingju* version of *Macbeth*) to the various versions of *Shamlet* (an extremely popular Taiwanese parody of *Hamlet*, performed in several different versions from 1992 to 2013), Shakespeare in Taiwan took on many different faces, from the saviour of the dying traditional theatre to a foreign force that helped the Taiwanese distance themselves from China and establish confidence in the newly formed modern culture. After a century of development, Sino-Occidentalism, or a selective process of essentialisation of what is conceived as 'the West' in the Sinophone world, is also transformed into various types of influence affecting almost every Shakespearean production in the contemporary Sinophone world. After the historicity of this study is established, the rest of the chapters in this thesis are devoted to the search for the Occidentalist narrative hidden in the interrelations between China/Taiwan and Shakespeare, so that Shakespeare's position in the contemporary Sinophone world, as well as Sino-Occidentalism's contributions for creating artistically refreshing adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, can be clearly portrayed.

[20] Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan (eds.), *Shakespeare in Asia: Contemporary Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010), p. 10.

Case Studies: Occidentalism in Contemporary Sino-Shakespeare

After these three introductory chapters establish the Sino-centric perspective through which Occidentalism is utilised, the main part of this study will look at the contemporary Sino-Shakespeare in China and Taiwan based on the historical and cultural context. As both sides of the Taiwan Strait are creating national images unique to each other in the modern world of globalisation, the discourse of the contemporary ideology, the place of the Chinese culture, and the Sino-Occidentalist perspective are therefore essential in the understanding of the adaptive approach and the mode of appreciation for Shakespeare in the two Chinas. This study will therefore be devoted to the extremely complicated situation of Sino-Shakespeare in China and Taiwan, with case studies of both *huaju* and traditional theatre (with the exception of one Chinese film adaptation, whose significance lies with the globalising ideology of the modern Chinese cultural exportation central to the study of modern Chinese Shakespeare). The Occidentalist theory proposed in the Introduction speaks of a fantastical admiration for the West, while such fascination is always tainted by the Sino-centric hubris. From this stems the clash between two contesting authoritative voices of Shakespeare's West and of China, while the latter is further complicated by the ideological conflicts between China and Taiwan. Such intricate conflicts, more implicit yet more severe than the struggles experienced by the earlier Chinese Shakespeareans, are the backbone of the appreciation of contemporary Sino-Shakespeare. Thus, the case studies begin with the Chinese Shakespeare in the late 1980s, when the third stage of Sino-Shakespeare's development began.

The case studies do not follow a strictly chronological order. The purpose here is not to delineate the historical accounts of Sino-Shakespeare beyond the necessary contextual establishment, but to construct the Sino-Occidentalist view on Shakespeare. The productions in the 1990s are absent from the case studies because they largely follow examples established by the 1980s productions examined in Chapter 4 and 5. These two chapters discuss the *xiqu* adaptations of Shakespeare, in which Chineseness can be understood with apparent ease, since the dramaturgy of *xiqu* requires the understanding of the Chinese traditional culture. As the study moves onto *huaju*, a theatrical form that denotes the western influence, case studies in the twenty-first century can best describe how the Chinese internalise and essentialise Shakespeare and his Westernness, and how the Taiwanese cope with Chinese ideology with the essentialised Westernness. Thus,

the structure of the case studies follows this study's discursive progress of Occidentalism rather than the linear development of the productions. As in Chapter 7, while the first performance of the second case study preceded the first case study by 17 years, the second case study's purpose as a parody must be understood on the basis of the first case study, which gives a lucid picture of what Shakespeare means to the Taiwanese audience.

Chapter 4 thus serves as a bridge that merges the historical development of Sino-Occidentalism and the contemporary perception of Shakespeare in China. This chapter begins with two case studies that examine how and why the Chinese incorporate Shakespeare with the traditional theatre. Shakespeare was initially introduced to the Chinese stage as *huaju* or spoken drama. However, after almost a century of westernisation, the Chinese have been looking into their own tradition to recreate Shakespeare – the original stimulation for a westernised stage. The conversation between the Chinese traditional culture and the western canon is divided into two modes of adaptation/appreciation as Zhang Xiaoyang defines in his *Shakespeare in China*: the western manner and the Chinese manner. The *jingju Othello* in 1983 examines director Zheng Bixian and actor Ma Yong'an's attempt to use the convention of traditional *xiqu* to tell a Shakespearean tale with the focus on a western representation. This production, in which the lead actor Ma painted his face black, was 'one of the earliest attempts for *jingju* practitioners to engage at length the notion of racial otherness through a black character'[21]; but the discussion on the racial Otherness is only a pretext for a Chinese narrative, which would be made more prominent with Huang Zuolin's *kunju Macbeth* in 1986. This second case study was part of the Inaugural Shakespeare Festival in Shanghai. Unlike the *jingju Othello*, which made alterations to *jingju* to conform to Shakespeare, this production made Shakespeare conform to the stylisation and aesthetics of the traditional *xiqu*. With details of the productions based on secondary studies, Chapter 4 establishes the critical entry point for all future studies on Chinese *xiqu* Shakespeare by reading the adaptive and appreciative approaches to these productions with the Occidentalist discourse established in the introductory chapters.

[21] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 177.

Chapter 5 will apply the methodological models established in Chapter 4 to examine the contemporary development of Taiwanese *xiqu* Shakespeare through three case studies: director/actor Wu Hsing-Kuo's *The Kingdom of Desire* (1986), *King Lear* (*Lear is Here*, 2000) and *The Tempest* (2004). While other *xiqu* productions in China and Taiwan mainly follow the two modes of adaptation described in Chapter 4, Wu's productions add the contemporary Taiwanese consciousness to the conversation between the Chinese tradition and Shakespeare. In *The Kingdom of Desire*, the Chinese tradition was first rejected by and then assimilated to the Taiwanese narrative. In *King Lear*, Wu began to claim a personal motivation for adapting Shakespeare, adding Taiwan's locality and cultural contemporaneity to the *xiqu* convention. By performing ten characters from Shakespeare's *King Lear* and acting as himself, Wu broke free from the Chinese convention, an act impossible in China yet encouraged in Taiwan due to the latter's eagerness to be liberated from the former. In *The Tempest*, the Chineseness in *xiqu* was utilised to accompany Shakespeare's international marketability as the most exportable cultural commodity for the contemporary Taiwanese. The cultural confidence in modernity is seen in the adoption of cinematic special effects for the stage, yet it is juxtaposed with the anxiety of lacking a Chinese-less master narrative for the Taiwanese.

Comparing with the Taiwanese approach to Shakespeare's universality, Chapter 6 will study the internationality of contemporary Chinese Shakespeare. The first case study, the 2006 feature film *The Banquet* (*Hamlet*), is an exception from all the case studies in this thesis. While the cinematic genre should have been given an entirely different sphere of discussion due to the complicated distinctions between the theatrical and cinematic media, *The Banquet* deserves a special attention in this study because it demonstrates the Chinese eagerness to invest in feature films as well as build a worldly image of modernity and wealth, selling Chineseness to the world through capitalist media. Thus, this feature film Shakespearean adaption, unique in the Sinophone world, must be included in the discourse of modern Chinese ideology. The second case study returns to the theatre. Wang Xiaoying's *Richard III*, designed for Shakespeare's Globe during the 2012 Globe to Globe season, is the culmination of the historical development of the Chinese understanding of Shakespeare, the theatrical conversation between *xiqu* and the western dramaturgy, and the Chinese cultural confidence in a global context. In these most recent events of Chinese Shakespeare, the Chinese Occidentalism has

moved into an arena where the Chinese are establishing a cultural and political confidence in the face of the West, and the Chinese Occidentalism speaks of a much more equal position than that of Taiwan.

Chapter 7 will conclude the thesis with two recent cases studies of *huaju* adaptations. Devoid of Chineseness except the spoken language, the Taiwanese Occidentalist discourse marks an appreciation for Shakespeare with a touch of fantasy. However, differing from the worshiping aspect of the early Chinese Occidentalism, the Taiwanese directors illustrate their understanding of Shakespeare's plays while simultaneously recognising the Taiwanese audience's apparent disinterest in the plays and the eagerness for the Bard's name, not so much as a globally marketable brand than as a foreign force that provides a stage where sensitive issues of national crisis can be rendered humorous. Wang Hong-Yuan's *The Two Gentlemen in Verona* (2009) demonstrates the director's belief that the young Taiwanese audience has to learn about Shakespeare's plays through a language heavily accented by popular culture. Lee Kuo-Hsiu's *Shamlet* (1992)[22], though created earlier than Wang's production, has elements that already foreshadowed Wang's idea that the Taiwanese audience does not need any authentic representation of Shakespeare's plays. By fragmenting and ridiculing *Hamlet*, Lee's adaptation makes use of the Taiwanese Occidentalist view on Shakespeare to create an adaptation that is appreciable only under the local context of modern Taiwan.

This thesis starts from the historical context from which China gains its modern perspective of cultural centrality. The cultural supremacy central to the Chinese ideology necessitates the understanding of Chinese Shakespeare through the discourses and competitions between the two authoritative voices: the Chinese culture and Shakespeare's established critical history in the West. Shakespeare in Taiwan, a representative political entity dislocated from the Sino-centric narrative, serves as an imagined space that enables ideological debates otherwise too sensitive to be discussed. The tension between Taiwan's current anti- and pro-China ideologies are offered some relief, and whether the presence or the absence of 'Chineseness' in Taiwanese Shakespeare is always linked with China's political and cultural metanarrative. It should be noted that the plays chosen for the case studies are mostly plays about the

[22] This chapter will discuss the significance of the 2000 version of *Shamlet*.

struggle for power, and *Macbeth* and other more renowned tragedies predominate the scene. This selection conforms to the nature of the triangular relationship that this thesis proposes: the Occidentalist value of Shakespeare serves precisely for the contesting voices of power. For China, it is the Chinese against the western world that is always fantasised; for Taiwan, it is the Taiwanese against the Chinese for a place in the world. The next chapter will then begin with the initiation of China's idolisation of the West, which will lead to the mythical and utopian nature of Shakespeare in both the contemporary China and Taiwan.

Chapter 2

The First Stage: China's Early Idolisation of the West

This introductory chapter discusses the first stage of modern Chinese Occidentalism, which will later form the basis for the Chinese approach to Shakespeare. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part provides a comprehensive historical account on which the second part, the formation of Shakespeare's status as a mythical idol, is based. While studies such as Alexander C. Y. Huang's *Chinese Shakespeares* have established such a historical account, this chapter will, based on the works of other such studies, focus more on China's fantasisation of the West. As Li Ruru rightly argues that Chinese Shakespeare is 'more about China than Shakespeare',[1] it is necessary to understand how the Chinese began to view the West through a Sino-centric perspective in order to later analyse the Occidentalist approach to Shakespeare. It is worth noting that, though Taiwan's narrative is temporarily put aside, China's role discussed in this chapter will be carried by the Mainlanders to Taiwan, forming the Sino-centric metanarrative. The bond between Taiwan and China will be evident as Taiwanese culture is constantly incorporated into the discourse on Chinese culture, leading to the conflict between the pro- and anti-China sentiment which predominates Taiwan's local discourse.

Part I: The Fall of a Kingdom

The End of Qing and the Sino-centric Confidence: Late 19th Century to 1911

The historical discussion begins at the end of the nineteenth century, because the Chinese Occidentalism must be discussed with the downfall of Sino-centricism, a millennia of belief that China is the political, cultural, and military centre of the known world. This period of time witnessed a dramatic change in China. An essay in *The People*, one of the major Chinese media outlets, while looking at the Chinese reform in the past two decades, states that 'the last twenty years of the nineteenth century was the

[1] Li Ruru, 'Millennium Shashibiya: Shakespeare in the Chinese-speaking World', in *Shakespeare in Asia*, eds. Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 185.

time when our country was being exploited by the Western powers, and becoming colonised, or semi-colonised… the Chinese people were under immense humiliation, the nation was on the edge of collapsing. And after a hundred years, in the last two decades, we have righted the hundred-year humiliation, and have risen in the world'.[2] This patriotic remark can be readily attributed to the war-time sensationalism, yet it does invoke of sense of self-righteousness that is ubiquitous in the collective Chinese consciousness. The Qing Dynasty, being the last dynasty of three thousand years, was suffering from corruptions, failing wars with the American and European imperial powers from and the uprising of domestic revolution that threatened to end the old traditional ways of the Chinese.

China has always considered itself as the centre of the world. During its long history, its power over all other Asian countries seldom faltered. The Chinese name of China, *Zhungguo*, literally means the Middle Kingdom. It is the pride of the Han People that, throughout all the changes of different dynasties, China has stayed intact no matter who was on the throne. When the Manchurians took over the reign from the Han People and established the Qing Dynasty, China was still 'a vast empire which stood resplendent and unrivalled in East Asia', and 'was doubtless one of the most advanced countries on earth, and its secular political and social system had won the admiration of not a few famous European philosophers'.[3] However, when entering the nineteenth century, the Qing Dynasty began to decline because of its corruption, of the deterioration of the ruling Manchurians out of peacetime idleness, and of financial burdens.[4] In the meantime, the British Empire was rapidly gaining strength from the Industrial Revolution, and the two empires soon collided in the first and most important contemporary conflict between China and the West that changed the former's history forever: the Opium War.

The Opium War began in 1840, when Rear Admiral George Elliot arrived in China with the British forces as 'a necessary action to defend their right to trade, to uphold their national honour, to correct the injustice inflicted upon the British officials and subjects

[2] *The People*, 17 December 1998, quoted from Tomoyuki Kojima, *The Contemporary History of China* (Taichung, Taiwan: Wunan, 2001), p.4.
[3] 'Spinoza, Leibniz, Goethe, Voltaire, and Adam Smith', from Immanuel C.Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 123.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 124-27.

in China, and to secure an open future', while the Chinese fought as 'a crusade against opium'.[5] In 1842, the war ended with China defeated and Hong Kong ceded to the British Empire as a colony[6], along with the enforced opening of trading ports. This defeat, however, did not 'shock the Chinese people into realising their backwardness'.[7] The Sino-centric confidence had been established for too long to be easily eradicated; it was against the Chinese disposition to consider the possibility of the military and political advancement of the 'Western barbarians', and China had to face more successive defeats in the coming twenty years to realise the importance of learning about the West.[8] In other words, the Sino-Centric confidence lent the Chinese a deeply rooted discrimination against everything non-Chinese; when later the West was fantasised, such discrimination persisted, resulting in a perpetual dilemma between worship and contempt in the China/West relationship.

The problems China was facing at the end of the nineteenth century, triggered by the Opium War, were 'the incompatibility of the Chinese claim to universal overlordship with the Western idea of national sovereignty; the conflict between the Chinese system of tributary relationships and the Western system of diplomatic intercourse; and the confrontation between self-sufficient, agrarian China and expansive, industrial Britain'.[9] In late Qing China, the government officials and scholars were still immersed in the past, refusing to give up on the old way of life because it had been proved in history that any foreign invasion was transitory, nothing but merely 'unfortunate and passing'.[10] The root of this dismissive attitude towards foreign invasion can be found in Confucianism, the spiritual and practical guideline deeply rooted in the traditional Chinese way of thinking.

The most significant force at work here is *hua yi ji bian* – the distinction between *hua* (the Han people) and *yi* (every race outside of the jurisdiction of the legitimate Chinese

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[5] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

[6] As noted earlier, this event marks Hong Kong with a colonial/postcolonial discourse different from that of Taiwan. The close relationship with the British Empire brought various social aspects of the Empire into Hong Kong, making Hong Kong's Occidentalist view of Shakespeare closer, but not entirely equal, to what Kennedy and Yong term 'colonial instigation' (Kennedy, *Shakespeare in Asia*, p. 7).

[7] Hsü, p. 193.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 192.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 447.

reign). A chapter in *Analects of Confucius* can best describe how this ideology works:

> Tzu-kung said, 'I don't suppose Kuan Chung was a benevolent man. Not only did he not die for Prince Chiu, but he lived to help Huan who had the Prince killed.' The Master said, 'Kuan Chung helped Duke Huan to become the leader of the feudal lords and to save the Empire from collapse. To this day, the common people still enjoy the benefit of his acts. Had it not been for Kuan Chung, we might well be wearing our hair down and folding our robes to the left. Surely he was not like the common man or woman who, in their petty faithfulness, commit suicide in a ditch without anyone taking any notice.'[11]

Tzu-kung, one of Confucius's disciples, did not approve of Kuan Chung's change of loyalty to Huan, Lord of Chi, as his action transgressed the traditional doctrine that one should die with one's master. Confucius, however, praised Kuan Chung's decision to preserve his life for a greater good: by being Chancellor to Lord Huan, he was able to wield a greater army and defend the Han people against outsiders, sparing the Han people the humiliation of adopting foreign culture - 'wearing our hair down and folding our robes to the left'. In late Qing China, the Chinese were hanging on to this ideology when met with the advancing power of the West. As Immanuel Hsü observes, the Chinese felt 'it was well and proper to Sinicise barbarians, but outrageous to imitate their ways'.[12] The Manchurians were outsiders once, but in the three hundred years of their reign, they had became culturally and politically Sinicised; it had been the way throughout Chinese history, and it could not be easily altered no matter how strongly the Western power confronted the Chinese belief in being 'the Celestial Empire'.[13]

Near the end of the Qing reign, however, there were already cries from some intellectuals for new knowledge. Though too late for the Manchurian government, indulgence in the past was seen by the clairvoyant as the most obvious reason for the

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[11] *Lun-yu*, or *Analects of Confucius,* Chapter 17, Book 14. Translation cited from *Confucius: His Life, His Words, His Deeds* (http://www.confucius.name/analects/book-14/page-04.html).

[12] Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, p. 448.

[13] *Ibid.* In fact, this ideology is still prevalent in the Sinophone world, as Confucianism forms the central narrative for this part of the world. Thus, when Shakespeare is adapted, the glorification of the Bard's international status will always be mixed with a reluctance to adopt that which is being admired.

humiliation China was suffering from the encounters with the Western powers. The government was investing in the renewal of the military and industrial development, importing new weapons and new designs for industrial factories from the invading countries. This improvement was not in any way stopping the rebellious force from the upcoming Republic that threatened Qing reign; and the demands for larger scale reformation, such as democracy and new culture, were growing at an accelerating pace. The most significant intellectual movement in this period was the 'New Learning': the urge to learn the Western ideas through translations of philosophical, religious and literary works, as well as ideas on various social aspects.

Before the First Sino-Japanese War of 1884-85[14], most of the translations of Western works had been from Anglo-American works on religion (the Bible), military and technology, and science.[15] After the war, the Chinese intellectuals realised the importance of understanding more about the Western thinking rather than limiting their knowledge to military art. In 1907, the official Bureau of Translation and Compilation was established, through which a number of literary works were introduced; and outside the Qing court, private translators were gaining more influence on the entire Chinese population.[16] Lin Shu, whose translation of Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* in 1904 would later become the first milestone in Sino-Shakespeare[17], was a prominent figure in translating Western novels in this period. Since Lin's linguistic skill was expert in, yet limited to, Chinese, his friends had had to read the works to him.[18] The importance of Lin's works was immense:

> Through Lin, Western literature was introduced into China, and through his translations the Chinese gained invaluable insights into Western customs, social

[14] This was the war in which Taiwan was ceded to Japan. From 1845 until 1945, Taiwan was under Japanese colonisation, and was almost completely left outside of any cultural and political movement in mainland China.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 420.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 421.

[17] Alexander Huang notes that though the first translation of Lamb's *Tales* appeared in 1903, Lin's work was the one 'that made a crucial difference'. The difference made was the provision of an Occidentalist fantasy of Shakespeare for the Chinese. Alexander C. Y. Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: A Century of Cultural Exchange* (New York, USA: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 71.

[18] Wang Tzu-jen worked with him on Alexander Dumas's *La Dame aux Caméllias*, and Wei Yi translated Lamb's *Tales* with him (Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, p. 424; Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 71).

> problems, literary currents, ethical concepts, familial relations, and the glittering world of literature itself… Lin often promoted patriotism, nationalism, social progress, and better human relationships in the prologues and introductions of his works. His influence on the younger generation cannot be overemphasised.[19]

Lin's enthusiasm for Western literature would be carried into the next stage of intellectual movement in China, but he did more than introducing the literature to the Chinese. In his introduction to Lamb's *Tales*, he urges that the reformers, who 'try their utmost to seek the new', should not 'slander their ancestors and abandon the past' and '[over-praise] the Westerners'.[20] His idea of learning the new from the West and retaining the important values in the Chinese culture marks the beginning of a century of efforts to seek a new Chinese culture that can incorporate the old and new, the East and West. However, in spite of his warning, a biased attitude towards the West that is the essence of Chinese Occidentalism would begin to grow in influence in every cultural sector.

The Beginning of the Modern China: 1912-1949

The end of the last dynasty in China did not lead to a peaceful time. After the Republic of China was established, it soon fell into the hands of several warlords, dividing the new nation and making their own treaties with different foreign powers. Japan's power and influence over East Asia was growing, leading to the Twenty-one Demands of 1915 that infuriated the Chinese public; on the other hand, World War I greatly weakened the Western imperial influence on China, which gave China the perfect opportunity to develop its own industry and middle class.[21] It was through the Western-trained or influenced intellectuals of that time, whose patriotism and nationalism reflected the situation China was in, that the most important intellectual movement in contemporary Chinese history occurred: the New Cultural Movement.[22] This movement was the

[19] Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, p. 425

[20] Lin Shu 1904, 1-2, cited from Li Ruru, *Shashibiya: Staging Shakespeare in China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), p. 13.

[21] Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, p. 495.

[22] The New Cultural Movement, beginning in 1915, was thought to be the precedent of the May Fourth Movement beginning on 4 May 1919, which was a series of activities against the Japanese imperial power and some pro-Japan Chinese officials. This later development in political demands coincided with the New Cultural Movement, and some historians simply include it in the May Fourth Movement to mark the beginning of modern Chinese literature. Zhang Yumao, *The History of Chinese*

milestone for the first complete Westernisation in China. The practical deification of the West constitutes the most significant force in the Sino-Occidentalist discourse.

The movement began with one of the leading figures, Chen Duxiu, promoting the concepts of 'Mr. De (democracy) and Mr. Sai (science)' in the journal *La Jeunesse* in 1915. The journal, established by Chen, had the aim of 'arousing the youth of the country to destroy the stagnant old traditions and forge a new culture'. Chen fiercely attacked all aspects of Chinese tradition, including Confucianism, stating that it was 'the product of an agrarian and feudal social order, totally incompatible with modern life in an industrial and capitalistic society'.[23] The same point of view was shared by Hu Shih, another leading figure of the New Cultural Movement. Being the father of China's pragmatism, Hu's attack on the tradition expanded to the most influential literary revolution in China: the plain language movement.

Interestingly, this can be understood as a conscious act of foregrounding the colloquial language as English was promoted by Shakespeare's plays during the Renaissance, though the English example was not as deliberate as the Chinese cultural movement. Thus, Hu's promotion of the plain language style was set in the larger context of China's emulation after European historical examples. Before Hu, Chinese official literature was written in the traditional, archaic form of language, which required professional training to read and write; thus making it unavailable to the majority of the population. By promoting the plain language style, the written form of Chinese was finally compatible with the spoken one, and the majority were now able to read new novels, poetry and plays. These new forms of literature, whilst more approachable in terms of language, were also able to incorporate the new idea of realism, as the characters in the book or on stage spoke the common language of the people.

Hu's love for pragmatism and realism led to a passion for Ibsen's works. 'Ibsenism' began in 1914, when a group of Chinese students in Japan (the Chun-liu Club) put *A Doll's House* on stage, and *La Jeunesse* devoted a column exclusively to Ibsen's works and Hu's essays on Ibsenism for six issues.[24] This trend of realism, resulting from both

Literature Across the Strait in Twentieth Century (Shenyang, China: Liao Ning University Press, 1988).

[23] Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, pp. 497-98.

[24] Zhang, *the History*, pp. 182-83.

the pursuit of total Westernisation and the plain language movement, began what the Taiwanese dramatist Ma Sen calls the First Wave of Chinese Theatre's Westernisation, in which realism and *huaju* became mainstream.[25] Although the first modern theatre in China could be traced back to the 'civilised theatre'[26] in the late Qing Dynasty, this period was the crucial moment for modern theatre to establish itself in China. Another trend in this period was the 'Aimei drama'[27], taken from the Chinese transliteration of 'amateur'. As opposed to the late Qing civilised drama, Aimei drama presents the growing urge for theatre of the proletariat, with a focus on exploring the meaning and beauty of *huaju* without the aim to make commercial gains.[28] These developments, along with the outcry for Western ideas of democracy and science of the May Fourth Movement, the new / spoken drama at the time 'turned against and abandoned the old theatrical form with bright banners, while promoting and introducing new plays from the West with drums and flags'.[29]

The pursuit of modernity, embodied in the passion for realism, resulted in a national movement towards complete oblivion for the traditional culture, which would resurface in the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s. When leading intellectuals such as Chen and Hu equated modernity with Westernisation, their Movement was actually 'far more effective at destroying the past than at constructing the future'.[30] Besides the effort to modernise/Westernise China, the Movement also achieved its nationalist purpose. However, while the Chinese were united against the major foreign threat from Japan, a domestic threat arose from the opposing views between Marxism, represented by Chen and adopted by the Chinese Communist Party, and Hu's pragmatism, later adopted by the Nationalist Party or Kuomintang (KMT). Although there were voices against the overheated trend for embracing the West with deliberate effort to eliminate the Chinese values, the 'ultimate goal' of the New Cultural Movement - to create a modern China that is distinctly Chinese – came to a halt because of unstable domestic and foreign

[25] Ma Sen, *Two Waves of Westernisation in Modern Chinese Theatre* (Taipei, Taiwan: Lian He Literature, 2006), p. 19

[26] Such as *La Dame aux camellias* by Chun-liu Club in 1906, whose audience was mainly diasporic Chinese and non-Chinese (Ma, *Two Waves,* pp. 36-37).

[27] The Shanghai Amateur Experimental Drama Company is exemplary of the Aimei drama. They were a professional group, and in this context 'amateur' meant as opposed to commercial (Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 27).

[28] Zhang, *the History*, pp. 178-79.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

[30] Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, p. 511.

warfare to come[31], thereby temporarily ending the first stage of the Occidentalist worship.

In 1921, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was founded by Chen Tuxiu and others. Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, founder of the Republic of China and the KMT, was frustrated by the Western imperial support for the warlords, which thwarted his plan for international development of China, and was thus eager to include the CCP in a united China.[32] After Dr. Sun's death in 1925, however, an inevitable split between the two parties began to grow under the leaderships of Chiang Kai-Shek of the KMT and Mao Zedong of the CCP. This conflict, resulted not only from the differences in ideology, but also from the leadership of the country, led to a series of domestic wars, ended only when the eight-year Sino-Japanese War erupted in 1937. When the war ended after the atomic bombing in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, a full-scale civil war took place, resulting in the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the mainland, and the retreat of the Republic of China (ROC) to Taiwan in 1949, marking the historical moment of the establishment of the two Chinas of the present day.

Part II: The Beginning of the Chinese Shakespearean Myth

At this time, the most important theatrical movement was how *huaju* continued to develop into maturity in spite of the turmoil of the time. From the 1920s, literary scripts were being translated or created, establishing the first theatre of the author in China. Before that, due to the disdain held against all literary forms other than poetry and political essays, the early form of *huaju* - the civilised plays - was directed and created on stage by the actors, without any prepared lines.[33] Before the war, there was another important development: the appearance and growth of the left-wing theatre. Since theatre was becoming one of the most thoroughly utilised propagandist means for political agendas, the CCP's first theatre company, the Shanghai Art and Theatre

[31] *Ibid.*
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 518.
[33] Ma, *Two Waves,* pp. 67-85. This Chinese disdain against the acting profession became a severe financial difficulty for Wu Hsing-Kuo (Chapter 5), and a theme to be ridiculed by Lee Kuo-Hsiu (discussed in Chapter 7).

Society, was founded in 1929, promoting left-wing agendas under the banner of 'New Theatre' and 'Proletarian Theatre'.[34] The KMT, though not as eager as the CCP to create theatre, also established theatre schools in Guangdung Province and Nanjing in 1929 and 1935.[35] The Sino-Japanese war then further stimulated the development of *huaju* mainly in two ways: the warfare made importing films from the West impossible, and stage plays became the only available public entertainment, though the development was mostly restricted in the foreign concession areas in Shanghai and more remote places away from the front line; patriotism united left- and right-wing playwrights, and the dire need for the promotion of nationalism against the Japanese invasion was at its climax. This period became the 'golden time' for *huaju*; the abundance of new plays and the increased standard of directors and actors 'made *huaju* deeply rooted in the Chinese soil since it was first grafted from the West in the early twentieth century, and it has become a new theatrical form accepted and beloved by the Chinese people'.[36]

The Textless Shakespeare

The beginning of Chinese Shakespeare preceded the arrival of the actual theatre of *huaju.* The Shakespeare myth in China was further accentuated by the lack of a compatible translation, which was not available until 1921. But Chinese interest in Shakespeare was growing rapidly. The questions regarding the beginning of Sino-Shakespeare are obvious: what was attracting the Chinese to Shakespeare? An amended text can be an adaptation or an appropriation that can still be seen as Shakespearean, but what is Shakespeare in a completely textless context?

As Shen Lin observes, Shakespeare was 'predestined' to be politicised in China from the very beginning of his arrival.[37] In 1839, Lin Zexu, a leading figure opposing the British force in the Opium War, mentioned Shakespeare among other world cultures.[38]

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[34] Zhang, *The History*, p. 453.
[35] Ma, *Two Waves*, p. 99.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 109.
[37] Shen Lin, 'Shakespeare, "Theirs" and "Ours"', in *Shakespeare without English: The Reception of Shakespeare in Non-Anglophone Countries,* eds. Sukanta Chaudhuri and Chee Seng Lim (Delhi, India: Dorling Kindersley, 2006), p. 5.
[38] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 7.

This first mention of Shakespeare's name, passing though it was, would later open the first chapter of Sino-Shakespeare in pursuit of that name, and the cultural context behind it. It was not, however, the first time that the Chinese had found fascination in Western culture; the interest in the exotic West, its culture and new materials, could be traced centuries back before the nineteenth century, establishing 'a pre-existing framework within which modern Chinese writers and playwrights could rapidly appropriate non-Chinese cultural texts' on a Sino-centric basis.[39] The Western invasions that plagued the late Qing China brought the Chinese's exotic interest in Western culture to a new height; and Shakespeare, representative of 'the superiority of Anglo-European cultures', was hailed in numerous panegyric accounts of a group of Chinese elites during the late Qing and the early Republic period.[40]

In 1879, Guo Songtao, China's first minister to England, attended *Hamlet* at the Lyceum Theatre in London. While the British reviews praised how Henry Irving gave a substantial performance in his portrayal of Hamlet's mentality`, Guo wrote in his diary that 'the emphasis was on decorating the plots and not on spectacles or oration'[41]. The attention given to the plot design rather than the performance technique and the soliloquies echoed Lord George Macartney's account of the Chinese plays he saw in 1793, as well as anthropologist Laura Bohannan's record of an African tribe's impression of *Hamlet*'s plot in the 1950s.[42] The reason for such different perceptions between the Chinese and the British in Shakespeare's plays would have derived from the traditional Chinese theatre's lack of a complete plot[43]; and such exotic otherness was the main attraction of Shakespeare to the late nineteenth century Chinese:

> What Shakespeare meant to the Chinese between 1839 and 1900 was a fiction; a convenient Other that articulates China's relation to the rest of the world. The topicality of Shakespeare in the Chinese reformers' writings superseded any

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 49.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 52.
[41] *Guo Songtao's Diary* (Changsha: Hunan renmin publication, 1981-83), 3:743, cited from Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 55.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[43] Peking Opera, or *jingju*, the major entertainment during the Qing Dynasty and early Republic era, emphasises on music and arias singing to the extent that the scenes in a play are rendered 'episodic—and quite frequently not sequential'; it requires the audience 'to be familiar with the plots before going into the theatre'. Perng Ching-Hsi, 'At the Crossroads: Peking Opera in Taiwan Today', in *Asian Theatre Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (University of Hawaii Press, Autumn, 1989), p. 131.

> contextual understanding of the plays themselves. The Shakespearean difference provided convenient shorthand for the qualities the reformers were proposing for citizens of the new China.[44]

Before Shakespeare's texts or even his stories reached China, the Chinese had created Shakespeare's topicality in a fictional space as a model for cultural reform. Liang Qichao, a leading figure in late Qing reform, wrote a *kunju* play titled *New Rome*, in which Shakespeare, Dante, and other Western literary and philosophical masters serve as moral authorities who could guide China to the establishment of its modern national literature in the crisis of foreign invasion. As described earlier, the Sino-centrism was not easily abandoned when the Chinese tried to Westernise their culture. The urge to learn while avoiding total imitation of the West also inspired a search for a Chinese equivalent for Shakespeare: Du Fu, the great poet of the Tang Dynasty, and Tang Xianzu, an important 16th century playwright were among the popular candidates.[45]

Shakespeare's fictionality did not end in 1900 as Huang suggests, but the imagination of the English playwright gained more ground with the arrival of a Sinicised version of his stories. In 1904, Lin Shu's translation/rewrite of Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* was published, and it was the first time that Shakespeare gained a significant readership amongst the Chinese because of its immediacy to the historical context. Lin's initiative was 'to argue with his more radical contemporaries who had cited Western culture to censure the Chinese mentality'.[46] While Liang Qichao's *New Rome*, which uses Western masters to criticise the Chinese morality, was rejected by the Chinese, the popularity of Lin's rendition of the *Tales* can be seen as an assertion that the Chinese needed more than just a name. As Lin defined his work as a novel of spirits and gods, this rewrite of Lamb's *Tales* consolidated Shakespeare's fictional image. Shakespeare in China was, therefore, from the beginning 'neither an explicitly contested symbol of imperialism nor a figure for national reappropriation, as has been the case in India and the Caribbean'[47], but a literary creation imagined in a Sinicised fashion to be readily available to the Chinese intellectuals and their reformative purpose.

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[44] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 57.
[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 61-63.
[46] Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 13.
[47] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 60.

It was not until 1935 that Shakespeare was included in the degree requirement at the National Drama School, giving the Chinese three decades of interpretive liberty, and further enhancing the Occidentalist point of view towards Shakespeare.

The lack of translation did not put the Chinese off from staging his works; the stories of Lin's rewritten *Tales* seemed to be enough for personal motivations. As Kennedy and Yong observe, 'in general, in Asian contexts of reception it is the notion of "Shakespeare" as a Western theatrical paradigm that dominates as the point of reference over the particular play in question; the choice of play serves to colour or condition that which is brought to the fore in and by Asian performance forms'.[48] The Chinese 'did not question the omission of the substantive content of Shakespeare's plays, or the translations' detachment from the invisible originals, because an inward gaze dominated the mode of reception of Western culture'.[49] This inward gaze, Shen Lin argues, was a 'daring topical lampooning of the off-stage abuse of power and perversion of justice'.[50] An early production can exemplify such attempts to bypass the text and plunge into Shakespeare's ready availability. In 1915, General Yuan Shikai declared himself Emperor, betraying the newly founded Republic, and signed the humiliating Twenty-one Demands with Japan to ensure his power. This event 'stirred great indignation in the people', and 'suddenly the fight against monarchy rose from all over the nation; those involved in *huaju*…used it as a weapon against Yuan Shikai's treachery, and began the propagandas to reveal the threat of Japanese imperialism'.[51] Zheng Zhengqiu adapted *Macbeth* into a *huaju* called *Qie Guo Zei* (*Usurper*)[52], possibly according to Lin's *Tale*, to satirise this event. When actor Wen Wuwei performed in this production to 'the natural result of great applause from the audience', he was sentenced to death by Yuan.[53]

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[48] Dennis Kennedy, and Yong Li Lan (eds.), *Shakespeare in Asia: Contemporary Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010), pp. 14-15.
[49] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 96.
[50] Shen, 'Theirs', p. 5.
[51] Cau Shujun and Sun Fuliang, *Shakespeare on the Chinese Stage* (China, Harbin: Harbin Press, 1994), p. 78.
[52] Zheng was also the director of the first Chinese professional *huaju* Shakespeare production: *A Pound of Flesh* (1913), adapted from *Merchant of Venice*, which was based on Lin's *Tales* (Huang, 70).
[53] Cao, *Shakespeare*, p. 79. In fact, the recurring theme of power struggles exemplifies *Macbeth*'s dominance over the Chinese/Taiwanese stage into the present day. From the historical perspective, it is not difficult to see why the future directors would claim to highlight this theme as the 'spirit' of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in their adaptations.

This type of ideological use of theatricality witnessed the Chinese's eagerness to own Shakespeare with neither the Western imperial enforcement nor any translated texts from the originals. Many Shakespearean performances were produced as improvisations, such as *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*.[54] This sense of ownership regardless of the texts also contributed to the Chinese engagement in *xiqu* Shakespeare - Shakespearean productions in traditional Chinese Opera. The earliest example was Wang Guaren's *Hamlet* (1915), and *xiqu* Shakespeare would later become one of the most popular styles of Chinese Shakespeare from 1980s onward. However, *xiqu* Shakespeare involves not only the sense of ownership, but other elements such as the Europeans' Orientalist appreciation of the stylisation that in turns encourages the creation of such performances.[55]

Shakespeare and the New Theatre

With the New Cultural Movement commencing in 1915, the demand for translations of Western literature became higher than ever. Leading figures such as Hu Shi equated modernisation with Westernisation; and the pursuit for realism, as well as the Plain Language Movement, made this period of time a crucial moment for the development of modern theatre in China. From 1918 to 1921, 32 translated plays were published, among them the first Chinese translation of Shakespeare - Tian Han's *Hamlet*.[56]

The demand for a new theatrical trend conforming to the Western realist theatre was clearly visible in the 1920s and 1930s. As the aim of the New Cultural Movement was to completely Westernise China with culture, it followed that the traditional Chinese theatre must be Westernised as well. As Zheng's adaptation of *Macbeth* (discussed earlier) suggests, the Chinese had come to learn the pedagogic and propagandistic values of Western theatre, especially the tragedies and their social function, since Shakespearean tragedies were 'unknown to Chinese theatre'[57]. The value of the Shakespearean tragedies to the Chinese is in the speeches and dialogues. *Huaju* was

[54] Perng Ching-Hsi, *Discovering Shakespeare: A Collection of Taiwanese Shakespearean Discourses* (Taipei: Owl Publishing, 2004), p. 322.
[55] The complexity of the relationship between *xiqu* and Shakespeare will be form the central issue in Chapter 4.
[56] Cao, *Shakespeare*, p. 80.
[57] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 104.

considered capable of conveying serious ideas, whereas *xiqu*, translated as 'drama and music', could provide little beyond minor entertainment suitable for lesser minds - 'spoken drama promoted intellectual reflection, while the traditional Chinese theatre sought only to entertain and preach an outdated worldview'.[58] However, the over-simplified dichotomy of spoken-versus-stylised theatre overlooks the emphasis on other elements in Western theatre such as body movement and *mise en scène*;[59] and later, when the CCP took over China, the propagandistic values of spoken lines would further enhance the political topicality on the Chinese stage.

Though Shakespeare performances at this time were mainly *xiqu* productions that, under the influence of Lin's *tales*, incorporated only the plots,[60] Tian Han's translation of *Hamlet* opened the debates of Shakespeare's authenticity and ownership among the reform activists.[61] Apart from the *xiqu* productions, the 1920s saw various Shakespeare performances by students, many of which were done in the original English[62], when professional performances began to appear in the 1930s.[63] In May 1930, the Shanghai Drama Assembly performed *The Merchant of Venice*, using a complete translation of the play by Gu Zhongyi. It was the first attempt to put on a 'more serious Shakespeare production in Chinese and in accordance with the requirements of modern *huaju*', and the decision to stage Shakespeare was due to the difficulties in staging plays that reflect the reality under governmental pressure, and the need to improve the Chinese modern theatre 'via introducing and researching into Western classics'.[64] The translation by Gu was written in plain language, which claimed to be omitting nothing from Shakespeare's text. The *mise en scène*, in accordance with the trend of Aimei theatre, was created as 'an imagination close to real life':

> Fountains, gardens, buildings, streets, and bridges appeared on stage; lighting

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 105.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 104.
[60] Wang Shu-Hua, *Politics and Theatre: New Discoveries in Chinese Shakespeare*, in *Discovering Shakespeare*, ed. Perng Jing-His (Taipei: Owl Publication, 2004), p. 322.
[61] Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 24.
[62] A notable instance was the 1924 *Merchant of Venice*, performed by students at a British missionary school in Tien Jin. The production 'inspired a great flame' for a youth named Hunga Zoulin, who attended a research course on Shakespeare at Oxford, and would later become the first dramatist to systematically study Shakespearean performances (Cau, *Shakespeare*, pp. 80-81).
[63] Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 25.
[64] Cao, *Shakespeare*, p. 83.

> changed according to the natural and theatrical atmosphere…the costumes were exquisitely made…when Portia, played by the actress Yu Xiuyun, made her first appearance on stage in a beautiful Western-style dress, the audience was excited and gave enthusiastic shouts and applause.[65]

The seriousness put into the translation and the *mise en scène* was evident of the effort put into establishing a Westernised modern theatre in China during the New Cultural Movement, as can be seen in another production of *Romeo and Juliet* by the Shanghai Amateur Experimental Drama Company in 1937. This production was noted by many as a historical event regarding Shakespeare in China, because of its casting of famous film stars, the huge budget devoted to creating a luxurious and realistic setting, its script based on renowned dramatist Tian Han's translation, and its attempt to apply Stanislavski's acting methods. The effort that went into the settings can be seen in Cau's description:

> When the curtain is drawn, the gate of the cathedral appears in front of the audience. Ten columns stand ten feet tall; a huge fountain is presented in front of the wide stone stairs, and buildings with great heights flank the fountain. In the scene of Juliet's bedroom, a huge bed is placed upon an imperial, four-story high platform, with white lace curtain on top of it, and an eight-foot tall engraved window sits in the back.[66]

With music composed to the script and lighting effects presenting the sun and the moon, this production, like the 1930 *The Merchant of Venice*, aimed to create an authentic European theatre experience for the Chinese, as can be seen in its promotional materials.[67] The acting as well as the settings was aimed at realism. The actors were taught fencing by a Russian fencer, and Stanislavski's methods were applied in the directing. The result, however, was far from the original goal, being described by critic Li Ming to be 'as dull as reciting a book of classical Chinese'.[68] It could be that, though Stanislavski's name was mentioned, his works were not yet translated into Chinese; the

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 85.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 86.
[67] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 86.
[68] Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 28.

acting methods, like Shakespeare's plays, were the Chinese presumption from hearsay,[69] confirming the Chinese Occidentalisation of the West.

The Chinese Shakespearean scholar He Qixin has observed that before 1949, there was a general lack of public interest in Shakespeare's texts, even when serious and scholarly translations began to be published[70]; and a more essential understanding of Shakespeare's artistic values was still restricted to the few elites. What Shakespeare stood for was (and still is, as seen in Chapter 6) a cultural brand, whose imagined significance matters the most. The advertisement of the 1930 *The Merchant of Venice* depicts the simplified plots in poetic Chinese:

> A tender girl sets chests for husband;
> A lavish son raises debt to wife;
> A moneygrubber storms a court;
> A female lawyer solves an odd case.[71]

The form of the language was common in the Chinese tradition[72]; thus an easy access to a foreign play was created for the general public.[73] Even with the inclusion of Shakespeare as part of the degree requirement at the National Drama School in 1935, Shakespeare was still generally unfamiliar to most of the Chinese. Shakespeare's foreignness remained, especially in the Chinese effort to '[present] the plays with spectacular scenery and costumes, following the Victorian tradition of staging Shakespeare and presumably legitimising the performance by modelling itself on its English counterpart'; the costumes, the *mise en scène*, and the plain-language-style translation in the 1930s productions all worked together to satisfy 'an appetite for exotic

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[69] *Ibid.*

[70] Zhu Shenghao, one of the most influential translators of Shakespeare, had 27 of his plays posthumously published in 1947, but his translations of 31 plays did not gain much attention until it was published again in 1954. He Qixin, 'China's Shakespeare', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Summer, 1986), p. 152.

[71] Cao, *Shakespeare*, p. 85.

[72] Chinese poems are most often written in five- or seven-word *jueju*, or quatrains. It was commonly used in the old China because the sound of five and seven words is easily memorable in Chinese, not unlike the English jingling verse. After the New Cultural Movement, plain language began to be incorporated into propagandistic slogans, and those during the Cultural Revolution can best exemplify the Chinese way of creating slogans for the general public.

[73] Li, *Shashibiya,* p. 27.

spectacles that approximated the "real" foreign country in the Chinese imaginary'.[74] The availability of translated texts, therefore, did not deepen the Chinese's aesthetic understanding of Shakespeare's plays; the Shakespeare myth before the arrival of the translation was simply turned into a more thoroughly biased perception to Westernise the Chinese stage, when Chinese actors pretended to be Europeans, performing in Shanghai where Western imperial influences were most prevalent.

Wartime Shakespeare

The attempt to create authentic Shakespearean plays came to a halt with the full-out war with Japan from 1937 to 1945, followed hard by the great civil war between the CCP and the KMT. However, during the decade of hardship, the Chinese did not give up on theatre performances; in fact, various Shakespearean plays were performed in this time, such as the 1938 *The Tempering of Love* (*Romeo and Juliet*) in Shanghai, the 1942 *Hamlet* in Sichuan province (staged in a Confucian temple), the 1944 *Romeo and Juliet* in Sichuan province, the 1945 *The Hero of the Turmoil* (*Macbeth*) in Shanghai, and the 1948 *The Story of Tempering of Love* (*Zhu qing ji*, a *jingju* adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*) in Beijing.[75] However, at this point Shakespeare was being invoked not to provide a Western fantasy, but a safe space where political debates were made possible without the fear of censorship - an adaptive mode prevalent in the future politically troubled China and Taiwan.

Like their predecessors, these productions – the choices of the plays, the locations of performance, and the director's or translator's selected approach – were inseparable from the historical context. With the exception of the 1948 production, all were performed in either the inland Sichuan province, where the KMT set their temporary government away from the Japanese frontline, or Shanghai, where the Western concessions, unoccupied by Japan, served as a sanctuary for theatrical activities.

The 1938 *Romeo and Juliet*, as noted by Li, was evidence of the political influence over Sino-Shakespeare. It was a replacement for another scheduled Chinese play for fear of 'the intensive patriotism it would have aroused'; and since Shakespeare's literary

[74] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 105.
[75] Li, *Shashibiya*, pp. 30-40.

authority was unquestionable to the Chinese and approved of by the Americans and the British, a Shakespearean play was politically safe and aesthetically recommended for the concession audience, two reasons that have always been prominent for Sino-Shakespeare.[76] The other production in Shanghai, the 1945 *The Hero of the Turmoil* (*Macbeth*) by renowned director Huang Zuolin, placed its emphasis on 'the allegorical capacity of drama' and received a much more passionate patriotism from the audience as the war drew to an end. The original script for the production, *Wang Deming* by Li Jianwu, is an adaptation with certain scenes from the original.[77] *The Hero of the Turmoil* connected the story of *Macbeth* to an ancient Chinese civil war, which immediately gained empathy in wartime Shanghai; the Lady Macbeth figure, as Huang observes, was given more agency by alterations such as that it was she who actively sought the prophecy.[78] The direction of the play did not attempt to imitate foreign strategies as in the 1930s, while director Huang Zuolin used his own Chinese perspective to create a *huaju* for his local audience, enthusiastically recorded by Cau:

> The director uses various ways of directing to develop the intense conflicts within the characters of the play. The sudden stops, the lasting silence and depressions followed by a crescendo in pace, all of which tightly cling onto the strings of the audience's heart, composing a stunning piece of symphony.[79]

The Chinese aesthetics and the political safety of which was guaranteed by Shakespeare played a crucial role in supporting the Chinese dignity during the War.[80] The productions in the inland province of Sichuan showed a similar tendency toward patriotic approaches. The 1942 *Hamlet* was produced in very poor conditions, but director Jiao encouraged his crew that the capability to perform a play by Shakespeare, who already had secured 'a sacred place in Chinese theatre', was evidence enough that the Chinese still stood tall against the Japanese ruthless invasion.[81] Thus, during the war, Shakespeare became an assistant in establishing a source of national confidence, a theme that will resurface whenever a nationalist crisis arises.

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[76] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[77] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, pp. 108-10.
[78] *Ibid.*
[79] Cao, *Shakespeare*, p. 109.
[80] In 1986, director Huang would accentuate the Chineseness in his *kunju* adaptation of *Macbeth*.
[81] Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 33.

The political and aesthetic reasons to stage a Shakespearean play are, however, essentially the precursors for the main purpose for Shakespeare in the Sinophone world: to be localised in a historical context as well as personalised to the adaptor's needs, so that an understanding of the orthodox meanings in the texts as would be taught in the West is unnecessary. When commenting on a second staging in Chongqing of the 1942 *Hamlet*, Yu Shangwan, Principal of the National Drama School, pointed out that 'introducing and staging Shakespeare was imperative' for Chinese culture to catch up with the countries of the highest standard of art, because they produced the most Shakespearean plays both in quality and quantity; and *Hamlet*'s immediacy to the Chinese was Hamlet's 'revolutionary spirit' borne out of a corrupted circumstance that seeks liberation against destiny.[82] However, the starting point of this production, as with most of the others we have seen[83], was to create a *Hamlet* that bears the need of the Chinese. The character Hamlet was modified to conform to Confucian thoughts to fit into Yu's comment;[84] the script was also 'blatantly cut down' to make the graveyard scene stand out, to 'signify the people's thoughts on resisting against tyranny'.[85] The Sinicisation of Shakespeare that had dominated the scene from the late Qing period to the end of wartime suggests that, though the Chinese directors and translators, especially those who studied abroad (such as Jiao and Cao), constantly referred to their works as being close to the original, the scripts were translated not only linguistically, but also culturally; and the end products were consequently the hybrid creation of new plays that are distinctively Sino-Shakespearean.

The interrelations between China and Shakespeare would only get more complicated after the War ended. However, the mythical nature of Shakespeare examined in this chapter never ceases to be. In the next chapter, literary criticism was finally brought

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[82] Cao, *Shakespeare*, p. 102.

[83] The leading playwright Cao Yu was commissioned to translate *Romeo and Juliet* for the 1944 production in Sichuan. His motive came from his 'emotional turmoil during this period, and the feelings and passions Shakespeare wrote beautifully for *Romeo and Juliet* best expressed his own inner world' (Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 35). The connection between Shakespeare's play and Cao's passion was forged on the literal sense: the lines in Shakespeare, designed for romantic tragedy, must have undergone appropriation by either the translator or the director to be able to apply on the wartime struggle.

[84] Hamlet's procrastination is, explained by Jiao, because of his overly cautious search for the truth, commonly shared by the Chinese (Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 133).

[85] Focusing on the selected thematic actions is a recurring strategy in foreign Shakespeare, and it also conforms to the convention of Chinese *xiqu* (Cao, *Shakespeare*, p. 102).

into view. But the Shakespearean myth would persist not only because of the linguistic and cultural distance between Shakespeare and China, but also due to the enduring Occidentalist admiration for the West. As the Chinese Occidentalist admiration for Shakespeare would be accentuated by China's history and communication with the West, Taiwan's lack of such history would push Shakespeare's, as well as the West's, mythical idolisation to a much more intense degree, leading the two Sino-Shakespeares to two distinctive paths.

Chapter 3

The Second and Third Stages: The Beginning of the Two Chinas Complex

The Second Stage

The first stage of the development of the Chinese Shakespeare established the Occidentalist basis for the future Sino-Shakespeare, and the second stage was when Taiwan began to take on a different direction from that of China. But this difference must be understood with Taiwan's inheritance of the Chinese historical perspective. A second-century Chinese poet lamented that 'if the bean and the tree branch were born from the same root, wherefore would one be so eager to cook the other?'[1] Though the mainstream political ideology in Taiwan demands a complete ethnic and cultural separation from China, the cultural, social and political Chineseness is still prevalent in the Taiwanese narrative. This chapter will thus provide the crucial discourse for the interrelationship between the two Chinas.

In 1949, the CCP established the People's Republic of China on the mainland, and the KMT was driven to Taiwan, where Japanese colonisation was only four years past. In a strictly political sense, it was the time when the term 'Chinese Shakespeare' stopped being applicable to the two Chinas across the Taiwan Strait. The decisive change in the two Chinas can be seen in the following description by Ma Sen - himself of Chinese origin, and who moved to Taiwan during this period:

> After 1949, Taiwan and the mainland became two totally different worlds. One of them began to take on the path of modern capitalist industrialisation under the influences of the American [economic/military] support and the Japanese [colonial] experience; the other joined the socialist ranks with the Soviet Union

[1] Cao Zhi, *The Quatrain of Seven Steps*, C.E. 192-232. The Ministry of Education Digital Resource (https://isp.moe.edu.tw/resources/search_content.jsp?rno=590326). The translation is the researcher's own.

> as the leader, struggling in the agricultural economy. In terms of ideology, Taiwan inherited the pro-Westernisation attitude from the May Fourth era, and by imitating the US and Japan, was speeding up the process of Westernisation; on the opposite side, China first learned from the Soviet Union, and after they split up, China wanted to stand alone and lived by themselves, firmly rejecting any Western influences.[2]

At this point, China was under the omnipotent influence of Mao Zedong and his modified Marxist-Leninist socialism during the 1950s to 1970s. On the other hand, Taiwan was put under Martial Law by Chiang Kai-Shek; and though the Republic boasted their democratic government, Taiwan was ruled under dictatorship until the end of 1970s. In the first stage we have seen that the Chinese used Shakespeare mostly for political ends; in the second stage, when domestic and international situations were not more peaceful after the Sino-Japanese War, the political atmosphere had an even stronger influence on Shakespeare's status in the two Chinas. It was also a time when the Chinese began to take on a more serious attitude in literary criticism towards Shakespeare's plays, and translations of the complete works were published and gaining major popularity, especially those of Zhu Shenghao in China and Liang Shiqiu in Taiwan, which would have lasting impact on the contemporary Sino-Shakespeare. Comparatively short-lived, the second stage of Sino-Shakespeare nonetheless serves as a prelude to everything that is important to consider in the current period because of its historical importance. In order to clarify the complex dual-identities of China and Taiwan, starting from this chapter, this thesis will begin to simultaneously examine Sino-Shakespeare by juxtaposing Chinese and Taiwanese development.

Part I: China

The People's Republic of China and the Cultural Revolution:

The victory of the Sino-Japanese War did not bring immediate peace to China. As soon

[2] Ma Sen, *Two Waves of Westernisation in Modern Chinese Theatre* (Taipei, Taiwan: Lian He Literature, 2006), p. 20.

as the foreign invasion of a century ended with Japan's surrender in 1945, the civil war between the CCP and the KMT resumed. Between 1945 and 1949, the CCP was rapidly gaining strength through Soviet support and their agenda to liberate all China from the KMT, and the Nationalists were thwarted not only by exhaustion after the Sino-Japanese War, but also by its corruption and America's withdrawal of its support.[3] In 1949, the People's Republic of China was established, which was to replace the Republic of China in the UN in 1971 when the world officially recognised the PRC as the only legitimate ruler of China. The ROC retreated to Taiwan in 1949, and since then the political status of Taiwan has been ambiguous: it has all constitutional rights over the territory including the Taiwanese Island, the Perng Hu Islands, and Jinmen and Mazu Islands, while the PRC also claims the said territory in its constitution. This section will follow the PRC's recent development first, and Taiwan's situation will be examined in more detail later in the chapter.

The modern history of China can be roughly marked by two people and their distinctive policies: Mao Zedong and his revolutionist path, which would eventually lead to the devastating Cultural Revolution; and Deng Xiaoping's Open Door Policy, which shaped the present-day China. After the founding of the PRC in mainland China, Mao's first aim was to establish Chinese democracy. However, the CCP emphasised that the success of the revolution must depend upon the leadership of the Party, and the other democratic parties were simply denied the right to participate in state affairs from that time.[4] As the one-party system was consolidated, Mao began to modernise China through his own interpretation of socialism; his conservatism in terms of Chinese tradition as well as his own experience in previous revolutions made him believe that only in poverty could the revolution finally succeed.[5] But the failure in creating a socialist utopia in the 1950s weakened Mao's authority, and the attempt to alter socialism according to China's agricultural society also accelerated the split between China and the Soviet Union, which was at that time the biggest supporter of the Chinese military, economy and industry. Mao's successor Liu Shaoqi, was positioned as President in 1959; he took on a more pragmatic path, and the CCP began to grow closer

[3] Immanuel C.Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China Fifth Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) p. 635.
[4] Tomoyuki Kojima, *The Contemporary History of China*, trans. Wung Jia-hui (Taichung, Taiwan: Wunan, 2001), pp. 37-38.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

to the US as well as capitalism. In response to the new pragmatism that permeated the party, Mao branded Liu and the others as right-wing, and renewed a revolution of class struggle: the Cultural Revolution that would cease the existence of all Occidentalist discourse.

Under the ruthless sway of left-wing ideology, all manner of cultural activity other than those strictly following the Maoist socialism were prohibited. Mao enforced China into an international isolation, where the Chinese national confidence gave way to domestic political conflicts, not to foreign invasions as it had done in the first stage. The Red Guard, whose members were all young students stimulated by Mao's agenda to overturn the bourgeois class, were 'dedicated to the elimination of old thought, old culture, old customs, and old habits':

> They wrote big-character wall posters…ransacked private property, rampaged cities, renamed streets, attacked those with modern attire and haircuts, and humiliated foreign diplomats.[6]

The revolution that aimed not to create anything, but to overthrow Liu, rendered a whole generation that was uneducated, and any development in agriculture, industry, science and culture was thwarted for a decade: 'not only was the younger generation deprived of education, but a great many middle-aged and senior scholars and scientists were sent to the countryside to do menial chores, denying them for years the opportunities for research and teaching'.[7] In fact, not only were any liberal thoughts considered as right wing and dangerous, but knowledge as a whole was marked as bourgeois and wrong. The ten-year Revolution, which ended only with Mao's death in 1976, would later be criticised by the CCP, which acknowledged that it 'did not in fact institute a revolution or social progress in any sense, nor could it possibly have done so', and the victim from the revolution was China itself.[8]

During the Revolution, however, there was one event that would accelerate China's

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[6] Hsü, *The Rise*, p. 701.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 703.
[8] The CCP's 'Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic' in 1981, cited from Hsü, *The Rise*, p. 826.

merge of socialism with capitalism, and shape its international status as one of the major global powers in present day. In 1971, the American Foreign Advisor Henry Kissinger paid a secret visit to China and had a meeting with Premier Chou Enlai. In October, the United States stated its support for the PRC to join the UN, and consequently the PRC replaced the ROC's place in the UN as representative of China, marginalising all future political claims by Taiwan. In 1972, President Richard Nixon visited China, and announced the Shanghai Communiqué, establishing a close and direct relationship with China to stand against the threat from the Soviet Union, enabling China to negotiate on equal terms with the US and finally re-establish its international status after more than a century of humiliating history.[9]

A notable issue with the Communiqué is the official statement concerning the Taiwan problem, which China wanted the US to address:

> [The United States] acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwanese Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. With this prospect in mind it affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all US forces and military installation from Taiwan. In the meanwhile, it will progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension in the area diminishes.[10]

Although there was no proclamation of the PRC's (not only the general Chinese) ownership of Taiwan, or the domestic nature of the Taiwan problem, the assertion of being part of China has since then been the basis of the notion that 'there is only one China'. But failing to acknowledge 'which China' Taiwan belongs to, whether intentionally or not, has actually confirmed the existence of the two Chinas: the People's Republic, and the Republic. Accordingly, though US forces would eventually withdraw from Taiwan, the ambiguous nature of the two Chinas could not be eased.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 729.
[10] Cited from Hsü, *The Rise,* p. 729.

The Short-lived Progress of Modern Chinese Shakespeare

Shakespeare in China during the 1950s was marked by progress in three dimensions: the newly aroused attention on translation, the Sinicised Marxist-Leninist literary criticism, and the Stanislavskian performance methods on stage. The 1950s saw a great expansion in publications of Shakespeare's translations[11], including thirty-one plays translated by Zhu Shenghao published in twelve volumes in 1954, which were reprinted in 1958 and 1962.[12] Zhu's works not only brought the history plays to Chinese readers for the first time, but also, because they were rendered in eloquent prose, the 'fluency and sensitivity to Shakespeare's nuances of diction and word play', which have made them all-time favourites in the Sinophone world to this day.[13] The increase in the number and quality of translations significantly helped to shorten the distance between China and Shakespeare, as they provided an access for a wider reader to the plays, replacing the logocentric name 'Shakespeare'. Close reading became possible for those who did not read English for the first time. The most significant change brought about by the translations would be the birth of Chinese criticism that` discussed Shakespeare's work.

With the CCP rising to absolute power over China, the bond with the Soviet Union grew even stronger. Literary criticism, along with the whole system of education, was directly imported from the Soviet Union.[14] The focus of Chinese Shakespearean criticism in this period was on the history of England, in order to find out to whom (or more precisely, to which social class) Shakespeare was writing: for instance, Bian Zhilin, the leading Shakespearean scholar, wrote in his essay on *Hamlet* that Shakespeare wrote 'for the people, not the ruling class', and Shakespeare was hailed for his attitude against feudalism.[15] However, because the Marxist-Leninist ideas were essentially different in China due to Mao Zedong and the CCP's arbitrary argument on class struggle, the criticism in China 'on the one hand tries to approve Shakespeare's achievement and to give the credit to Marxism, and on the other hand is very disturbed

[11] Cau Weifung's twelve plays, Fang Ping's three plays, and six other translators, each translated a play. He Qixin, 'China's Shakespeare', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Summer, 1986), p. 153.
[12] *Ibid*.
[13] Murray J. Levith, *Shakespeare in China* (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 12-14.
[14] He, 'China's Shakespeare', p. 153.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 154.

by the Western capitalist thoughts and ideas expressed in Shakespeare's plays'.[16] The extreme left-wing trend can be demonstrated in scholar Yang Zhouhan's criticism in his 1958 *Shakespeare's Life and Major Works*. In *Hamlet*, he points out that Shakespeare meant to write that 'Hamlet's tragedy is resulting from his inability to understand the power of the people; he fights alone when the people are ready, but he cannot join force with them'; in *Othello*, the love between Othello and Desdemona is 'an interpersonal trust…without feudal prejudice and racial discrimination…and this kind of ideal is impossible in a capitalist society'.[17]

As a consequence of the overly left-winged and forceful influence, the earliest Shakespearean criticism in China, assisted by the presence of translations in large quantities and of fine quality, resembled the effort to interpret Shakespeare's work with a Marxist insight in the Anglophone world. However, the analogy between the Marxist interpretation of the European and that of the Chinese is risky, because Mao's ideal was not to fully assimilate Marxism. In fact, his later action to overthrow the Marxist approach with his own 'interpretation' – a Chinese version of the social theory – can be seen as his, as well as the Chinese, active resistance against anything non-Chinese. In this light, the Chinese rendering of left-wing Marxism resembles that of Shakespeare, or any other Western cultural imports, is Occidentalised: amended to suit not only the current political agenda but also the Sino-centric confidence that denies the essential significance of the Other.

The denial came after the initial embrace of the Soviet influence. In 1956, Stanislavski's *An Actor Prepares* and *Building a Character* was published in Chinese, followed by his other major works.[18] Unlike the 1937 *Romeo and Juliet*, which was based only on hearsay, the Chinese directors of Shakespearean performances in the 1950s were able to rely on a much more concrete source, further consolidated by the invitations of Russian theatre practitioners to China, such as the 1957 *Much Ado About Nothing*, directed by Yevgeniya Konstantinovna Lipkovskaya.[19] This production, which used Zhu's fluent prose translation and Stanislavski's method brought by Lipkovskaya,

[16] Perng Ching-Hsi, *Discovering Shakespeare: A Collection of Taiwanese Shakespearean Discourses* (Taipei: Owl Publishing, 2004), p. 324.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 325.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

impressed the audience with its 'fluency and completeness…the sixteen scenes are moving fast and lightly, giving out an artistic feeling of a clear and notable gist accomplished in one go'.[20]

In 1957, 1959, and 1962, four productions of *Twelfth Night* were given by the same group of actors, trained together in Stanislavski's methods. These productions witnessed the improvement of the Chinese theatre: the actress Shali successfully enacted Olivia, Viola and Sebastian; her performance 'typically exemplifies the positive effect in raising the level of the Chinese acting skills brought by Shakespearean plays'; the actor Zhang Fa's Malvolio 'has a unique "Chineseness" in it… he makes people feel that a Shakespearean character can also be "Sinicised"'.[21] Productions such as these brought Chinese Shakespeare to the edge of full bloom. It would seem that, after half a century of imagining a Shakespeare that could lead China out of its misery to an Occidentalist view of Westernisation, the Chinese had begun to experience Shakespeare's plays via a less biased and more academically substantial point of view as the national confidence was gradually built up with the establishment (or liberation, as the Chinese would call it) of the People's Republic, despite the extreme leftism in the literary criticism.

However, the leftism ultimately shut down all cultural creativity in the following Cultural Revolution, abruptly breaking China away from any foreign Other. In the 1960s, China broke away from the Soviet Union, and teaching foreign language through foreign literature was considered inappropriate, resulting in the removal of all foreign literature in the university curriculum.[22] From 1966 to 1976, all foreign literature, including the translations, was banned; all stage performances other than the eight 'model dramas' that bore the Maoist propaganda were forbidden. During this time, 'even Shakespeare's name vanished from the lips of a population of nine hundred million people'.[23] Eventually, this oppression, when finally lifted and turned into Deng Xiaoping's Open Door Policy in the 1980s, fostered a passion for Shakespeare never before seen in Chinese history. And with the understanding of the Western dramaturgy

[20] *Ibid.*
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 117.
[22] He, 'China's Shakespeare', p. 154.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

and Shakespearean criticism developed during this period, the modern Chinese - compared with the Taiwanese, who have boasted a more open attitude towards the West - would have a more solid comprehension of the text, thus more confidence and less anxiety, when confronting Shakespeare's universal adaptability within the Chinese traditional culture and China's eagerness for a new international image.

Part II: Taiwan

The Republic of China, also known as Taiwan, has a complicated history and national status. Its territory consists of the Taiwan Island and the isles around it, but its Constitution includes the Chinese mainland; it has an independent government and constitutional rights, as well as a military force, but internationally it is not recognised as a country; its population includes mainly Han people and aboriginals, but the former has many distinctive groups, and the conflicts among them have major influences on the shaping of modern Taiwanese culture. The most urgent social agenda in Taiwan today, driven by the difficult historical questions, is the establishment of a national identity.

The agenda has two main opposing ideological anxieties: one is the reunion with China, and the other the declaration of Taiwanese independence.[24] Between the ideological conflicts and the search for national identity lies the discourse of 'Taiwanese consciousness', which 'indicates the way and thoughts by which the people living in Taiwan understand and explain the time and space in which they live'.[25] With limited global recognition[26] and China's persistence in reinforcing its claim over Taiwan, the

[24] Ethnically, the former can be represented by the Mainlanders, while the latter by the Islanders. However, such a dichotomy is dangerous because the two ideologies are being shared by more people from the opposite group, as the distinction between the two ethnic (or more accurately, historical) groups is lessening with the new generations of the Taiwanese. In fact, in Chapter 7, Wang Hong-Yuan's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* would witness the mainstream ideology, a mixture of the two described in this section, represented by his target audience: the young students in the twenty-first-century Taipei.

[25] Huang Jun-jie, *Taiwan Ishi yü Taiwan Wunhua* (*Taiwanese Consciousness and Taiwanese Culture*) (Taipei: National University of Taiwan Press, 2006) p. 3.

[26] In 2009, 23 nations had diplomatic relationships with Taiwan; six of them from the Asia- Pacific region, 12 from Latin America and four from Africa, with Vatican City as the only European state having diplomatic relations with Taiwan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official Website,

Taiwanese have been struggling to strengthen the discourse, and it has in turn become a source of reliance. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, over three quarters of the population now recognise themselves as Taiwanese rather than Chinese; while China's international influence is growing, the threats[27] it imposes on Taiwan only accelerate the separation between them.

Besides China's influence on Taiwan, the complicated history of immigration also renders a straightforward post-colonial discourse impossible. Professor Liao Bing-Hui, in her 'Taiwan: Postmodern or Postcolonial?', proposes that the Taiwanese can benefit from a peculiar stand-point: the Japanese colonisation, seen as an oppression in the fifty years of occupation, can now be used against China if a Taiwanese feels threatened by the new Chinese 'imperialism', while the Chinese still see the colonisation as a historical humiliation.[28] In fact, a Taiwanese can benefit in international affairs by 'being Chinese', while public opinion would condemn such an act in the heat of the establishment of a national identity.[29] Liao states that a simple post-colonial discourse cannot be fitted into Taiwanese literature, and she questions the Taiwanese's efforts to replace post-colonialism (as associated with Japan) with a new discourse that seeks to severe any historical connection with China, suggesting the two are actually inseparable. Although Shakespeare was almost absent in Taiwan during this time, it is necessary for the thesis to illustrate the multifarious historical and social influences on the Taiwanese.

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http://www.mofa.gov.tw/webapp/ct.asp?xItem=11624&CtNode=1143&mp=1).

[27] The threat has many dimensions: militarily, 820 missiles aim at Taiwan on the east coast of China, and America's continuous selling of weapons to Taiwan is considered by China interference in domestic affairs; the Chinese government has been trying to deny Taiwan's adherence to any international organisation, such as the WHO and WTO; and all of Taiwan's diplomatic efforts are thwarted due to Taiwan's incapability to assert its status as a nation: in every international organisation or event, Taiwan's name can only appear as 'Chinese Taipei', rather than the ROC or Taiwan (*CAN News*, 'Chinese Ministry of Defence Demands US Stop Selling Weapons to Taiwan', 8 January 2010; *The Ministry of National Defence News*, 'President: Chinese 820 Missiles Aiming at Taiwan will Affect Peace of the Taiwan Strait', 17 July 2006; the Democratic Progressive Party's 22nd Press Release from the 12th Meetings of the Central Governmental Committee, '"Chinese Taipei" is a Production of the Chinese Oppression', 4 June 2008).

[28] Chou Ying-Xiung and Liu Ji-Hui, *Writing Taiwan* (Taipei, Taiwan: Ryefield, 2000), p. 94.

[29] Wang Xue-Hong (Cher Wang), co-founder and chairperson of the Taiwanese international smartphone giant HTC, said in a conference that 'HTC is a brand created by the Chinese'. The conference was in China, 27th July, 2010. While her mentioning of the Chinese could be interpreted in a broader sense, as the prefix Sino- in this thesis tries to establish, this declaration has also been understood by many as a strategy to expand HTC's business in China, causing huge political debates about HTC among the Taiwanese even to this day. FTV News, 'Cher Wang: HTC is a Brand Created by the Chinese', 19 Jan, 2012 (http://tw.news.yahoo.com/%E7%8E%8B%E9%9B%AA%E7%B4%85-htc%E4%B8%AD%E5%9C%8B%E4%BA%BA%E8%87%AA%E5%89%B5%E5%93%81%E7%89%8C-120310533.html).

Only by combining these developments and the lack of Shakespeare can the modern Taiwanese Occidentalist perspective be fully realised.

The Root of the Taiwanese Independence Discourse: The Early Modern Immigrations and the Qing's Inclusion in China

Though China's earliest record of Taiwan was in the third century[30], before the sixteenth century, the population of Taiwan was mainly aboriginals. Though the court of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644, the predecessor of Qing) never sent any official to Taiwan nor included it as the dynasty's territory, the Han people had come to Taiwan for trading and fishing at the end of the sixteenth century.[31] But two reasons made immigration of the Han people to Taiwan extremely difficult. On the one hand, in the 1520s, Ming's court prohibited any overseas trading, which forced most of the Chinese in the south-eastern coastline into piracy, already a huge problem around that area. On the other hand, the European colonisers (especially Spain and The Netherlands) competing in East Asia would finally take hold of Taiwan in mid-seventeenth century, and the Han people could only work privately against them without any support from the Chinese court. The difficult situation made these first Han immigrants, who were the ancestors of the modern Taiwanese Islanders, begin to develop further away from the Mainland Chinese.

From 1624 to 1662, Taiwan was under the colonial control of The Netherlands; and Spain had also taken north Taiwan for 16 years until the Dutch forces drove them out in the 1640s. The Netherlands' plan for Taiwan was originally a stand point for trading with China, but the official policy against foreign trading and the pirate problems made them turn to tropical agriculture, for which they began to import Han labourers from south-eastern China.[32] The Dutch missionaries built churches and schools in Taiwan, teaching their language and religion to the aboriginals; but the heavy taxes on the aboriginals' hunting and the Chinese's trading and labour of the colonial government incurred many riots during the 38 years.[33]

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[30] Huang, *Taiwanese Consciousness*, p. 276.
[31] Gao Ming-Shi (ed.), *The History of Taiwan* (Taichung, Taiwan: Wunan, 2005), p. 53.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 63.
[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

After 1664, when the Manchurian Qing replaced the Han Ming Dynasty, the local power in south-eastern China, led by Zheng Chenggong (known in the West as Koxinga), became a part of the forces revolting against the Qing Dynasty. This period marked the beginning of anti-China discourse; Zheng, though originating from China, would be recognised as a Taiwanese representative that drove away foreign invasions and oppression both from the European colonisers and the Chinese rulers. When the attempt failed in the 1650s, Zheng decided to take over Taiwan as a base for future revolution, and defeated the Dutch colonisers in 1662. In order to increase his forces, Zheng began to encourage the Chinese (the Han people) in the south-eastern provinces to immigrate to Taiwan, and from then on great numbers of Han people began to settle in Taiwan, their numbers increasing and largely exceeding those of the aboriginals.

After 1683 when the Qing Dynasty took over Taiwan (the first official inclusion of Taiwan in Chinese history), it began to develop into a Han-dominated society. At the beginning of Qing's rule, the Han people in Taiwan numbered around 10,000; before the concession to Japan in 1845, the number reached 2.5 million.[34] However, the Han people's immigration to Taiwan was not encouraged by the Qing court; in fact, Qing's attitude toward the development was rather dismissive, and prohibitions such as that against bringing family members along brought years of civil unrest.[35] In late nineteenth century, however, the Qing court finally began to realise Taiwan's military importance after the Japanese and French invasions (1874 and 1883). Taiwan was officially established as a Chinese province, and public constructions were actively encouraged by the government. But Qing's effort was short-lived as Taiwan was conceded to Japan in 1895. Thus, the historical bond between Taiwan and China ended just when the formerly disinterested attitude of the Chinese began to change.

The early developments described here would finally become the backbone of the discourse of the Taiwanese independence ideology. According to an essay entitled 'Two Nations and Two Governments in Peaceful Coexistence - the Taiwanese People's Essential Opinion Toward the Relationship with China' published by the pro-independence *Independent Evening Post* in 1993, the correctness of claiming

[34] *Ibid.,* pp. 81-82.
[35] *Ibid.,* pp. 84-95.

independence mainly lies in the historical fact that Taiwan was never seriously considered as a part of China before the KMT occupied Taiwan in 1949 after its defeat by the CCP; and the only respectful ruler of Taiwan had been the Japanese colonisers between 1895 and 1945.[36] As the Chinese government and the KMT (who were the ruling party in Taiwan from 1945 to 2000, and have been so since 2008 to the date of this study) claim the early Chinese involvement to be more significant, the KMT nationalist perspective asserts that Taiwan has always been a part of China since at least 1683, while it was during the Japanese colonisation that Taiwanese culture was first given a chance to develop into maturity, giving birth to an ideology that is always struggling against the insubstantial bond with China. Later, when the KMT came to Taiwan, their Chinese influence would be seen as that of Qing: a foreign plundering force with little interest in the need for a national identity to which the many-times intruded Taiwanese could cling.

Enduring Admiration for the Colonial Master: Japanese Colonisation 1895-1945

The late Qing China, under a series of attacks from the Western imperial powers, was forced to open trading ports along the Chinese coastline, and Taiwan was no exception. From 1858, after being forced by the British Empire and France to open trading ports, Taiwan was receiving more attention from the Qing court, and eventually it would become the province where Qing's Self-strengthening Movement [37] was most successful. During this time, because the Qing court wanted to secure its business in agriculture, the Han people were provided with military force to drive the aboriginals into the mountains, marking the beginning of the marginalisation of the aboriginal narrative in Taiwan's history. At present, though the aboriginal culture is often evoked to represent Taiwan's difference from China as in Wu Hsing-Kuo's *The Tempest* (discussed in Chapter 5), such representation would be understood as the avoidance of a more imminent yet dangerously sensitive debate between the Islanders' and Mainlanders' ideologies.

Moreover, since the defeat of the Dutch colonisers in seventeenth century, Western

[36] Huang, *Taiwanese Consciousness,* pp. 272-75.

[37] It was a movement aiming at modernising China with the newly acquired technology and industrial equipment from the West between 1861 and 1895.

culture, especially Christianity, was again being imported to Taiwan by missionaries.[38] However, due to Taiwan's rebellious history, as its prosperity grew, the Qing court became reluctant to further develop the province. After the Qing Dynasty's defeat in the first Sino-Japanese War, Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895 - the only unconditional concession that Qing made during its history of foreign invasions. Fifty years of Japan's policy on its first colony could be divided into three periods.[39] The first was 1895-1919, during which no specific guiding principle was applied. The colonial government's effort was put into separating the connection between Taiwan and mainland China, as well as suppressing local riots and encouraging Japanese immigration to Taiwan. The second stage was from 1919 to 1937, the eve of the second Sino-Japanese War between the Republic of China and Japan. It was the time when the May Fourth Movement in China took place, and Chinese intellectuals were promoting new culture and ideas. The Taiwanese (mainly referring to the dominating Chinese immigrants, or the Islanders) were also beginning to form various anti-imperialist societies, carrying out non-violent activities to fight for the right to participate in Taiwan's governance. The Japanese colonisers were more tolerant with the Taiwanese's activities at this time; they also set up new social orders, new laws and universities, in hope of building a long-term and more peaceful relationship with the Taiwanese. It was during the second stage that the peaceful relationship would foster the Taiwanese lasting cordial affection for the Japanese. The third stage, 1937-1945, was the Sino-Japanese War. As Japan's engagement in World War II was also deepening, the full support of Taiwan was necessary. This was a time of total Japanisation: the Taiwanese were encouraged to take a Japanese name; the national language in Taiwan became Japanese; all Chinese cultural activities were either discouraged or prohibited, including books written in, or theatre performed in the Taiwanese dialect - originally the Chinese Fujian dialect.

However, the Japanese colonisation was not completely benign for all Taiwanese, and the cultural presence of China was enhanced during this period. Before the Japanese colonisation, Taiwan was, from the aborigines' point of view, already colonised by China. From the early settlement of the Han people in the sixteenth century, the aboriginals had been gradually Sinicised, as was every foreign culture when meeting

[38] Gao, *The History*, pp. 138-40.
[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 173-74.

the Chinese culture. At the time of the concession, the Han-dominated Taiwan was already culturally a part of China. China was thus a provider of a cultural origin, and nationalism could establish itself on nostalgia for Chinese culture. Though the Taiwanese may not have politically identified it at the time, colonisation offered the Taiwanese a standpoint in the class struggle against the Japanese.[40]

The preservation of Chinese culture, however, did not include the preservation of the language, or more accurately, the dialect. The official language used on the mainland has always been *Putonghua*, or standardised Mandarin Chinese; the Taiwanese were using the Fujian dialect of Chinese, which is very different from Mandarin in pronunciation, intonation and diction. In terms of theatrical performances, the popularisation of the Taiwanese Opera (*goahi*), performed in the Fujian dialect, was a part of the nostalgic movement toward Chinese culture; but the nostalgia itself is problematic. When a Chinese theatre group from Shanghai performed a 'civilised' play (as opposed to the Taiwanese local theatre considered to be less sophisticated by the Chinese Mainlanders) in Mandarin in 1921, the Chinese language was more difficult for the Taiwanese audience to understand than the Japanese, the Chinese theatrical performance was more distancing than the Japanese New Theatre, and a prologue in Taiwanese dialect was called for.[41] This suggests that, to the Taiwanese, China has begun to be as exotic as the West: both are understood through a biased process of essentialisation.

The Japanese New Theatre, on the other hand, marked the beginning of modern theatre in Taiwan. Unlike China, the Taiwanese were not able to import new culture from the West; the greatest influence on the Taiwanese culture was naturally from Japan, and the Taiwanese modern theatre was 'directly grafted from the Japanese New Theatre'.[42] Several theatre groups were formed entirely by the Japanese, introducing the modern theatre – *huaju* performed in Japanese – to Taiwan. Some Taiwanese theatre practitioners would also go to Japan to learn the style, and they also formed New Theatre groups with the Japanese. However, as the Japanese language and its education were the privilege of the intellectual elite, most Taiwanese theatre groups would

[40] Huang, *Taiwanese Consciousness*, pp. 14-18.
[41] Ma, *Two Waves*, pp. 149-50.
[42] *Ibid.*

perform entirely in the Taiwanese dialect, with distinctively Japanese style.[43]

The development of Taiwan under the Japanese colonisation was at once directed away from and closer to China: as nationalism demands, China was thought of as the motherland by whose culture the Taiwanese were able to hold against the colonial enforcement; on the other hand, the social order and foreign cultures such as the Western modern theatre brought by the Japanese, as well as the development of non-violent political resistance under the colonisers' tolerance would later make the post-war Taiwan inevitably different from China. The conflict between mainland China and Taiwan resulting from the fifty-year separation would eventually become the ideological disagreement and cultural difference across the Taiwan Strait.

The Modern Taiwanese Anti-China Ideology: the Republic of China

The end of the Japanese colonisation did not bring Taiwan into a post-colonial state, and life in Taiwan did not get better.[44] When the Republican government took over Taiwan in 1945, it was replacing colonialism with dictatorship, which was not very different from their previous Chinese ruler - the Qing Dynasty. Because of the war, China's economy was in a devastating state; the restoration to China not only destroyed Japan's economic legacy, but also brought great inflation and a high unemployment rate to Taiwan. Furthermore, Chen Yi, the first Chinese official arriving in Taiwan, labelled the Taiwanese as Japanese accomplices during the war, as most of them had helped the Japanese during the colonisation.[45] The Japanese language was soon forbidden, and the Chinese's discrimination against the Taiwanese grew as the former (later becoming the Taiwanese Mainlanders) 'grafted their hatred against the Japanese' onto the latter.[46]

On the other hand, the social order and civilisation established by the colonisers were also being disrupted by the incoming Chinese:

> At the beginning of the post-war era, most of the Chinese coming to Taiwan

[43] *Ibid.* In Wang Hong-Yuan's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the modern Taiwanese director adapted the comic effect mostly from Japanese popular culture (Chapter 7).
[44] Gao, *The History*, pp. 254-57.
[45] *Ibid.*
[46] *Ibid.*

> admitted that the living standard was higher than in the mainland. Taiwan was better industrialised, and the people had acquired ethnic virtues such as being punctual, law-abiding, and hygienic… It was unavoidable that the Taiwanese were disdainful towards the Chinese's lack of the modern knowledge of daily life, and completely intolerant of the corruption and bribery of the Chinese officials.[47]

The conflicts between the Taiwanese and the Chinese ruling class eventually led to the eruption of the 228 Incident in 1947: at first it was local riots between civilians and the police (begun on the 28th of February, hence the name), the incident later escalated into military oppression and massacre, resulting in 18,000 - 28,000 deaths.[48] The situation only worsened after the arrival of President Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT in 1949. The defeat by the CCP in the civil war forced the entire government of the Republic to retreat to Taiwan, forming the present existence of the quasi-nation. Initially, Taiwan was considered as an anti-CCP military base, and the government put martial law into effect, replacing the Constitution, in order to gain complete cooperation from the Taiwanese.[49] Under the dictatorship of President Chiang Kai-shek, Taiwan entered almost forty years of the White Terror era, during which countless political activists were arrested or executed. Apart from the martial law, Chiang Kai-shek also began and led the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement in 1966 in order to counter the Cultural Revolution in China and its Maoist attack on Chinese tradition, as well as to culturally consolidate the KMT's regime in Taiwan. But the movement was perceived as a forceful cultural imposition, and the major effect of this movement on Taiwan was the increase in the cultural and ideological split between the Taiwanese Islanders and the Mainlanders beyond the 228 Incident; as such, the promotion of Chinese culture would in fact accelerate the development of local culture and the resentment towards the cultural connection with China.

According to a statement issued by the Chinese Cultural Movement Promotion Council in 1967, the general goal of the movement concerning traditional Chinese culture was 'to reissue Chinese classic literary works and translate important works with a view

[47] *Ibid.*
[48] *Ibid.,* pp. 259-60.
[49] *Ibid.,* p. 264.

toward disseminating Chinese culture abroad'.[50] In practice, however, the policy was 'eradicating any vestiges of a unique (and independent) Taiwanese culture and replacing it with "mainland" Chinese culture', as can be seen in 'the nearly exclusive support and promotion of the mainland-derived Peking opera' or *jingju*, leaving the development during the colonial period blank for a whole generation; and the fact that the Taiwanese stage was almost totally occupied by Mainlander playwrights and actors due to the linguistic barrier between Mandarin and the Taiwanese dialect.[51]

As a consequence of the historical development since the end of the Japanese colonisation, the KMT's oppressive policies turned it into another colonial power before a post-colonial discourse could be established in Taiwan. Similar to the previous colonial period, the Taiwanese Islanders soon found the need to work against the KMT's oppression. Since the oppression began when the Mainlanders retreated to Taiwan, this time a consciousness of locality – mainland China versus Taiwan – took the place of the former colonial nationalism. Although the Taiwanese were the descendants of the sixteenth century Chinese immigrants, the debate over locality soon developed into the dichotomy of an ethnic consciousness. The ethnicity-based Taiwanese consciousness at this time separated the Taiwanese from the Mainlanders, with the equation of the former as the local ruled, and the latter as the foreign rulers.[52] At the same time, political activists in Taiwan were working under the pressure of the White Terror of the KMT's regime; the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), formed in 1986 by these activists, carried the ethnic consciousness into their agenda, and its influence would reach into the present anti-China consciousness in Taiwan.

It is worth noting, however, that the bond between Taiwan and China was never entirely lost. Both the cultural and historical nostalgia established during the Japanese colonial period and the KMT's Chinese Cultural Movement provided the Islanders and the Mainlanders with motivation to seek the remnants of the China-Taiwan bond amidst the anti-China political atmosphere. Thus neither the Taiwanese independence ideology nor the pro-China argument can stand alone in any discourse on the Taiwanese

[50] *Free China Review* 1968a, pp. 78-79, cited from Nancy Guy, *Peking Opera and Politics in Taiwan* (Chicago, USA: University of Illinois Press, 2005), p. 69.
[51] *Ibid.,* p. 80. When Wu Hsing-Kuo and others attempted to revitalise *jingju* in Taiwan, this history of eradication was the main predicaments they had to face (Chapter 5).
[52] Huang, *Taiwanese Consciousness*, p. 26.

consciousness. Shakespeare, then, will become the Occidental power that offers the Taiwanese a temporary relief from the endless struggle between the two simultaneously polarised and intertwined ideologies.

A Time Before Taiwanese Shakespeare

While China was experiencing a great change in the perception of culture during the New Cultural Movement, Taiwan was still under Japanese colonisation, missing out on what Ma Sen calls the first wave of Westernisation in theatre – the pursuit of realism on stage. Unlike the Chinese, the Taiwanese did not develop a solid relationship with Western literature and theatre. Although after the 1980s Taiwan began to grow rapidly closer to the West, faster than China did because of Taiwan's democratic political nature, the lack of historical development would later consolidate the fantasy aspect of the Taiwanese Occidentalism.

During the colonisation, all of the documented Shakespearean performances were Japanese[53]. The first Mandarin Chinese production of Shakespeare was recorded in 1949, a play named *Clouds of Doubt*, adapted from *Othello.*[54] The reason for the lack of interest in Shakespeare, both in theatre and translation could be that, during the Japanese colonisation and Chinag Kai-Shek's rule, the Taiwanese were striving to seek their cultural reference in China and Japan;[55] though the American influence came to Taiwan after 1949, it was mainly military and economic, and the Taiwanese were still struggling to accept the newly found Chinese culture imposed upon them after fifty years of separation from the cultural origin.

In 1949, the great scholar/litterateur Liang Shiqiu moved to Taiwan with the KMT, and published his translation of the complete works of Shakespeare (thirty-seven plays in forty volumes) in 1967. In 1966, the Chinese Cultural Renaissance was commenced by Chiang Kai-Shek and the KMT government, in opposition to the Cultural Revolution in China, which neither encouraged nor forbade Shakespearean performances. As a

[53] Such as Kawakami Otojiro's 1903 *Othello*, in which Taiwan becomes 'the outpost of the colonial Japanese Empire', and certain tours of the Japanese all-female company Takarazuka, which would bring a few Shakespearean plays to Taiwan (Huang, *Chinese* Shakespeare, pp. 9-10).
[54] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeare*, p. 10.
[55] *Ibid.*

result, from 1967 onwards, Shakespeare's plays were restricted to universities, especially the Drama Department of the Chinese Culture University, where Liang was the first Chairman of the English Department, until the lifting of the martial law in the mid-1980s.

Although there was not much Shakespeare in Taiwan before the 1980s, these sporadic events would have an explosive outcome on modern Taiwanese Shakespeare. The Japanese influence from both traditional and popular culture could be seen in a majority of Shakespearean productions. The Chinese influence, particularly the imposition during the Chinese Cultural Renaissance, accelerated the fall in popularity of *jingju*, which forced traditionally trained actor Wu Hsing-Kuo to turn to Shakespeare for a solution, and consequently greatly affected Shakespearean performances done in the style of traditional Chinese theatre. The drama students that had experienced Shakespeare at this time would also find liberation after the 1980s, leading to a comprehensibility of Shakespeare unique to the present day Taiwanese. Thus, Stage Two of the Sino-Occidentalism forms the necessary basis for the discussion of the Third Stage, which is central to this thesis, when the Chinese and the Taiwanese Occidentalisms generate distinctively different presentations in Shakespearean adaptations/appreciations.

The Third Stage

With the end of the Cultural Revolution and the beginning of the Open Door policy in China, and with the lifting of the martial law in Taiwan, Shakespeare became prominent on the stage in both countries from the 1980s. The Chinese began to pick up what was left before the Revolution, and started to experiment with the re-established national confidence. The Taiwanese public would discover Shakespeare for the first time in history, and like the Chinese during the New Cultural Movement, Shakespeare was once again used in the struggle of forming a new culture. The last section of this chapter will thus offer an overview of the status quo in China and Taiwan, establishing the essential context for the case studies in the rest of the thesis.

The Rise of Modern China

Deng Xiaoping was installed as the President in 1977 after the Cultural Revolution ended, and China soon took a very different path from that of Mao. In 1978, the CCP accepted the Open Door Policy proposed by Deng, and China was freed from thirty years of economic isolation. China's economic growth skyrocketed between 1978 and 1988[56], making a future with greater economic power in the world possible, in spite of several setbacks such as the great inflation of the late 1980s. Opening to international trading, however pragmatic it was for the realisation of a socialist society, was nonetheless in conflict with the communist, especially Maoist, revolution against capitalism. The danger of an affinity with capitalist economies further deepened the thought that socialism, and its economy and politics, were not suitable for China's modernisation.

Deng's vision was to build 'socialism with Chinese characteristics', and the Chinese government was still conservative towards Western ideas while it reinitiated trade with Western countries. Nevertheless, the influx of Western culture could not be stopped. Directing the Chinese socialism with pragmatism in the hope of modernising, as well as globalising, China, Deng eventually opened the door not only to Western capitalist enterprises, but also to 'foreign ideas, news, films, plays, music, literature and popular culture' that 'swept in like a windstorm'.[57]

This was a time when the admiration for anything Western, as during the New Cultural Movement, began to grow again. In 1984, the Chinese Shakespeare Association was established by Chinese Shakespearean scholars; and in 1986, the Inaugural Shakespeare Festival opened in Shanghai, where twenty-five Shakespeare adaptations witnessed the explosion of interest in Shakespeare.[58] The Chinese expression *chongyang meiwai*, literally 'admiring the West, worshipping the foreign', describes the Chinese Occidentalism best when *He Shang*, a TV series beginning in 1988, promoted the absolute superiority of the West through manipulated social, political, cultural and

[56] The rate of economic growth was 15.2% in 1984, and 13.5% in 1985, an indicator that Chinese economic growth was over-heated (Kojima, *Contemporary History,* p. 59).

[57] Hsü, *The Rise*, p. 872. This sudden intake of the Western culture, along with the liberation from cultural oppression in the Cultural Revolution would start the Golden Age for Chinese Shakespeare in the 1980s, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

[58] Cao, *Shakespeare*, p. 139.

historical facts of the Western world.[59] Unlike Taiwan, where the worshipping aspect of Occidentalism knows no bounds, the Chinese were violently forced from total Westernisation, and the aftermath of such violence actually brings the contemporary Chinese partially back to the Sino-centric disinterest in the West.

In April 1989, students from many provinces gathered at the Tien-an-men Square in Beijing, demanding to clear the name of former President Hu Yaupang, who was dismissed due to his sympathy towards the student demonstrations for political liberalisation. The CCP refused the students' demands, and defined their activity as a riot. The party's strong attitude inflamed the students, and as more of them kept coming to the Tien-an-men, the demonstration developed into a patriotic event demanding democracy in China.[60] On 20th May, martial law was issued; and early on 4th June, the Chinese government ordered troops with guns and tanks to massacre the students at the Square. *The New York Times* estimated that between 400 to 800 students died at the onslaught,[61] but the government first denied that there were any casualties, and later stated that 23 civilians were accidentally killed, while over 200 soldiers actually died in the event.

The Tien-an-men Square Incident was defined by the Chinese government as an 'anti-revolutionary riot'; many were arrested, freedom of speech came under governmental control, and history was rewritten by various media.[62] Regardless of the international as well as the domestic outcry for compensation for the dead, the Chinese government has been denying the disastrous outcome of the Incident to this day. Similar incidents would recur in 2008 and 2009, as the riots in Tibet and Xinjiang were reported from completely different perspectives by the Chinese official media and the rest of the world.

The current Chinese Occidentalism can thus be understood as China versus the Western power: the former imperial masters are now seen with both admiration and deliberate contempt. However strongly the Tien-an-man Incident hit China, it did not topple the CCP. In fact, the present development in the Chinese economy can be one of the reasons

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[59] Xiaomei Chen, *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 23-42.
[60] Kojima, *Contemporary History*, p. 75.
[61] *The New York Times,* 12, 13, 21 June 1989, p. A6; cited from Hsü, *The* Rise, p. 937.
[62] Hsü*, The Rise*, pp. 938-40.

enabling China to ignore the outcry for human rights (specifically those from Western Europe and North America). By 1998, twenty years after the Open-Door Policy, China's GDP had grown by 32 times and it became the seventh largest economic body in the world.[63] In 2010, China replaced Japan as the second largest economic body in the world.[64] The model 'quasi-capitalism in a political dictatorship'[65] adopted by modern China juxtaposes the enormous economic growth and the oppression of human rights, and the conflict between China's and the West's perspectives will only deepen. With the continuous influx of foreign culture and ideas from the West, as well as other more liberal East Asian countries, the new China is struggling to create its modern national image with its liberal capitalist economy and conservative socialist politics.

Facing the twenty-first century, whether there is hope for a Chinese democracy is still in question, but with its leading position in the global economy, China's influence on the world is becoming formidable. On one hand, the contemporary Chinese are not so eager to embrace everything Western as their forefathers did: the Chinese Shakespeare Association was disbanded by the Chinese government in 2002, and the international Shakespeare festival, revived in 1994, does not face with the previous enthusiasm for another revival that is yet to come. While Chinese Shakespeare still occupies a significant place on the contemporary Chinese stage, it has lost the zest promoted with the absolute Westernisation in the past. On the other hand, the modern Chinese culture and its export to the world, strengthened and supported by the economy, have also aroused global interest, and formed the foundation of the Chinese confidence in the face of modern globalisation. One of this study's purposes, therefore, is to explore how the Chinese are interpreting Shakespeare in this new era, when the need to assert Chineseness is far more significant than Westernisation – a total opposition to the time when Western literature was introduced to China 150 years ago. However, Taiwan's position regarding modern China cannot be ignored; its cultural impact, especially popular culture, works intimately with the present state of Chinese culture. In the next

[63] Kojima, *Contemporary History,* p. 88.

[64] Justin McCurry and Julia Kollewe, 'China Overtakes Japan as World's Second-largest Economy', *The Guardian*, 14 Feb, 2011 (http://www.theguardian.com/business/2011/feb/14/china-second-largest-economy).

[65] When a market economy could never exist in a Marxist society, Deng Xiaoping incorporated this model into the shaping of the 'socialism with Chinese characteristics', thus avoiding an outright confrontation with the name capitalist (Hsü, *The* Rise, pp. 950-52).

part of this chapter, a brief history of Taiwan and the Republic of China after 1949 will complement the discourse of modern Chinese history.

The Contemporary Crises in Taiwan

In 1971, the replacement of the ROC's place by the PRC in the UN, as well as international (starting with the US's) recognition of the latter as the legitimate ruler of China, announced the failure of the KMT's attempt to reclaim the mainland and its effort in preserving Chinese culture as proof of the KMT's legitimate claim on the Chineseness.[66] Since then, Taiwan has rapidly developed in a completely different direction from China. In 1987, President Lee Teng-hui lifted martial law, and became the first President directly elected by the Taiwanese people in 1996, marking the completion of KMT's localisation. In 2000, Chen Shui-Bian of the DPP was elected as President, and Taiwan's democracy entered a mature stage.[67]

Following the lifting of martial law in 1987, the Taiwanese were finally allowed to travel to China. At that time, though a market economy was established in China, the CCP's socialist one-party politics made China very different from the democratic and capitalist Taiwan; the Taiwanese's visits to China eventually acknowledged this difference, and consequently consolidated the direction of nationalism toward Taiwan rather than China.[68] Also, Taiwan boasts a much more open attitude toward the West than China does. From the late 1980s to the present day, censorship for Western import franchises has not occurred, and the internet is not censored as it is in China by the Great Fire Wall. In 2009, the UK granted the Taiwanese visa-free entry, a policy soon followed by the rest of the EU and eventually the US.[69] While these developments are not applicable to the Chinese, they have a two-fold significance. On one hand, the Western world is more readily accessible for the Taiwanese both culturally and geographically; on the other, the Western world is treating Taiwan as an independent country in the absence of an official declaration in the UN. Thus, even with the lack of an established history with the West, like that of China, Taiwan has enjoyed a more

[66] Guy, *Peking Opera*, p. 80.
[67] Gao, *History*, p. 277.
[68] Kojima, *Contemporary History*, pp. 139-40.
[69] As in August, 2013, 43 EU countries have granted a visa-free entrance for the Taiwanese visitors. In North America, countries including Canada and the US have similar policies for the Taiwanese. (Official website, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.mofa.gov.tw/, accessed on 29th August, 2013).

advantageous position in relation to the West in recent decades. However, since 2000, China has been catching up, and Taiwan's international advantage is gradually losing its place in the domestic ideological conflicts.

The development of the Taiwanese consciousness was also heading towards its present stage. As the KMT was being localised, the dichotomy between the Mainlanders and the Islanders was hidden in the background. In 1998, the Taiwanese President Lee Teng-Hui created the term 'New Taiwanese' for the KMT's mayor candidate of Taipei City, Ma Ying-Jiu, who is a Mainlander.[70] The concept of New Taiwanese is to domestically unite the different ideologies, including all generations of immigrants in Taiwan, creating a national identity that is unique and distinguishable from that of China.[71] As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the impossibility of an actual declaration of independence (further consolidated by the fact that the DPP, whose main ideological claim is Taiwanese independence, failed to do so during its rule between 2000 and 2008) and this urge for Taiwan's uniqueness thus moves the discourse of Taiwanese consciousness to the cultural sphere.

But the CCP has not given up on claiming Taiwan as part of a completely unified China. The return of Hong Kong in 1997 serves as a model of 'one country, two systems', which has been China's main proposal to Taiwan regarding the prospect of unification. This prospect has been rejected by Taiwan, mainly because it is not, like Hong Kong, a colony; it has a modern military force[72] and a fully democratic constitution. On the other hand, because the Han population in Taiwan is, and always has, consisted of Chinese immigrants, China's function as the most important cultural origin for the Taiwanese has never ceased to exist. This cultural as well as ethnic bond coexists with the differences between Taiwan and China. At present, the Taiwanese attitude toward China is 'at once centripetal and centrifugal', and in its centre exists the struggle between political and cultural identification.[73]

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[70] Mr. Ma was elected the President of Taiwan in 2008, and is still holding the presidential office at the time of the thesis in 2013.

[71] Huang, *Taiwanese Consciousness*, pp. 27-28.

[72] Following the United States Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, the US has been providing Taiwan with defensive weapons, and any military attack launched against Taiwan would potentially mean the breaching of US interest in this area (Hsü, *The* Rise, pp. 918-19).

[73] Huang, *Taiwanese Consciousness*, p. 162.

The third stage discussed in this chapter thus initiates the triangular relationship between China, Taiwan, and Shakespeare's West. From the late Qing to the late 1980s, China and Taiwan have developed very differently, and such historical difference exemplifies the necessity of two distinctively different modes of understanding for Chinese and Taiwanese Shakespeare. China has always held a Sino-centric point of view when dealing with any foreign forces. Though the invasions suffered during the late Qing period prompted the first wave of Occidentalist admiration for the West, Sino-centricism pushed the Chinese to establish an equal footing in the East-West conversation. For the Chinese, Shakespeare had been a model for emulation, but the Bard has developed into not only a globally recognisable and marketable brand name for the Chinese, but also a worthy rival to be Sinicised into the larger context of a Chinese metanarrative: just as any other foreign forces in the Chinese history described in Chapter 2. Taiwan inherits the Sino-centric worldview, accentuated by the cultural nostalgia throughout its colonial history. However, its history with China also initiated a distancing effect, parting Taiwan's narrative from that of China from the very first immigration made by the Han people. While the 1949 separation from China also marginalised Taiwan's voice in the world, Taiwan has been eager to communicate with the West. Relying on such communication, the Taiwanese have found a space in which ideological discourses can be conducted without provoking China or the sensitive domestic debates. The Taiwanese Shakespeare, coming from such context, can be used by the contemporary Taiwanese directors and readers of Shakespeare as a political and cultural liberation. Via the historical perspective of the Sino-Occidentalism, the contemporary Sino-Shakespeare in the two Chinas can be understood through a much more intact framework. Such framework is thus established for a comparatively weaker entity (Taiwan), utilising a foreign assistance (Shakespeare) to talk to, contend with, or sometimes shy away from the persistent imposition of a much stronger political, cultural, and economical entity (China). And this framework, as discussed in Chapter 1 and Richard Paul Knowles's work on the material theatre, can be applied to entities such as Canada, Scotland, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, or any other entity in the world that seeks similar assistance in Shakespeare's ability to provide theatrical relief for the anxiety of an unresolved identity crisis.

Chapter 4
Seeking an Authoritative Voice in China's *Xiqu* Shakespeare

To localise or not to localise: this has always been the main issue when Shakespeare and an Oriental traditional theatre meet. The interrelation between the Chinese auto-Orientalism[1] and the Chinese Occidentalism determines how Shakespeare is perceived: the former stands for how the Chinese interpret their own cultural authority, while the latter expresses how the Chinese perceive Western, in this case Shakespeare's, cultural capital. Such a relationship is probably best described in Chinese dramatists' search for innovation in traditional theatre via Shakespeare, especially from the 1980s onwards as China embarked on its quest to become the centre of the world again. In attempts to shake off the traumatic aftermath from the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese were also enthusiastic, somewhat overtly so, in essentialising the West as what Xiaomei Chen in her studies of post-Mao China calls an 'anti-official Occidentalism'.[2] Such discourse takes the 'Western Other' as a metaphorical liberation as opposed to the official Occidentalism that seeks to utilise Western ideas to bring China to a more controlled modernisation.

As discussed previously, 1976 marked both the end of the Cultural Revolution and the beginning of China's official acceptance of Western ideas. With Mao's fall from power, China had its first chance since the establishment of the People's Republic of China to tolerate the import of anything Western, with eager emphasis on the economic and industrial aspects; however, a more suspicious attitude towards literature, theatre and art persisted.[3] As literature was still viewed by the Chinese government as demagogic, this slight opening to the West gave the Chinese intelligentsia an opportunity to exploit Western ideas and to claim an intellectual dominance over the political ideology. Such an explosion of interest in Western literature and art led to twenty-five Shakespearean

[1] The term is borrowed from Xiaomei Chen's study, which denotes the self-appropriation process of the Orients themselves to satisfy the Western Oriental desire. This exploitation of the Orients' own home culture is enabled by the Occidentalist perspective, under which the Western Orientalist desire is conceived. Xiaomei Chen, *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 3-4.

[2] *Ibid*.

[3] Ma Sen, *Two Waves of Westernisation in Modern Chinese Theatre* (Taipei, Taiwan: Lian He Literature, 2006), p. 23.

plays being put on the Chinese stage during the Inaugural Chinese Shakespeare Festivals in 1986.[4] Of the plays performed during the 1986 festivals, twenty were *huaju* (spoken drama) productions that collectively signified one of the two most important facets of the Chinese Occidentalism: the integration between a Chinese perspective and Western art, which will be discussed in Chapter 6. The other side of the Chinese Occidentalism tries to determine what a Western canon can mean to a Chinese audience through the Chinese theatrical medium; as such, the cultural authority of the latter contends with that of the former – the *xiqu* Shakespeare, or Chinese theatrical adaptation, provides the space for the two cultures to clash.

The traditional theatre's response to Shakespeare illustrates how auto-Orientalist discourses tried to redefine the Western Other and incorporate it into (and therefore enrich) the local culture. The nationalist implementation of Shakespeare (using his works to revive dwindling traditional theatre audiences for one) has often been proposed as the main direction of *xiqu* productions. In China, Shakespeare's impact on the traditional theatre is greatest where the classic repertoire is exhausting its attractions to theatre-goers - the older generation dies out and the new generation is too distracted by popular culture to retain the intense concentration required to appreciate the highly codified theatrical conventions of visuality - the main aesthetical and connotative signifier of the Chinese *xiqu*. Discussing theatre in general, Dennis Kennedy notes that any theatrical production will eventually lose its 'visual freshness' over time because the production's geographical and socio-political specification will shift through changes in time and place; thus it is inevitable that theatrical interpretation will alter with the progress of time.[5] Similarly, Margaret Jane Kidnie defines theatre as a dynamic process ready for reinterpretation instead of an immobile object.[6] The adaptation of Shakespeare, in terms of literary criticism, is linked to 'how editorial practices that seek to stabilise or destabilise texts literally adapt Shakespeare, making him conform to a particular editorial vision'.[7] A theatrical adaptation of Shakespeare can thus be defined as a theatrical representation of the particular needs of a specific

[4] Cao Shujun, and Sun Fuliang, *Shakespeare on the Chinese Stage* (Harbin: Harbin, 1989), p. 119.
[5] Dennis Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 4.
[6] Margaret Jane Kidnie, *Shakespeare and the Problem of Adaptation* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 2.
[7] *Adaptations of Shakespeare*, ed. Fischlin and Fortier, p.7, cited from Kidnie, *Shakespeare and the Problem of Adaptation*, p. 5.

group at a specific location and time.

The Chinese audience's and directors' 'fundamental dissatisfaction with their own cultural recourses'[8] is therefore a typical motivation for Chinese *xiqu* practitioners to approach Shakespeare. The Taiwanese *jingju* actor-director Wu Hsing-Kuo's decision to begin adapting Shakespeare in 1986 was first and foremost to revitalise the decaying Chinese theatre tradition in Taiwan. The director of a 2001 *yueju* (a *xiqu* based in the Guangdong Province) *Macbeth* also stated that the decision to adapt a Shakespearean play was 'simply because it has been difficult to find original scripts.'[9]

However, assuming this is the sole drive for *xiqu* to adapt Shakespeare is precarious; the history of *xiqu* Shakespeare has actually been a debate of cultural authority. By arguing that Shakespeare's plays serve only to revitalise the traditional theatre, one easily steps into the trap of prioritising the innovation brought by an essentialised idea of the West being new and exotic. In Alexander Huang's examination of this *xiqu*-Shakespeare conversation, for instance, he observes that *xiqu* productions of Shakespeare explore the possibility of looking at 'what we assume to be the metaphysical dimension of the text, a print-derived ideology, and the kinetic energy of the visual'.[10] Visuality, as shown by these productions, is the main trigger for Western interest in Chinese Shakespeare, and this perspective falls easily into the traditional Orientalist point of view that essentialises the Chinese *xiqu* to little beyond the codified systems of physical movements, face paints and arias.

However, in the post-Mao era when China no longer wished to reject all things Western, attracting Western attention actually became an official strategy. By means of Western Orientalism, the Chinese traditional theatre serves exactly the purpose of propagandising the Chinese culture. The visual stunts of the traditional *xiqu*, therefore, become an effective tactic implicitly known to the Orient itself. As discussed in the

[8] Fei Chunfang and Sun Huizhu, 'Shakespeare and Beijing Opera: Two Cases of Appropriation', in *Shakespeare in Asia*, eds. Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 57.
[9] Shen Lin, 'What Use Shakespeare? China and Globalisation', in *Shakespeare in Asia*, eds. Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 231.
[10] Alexander C.Y. Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 194.

introductory chapters, the auto-Orientalist awareness of such tactics is largely dismissed in the accounts and analyses of *xiqu* Shakespeare for a more optimistic view of how Shakespeare is used to transform the old art form (hence, the old faces of China) into a 'new' one.

Therefore, to argue that this newness 'revitalises' Chinese traditional theatre is insufficient when positioning *xiqu* Shakespeare in a more general narrative of Sino-Shakespeare. While the political agenda to 'strengthen China' is not prioritised by the present Chinese government[11], it is still an ongoing and sophisticated process. From the 1980s onwards, what really has been fading into the historical background is China's need to emulate the Western industrial and financial models of dominance and power; and when one faded, another previously repressed notion of art and culture surfaced: the search for a voice for China led to an explosion in *xiqu* theatre. In terms of the overall history of China, theatre has been deemed to have little academic value; and during the Cultural Revolution, all theatres were politically propagandised. Thus, as this artistic outlet was so powerfully released, actors and directors (whose role in the traditional theatre had been non-existent) were eager to try whatever they could to reinvent, rather than revitalise, China's traditional theatre.

This led to debate over the cultural confidence of the Chinese and Shakespeare's universality, demonstrated at the Inaugural Shakespeare Festival in 1986, which is not only the background for the two case studies in this chapter, but also the beginning of any discourse on contemporary (late twentieth to early twenty-first century) Sino-Shakespeare. Huang observes that a comment made by J. Philip Brockbank – 'while it was winter for [Shakespeare] in England it appeared to be spring in China' – was originally intended to describe the ability of *xiqu* Shakespeare to interpret the plays in a culture parallel to that of Shakespeare's time, but was later 'misappropriated' by Chinese scholars to 'feed into the Chinese national pride and an unexamined assumption that the merit of intercultural performance can lie only in its remedial effect on the source of host culture'.[12] Shakespeare as a means to demonstrate Chinese national confidence was also evident when the famed director Huang Zuolin

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 193.
[12] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, pp. 171-72.

commented on the 1986 festival that 'it fully demonstrates the greatness of a country of a billion people!' [13] Cao Shujun, Vice President to the Chinese Shakespeare Association, also commented that the 1986 festival showed that the Chinese 'are able to absorb all of the most advanced spiritual and materialistic wealth in the world'.[14] National confidence, therefore, must be considered in every discussion of Chinese Shakespeare, especially when *xiqu*, a vessel of Chinese traditional culture, is to rival Shakespeare's theatricality.

Although it can be risky to describe the development of *xiqu* Shakespeare in a linear narrative, such evolution of the modern Chinese Shakespeare does follow the progress of Chinese Occidentalism. At the earlier stage of the theatrical and literary discourse, the essentialised Shakespeare had been explicitly stagecraft-oriented; in the latter half of the ongoing narrative of Chinese Shakespeare, what was essentialised was the interpretation of the text. Shakespeare performed, perceived, and appreciated under these essentialised conditions, therefore, requires an additional appreciation of the aesthetic and sets of theatrical and literary concepts that 'fill in' the blank left out by Chinese Occidentalism.

Using two representative case studies in *xiqu* Shakespeare at its modern inception point, this chapter is devoted to such auto-Orientalist use of the Chinese Occidentalism, in which the cultural authority defined by the Chinese themselves is posed to reinterpret and retell Shakespeare's plays. Zhang Xiaoyang detects two modes of adaptation in the early *xiqu* Shakespeare: the 'Western manner', which places Western costumes and *mise en scène*, as well as the integrity of Shakespeare's lines and plots, as the top-most priority; and the 'Chinese manner', which Sinicises the texts, replaces the *mise en scène*, and sets the stories in ancient China for a more 'authentic' Chinese experience by eradicating as much Shakespearean Westernness as possible.[15] Of the five *xiqu* productions at the 1986 festival, two of them – *jingju Othello* by the Experimental Jingju Company and *yueju Twelfth Night* by Shanghai Yueju Yuan - were performed with the 'Western manner', while three - *kunju Macbeth* by Shanghai Kunju Theatre, *huangmei opera Much Ado About Nothing* by Anhui Huangmei Opera Theatre Troupe,

[13] Cao, *Shakespeare on the Chinese Stage*, p. 138.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 163.
[15] Zhang Xiaoyang, *Shakespeare in China* (London: Associated University Press, 1996), p. 145.

and *yueju The Winter's Tale* by Hangzhou Yeuji Yuan - followed the 'Chinese manner' of adaptation.[16] Later productions mostly followed the 'Chinese manner', such as the sole *xiqu* production at the 1994 Shanghai International Shakespeare Festival, an adaptation of *Hamlet* in *yueju* style; and a Taiwanese *bangzi* adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* (titled *Yue/Shu* by the Taiwan Bangzi Opera Company) in 2009.

As the line-up of these productions suggests, 1986 marked a clear division between the first and the second manner of adaptation. The 1983 *jingju Othello* (hereafter named *Aosailuo,* following the Chinese pronunciation of Othello to highlight the production's refusal to be localised)[17], re-staged in 1986 for the Inaugural Shakespeare Festival, was the first of *xiqu* Shakespeare that adopted the Western manner of adaptation, and the *kunju Macbeth* was also the first to thoroughly impose 'Chineseness' on a Shakespearean play. Based on these two case studies, the discussion in this chapter formulates a basis for interpreting *xiqu* Shakespeare more generally. The Chinese Occidentalist view will then become the lens through which discussions on Taiwanese *xiqu* adaptations are presented in the next chapter.

The line-up also suggests a trend of decline in Chinese *xiqu* Shakespeare that can be discussed in this chapter. In the next chapter, personal motivations and a more liberal trend of adapting Shakespeare to *xiqu* will be examined in more detail and considered with Taiwan's historical context, as *xiqu* and Shakespeare in Taiwan have been subjected to much less artistic repression. For instance, in 1994, the Shanghai Yueju Company produced *The Revenge of the Prince* (*Hamlet*), whose leading actor, Zhao Zhigang, went on to adapt the graveyard scene into a solo performance, *Hamlet in the Graveyard*, as part of his international repertoire. Such radical reinvention of the play moves from utilising Shakespeare's Westernness to rejuvenate *xiqu* and from invoking Chinese culture to retell Shakespeare's tales in their fullness to taking fragments of Shakespeare's plays according to the particular needs of an adaptation. Therefore, such productions must be discussed on the premise of Chinese Occidentalism; only after the essentialisation of the appearance of a Shakespearean play (the first category in this

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 130-66.

[17] The phonetic transcription, as opposed to other Sinicised titles and character names such as in the *kunju Macbeth* (Macbeth becomes Ma Pei), is evident in the Occidentalist view of the play, as the name gives the production a Western rather than a Chinese origin.

chapter) and a complete internalisation of Shakespeare with the xiqu conventionality (the second category) are examined can discussion of the next stage of Occidentalist *xiqu* Shakespeare be plausible.

Also, Taiwan is a more suitable starting point for the next stage of discussion, as most studies on recent Sino-Shakespeare (e.g. the works of Li and Huang) switch to the Taiwanese *xiqu* Shakespeare (especially the works of Wu Hsing-Kuo) for its local and personal interpretation of Shakespeare's plays; consequently, these will be the focus of the next chapter. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, the most recent development of Chinese Occidentalism accords to the deepening understanding between China and the West, and to China's growing desire for Shakespeare's international marketability, leading to a new category of Sino-Shakespeare best examined under the *huaju* genre. Therefore, this chapter's discussion will rely on the representativeness of the *jingju Othello* and *kunju Macbeth*[18] as a starting point for the discourse of Chinese Occidentalism.

Aosailuo in 1983 saw director Zheng Bixian's attempt to use traditional *xiqu* to tell a Shakespearean tale. This production, in which the lead actor Ma Yong'an painted his face black, was 'one of the earliest attempts for *jingju* practitioners to engage at length in the notion of racial otherness through a black character'.[19] Such engagement of the racial issue, however, has its root in a biased notion of anything non-Chinese. This production is the beginning of the first category of Chinese Occidentalist *xiqu* Shakespeare. The other productions in this category[20] all inherit the aim of the 1983 *Othello*: the emphasis on Shakespearean, or more generally, European *mise en scène*, beside a close textual relationship with the original. This case study will thus provide a starting point of Chinese Occidentalism, with a detailed account of the restructuring of Shakespeare's play. This adaptation process is used in all subsequent *xiqu* Shakespeare, and helps to clarify the strategies of all approaches to Shakespeare by the Chinese and

[18] Because of the lack of video recordings of the original productions (performed in 1986) , the details of these two case studies will be based on secondary resources, mainly Alexander Huang's *Chinese Shakespeare* and Li's *Shashibiya*. However, this thesis will differ from their studies mainly due to the Chinese Occidentalist perspective.

[19] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 177.

[20] Such as the *yueju* (a Chinese traditional theatre sung in the Cantonese language) *Twelfth Night* by Hu Weimin (Shanghai Yueju Company, 1986), and Zhao Zhigang's adaptations of *yueju Hamlet* (titled *Hamlet in the* Graveyard; Hong Kong Shanhuan Centre, 2002).

the Taiwanese.

The second category of this chapter examines the productions that make Shakespeare conform to the stylisation of the traditional *xiqu* and its directors/actors/script-adapters. While it seems that Shakespeare has the prevailing influence over the traditional theatre, these plays, exemplified by a case study on Huang Zuolin's *kunju Macbeth* (1986), are also transformed during the procedure. This second category of *xiqu* Shakespeare is often categorised as experimental in relation to the traditional performance, while the aim is to realise the more 'poetic' and 'pure' aesthetic of the Chinese theatre.[21] While the first category puts *mise en scène* in the foreground, this second category internalises the Chinese perception of Shakespeare, providing a comparative theoretical basis for later discussions on Taiwanese *xiqu* Shakespeare in Chapter 5 and for the most recent Chinese Occidentalisation of Shakespeare in Chapter 6.

The hierarchical relation between Shakespeare and *xiqu* is a dynamic one. First, Shakespeare was *xiqu*'s tutor to modernity. Then, after *xiqu* acquired a stronger cultural confidence, it claimed Shakespeare into its own repertoires. The dialogue defines *xiqu* Shakespeare, and this chapter serves as the base for the subsequent discussions of Chinese cultural authority discovered in Shakespeare, and vice versa.

Shakespeare over *xiqu*: *Aosailuo*, or *jingju Othello*, 1983[22]

Occidentalising *Othello*

The 1983 *Aosailuo* began with the instalment of a director (Zheng Bixian), a theatrical position that had never occurred before in Chinese traditional *xiqu* personnel; with a selection of line-by-line translations from Shakespeare's original text, a script that was unfamiliar to all but the translator Sun Jiaxiu;[23]with the leading actor, also a well-known *jingju* star, Ma Yong'an, donning European costume, putting on a black curly wig and painting his face black. All of these elements were radically different from *jingju*'s

[21] Lin Ke-Huan Theatre *in Consumer Society* (Taipei: Shulin, 2007), p. 58.
[22] Zheng Bixian, dir. *Aosailuo*. Experimental Jingju Company of Beijing. Bejing, May 1983; Shanghai and Tianjin, 1987. Ma Yong'an (Othello).
[23] The translation was done by Sun and brought to the actors 'for an ultimate Shakespeare experience' (Huang, *Chinese Shakespeare*, p. 184).

convention, even unacceptable to the majority of the Chinese audience, who was conservative about making any alteration to their treasured traditional theatre. These changes evidenced the yearning for innovation after the Culture Revolution, during which period only propaganda plays were permitted.

Huang explains that the racial Otherness signified by the black-painted face has to be discussed in terms of the theatrical history and attitudes toward race on stage in China.[24] The racial conflict that is so emphasised in Shakespeare's text was not a concern for Ma 'within and without Shakespeare's text'; the contemporary Chinese audience was more concerned with the distinction 'between China and non-Chinese—a catch-all category for the foreign', and the 1983 *Aosailuo* relied on '[the leading actor's] star power and the cultural capital of Shakespeare and *jingju*'.[25] Three years later, it was these two factors that defined the pivotal position of the play at the 1986 Inaugural Shakespeare Festival; the international visibility is also critical to the creative motivation of later Chinese *xiqu* Shakespeare discussed in this thesis.

While Ma's star power at that time was evident in the popularity and importance of his works in *jingju*, Shakespeare's cultural capital was problematic. As discussed in the introductory chapters, Shakespeare's text has always been comprehensible to only a strictly limited audience, educated and motivated enough to read the language. Shakespeare's stardom, therefore, must be understood within a broader context of Chinese Occidentalism. As discussed in the introductory chapters, the 'ultimate Shakespeare experience' of the Chinese almost always comes from a secondary source, such as Ma's from a Soviet cinematic version of *Othello*[26]. Therefore, to assume that Ma's audience would recognise the racial issues raised in Shakespeare's *Othello* would be an Orientalist misunderstanding. The complex variations inevitably include Shakespeare. In order to distinguish *Othello* from other popular plays among the Chinese (as well as most East Asians), the black-painted face could convincingly signify the moor's special status.

According to the *xiqu* convention, a black face is a branch of the *hualian* role type,

[24] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeare*, pp. 176-87.
[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 180-81.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

which suggests a character who is always explicitly powerful and never bends to subtle emotions (usually a general of a great army). Also, the black face would have inevitably invoked within the Chinese collective memory a judge named Baozheng from the Song Dynasty. Baozheng, famed for being *tie-mian-wu-si* (iron-faced and impartial), has always been a beloved character, embodying justice and fairness. Thus, when Ma as Aosailuo (Othello) stepped onto the stage in Western costume, a curly wig, a stylised stance of *xiqu* convention and with a black face that simultaneously denotes an Occidental prejudice against black people, delivering lines describing Aosailuo's military prowess, the effect would have had multiple layers of significance. From the perspective of a Chinese audience, Ma's Othello would seem exotic yet familiar. The invocation of Baozheng's image was distorted by the costume and the wig, while the assertion of the prowess of a great general conformed to the audience's preconception of a black face: the typical identity of righteousness.

But the perception of Ma's Othello does not stop at the potency of the character Aosailuo. Aosailuo is black, and such an obvious observation, accentuated by the wig and the European costume, may diminish the *xiqu* convention of a black face. As discussed in Chapter 2, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's *The Three People Principle* that defines the contemporary Chinese ideology literally demands a distinction between everything Chinese and non-Chinese with an only too racial overtone. As Millie R. Creighton observes in her analysis of Japanese culture, the perception of black people in East Asia is directly inherited from the stereotypical discrimination in the West.[27] The interaction between the Japanese (or the Chinese) and the Africans had been almost non-existent in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, the Japanese's (and the Chinese's) image of black people could only have derived from such comic representations by North Americans promoting a demeaning attitude toward the African Americans.[28] And like the Japanese, the Chinese Occidentalism 'denies the individual uniqueness of Westerners, transforming all Caucasians into an essentialised category that reduces the complex variations among them'.[29]

[27] Millie R. Creighton, 'Imaging the Other in Japanese Advertising Campaigns', *Occidentalism: Images of the West*, ed. James G. Carrier (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 153-54.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 152-54.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 137.

However, essentialisation of the ethnical traits of black people is only a less distinguishable signifier of the black paint. The audience stepping into the theatre in 1983 would have been attracted to, first and foremost, an Occidentalist preconception of Shakespeare. *Othello* would have aroused more exoticism than a curiosity in seeing how Shakespeare's text was represented on stage. All the pseudo-European *mise en scène* accentuated the exotic sense of the play, and the emphasis on Europeanness that was the 'special feature' of the production[30] would serve, in fact, the purpose of an essentialised adornment on Chinese *xiqu*. While Huang argues that productions such as this one refuse to localise Shakespeare, the very notion of an essentialised appearance subconsciously puts Shakespeare and his foreignness under the locality asserted in the deliberate effort. Ma's insistence on European costumes, settings and the names of the characters (such as the name 'Othello' which was not, as in conventional Chinese translations in mid- to late-twentieth century, translated into a Chinese name) worked for Ma to signify the cultural difference between the form and the content of Ma's theatrical representation of Shakespeare. It is, in short, an image of the West perceived by the Eastern point of view. To the Chinese, it evoked a fantasy as European and Shakespearean, since the underlying theatricality, while remaining recognisably Chinese, served to ease the cultural conflict as the audience was guided into the Westernness emphasised by this production. To the Western audience familiar with Shakespeare, it was exotic (the *jingju* elements) with a mimicked appearance of the colonial power, demonstrating that the Chinese theatre had not been directly and holistically reigned by colonisation from the English-speaking (hence Shakespearean) cultures (with the exception of Hong Kong).

As Ma Yong'an stepped onto the stage to enact Othello, there were forces at hand far more complicated than the performance simply being a wonder for the Chinese audience, or indeed, an exotic essence wrapped in the theatrical appearance supposedly familiar to the Western audience, when the production was restaged in the 1986 Shakespeare Festival in Shanghai. The Western audience's perception of the conflicts at work here would not be as sophisticated as the Chinese audience's. As the plot was mostly retained (see later in the case study), the most striking difference from a conventional European production of *Othello* would be the *jingju* stylised movements

[30] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 183.

and arias, added as a Chinese expression to the Western play.

Under these conflicting forces, *xiqu* Shakespeare in Western costumes and performed to the tune of Chinese convention is simultaneously shifting towards and away from the text. The Occidentalist reading of the production, as this thesis proposes as necessary, can render a fuller appreciation of this type of *xiqu* Shakespeare because the potency of China's own culture and tradition makes the Chinese people resistant to the assimilation of foreign cultures.[31] As examined above, the wig, the black painted face and the (pseudo-)European costumes served as a theatrical foil over *jingju*; while refusing to localise Shakespeare, these could not effectively disguise the Chineseness in the production.

Chineseness is persistent and prevalent in any given *xiqu* Shakespeare. Naturally, the outlook of the set roles, the Chinese music, the carefully (and forcefully) choreographed movements and the language used all denoted the authoritative Chinese voice in *Aosailuo*. In a rare interview with Ma, he confessed that the Westernised costumes were not brought in by any expert in Western-styled costume design due to financial difficulties (not uncommon in Chinese theatrical circles).[32] The 'non-localised style' insisted upon by Ma and his company (Desdemona's and Emilia's long dresses, Bianca's sleeveless dress that signifies her lowliness as a prostitute, and Othello's initial black and later grey wig) simultaneously defamiliarised the audience from its idea of a conventional Chinese theatre, as well as enabled the actors and actresses to retain their traditional performing techniques.[33]

Such techniques are acquired through long years of training, and a *xiqu* actor or actress must deliver the emotions to the audience through virtuosity in 'the hand, the eye, the body, the hair, the steps'.[34] The long sleeves worn by Desdemona, for instance, were not the traditional water sleeve that would enable the actress (or actor playing a female role type) to wave or flick. In her recorded analysis of the *Aosailuo*, Li Ruru observes that:

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[31] Li Ruru, *Shashibiya: Staging Shakespeare in china* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), p. 195.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 179.
[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 181-82.
[34] Xu Chang-Bei, *Chinese Jingju* (Taipei: National Press, 2006), p. 125.

> The long white and flimsy water-sleeves that contribute to the gestural repertoire and fluid movement of dancing were modified for Desdemona's costumes. They were now made in the same material as her dress but were shorter and narrower than the conventional water-sleeves. In the performance, when Desdemona learned that Cassio had been murdered and her husband was to kill her, she used a series of delicate long-sleeve movements to express her fear and innocence.[35]

It is worth noting that such gentle behaviour conforms simultaneously to Shakespeare's Desdemona and the Chinese conception of any virtuous woman, exemplifying the choice of *Othello* for the *jingju* production: the higher level of similarity in characterisation, the easier it is to adapt such a play by the Chinese theatrical vocabulary. Such displays reveal the nature of the Chinese *xiqu*: the physical representation of mentality.[36] Naturally, such a representation reminds one of Dennis Kennedy's observation that any transcultural representation of Shakespeare will place more emphasis on the 'scenographic and physical modes' due to the innate difficulty in dealing with Shakespeare's verbal genius, and that such productions must be seen with a localised signifier that gives the play its actual life.[37] However, the starting point of this production was an explicit and vehement wish to refuse localisation. The question here is thus extended beyond the more common 'is it Shakespeare?' or 'is it Chinese theatre?' to 'what is the significance to call it Shakespeare?'.[38]

The significance commences with the pursuit of *xiqu* actors/directors for a Shakespeare that is understood against the backdrop of Chinese history and culture, and due to the insistence on no localisation (e.g. transforming the play's setting to ancient China, or translating the names of the characters to Chinese-based names; the 'Western manner'), the actors/directors find themselves somehow unfettered by the conventional restriction, part of which is preserved as necessary for what actors/directors perceive as a Shakespearean essence. As with almost all *xiqu* Shakespeares, Ma's motivation comes

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[35] Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 180.

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] Dennis Kennedy, 'Introduction: Shakespeare without His Language', in *Foreign Shakespeare,* ed. Dennis Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 6.

[38] This question is the theme throughout all *xiqu* Shakespeare productions. For example, the Taiwan Bangzi Opera's 2009 adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* also emphasised on presenting Shakespeare's 'original gravy and sauce' while doing so via a local medium of *xiqu*.

from the appeal of Soviet's films and his yearning to 'transcend his limits' as an already extremely successful and renowned *jingju* actor.[39]

The Convention of *xiqu* Shakespeare

Like most Chinese actors/directors, Ma had no substantial knowledge about Shakespeare, and sought help from Sun Jianxiu, a professor in English literature, and Jiao Juyin (whose widow Pan Xiaoli provided him with Jiao's works), a director and translator educated in Paris.[40] With limited textual references available (only a Chinese translation of *Stanislavski Produces Othello*), the Shakespeare seen from Ma's point of view was more a projection of his Occidentalist ideal than a literarily informed inspiration. As can be seen in the above discussion of the physical theatricality of the production, Ma's work attempted to dress *xiqu* with a Shakespearean appearance.

While this appearance simultaneously gives the characters and the audience a sense of staged foreignness and an essential experience of a Chinese theatre opened to more possibilities (e.g. the fusion of different set role types into one character), the adaptive script and the directorship of the production demonstrate an even more profound insight into how an Occidentalist approach to *Othello* has contributed to this hybrid artistic creation.

Characterisation was the first important aspect that affected Ma's and Shao's (Shao Hongchao, the script writer) choice of *Othello*. While *jingju* (as well as all *xiqu* subgenres) requires each character to be enacted by a certain role type, Shao wanted to keep the integrity of Shakespearean characterisation, which is typical for the complexity in each character.[41] While this could have posed serious difficulties in a *xiqu* adaptation (as it had, for instance, for Wu Hsing-Kuo's adaptation of *Macbeth*), the characters in *Othello* actually fitted into the *jingju* role types with relative ease.[42] Aosailuo, as discussed above, was created as a type of *hualian* usually depicted as a valorous male; Desdemona's character was assigned to a *zheng dan* role that denotes physical grace and virtue; Iago, while expected to be assigned to a role type of *chou*

[39] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeare*, p. 177.
[40] *Ibid*., p. 184; Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 178.
[41] Fei, *Shakespeare and Beijing Opera*, p. 63.
[42] Zhang, *Shakespeare in China*, p. 147.

(the clown) that is common for a sinister character, was finally created as the *lao sheng* type (normally a sincere and honest old person, leading the audience to misplace trust in him as in Shakespeare's original).[43] Naturally, the strict stylisation of *jingju* could not completely convey the complexity of the Shakespearean characters; yet the close proximity was defined by the essentialising strategies utilised to create the performance in the first place.

In Li Ruru's report, *Aosailuo* incorporated three main adaptive strategies. Firstly, the structure of the play was altered into eight acts; secondly, the handkerchief played a much more prominent role in terms of plot and emotional representation; and thirdly, Iago's character was given a more concrete motivation.[44] In defence of the appropriation, one can easily argue that the theatrical form of the Chinese *xiqu* theatre necessitates the changes; after all, the production was designed to introduce Shakespeare to a Chinese audience which had relatively little contact with the Renaissance English playwright. However, the Shakespeare that was introduced was given a new sense of aesthetics from the confrontation between Chinese *xiqu*'s 'necessities' against an Occidentally perceived *Othello*. The understanding of the text may not have been enough to put Ma on the list of the best informed Shakespeareans (such as Professor Perng Ching-Hsi, a celebrated Taiwanese Shakespearean scholar who worked closely with the Taiwan Bangzi Opera Company on its Shakespearean adaptations); however, his (and the director Zheng's) reflection on the play deserves a more thorough scrutiny.

From the inception of Ma's idea to put Shakespeare on a Chinese traditional stage, non-conventionality was always the end purpose and the means by which Ma, as a well-established actor in the *jingju* genre, was able to find an escape and express his ideal for a new Chinese theatre. Such personal motivation can be found in every *xiqu* adaptation of Shakespeare, and is in accordance with the nature of Occidentalism as defined by Xiaomin Chen: that the purpose of Occidentalism in China is determined by the agent which utilises this theoretical framework to interpret a literary work. On the other hand, where Chen bipolarises the usage of Occidentalism as anti-official versus

[43] *Ibid.*, pp. 147-48.
[44] Li, *Shashibiya*, pp. 181-85.

official propagandas, Ma's *Aosailuo* can be said to have initiated the artistic side of Sino-Occidentalism, which essentialised both Shakespeare and the Chinese traditional theatre, applying Shakespeare as a framework to the Chinese dramaturgy to recreate *jingju*.

An Occidentalist viewpoint gave Ma a license to adapt both the play and the *jingju* performing style in whatever way he deemed necessary. Shakespeare's cultural credential was enough for the Chinese audience, and the Chinese traditional theatre's exoticism was sufficient for a European audience. When Occidentalism and Orientalism are combined, drastic transformation of the play itself (including the appearance of the characters) is not only possible, but also justifiable. In his analysis of Chinese traditional theatre's status quo (particular *jingju*'s, hailed as the National Theatre in Taiwan), Perng Ching-Hsi points to the structural weakness of *jingju*, observing that 'the emphasis on music and singing leads Peking Opera (*jingju*) to… the deficient dramatic scripts'.[45] Because the usual repertoire of any *xiqu* is supposed to be already familiar to Chinese *xiqu* theatre-goers, a repertoire is always reduced to certain scenes of especially spectacular acrobatics or beautiful arias. Keeping a script intact to tell a complete story is an essential step of a different *xiqu* performance. *Huaju*, on the other hand, is readily equipped with the requirement of a complete script. By including the artistic effort of *huaju* (spoken drama) director Zheng Bixian and scriptwriter Shao, the collaboration mirrored the conversation between *jingju* and Shakespeare, and *Othello* was adapted according to *huaju*'s standard of a complete storytelling in order to achieve Ma's desired artistic entirety.

However, a straightforward translation of the play would by no means be applicable to *xiqu*'s requirements. The complicated issues of *xiqu*'s stylised actions, conventional codification of movements and the poetic aesthetics of the arias must be taken into consideration. In order to study further examples of *xiqu* Shakespeare, it is essential to examine how the process of trans-theatrical adaptation can work. Su Leci's (Shanghai Theatre Academy) summary of the six principles used in the *yueju* (a Cantonese form of *xiqu*[46]) *Hamlet* during the 1994 Shanghai Shakespeare Festival provides the most

[45] Perng Ching-Hsi, 'At the Crossroads: Peking Opera in Taiwan Today', in *Asian Theatre Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Autumn, 1989), p. 131.

[46] While the musical elements set it apart from jingju, the differences lie in technicalities such as

detailed account of the dialogue between *xiqu* and Shakespeare.[47]

Firstly, even though the play's appearance (i.e. the costumes and *mise en scène*) seems to equate *xiqu* with Shakespeare, the requirements of *xiqu* technicalities (e.g. the arias, the theatrical essence of externalising the inner world) nevertheless put the play into an ancient Chinese setting. Su therefore asserts the inevitability to 'emphasise the resemblance between [Shakespeare's] play and Chinese traditional thinking, while diluting certain philosophical thinking, specifically Renaissance'.[48] The process of such dilution was seen most strongly in the simplification of Iago's character. Instead of letting Iago play out the ambivalent evil, *Aosailuo*'s Yagu had a clearly orientated motivation: his jealousy for Kaxi'ao's (Cassio's) military promotion and his desire for Desdemona.[49] While Shakespeare's Iago also begins his sinister intention for these two reasons, his pursuit for evil is subtle; not so for Yagu, whose motivation was clearly outlined and straightforward, thus reducing the character's complexity. The trimming of Iago's complexity, thus centrality to the play, suits an important purpose: the *jingju* adaptation has to conform to *jingju*'s requirement for the focus on 'one person and one thing'.[50] As the focus was always trained on Ma's Aosailuo, it matched the Chinese audience's desire for and familiarity with watching and caring about only one character/actor on the stage.[51]

The Chinese audience's desire to focus only on the protagonist leads to Su's second, third and the forth points: that the 'bold trimming' of the original text is justified by the need to 'grasp the central theme and character' to 'clarify the play'; that characterisation is achieved through 'music, dancing, and various other artistic techniques'; and that the

instruments used in the music rather than a completely different genre, making Su's account for *yueju* applicable to the general genre of xiqu, including jingju and kunju discussed in the next section of this chapter.

47 Su Leci 'Sinicised and *Xiqu*-ised Shakespeare', in *A Collection of Theses, International conference on Shakespeare in Chine-Performances and Perspectives*, eds. Shanghai Theatre Academy, Hong Kong University, La Trobe University Australia, 1999, pp. 195-99. All quotations and paraphrases are from the researcher's translation.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 196.

49 Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 185.

50 *Ibid.*

51 Li points out that such centrality in Chinese theatre was already clarified by Li Yu, a dramatist who, in seventeenth century, has argued that 'although there are many people in a play, they are after all there to accompany the protagonist' (*Ibid.*, p. 184).

'focal scenes' must be emphasised via discussions among the production team.[52] As Iago was simplified to foreground Othello's storyline, the handkerchief was pushed into the foreground of the play. While in Shakespeare's original, the connection between the handkerchief and the protagonists' romance is mentioned in passing during the Act III, *Aosailuo* had it performed on stage in literal and metaphorical accordance with the Chinese theatrical convention. During a dance scene early[53] in the play, Aosailuo and Taisidemengna (Desdemona) conjured up images easily recognised by a Chinese audience: the man as the Sun and the woman the Moon.[54] The conventional use of handkerchiefs (whose effect is closely related to the water sleeves discussed earlier in this chapter) accompanied their arias, simultaneously conforming to a theatre of the Chinese expectation and to the centralisation of the handkerchief. Thus as the centralisation of an object provided a comfort for the Chinese audience, it simultaneously decentralised Shakespeare, offering yet another Orientalist curiosity apart from its *xiqu* stylisation.

Fifth, while Shakespeare is 'magnificent, serious, and profound', the Chinese *xiqu* is often 'gentle, emotional, and subtle'; the latter is somehow 'unable to bear the philosophical burden' of a Shakespearean play, and the solutions to the Shakespearean-philosophy-versus-Chinese-theatrical-subtlety dilemma are: 1) to make the *mise en scène* more concise in order to place the emphasis on 'consciousness' rather than on form; 2) to focus on the structural beauty of physical movements and to replace certain subtleties required for *xiqu* with gestures that convey more profound meanings; and 3) to focus on the rhythm between action and stillness, as well as on the exchange between the magnificence of a scene and its focal plot.[55]

Such transformation from Shakespeare's philosophical magnificence to Chinese theatrical subtlety is one from words to actions: a Shakespearean actor talks, while a Chinese *xiqu* actor plays out the lines with the assistance of the accompanying music - a more powerful translation of Shakespeare's texts than the spoken words. The Chinese have not been used to the audio part of the language, and all Chinese performing arts

[52] Su, 'Sinicised Shakespeare', p. 197.
[53] This scene supersedes Roderigo's recounts of Desdemona's elopement with the Moor in Act I Scene I (Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 182).
[54] Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 182.
[55] Su, 'Sinicised Shakespeare', pp. 197-98.

are accompanied by subtitles; therefore, any dramatic realisation must be visualised. When Othello asks for the handkerchief in Act III, he invokes Desdemona's despair by claiming the Egyptian magical origin (*Othello*, III, iv, 65-87).[56] It is a general concern of Chinese-speaking directors that such Western allusion would inevitably elude the audience's comprehension and appreciation. In some productions such allusion is replaced by a Chinese tale, or anecdotes that have cultural immediacy for contemporary Chinese-speaking audiences.[57] In *Aosailuo*, storytelling was discarded, since *xiqu* is more physical than verbal, in the form of three 'requests', as described by Ma:

> [Aosailuo] became more and more enraged. The first was to stretch my right arm and ask for the handkerchief. The second 'request' was done by turning my body to face upstage, while stretching my left arm behind my back. [Aosailuo] at this time did not want to see his wife. The movement of the cloak I wore also helped me to strengthen the power of this gesture. Still no handkerchief…[Aosailuo] made a sudden turn to face his wife and put one of his legs on a prop rock. In this posture I looked like a hungry and fierce tiger charging down the hill and forced Desdemona into an inferior position.[58]

From this point on, Ma's Aosailuo went on to threaten his wife with increasing verbal potency, but no story was told. The physical representation of the originally verbal expressions achieves two ends at the same time. On one hand, adaptations inevitably require a language which enables the target audience to find an interest in the plays, especially for the Chinese, who are historically, geographically and culturally so distanced from Shakespeare. On the other, as the lines are ignored, the linguistic and cultural restriction is also cast away; the Chinese actor and director are thus given the liberty to interpret Shakespeare from their personal reading, regardless of any European conventions about the play.

This Sino-Occidentalist representation leads to Su's final point on *xiqu* Shakespeare.

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[56] William Shakespeare, *Othello*, eds. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, The Folger Shakespeare Library (New York: Washington Square Press, 1993). Subsequent references are to this edition.

[57] This technique is particularly popular among the *huaju*, or spoken drama, directors. In Chapter 7, for instance, this replacing of the Shakespearean allusions will serve to transform *Two Gentlemen of Verona* into a Taiwanese melodrama.

[58] Excerpted from Li's interview with Ma on 19 December 2000. Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 183.

He stresses that the theatrical techniques, especially the arias, of *xiqu* must not be discarded (albeit such techniques are overtly formalised throughout the long history of Chinese traditional theatre), because 'we must not disregard where we begin in pursuit of an end-product'.[59] Apart from the physicalisation of the allusions, the arias also transformed Shakespeare's lines into something more straightforward. In Act III, Othello laments that

> She's gone, I am abused, and my relief
> Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage,
> That we can call these delicate creatures ours
> And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad
> And live upon the vapour of a dungeon
> Than keep a corner in the thing I love
> For others' uses (III, iii, 308-14).

Replacing the soliloquy, Ma's Aosailuo sang

> Oh, God! A woman's mind is so elusive,
> If unfortunately Yagu's (Iago's) words tell the truth,
> The moon will disappear from the sky for ever.[60]

This abbreviation of Shakespeare's text exemplifies one of the most essential approaches for the Chinese to take what they believe is the 'essence' of Shakespeare's play. When the Chinese Aosailuo seemed to offer a more straightforward version of Othello's complaint, Aosailuo was actually simplifying the nature of the complaint. Shakespeare's Othello explicitly acknowledges that he is being abused by the unfortunate marriage, and such misfortune stems from the marriage's being 'for others' uses' and forces him to resent his marital status. But Aosailuo refused to acknowledge the detailed explanation, waving it away with a metaphorical sigh while assigning the misfortune as the elusiveness of a woman's mind. What was gained in Aosailuo's version was the Chinese aesthetics for imagination; but what was lost was the necessity

[59] Su, 'Sinicised Shakespeare', p. 198.
[60] Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 186.

of a serious discussion on a woman's mentality.[61]

Also, Li observes that, while the Chinese version seemed to be a shorter summary, it took longer to be sung on stage than when Shakespeare's words are spoken.[62] The use of metaphor was also altered, as 'the vapour of a dungeon' was replaced by a vanishing moon to signify Aosailuo's despair of a lost love. Presented with the form of arias, dance and music, *Aosailuo* gave the audience a vision more intimately connected to its culture, precisely because such a vision was generated and realised from the understanding and aesthetic sense of the Orient. As will be discussed further, *xiqu* Shakespeare, not unlike their *huaju* (spoken drama) counterpart, always contains a hint of Chineseness, and an Occidentalist reading of Shakespeare. In this production, while the appearances (i.e. the *mise en scène*, the modified costumes, the direct translations of the characters' names, the story-telling mode of a Western play) were seen as a grand gesture to resist localisation, the inception of producing such a play itself can never avoid the very localisation that Ma claimed he desired to accomplish. The mounting of a Shakespearean play is therefore not only the donning of Western costume by a Chinese traditional actor; the costume is imagined, woven not by direct contact with Shakespeare's culture, but by a desire to emulate something that has never truly been in the Chinese cultural narrative. The texts are filtered through translations that alter from one translator to another, and adaptations that must be tailored to fit the theatrical convention. Shakespeare's value to this type of *xiqu* adaptations is its cultural capital, which can be a cultural attraction in international festivals. This understanding also describes the early stage of the conversation between Occidentalism and Orientalism: as the West idealises the tranquillity of the Eastern theatre, the East idealises the ability to act of the Western theatre. At a more mature stage of the conversation, the focus of the idealisation turns inward. As the Chinese at the time were gaining their own cultural confidence, however, the need to stress the European appearance was gradually lost, replaced by the need to justify the cultural competence of the Chinese *xiqu* against

[61] A discussion on the Chinese perception of gender will open another thesis. It suffices to say that, since feminism has never been a serious issue raised in the Sinophone world as it is in the West, the role of women on the Chinese stage is at once dominating and discriminated. The former derives from the Chinese culture's respect for the female's role both domestically and socially, the latter stems from the lack of a feminist discourse: without such discourse, the nonchalance of the male has little chance to be remedied.

[62] *Ibid.*

Shakespeare.

Shakespeare internalised: *Blood-Stained Hands*, or *kunju Macbeth*, 1986[63]

At this time, dressing Chinese traditional actors in Western costumes was a gesture of refusal of localisation, as the Chinese theatre practitioners sought a European authenticity, supposedly superior to the Chinese tradition. The relatively new repertoire from Shakespeare provided a new opportunity for a renovation of the traditional *xiqu*, and Chinese *xiqu* directors believed that the Western *mise en scène* and story offered a chance for the traditional theatre to break out of Oriental boundaries and reach beyond the physicality of the traditional theatre. However, the costumes were merely borrowed; the physical actions of the actors and actresses still composed the theme of *xiqu*. Since *xiqu* uses physical actions and patterns to convey an idea, an emotion or a story, a *xiqu* production of Shakespeare created from the 'Western manner' could hinder the expressiveness of the physical theatricality; also, when the emphasis is placed on the integrity of the plot, the requirement of *xiqu* convention to cut down the texts could also cut down a director's choice of the parts of a Shakespearean play which particularly interest him.

In the second category of Chinese *xiqu* Shakespeare, the 'Chinese manner', the Chinese Occidentalism is more clearly exposed, while the Chinese traditional costume makes the performance more comfortable in the context of its creation. Huang Zuolin, the artistic director for the 1986 *kunju Macbeth* (or *Blood-Stained Hands*, as translated from its original Chinese title *Xieshou Ji*), asserted that the specific purpose of this production was to 'be a *kunju* performance of a Shakespeare's [sic] play'.[64] Huang's assertion turned the production into a refusal to Westernise Chinese traditional theatre, even when it was reaching out to Shakespeare. The significance of such a refusal is two-fold. Retaining all aspects of the traditional theatre (i.e. the costumes, the *mise en*

[63] Huang Zuolin, and Li Jiayao, dir. *The Story of Blood-Stained Hands*. Shanghai Kunju Theatre. Shanghai, Edinburgh, and London, 1986. Huang and Li differ in the English translation of the play's title. In this thesis, Li's translation 'Blood-Stained Hands' is adopted over Huang's 'Bloody Hands', for the former can better convey the production's representative purpose of internalising Shakespeare's spirit into the Chinese comprehension.

[64] Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 121.

scène, the verbal and musical art) and performing in China's first Shakespeare Festival made this production a proclamation of the Chinese ability to resist being consumed by the West and to absorb the Western culture, grafting the 'new' repertoire onto the old and decaying art form to revitalise it. Also, this production illustrates that the theatricality is authentically Chinese; in this view the Orientalised Shakespeare is actually a powerful representation of an Occidentalist approach to Shakespeare's play with a stronger assertion of Chinese cultural competence.

If the (pseudo-)European costumes of the *jingju Othello* signified Ma Yong'an's intention to differentiate the content (Shakespeare/Western) and the form (*xiqu*/Chinese) of the production, Huang Zuolin's insistence on an authentic traditional theatre performance demonstrated the Chinese confidence in its culture's ability to integrate the Other for Chinese audiences and the performers' own artistic purposes. In Huang Zuolin's report for the 1987 *kunju Macbeth* Symposium in London, he expressed the desire to see Shakespeare as not a mere 'foreign visitor', but an intimate friend whom only 'our unique traditional culture can reach'.[65]

The reason behind Huang Zuolin's assertion can be explained as simply as his confidence in the capacity of Chinese *xiqu*, especially the chosen *kunju* - the oldest existing theatrical form from which many other Chinese theatre traditions, including *jingju*, were born. While the 1983 *jingju Othello* translated the play's name phonetically into *Aosailuo*, the 1986 *kunju Macbeth* transformed the name into *Xieshou Ji*, literally meaning *Blood-Stained Hands*, and Macbeth's name was not translated as Makebai, which would have been the Chinese phonetic equivalent, but as Ma Pei, which sounds more similar to a fictional Chinese general with a proper surname and given name.[66] Lady Macbeth was also translated into Tie Shi, meaning the Iron Lady, giving her a clear motif for the audience to recognise easily (Chinese audiences at that time would have been familiar with Margaret Thatcher and her nickname through her interaction with the influential leader Deng Xiaoping). The Sinicised title and names acknowledged *Blood-Stained Hands* as a Chinese tale from the outset, and Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was effectively adapted into the Chinese narrative, endorsing

[65] Lin, *Theatre in Consumer Society,* pp. 56-57.

[66] A Chinese name puts the family name, usually consists of a single syllable, before the given name, which can have either one or two syllables.

Huang Zuolin's intention to make this production 'so authentic that audiences would not realise they were watching an adaptation of a Western play unless so informed'.[67]

The act of adaptation signifies the director's freedom to facilitate *xiqu*'s convention of focusing on the main characters and on one specific object. In the previous analysis of the 1983 *Aosailuo*, the conventions are explained as indispensible for a Chinese traditional theatre to tell any tale; in *Blood-Stained Hands*, though the necessary visualisation and other conventions remain largely the same, Huang Zuolin's explicit proclamation of the Chineseness in the production sets this production apart from those, like *Aosailuo*, that have sought to borrow the Chinese-conceived Shakespearean appearance.

In his speech to the Inaugural Shakespeare Festival in 1986, Huang Zuolin expressed his idea that Shakespeare and the Chinese theatre can learn from each other, and that:

> there is no doubt that we shall make more contributions to the theatrical circles of the world if we perform Shakespeare's plays by using some stage techniques of traditional Chinese drama when we introduce the works of this great dramatic poet to Chinese audiences. And in the meantime we can make our brilliant theatrical tradition and consummate stage techniques known to countries all over the world.[68]

Here, Huang Zuolin demonstrated a clear sense of national pride in the theatrical prowess of *xiqu*, equating it with Shakespeare's high status as perceived by the Chinese. Moreover, he was eager to show to the world what the Chinese had in store by way of a festival dedicated to Shakespeare. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, it was a time when the Chinese were beginning to re-establish their cultural confidence in the global context, and Shakespeare was one of the greatest assets by which the West, where Shakespeare gained his cultural authority, could understand and acknowledge the equal greatness of the Chinese *xiqu*.

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[67] Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 120.
[68] Zhang, *Shakespeare in China,* p. 134.

It would seem that the essentialisation, or Occidentalisation, of Shakespeare in *Aosailuo* was an act of insufficient cultural confidence for Ma Yong'an; however, borrowing from the essentialised Shakespeare was not entirely negative in terms of artistic creation for the Chinese. As analysed in the previous section, boundaries for the Chinese *xiqu* in performing Shakespeare present themselves whenever the storytelling modes between a more philosophical/complex Shakespeare and a more physical/straightforward Chinese theatre are at odds. These limitations nonetheless mark a very distinctive access point for the audience and the actors to appreciate the effort to overcome the different perspectives of Shakespeare and *xiqu*. In *Blood-Stained Hands*, the boundaries were still there, but hidden underneath Chinese theatrical symbolism. When water-sleeves were replaced by Western costumes in *Aosailuo*, the movements of the actresses were thwarted and awkward; a Westernised costume would have been more suitable for *huaju* performance, since it is not designed to maximise the Chinese physical theatricality. However, while the Oriental physical aesthetics were invoked to express the distress of the Chinese Desdemona, in *Aosailuo* the audience could still comprehend the Western source of her distress, as the Westernised costume compelled the actress to step into a more realistic performance unseen and forbidden in *xiqu*. In *Blood-Stained Hands*, on the other hand, when Tie Shi washed her hands, those in the audience who were not 'so informed' that they were viewing an adaptation would simply see the action as authentically Chinese; hence the appropriation was complete for Huang's intention to create a Chinese theatre that absorbs and integrates Shakespeare's spirit: 'Shakespeare's humanistic ideal' as asserted by the director Li Jiayao.[69]

The humanistic ideal exercised in *kunju Macbeth* composed the theme of the production, setting itself apart from *Aosailuo* in significant ways. The refusal to be Westernised was evident in the retaining of all conventions of *kunju* to express what Huang Zuolin saw in *Macbeth*; yet it might have been a mere visualisation of Shakespeare's texts. However, the refusal of Westernised costumes and acting styles could instead be considered a force to capture Shakespeare's 'spirit': with the texts replaced by a Chinese-oriented thinking, *Macbeth* was told through a Chinese philosophical as well as visual perspective. An Occidentalist production would have had the outward

[69] Zha Peide and Tian Ja, 'Shakespeare in Traditional Chinese Operas', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Summer, 1988), p. 205.

appearance of a Shakespearean play, since the *mise en scène* is the easiest part of the foreignness for an audience unfamiliar with Shakespeare's original texts to grasp. Without the apparent visual cues, the audience has to be knowledgeable enough about the *kunju* formulas to understand the difference between the traditional repertoires and the Shakespearean adaptation. In 1986, when *Blood-Stained Hands* was performed for an audience with all the required knowledge, the Shakespearean story that was not included in the usual repertoire was enough to offset the Chinese theatrical authenticity: the perception of the production was genuinely Chinese, and Shakespeare was remotely recognised, just as his play was perceived through the lens of Occidentalisation.

This is what Huang Zuolin was aiming for, and he was the most appropriate person to achieve this. Prior to this production, he had already tried to adapt *Macbeth* in a *xiqu* form in 1945.[70] As discussed in Chapter 2, Huang Zuolin's earlier years were spent in a government-sanctioned Stanislavskian theatre, and he had experimented with 'blending the oriental and occidental cultures', but was frustrated by the fact that 'we have only stressed certain ideas of the picture-frame stage, the fourth wall, and the realistic theatre that creates the illusion of [the European and Northern American] theatre'.[71] Though deeply immersed in the *huaju* form himself, Huang Zuolin insisted on a theatre he called *xieyi* (literally 'writing the meaning') theatre, which invoked the fundamental Chinese aesthetic that would leave blanks in paintings and bare stages for imagination to work through the strictly categorised physical symbols.[72] With an understanding of the *huaju* genre in one hand and an aesthetic sense of China in the other, the merging of the two generated a new art form that told the Shakespearean tale from a Chinese tongue. Such a unique combination of achievements thus set an example for future productions: in Wu Hsing-Kuo's adaptation of *Macbeth* into *jingju* in Taiwan in the same year, the *huaju* elements served to smooth the storytelling mode of *jingju*, completing the narrative and rendering a more cohesive plotline for the modern Taiwanese audience who was not familiar with the traditional *xiqu* repertoire.

When the act of adaptation begins with a proclaimed purpose of realising Shakespeare's 'spirits', faithfulness must be called into question (albeit the question itself is

[70] Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 124.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 123.
[72] *Ibid.*

problematic). While Alexander Huang laments that 'the ideological investments in Chinese opera's visuality have turned *xiqu* into a system of signification antithetical to *huaju* and verbalisation'[73], the supposed antithesis comes from the contrasting methods of adapting the plays. In *huaju*, as will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, the comparable theatricality has already led directors to incorporate personal reading for Shakespearean plays into their productions post-2000. A straightforward *huaju* performance, more capable of accommodating the textual translation, is not as troubling as a transformation to a more metaphorical presentation of the *xiqu*. Preserving the textual aesthetics in arias poses a grave issue, as the texts feature significantly more spoken lines than the sung arias. As in *Aosailuo*, cutting the lines would have meant leaving out characterisation, and the requirement to focus on one particular storyline and character means the inevitable abandonment of themes in Shakespeare's plays only possible to express through intricate sub-plots. Therefore, *Blood- Stained Hands*'s foremost significance lies in Huang Zuolin and Li Jyayao's insistence on catching the spirit of *Macbeth*: the rise and fall of ambition.

Blood- Stained Hands divided the play into seven acts:[74]

1. Advancement (I i/iii/iv)[75]
2. Conspiracy (I.v)
3. Shifting the Blame (II.i/ii/iii)
4. Turn the Banquet Upside Down (III.iv)
5. Seeking Help from the Witches (IV.i)
6. Frenzy in the Boulder (V.i)
7. Blood for Blood (V.vii)

The abbreviation of the play was essential to the *xiqu* convention; and the length of *Macbeth* was actually one of the practical reasons for the choice of adaptation - being the shortest of Shakespeare's tragedies, cutting down the text would have been easier. Nonetheless, the decision of the textual reduction was a result of the *xiqu* requirement

[73] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 176.
[74] Li, *Shashiniya*, p. 127.
[75] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. George Hunter, Penguin Shakespeare (London: Penguin, 2005). Subsequent references are to this edition.

to highlight the main theme and characters. Leaving out scenes such as Act I Scene VII, in which Macbeth struggles with his wife's murderous plan, weakened the character's complexity, as well as foregrounding his ambitious personality. Macbeth's indecisiveness, however, was ruled out both for the space necessary for *kunju*'s theatricality and for the chosen 'spirit' of Shakespeare to be put on stage. To be more precise, the proposed spirit of the play in this production can best be described as the Chinese scholar Cao Shujun summarises:

> Ma Pei was one of King Zheng's military elites. He was generously rewarded for his extraordinary results from one campaign to put down a rebellion. However, promotions only inspired his long-time longing for the throne. During the first night when King Zheng took residence at Ma's place, Ma conspired with his wife to murder the King, planted the crime on others, and took the throne with ease. When 'successful', Ma Pei began to eradicate any opposing voice; even his most trusted men were not spared. A pair of blood stained hands committed consecutive crimes, leading to betrayals from all directions and madness on themselves. As the army of vengeance drew near, both husband and wife took their own sinful lives.[76]

Ambition is one of the themes of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and the seven acts were carefully selected to magnify the murderous intention of Ma Pei. While Shakespeare's Macbeth begins to substantialise his ambition after Lady Macbeth's encouragement, Ma Pei's longing for the throne was added to make his ambition clear from the start; Ma Pei's suicide in the end, comparing with Macbeth's resigned persistence through the end, drew a more concise conclusion to his remorse. The pair of blood stained hands gave the play a central focus; the parallel between the image of a pair of bloody hands and the title of the production was a useful reminder for the Chinese audience, to whom the source material was otherwise foreign. Moreover, instead of an epiphany, the witches in *kunju Macbeth* incited the long-awaited call of ambition, adding the Buddhist sense of predetermination resonating in every Asian adaptation of *Macbeth*, e.g. Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* and Wu Hsing-Kuo's *The Kingdom of Desire*.

In *Aosailuo*, Iago's role was simplified to add stress on Othello's jealousy. A similar

[76] Cao, *Shakespeare on the Chinese Stage*, p. 192.

approach was employed here to push Ma Pei's theme to the foreground, while the majority of the story was retained. It is worth noting here that the Chinese focus on the tragic heroes, as evident in most of the case studies in this thesis, can be understood from the significance of the power struggles by which the Chinese and Taiwanese directors are motivated to adapt Shakespeare. Of the seven acts of *kunju Macbeth*, the witch scene at the opening of the play, the dagger scene before the murder takes place and the banquet are the main focus of scriptwriter Zheng Shifeng and Huang Zuolin's narrative.[77] With a court physician linking all seven acts together, Huang Zuolin re-created Shakespeare, telling the story of *Macbeth* in a way that reinforces the Chinese cultural authority rather than using *xiqu* to assert Shakespeare's cultural superiority.

Sinicisation was seen in almost every theatrical aspect of this production. Tie Shi (Lady Macbeth) did not invoke unearthly power to 'unsex' her (I.v.39), but dreamed of a tiger sitting on a dragon's bed, referring to an unworthy man usurping the bed of the rightful king, thus justifying Ma Pei's intended murder.[78] According to Li Ruru's description, the centre of the production (the dagger scene) opened with a bare stage, with two drugged guards lying in a corner.[79] Ma Pei appeared on stage, sword in hand, and he dashed, stopped, prayed, adjusted his helmet and rolled his eyes, while simplistic music accompanied him as he began to waver in his resolve. And when he saw an imaginary sword before him, he sang:

> What is that flickering in front of my eyes?
> Another Dragon Spring.
> It is clanging in the sky.
> Dripping with blood, the sharp blade is shining!
> It is changing, now long, now short,
> Sometimes half of it appears, sometimes it hides.
> The sword is slipping away from my grip.
> It makes the people who work with their minds lose their minds.[80]

[77] Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 128.
[78] Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 111.
[79] *Ibid.*, p. 110.
[80] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

A chorus was heard repeating his last line; and Tie Shi's aria rang from the backstage, reminding Ma of her dream of the tiger and the dragon's bed. Thus encouraged, Ma Pei again sang to his final resolution on the murder.[81] Compared with the twenty-eight lines in Shakespeare's original where Macbeth soliloquises on the imagined dagger (II.i.33-61), the arias were much shorter in length. Yet the music, the movements, and the bare stage left the audience with a huge space where imagination could take place.

The instance described here is a representative example of how the Shakespearean language is translated into the Chinese theatrical vocabulary. Firstly, if Tie Shi was to call for a spirit to neutralise what her gender ordained she should do, it would have conflicted with her name's invocation of an iron will; the Chinese Tie Shi was already unsexed. Second, Ma Pei's agitation was evident in his stylised movements. If an actor on a more naturalistic stage gives as many facial movements as Ma Pei did, the interpretation of these movements may be that of insanity; yet Ma Pei's movements were accompanied by musical lyrics resonated through the stage by the repetition of the choirs and Tie Shi's reminder; as such Ma Pei's actions could be read as his indecisiveness, in addition to a crazed tendency driven by a supernatural power as much as by his own manifested ambition. In this way, Shakespeare's text was translated not only verbally through the lyrics, but also by the *xiqu* convention that absorbs the text and metaphors of Shakespeare's play.[82]

Active participation would have required knowledge of the physical language of *kunju*, but the spectacles of the play were impressive enough for Antony Tatlow to conclude, after viewing the 1987 performance, that 'The Western actor speaks the words; the East Asian actor embodies the codes'.[83] While some of the Chinese contemporary critics lamented that the production 'devoured Shakespeare'[84], the complete Sinicisation of Shakespeare's play welcomed interpretations on *xiqu* itself. According to Zhang, *Blood-Stained Hands* won great praise from the Chinese critics, artists, and the general

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[81] *Ibid.*

[82] This chapter focuses on the essentialist selection of Shakespeare's text by the Chinese director. For a more thorough examination of the visual translation from Shakespeare's text to the convention of *kunju*, see Alexander C. Y. Huang, 'The Visualisation of Metaphor in Two Chinese Versions of *Macbeth*', in *Shakespeare in Hollywood, Asia, and Cyberspace*, eds. Alexander C. Y. Huang and Charles S. Ross (Indiana, West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2009), pp. 98-108.

[83] Quoted in Huang, *Chinese Shakespeare*, p. 175.

[84] Quoted in Cao, *Shakespeare on the Chinese Stage*, p. 191.

audience; when it toured to London and Edinburgh in 1987, it was also well-received by the English audience.[85] When words were left unspoken, those knowledgeable of the codification of *kunju* could draw on that professional knowledge to understand the actions; those who were not equipped with this knowledge, but understood Shakespeare, could rely on that to discern the similarities and differences of the play, and appreciate the unique physical and musical coding of Chinese theatre. The 1986 *Blood-Stained Hands* thus set an example of how the Chinese directors of future *xiqu* Shakespeare can interpret freely whatever they want to convey from Shakespeare's texts, translate the chosen part of the texts into Chinese theatrical vocabulary, and win 'a ticket to promote [*xiqu*] at international venues'[86] - one of the most potent driving forces behind *xiqu* Shakespeare in twenty-first-century China and Taiwan.

Conclusion

The political atmosphere in China turned in late 1980s towards a more open acceptance of the West, altering the course of Chinese Occidentalism. Before the 1980s, the boundary between the official and the anti-official Occidentalism was very clear; the West was either used to assert more ideological control by incorporating certain Western thoughts (e.g. socialism) to justify the Communist Party's actions, or to claim more freedom from the government-controlled propagandas by calling for other Western ideas (e.g. democracy). After the 1980s, the government began to loosen its guard against the previously anti-official ideas. As a theatre is one of the prominent places for ideas to be revealed and contested, theatrical productions reflected this turn of tide, and aspects of the West were no longer chosen according to the previous dichotomy of pro- and anti-liberation, becoming more complex through greater knowledge and understanding.

It was a time when the Chinese began to put more effort into asserting the country's cultural authority. After the Chinese Cultural Revolution, which had pushed the cultural authority to an extreme, Chinese directors needed a new cultural form that could express the contemporaneity of Chinese culture alongside its Western counterparts.

[85] Zhang, *Shakespeare in China*, p. 156.
[86] Huang, *Visualisation*, p. 104.

Chinese *xiqu* required innovation, but it was not a simple and straightforward change of the forms and conventions. As directors looked to the West for new ideas, a process of selection of the elements most suitable for diversification purposes also commenced. Such processes were determined by the nature of *xiqu*, and the individual directors' interpretation and the intended presentation of the plays. Where the latter intention differed, different modes of adaptation took place. Moreover, Shakespeare's exoticism for the Chinese and a general deficiency in the understanding of Western interpretations of the plays led to the inevitable and necessary process of essentialisation, which was based in this first phase of development on what the individual director deemed to be the most appealing aspects of the plays.

This chapter tackles the generalised categories of two modes of adaptation. In both cases, the lead actors expressed difficulties in playing Shakespearean characters due to the *xiqu* conventions that restrict a traditional character to a certain role type, as a Shakespearean character undergoes emotions more varied than a single traditional role type can allow. The challenges were accepted by both the lead actors, and their acting consequently broadened the restriction for *xiqu* actors, at least when the adapted play required it.

However, when adapting the conventions of *xiqu* to accommodate Shakespearean characters, the two categories differ in the conception of the characters. In *Aosailuo*, Ma acquired the appearance of an African general. Dressed in a costume that was deliberately intended to be Western, Ma played Aosailuo with a wig and a face painted black. Such an appearance was directed towards an illusion of a more authentic presentation of a Western play, as with many *huaju* productions of Shakespeare at the beginning of the twentieth century; yet the performance was in *jingju*, which requires codes recognisable only to *jingju* theatregoers. The Westernised costumes thus provided a perspective on how a Shakespearean character would perform when taken straight out of his natural context of a European spoken drama, while the Westernness retained the lopsided view of the oriental. In *xiqu* Shakespeare of the 'Western manner', prejudices went unchecked and in fact were perpetuated, reinforcing the divide between East and West.

In Huang Zuolin's *kunju Macbeth*, Shakespeare's character was internalised through the conventions of *xiqu*. Without the Westernised costume and name, Ma Pei was settled comfortably within the context of ancient China. Such context was directed to raise recognition in a Chinese audience, yet Shakespearean characterisation was done with the multi-role type atypical in Chinese traditional theatre. As Huang Zuolin's intention was to create a Chinese version of *Macbeth*, what was taken from Shakespeare was only the parts of the story which the adaptor believed to represent his own interpretation of Shakespeare's tragedy.

The actual process of adaptation, whether it is to dress Chinese actors in Shakespearean costumes, or to enact Shakespearean characters by means of Chinese theatricality, depends heavily on *xiqu*'s theatrical conventions, among which the emphasis on the physical presentation and the central characters and themes is stressed by both directors, as well as the directors of the productions in the next chapter. *Xiqu* is a musical theatre; physical movements and arias tell a story as much as words do. The spoken lines in Shakespeare's plays are thus distributed to the two kinds of presentations. The codified gestures and movements express not only the parts where conventional props are missing, but also the inner emotions of the characters. The arias deliver feelings and thoughts through poetic lyrics and music, the combination of which not only compensates for the truncated lines, but also offers the audience a Chinese take on the Shakespearean stories.

As noted earlier in this chapter, all future discussion in this thesis on *xiqu* Shakespeare must be based on the analyses of the two categories here. *Aosailuo* represents a kind of the 'Chinese take' that shows the eagerness to radically change the look of Chinese traditional theatre. Whilst characterisation and plot alterations are necessary, the change does not only conform to the *xiqu* conventions but also (even more so) to the purpose of presenting the Chinese a Westernised *xiqu*. Many traits in *Aosailuo* remain debatable, such as the complicated issue of the black painted face that recalls a Chinese historical figure of justice but at the same time has innate racially discriminatory connotations defined by the Chinese political and social context. Therefore, eradication of the Occidentalist enterprise to fully Westernise a *xiqu* production in order to accommodate Shakespeare in full can be justified, as the Westernised aspects actually undermine the

expressiveness of *xiqu*. A total eradication was realised in *kunju Macbeth*. Without the pretence to be Western, *kunju Macbeth* was received as an authentic Chinese play by audiences in the West and by a part of the Chinese audience that was eagerly searching for new repertoire for the Chinese *xiqu*. For a Western audience, there is the risk of an Orientalist perception of a *xiqu* Shakespeare, since *xiqu* convention must be essentialised for aesthetic appreciation; yet if Shakespeare has already been essentialised via an Occidentalist adaptation, the process of essentialisation can be justified in terms of cultural exchange in the global venue.

The ready reception conforms to China's recent intention to assert its cultural authority in the global context, and the ability of its oldest theatrical form to accommodate Shakespeare's play conveys the cultural confidence of the Chinese. Nevertheless, it must be noted that while the example set down by *kunju Macbeth* will thrive in future productions as the main approach for *xiqu* adaptation of Shakespeare and other Western repertoires, *Aosailuo*'s Occidentalist venture to alter the appearance of *xiqu* will also be represented in productions that seek a more total and harmonious fusion of the Oriental and the Occidental elements. Through the experimentation of theatrically translating Shakespeare into a Chinese cultural context, greater experience and knowledge of the Other comes into view, while new meanings and new modes of creation/appreciation are being generated. The next chapter will examine how Taiwan's particular context allowed actor/director Wu Hsing-Kuo to take advantage of the two categories to produce *xiqu* Shakespeare from a fuller vision of Occidentalist reading.

Chapter 5

Taiwanese *Xiqu* Shakespeare: A Question of Cultural Inheritance

Prologue: Taiwanese or Chinese?

While the Chinese were struggling with the great Cultural Revolution and the re-establishment of a culture almost destroyed by the foreign invasion at the end of the nineteenth century, Taiwan was heading in a very different direction. The previous chapter examined how the Chinese established an equal conversation with Shakespeare. Chinese directors, by transforming Shakespeare's plays into a Chinese context, have actually been creating new scripts for a stagnant traditional form of theatre, and this approach had first served to revitalise the traditional theatre. The Taiwanese integration of Shakespeare and traditional theatre, at the beginning, was also aiming at the revitalisation of the tradition. The outcome, however, was a new theatrical form, departing from its Chinese origin and from Shakespeare's plays. Such a departure significantly influenced the peculiar historical moment at which the Taiwanese now find themselves, localising and personalising the Chinese-originated traditional theatre and the Shakespeare created in this way. As with *Aosailuo* (the *jingju Othello*) and the *kunju Macbeth* discussed in Chapter 4, *xiqu* Shakespeare almost always has a personal purpose as its framework. However, Chinese directors have been able to draw from the long history with Shakespeare; what is being essentialised, be it Shakespeare or the *xiqu* formalities, retains more Shakespeare and Chineseness than the Taiwanese productions do. The contemporary Taiwanese has a more indirect and complex relation with Shakespeare, and the historical, political, and cultural relationships with China give the Taiwanese *xiqu* Shakespeare a distinctively different form that deserves more attention.

Kate Chedgzoy observes that Shakespeare has been used by the postcolonialists 'to stake a claim to cultural centrality'.[1] In the context of the political pressure from the Chinese government being seen as an imperial power over Taiwan, apart from the traditional theatre, the Taiwanese seek a voice other than Chinese on stage. By

[1] Kate Chedgzoy, *Shakespeare's Queer Children: Sexual Politics and Contemporary Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) p. 2. Cited from Sonia Massai (ed.), *World-Wide Shakespeare: Local Appropriations in Film and Performance* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), p. 5.

introducing Shakespeare, the new Taiwanese theatre can produce locally manufactured goods with a '*universally* recognisable logo or brand name'.[2] The historical moment in Taiwan thus enables the directors to use Shakespeare to express a particular 'Taiwaneseness' - a cultural identity that is at once akin to, yet distinctive from China due to various reasons ranging from the democratic politics, Japanese and American influence, the longer history of embracing the full power of capitalism and the leading creativity of popular culture among all Chinese-speaking countries. This chapter will illustrate how Taiwan's contemporary history alters the course of traditional Sino-Shakespeare by examining the representative productions of Wu Hsing-Kuo's Contemporary Legend Theatre and its successors, with a special focus on Wu's *The Kingdom of Desire* (1986), *King Lear* (2001) and *The Tempest* (2004).

The productions discussed in this chapter are from director/actor Wu Hsing-Kuo. He and his Contemporary Theatre, established in 1986, are the pioneers both in staging Shakespeare according to the Taiwanese culture and in revolutionising the traditional theatre. Although scattered productions have tried to incorporate Shakespeare into the traditional theatrical forms, such as the Taiwan Bangzi Company's *The Merchant of Venice* (2009) and *Measure for Measure* (2012), these mainly followed the 'Chinese manner' described in the previous chapter to produce adaptations that focus on translating Shakespeare into the *xiqu* vocabulary. Some Taiwanese adaptations were adopting Taiwan's local *xiqu*. The glove puppetry, for instance, is the most popular local *xiqu* in present-day Taiwan, and a 2002 adaptation of *Henry IV* by the Yiwanran Puppet Theatre Troupe is a fine example of one of the Taiwanese approaches to Shakespeare.[3] This adaptation followed the 'Western manner' by dressing the puppets in European costumes, and was noted as 'difficult to fit in with the Taiwanese'.[4] Similar to the Chinese *Aosailuo*, this *Henry IV* attempted to present a straightforward translation of Shakespeare's play by the convention of the glove puppetry, but the production did not bring any new reading into Shakespeare and his meaning to the Taiwanese beyond what

[2] Massai, *World-Wide Shakespeare*, p. 4.

[3] A full discussion of this production can be found in the PhD dissertation by Huang Ya-Hui (2012). Huang's thesis provides a detailed account of the historical development of Taiwanese Shakespeare from a Taiwanese Islander's point of view. In this thesis, the significance of such development is discussed in a broader context, focusing instead on Shakespeare's meaning to the Taiwanese while noting the inevitable interrelation with China, Japan, and the world.

[4] Lin Mau-Xian, 'Review of Yiwanran Puppet Troupe's *Henry IV*', in *Performing Arts Review*, Vol. 115, Taipei, 2002, pp. 30-31.

has already been discussed with *Aosailuo* with the Chinese. Wu's productions hold the most pivotal position at every stage of the development of the Taiwanese cultural and political consciousness. As discussed in the introductory chapters, most studies on Sino-Shakespeare shift their focus from the Chinese to the Taiwanese productions post-2000, mainly because the Chinese *xiqu* productions at present are also mostly limited by the scope of the 'Chinese manner' of adaptation (their significance will be discussed in Chapter 6). It is therefore most suitable for this chapter to focus on and follow Wu's career in order to clearly illustrate the complex relations between Taiwan and China, and between Taiwan and Shakespeare.

The Occidentalist approach to Shakespeare in Taiwan can be divided into three phases. The first two follow the Taiwanese national ideology: one before and the other after 1987. Wu's very first production and the Taiwanese earliest attempt to use Shakespeare in *xiqu*, *The Kingdom of Desire* (*Macbeth*, 1986), witnessed the final stage of the Kuomintang's (KMT's) intention to resurrect the authentic Chinese art/experience on the Taiwanese Island. At this earliest stage of modern Taiwanese ideology, *The Kingdom of Desire* represents the struggle to break free from China's cultural imposition on Taiwan. *King Lear* (2001), an artistic breakthrough that innovated the interpretation for both Shakespeare's play and the form of *xiqu*, exemplified the complex relationship of the new Taiwanese identity on the one hand, and the unbreakable cultural bond with China on the other. At this second stage, the foreignness of both Shakespeare and China were internalised for the Taiwanese, leading to a more mature third category, represented by the third case study on Wu's *The Tempest* (2004). This latest development of the Taiwanese *xiqu* Shakespeare saw the Taiwanese ambition to claim what Chedgzoy asserts as Shakespeare's power to grant cultural centrality, as the production grew into a full bloom of Taiwaneseness, claiming *jingju* not only as Taiwan's own cultural vessel to carry the post-colonial discourse on stage, but also as part of Taiwan's cultural export. Wu's latest production adapted Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, which he brought to the Edinburgh International Festival 2013.[5] This production continued the enterprise he began with *The Tempest*: to bring *jingju*, a name previously owned solely by China but now also by Taiwan, to an

[5] A Chinese adaptation of *Coriolanus* by the avant-garde director Lin Zhauhua also featured in the 2013 Edinburgh International Festival. The *huaju* form of this adaptation will be discussed in the next chapter.

international stage. As such, the contemporary Taiwanese *xiqu* Shakespeare, through Wu's endeavour, has observed Taiwan's relationship with Chinese traditional culture.

The Beginning of a Taiwanese Discourse on Chinese Influence: *The Kingdom of Desire*, directed by Wu Hsing-Kuo (1986)[6]

It has been noted that 'there is no really distinctive Shakespeare in Taiwan'.[7] But after 1987 when the martial law was lifted, as the sense of national identity increased, the Taiwanese began to demand a culture of their own, with a decisive difference from China. In this context, Shakespeare played a very peculiar role in Taiwan's traditional theatre. From a pro-Chinese point of view, he served as the saviour for the Chinese tradition. As in China, Shakespeare's plays provided new raw materials from which the *xiqu* artists could develop, as observed by Alexander Huang[8], to offer new stories to a shrinking audience. From a pro-independence perspective, the cultural distance of Shakespeare's plays and status enabled Taiwanese directors to move away from the orthodox pathway of traditional theatre, thus creating a space where the Taiwanese artists were able to discuss the struggle between a Taiwanese national consciousness and the legitimacy or inevitability of China's cultural influence.

While the Taiwanese *xiqu* Shakespeare is also mainly controlled by and confined within the physical formula of the traditional theatre, has gone through a different route of acceptance from that of the Chinese counterpart. *Xiqu* in China signifies a traditional cultural heritage, whereas such legacy has a hint of the Chinese cultural imperialism as seen from the Taiwanese pro-independence perspective. In all the forms of Chinese *xiqu*, *jingju* has the most profound and lasting impact on the Taiwanese society in terms of the imposition of Chinese traditional culture on modern Taiwan; it is also the main reason for this thesis to focus solely on *jingju* as the representative voice of Chinese

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[6] Wu Hsing-Kuo, dir. and perf., *The Kingdom of Desire*. The Contemporary Legend Theatre. Taipei, 1986; Taipei, 2006; Shanghai, 2010. All discussions about this production in this chapter are based on the DVD recording of the performance at National Theatre, Taipei, 1996. The DVD was published by The Contemporary Legend Theatre in 2006.

[7] Murray J. Levith, *Shakespeare in China* (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 106.

[8] Alexander C. Y. Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 192.

culture in Taiwan.

Jingju, originating from China, was brought to Taiwan by the nationalist KMT in 1949. Though various local *xiqu* had existed and been developing in Taiwan prior to KMT's retreat (i.e. the *Gowahi* opera and the Glove Puppetry, both of which utilise the Fukien dialect spoken among the Taiwanese Islanders), the local voices were largely silenced by the new regime's canonisation of *jingju* as the national theatre. The canonisation could be interpreted as a nostalgic gesture of the Mainlanders when they had to abandon their home in China, and as the dubbing of the Chinese culture and value. Though *jingju* is but one of many indigenous *xiqu* in China, its Taiwanese name 'national theatre' crowns it as the most prestigious art, overpowering all other theatrical voices. It is not surprising that the canonisation eventually accelerated its demise during recent decades. As Perng argues, canonisation should not be 'a proclamation but an ideal, and must always remain so'.[9] He also observes that *jingju* enthusiasts used the title 'national theatre' out of 'artistic chauvinism and prejudice' in order to exclude all other indigenous art forms, especially theatre, and to hold up *jingju* as the sole orthodox institution.[10] Canonisation has resulted in the loss of the wider audience in Taiwan, and government subsidies can do little to revive it, if not further worsening its condition.

Moreover, *jingju*, with centuries of evolution and assimilation of numerous indigenous Chinese art forms, has acquired a stable form consisting of various theatrical elements suitable to present the physicality of a story. All these elements require the audience to possess an advanced and profound knowledge of the meanings involved. Therefore, *jingju* playwrights focus wholly on the artistic representation through poetry and arias and do not concern themselves with the integrity of plots. Above all, the crux of the *jingju* is to provide moral lessons. While the French Racine is similarly highly moralistic, *jingju* in Taiwan lacks a Victor Hugo or Romanticism to criticise and, more importantly, renovate its obsolete forms.[11] As Perng observes, it is too much to ask a modern Taiwanese person to undergo intense learning in order to appreciate a traditional art form (especially one that carries a cultural significance and a political

[9] Perng Ching-Hsi, 'At the Crossroads: Peking Opera in Taiwan Today', in *Asian Theatre Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Autumn, 1989), p. 127.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 126.
[11] Stanley A. Waren, 'The Kingdom of Desire', in *Free China Review* (London 1987), March, pp. 6-10.

propaganda far from popular among the Taiwanese Islanders) when a great variety of other choices are available.[12]

While almost all traditional art forms in the world are looking at a similar fate of quiet disappearance due to the onslaught of modern popular culture, *jingju* in Taiwan faces a more severe challenge. First, the three categories of Taiwanese population have fundamentally different levels of interests in *jingju*: the aboriginals' interest in *jingju* has no cultural base, therefore is non-existent; the Islanders, since they use a different dialect from that of the Mainlanders, struggle to retain the theatre developed before and during the Japanese colonial period and thus actively resist the Chinese cultural imposition; and the Mainlanders, who came to Taiwan post-1949, strive to retain whatever can remind them of a lost home culture and hold *jingju* as one of the most precious legacies to which they can lay claim. The Chinese *jingju* is thus at once hailed by the Mainlanders and their sympathisers as an irreplaceable cultural treasure for Taiwan as well as condemned as the cultural representation of an oppressive regime; a coercive cooperation between China and the nationalist KMT, the latter being drawn to the ultimate dream of returning to China.

As discussed in Chapter 3, prior to 1987 the KMT aimed to eradicate all local and indigenous culture by means of reviving the Chinese culture. Such deliberate imposition of *jingju* exacerbates the decline of *jingju*, and *xiqu* as a whole is confronted by the competition not only from more readily accepted modern cultures, but also from *huaju*, or spoken drama, as the latter stands further apart from China. Thus, the Taiwanese *xiqu* Shakespeare, from its beginning, had to overcome challenges not only to localise Shakespeare, but also to localise *xiqu* itself.

Various attempts have been made to stimulate *jingju* in this environment hostile to traditional Chinese theatre.[13] *Jingju* masters such as Wang An-Chi (artistic director of

[12] Perng, 'At the Crossroad', pp. 124-25.

[13] The hostility was fuelled by the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP's) launching of a series of 'de-Sinification' activities during 2000-2008: to root out all Chinese cultural as well as historical connections to Taiwan. The movement was not dissimilar to the Cultural Revolution that took place in China several decades earlier, and the overtly radical anti-China sentiment has led the DPP to lose its reign again to the KMT in 2008. Thus the pre-2000 'Big China' ideology of the KMT reached a fluctuating yet somehow balanced relation with the Taiwan-independent ideology.

Guo Guang Opera Company, the only officially subsidised *xiqu* company in Taiwan) and Guo Xiao-Juang have tried to rewrite the fragmented plots of *jingju* into complete stories to kindle the interest of a young Taiwanese audience. But the most significant and successful production, as well as the most innovative and subversive, was *The Kingdom of Desire*. When in 1983 Wu Hsing-Kuo tried to revive the declining *jingju* in Taiwan, he chose Shakespeare's *Macbeth* because, as he said in an interview, both the *jingju* and Shakespeare have 'more than three hundred years of history', and 'are the finest form of [their separate] cultural heritage', and while 'representing the development of human civilisation, social hierarchy and the customs of the people', they are similar in terms of 'poetic language, simple stage setup, [and] quick [scenery change]'.[14] This echoes Huang Zuolin's notion of equating the Chinese cultural authority with Shakespeare's, which is thoroughly examined in the first part of Zhang Xiaoyang's *Shakespeare in China*. In Huang Zuolin's *Blood-Stained Hands*, the cultural confidence of the Chinese was invoked to fully internalise Shakespeare's *Macbeth* into the *xiqu* narrative. Similar to this approach, Wu's *The Kingdom of Desire* utilised Shakespeare's worldwide fame to attract both international and domestic audiences. However, the Chinese confidence could not be brought into the Taiwanese consciousness by itself.

The Kingdom of Desire was Wu's first successful experimental *jingju* that can be said to belong to Taiwan. The Taiwanese production differed from Huang Zuolin's *Blood-Stained Hands* (both productions were created in 1986, both were *xiqu* adaptations of *Macbeth*) due to different historical contexts. In 1949 when the KMT brought *jingju* to Taiwan, Mandarin Chinese was not understood by most of its inhabitants.[15] The combination of the language barrier, KMT's ideological manipulation and a lack of professional practitioners meant *jingju* belonged to a small group of elites and could not reach the local audience. However, *jingju* still inspired some ardent admirers, as Chinese culture was loved by some Taiwanese as an emotional and social resistance against the Japanese colonisation. These people, such as Wu Hsing-Kuo and Guo Hsiao-Chuang, began to create a *jingju* that was designed specifically for the Taiwanese

[14] The Contemporary Legend Theatre, 'Q&A: Wu Hsing-Kuo', in *The Kingdom of Desire Programme Book* (Taipei: The Contemporary Legend Theatre, 2006), p. 21.
[15] Ma Sen, *Two Waves of Westernisation in Modern Chinese Theatre* (Taipei, Taiwan: Lian He Literature, 2006), p. 163.

audience.

Starting from *The Kingdom of Desire*, the localisation of Shakespeare in *xiqu* served the purpose of *jingju*'s revitalisation. The process of essentialisation, similar to that of the Chinese *xiqu* Shakespeare, mainly involves selecting and highlighting the elements suitable for the theatrical form as well as for the comprehensibility of the local audience. However, the difference between Wu's productions and the Chinese *xiqu* Shakespeare begins with the different motivations. While the Chinese productions incorporate Shakespeare to revitalise *jingju* and other forms of traditional theatre, they also rely on Shakespeare to carry Chinese culture to the West as a gesture of cultural retaliation in the face of Anglo/American cultural imperialism. Such a gesture is fundamentally different from Wu's in that Taiwan's context demands not the retaliation against the West, but against China, where *jingju* was born. Therefore, Shakespeare's foreignness serves as a safe space for the Taiwanese where *jingju* can be detached from its historical and geographical origin.

Besides Shakespeare, Wu also relied on another foreign force appreciated by the Taiwanese Islanders to further marginalise the Chineseness of *jingju.* The text for *The Kingdom of Desire* is mainly based on Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*. The Japanese film influenced the Taiwanese production 'not just in the textual alterations and visual embellishments, but in the Buddhist subtext that recontextualises Macbeth's actions and their result into an Asian worldview'.[16] From the substitution of a prophesying mountain ghost for the Weird Sisters, to the betrayal of Aushu Cheng (Macbeth) by his soldiers, *The Kingdom of Desire* closely follows the adaptation for *Throne of Blood*, creating an atmosphere that belongs to an Asian, in particular Buddhist, tradition, and which virtually ensnares the protagonist in an invisible and inescapable web of fate.

In Lu Jian-Ying's *The Contemporary Legend of Wu Hsing-Kuo*[17], a biography detailing the development of Wu and his company, Wu admits that Kurosawa's film was, among

[16] Catherine Diamond, '*Kingdom of Desire*: The Three Faces of *Macbeth*', in *Asian Theatre Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring, 1994), pp. 114–33. Her essay provides a close comparison of *The Kingdom of Desire*, *Throne of Blood*, and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

[17] Lu Jian-Ying, *The Contemporary Legend of Wu Hsing-Kuo* (Taipei: Tianxia Yuanjian, 2006).

various versions of *Macbeth*, the one which most significantly influenced his artistic ideas at the initial stage of creation.[18] While at that particular point in history there was no other Asian Shakespeare easily available to a Taiwanese director (films were scarce, and it was impossible to carry Chinese productions to Taiwan in the 1980s), the close relationship[19] between Taiwan and its former coloniser, Japan, can be detected in Wu's choice of reference. In Lu's biography, Wu further explains that he 'has always tried to keep the so-called "Kurosawa's residues", to deliberately leave the mark of this particular creative process', and the grand scene of an army and the sense of inevitable Providence are evidence of the Japanese director's influence.[20]

With its Japanese influence, a culture more readily accepted by Taiwanese Islanders than Chinese culture, *The Kingdom of Desire* was taking *jingju* away from the older generations of Mainlanders. As Stanley A. Waren notes in his review of the 1986 premiere, some Taiwanese people regarded it as 'impertinent' to 'tamper with an authentic Shakespearean masterpiece' and were shocked by 'the effrontery' of modifying the traditional *jingju*.[21] According to Perng, the charge of 'effrontery' was quite predicable, as 'attempts to break the tyrannical yoke of a privileged theatre are bound to meet with strong resistance'.[22]

But knowledgeable *jingju* audiences were dwindling, and the resistance seemed to have been insignificant. Clinging to Shakespeare's adaptability in a non-English speaking context, Wu enabled himself to break free from the unchangeable discipline of Chinese theatre. Working with the award-winning writer Wei Hai-Min, Wu sought a way to use Shakespeare's realistic depiction of human nature to revitalise *jingju*. Like the Chinese *xiqu* adaptations of the 'Chinese manner' discussed in Chapter 4, which set performances in ancient China, *The Kingdom of Desire* was set in the third century China. However, unlike Huang Zuolin's *Blood-Stained Hands*, which retained all traditional costumes to justify the physicality of the theatre, Wu did not use the costumes designed for *jingju*; rather, the costumes were designed to represent an

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 172-73.
[19] This close relation is peculiar between a formerly colonised territory and its former coloniser, since Korea, which had also been occupied by Japan, banned all Japanese media until 2004.
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] Waren, 'The Kingdom of Desire', p. 6.
[22] Perng, 'At the Crossroads: Jingju in Taiwan Today', p. 139.

authentic Chinese historical period. For example, instead of the watersleeves required by the conventional hand gestures in *jingju*, the costume of Lady Aushu (Lady Macbeth) resembled the lavish dress that would have been worn by a third-century Chinese empress at court. The modification rendered a more Chinese impression for the Taiwanese audience, and was the first step towards breaking away from Chinese *jingju*. The seeming contradiction here lies in the fact that the Chinese *jingju* convention allows only costumes that conform to theatricality, not historicity. By adopting a historically accurate yet theatrically radical costume, this production claimed a Chineseness that is perceptively different from China's.

Several other measures were taken to accentuate the uniqueness of this production. Though heavily abridged, the Shakespearean plot was integral. Though arias were included, there were fewer than usual in order to hasten the tempo of the play; while *jingju* is conventionally composed of a series of arias 'interspersed with prose', Wu's production reversed that convention to create a production in which prose was decorated with arias, allowing space for a more naturalistic performance. The language, while still poetic, was not so archaic that would have perplexed a modern Taiwanese audience. The traditionally archaic pronunciation in the dialogues was also brought much closer to common Mandarin Chinese. The conventionally bare stage was enhanced with realistic settings that created the impression of a Chinese empire. Lighting and audio effects were also used to intensify the realistic representation as well as dramatic tension. The face paintings, though still symbolic enough to suggest different types of characters and mood, were no longer so heavy as to obstruct the facial expressions of actors and actresses; hence they could be more vivid and lively, and were more acceptable to the audience.[23] Above all, the keen Shakespearean observation of human nature was exploited to bring 'psychological realism' into the traditional Chinese theatre, which, with its 'sheer moralising and blatant didacticism […] has only succeeded in driving away large segments of the audience, who are generally much better educated and more sophisticated than were their counterparts just three or four decades ago'.[24]

Wu's toning down of *jingju*'s complex convention paralleled the easing of

[23] Aushu's face paint marked him as a warrior who is perpetually anxious and agitated; Lady Aushu's gave her a constant calmness traditionally belonging to a graceful housewife.

[24] Perng, 'At the Crossroads: Jingju in Taiwan Today', p. 136.

Shakespeare's language by popular culture: although the latter is a more extreme example, the intentions are shared by these two cases as both want their modern audience to more readily digest the high culture. While discussing the popularisation of Shakespeare, Douglas Lanier observes that popular adaptations/appropriations of Shakespeare's works recognise Shakespeare's established cultural authority while utilising the works only as a 'foil' to gloss over the otherwise popular, therefore low-brow, artistic creations.[25] Likewise, the adjustments Wu made for *The Kingdom of Desire* acknowledged Shakespeare's and *jingju*'s high cultural status while toning down the complexities of both through a more naturalistic presentation that would be easier for his contemporary Taiwanese audience to digest. Wu's creation thus opened up a new direction not only for *jingju*, but also for *huaju* adaptations in the future.[26]

When adapting *Macbeth*, Wu Hsing-Kuo and Li Hui-Min confronted the dual-challenge of retaining the essential art of *jingju* and remaining faithful to what they found as the spirit of Shakespeare. The Shakespearean script, which is almost entirely in dialogue, had to be largely abridged in order to fit the combination of 'poetry-song-acting'. Wu and Li thus turned to Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood.* Abetted by *Throne of Blood*, *The Kingdom of Desire*, like its *xiqu* predecessors and successors, made major alterations to Shakespeare's text in order to highlight a single, straightforward plotline. Macduff and Malcolm's parts were omitted; the Porter Scene, along with Ross and the Old Man, was changed into a single scene with four porters joking and arguing at the opening of Act 4; and the three witches were replaced by one Mountain Spirit to create a particularly Asian atmosphere with an emphasis on 'the futility of all human endeavour', separating the adaptation from Shakespeare's original while granting a psychological profundity which, though working in a different way, was as provocative and disturbing as that of *Macbeth*.[27] At the beginning of *The Kingdom of Desire* an anonymous chorus sang:

> How regrettable that the people of this world

[25] Douglas Lanier, *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 80.
[26] Chapter 7 will discuss how director Wang Hong-Yuan's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* developed this concept to fully explore the Taiwanese acceptability of a simultaneously Sinicised and modernised Shakespeare.
[27] *Ibid*, p. 119.

Cannot see through fame, fortune, and position;
In reality they are only like
The reflection of the moon in water, an illusion;
When you reach the abyss,
Plans and schemes only lead to downfall;
In the end, the waves still wash the sand;
All that remain are dry bones and empty sorrow.[28]

The Mountain Spirit, unlike the equivocal Shakespearean witches, asserted her intention to 'play on' Aushu Cheng when Act 1 began. Throughout the play the chance of avoiding fate was denied to Aushu and his wife. The unavoidable destiny somehow simplified Macbeth's eternal conflicts of ambition, loyalty, and his anxieties toward the prophecies, all of which lead him to catastrophe.

Duncan's character was also changed to make Aushu's motivation less equivocal than Macbeth's. While Shakespeare's Duncan is in all ways the paragon of Christian kings, the King in *The Kingdom of Desire* was dangerous, suspicious, and posed an extreme threat to Aushu when the latter realised that the King might execute his entire household once he knew about the prophecy. Thus, Lady Aushu initiated not only Aushu Cheng's ambition, but also his fear.

Compared to Macbeth, Aushu's hesitation was seemingly less convincing. But Wu's intention (like Kurosawa's) was not to produce a clone of Macbeth and simply dress him in Chinese costume. In Verdi's operatic version of *Othello*, because the Italian Iago is given new motivation to be jealous of Othello, the Shakespearean icon of pure malice is transformed, in an interpretation that led George Bernard Shaw to remark 'not that [Verdi] could occupy Shakespeare's plane, but that Shakespeare could on occasion occupy his, which is a very different matter'.[29] When Aushu was given additional motivation for the murder of the king, he was in fact pushed into another hellish dilemma - a dilemma of trust. Should he listen to his wife? Should he believe in his

[28] Li Hui-Min, 'Yuwang chengguo' ('The Kingdom of Desire'), in *Chungwai Literary Monthly 15* (11), p. 52, cited in Diamond, '*Kingdom of Desire*: The Three Faces of *Macbeth*', p. 119.
[29] George Bernard Shaw 1901, cited in Jonathan Bate, *The Genius of Shakespeare* (London: Picador, 1998), p. 285.

comrade? Should he have faith that his previous service to his king would secure his beloved position, even if the prophecy of the Mountain Spirit should leak out?

Apart from asserting his artistic vision in the textual adaptation, Wu also realised his admiration for the Chinese art. As acrobatics can be counted as the most endearing aspect to any *jingju* audience, Wu exploited his traditional training in full. While the props remained simplistic apart from the elaborated costumes that gave the production a royal feeling, Wu pushed the aspect of physical performance to extreme. In a scene when Aushu was riding a horse, he used nothing except exaggerated movements of the legs to literally prance around the stage, signifying the act of riding. The most memorable moment of the production came during the last scene. In this scene were a breakthrough from *jingju* convention and a triumphant showcase of that convention. First, as the solders moved to surround the cornered Aushu, the actors were moving in seeming chaos while *jingju* convention would have dictated a unified movement of the extras on stage. Second, Wu, in Aushu's last moment, stepped onto a 'rock' of three stories high, and then back-somersaulted to the floor. These remarkable development witnessed Wu's aspiration to renovate and honour the traditional *jingju* convention simultaneously. In the DVD recording, the applause from the audience was clearly audible despite the thundering music. Thus, the production that sought to seek the Taiwanese recognition of *jingju* succeeded not only in attracting the Taiwanese to a Sinicised Shakespearean story, but also in appealing to the Taiwanese with a grand Chinese traditional flourish.

So crafted to suit the appetite and understanding of the contemporary Taiwanese, Wu's adaptation finished by cloaking the Shakespearean tale with an authentic Chinese story/performance of political struggle; a political scene that, more than twenty years after its premiere in 1986, would make Wu as well as his *xiqu* Shakespeare more Taiwanese and more international.[30] In 2010, *The Kingdom of Desire* was part of Taiwan's repertoire at Expo Shanghai, signifying Wu's successful incorporation of *jingju* into Taiwan's national identity. Shakespeare provides a distance between China and *jingju*; in this case the distance was further secured by the affinity to Kurosawa,

[30] *The Kingdom of Desire* has travelled to the UK (1990), Korea (1991), Japan (1993), Hong Kong (1994), France (1994 and 1998), Germany (1996), the Netherlands (1996), Spain (1998), China (2001 and 2010), the USA (2005).

whose Japaneseness and the ensuing Buddhist concept of predetermination are so endearing to the Taiwanese pro-independent ideology that the harshness against Chineseness in *jingju* can be softened. Judging by the enthusiasm from the audience observed in the recorded performance in Taipei, the grandiose last scene of *The Kingdom of Desire* could also be interpreted as an approval, even an acknowledgement, that the Taiwanese could 'own' the best part of the Chinese tradition. Thus, the Chinese *jingju* and its cultural implication were localised and can be completely personalised, leading to Wu's next step: claiming *King Lear* as his own.

Internalising Shakespeare: *King Lear*, directed by Wu Hsing-Kuo (2001)[31]

The second case study is of Wu Hsing-Kuo's solo performance of *King Lear*.[32] This *jingju* adaptation challenges both the traditional Chinese theatre and Shakespeare's creation. Empathising with Lear, Wu's performance eluded the storytelling mode while focusing on reflecting his own struggle and life through adapting Shakespeare's character. The personalisation of Shakespeare departed from his previous use of Shakespeare as a way to rejuvenate a withering art form.

Discussing Wu's *Lear*, Alexander Huang terms such productions as 'small time Shakespeare' because of their personal engagement with the plays rather than a proclamation on Shakespeare's 'literary universality'.[33] Huang claims that the authority for Taiwanese directors to utilise Shakespeare as a voice for their own personal purposes comes from the familiarity with Shakespeare of the middle class[34];

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[31] Wu Hsing-Kuo, dir. and perf. *King Lear*, The Contemporary Legend Theatre. Taipei, 2001; Taipei, Shanghai, 2006. All discussions about this production in this chapter are based on the DVD recording of the performance at The Metropolitan Hall, Taipei, 2006. The DVD was published by The Contemporary Legend Theatre in 2012.

[32] In the programme, as well as the poster and DVD cover, CLT uses *King Lear* as the official English title. Though it is anything but a straightforward adaptation, it is suitable to follow what the company wants to achieve in putting *King Lear* instead of an English translation of the Chinese title, as they do with *The Kingdom of Desire.* The Chinese title for this production is *Li Er Zai Ci,* meaning *Lear is Here*. The former is used by Li Ruru in her '"Who is it that can tell me who I am?" / "Lear's shadow": A Taiwanese Actor's Personal Response to *King Lear*' in *Shakespeare* Quarterly 57; 2006, pp. 195-215; the latter is adopted by Huang in his 'Shakespeare, Performance, and Autobiographical Interventions', *Shakespeare Bulletin* 24.2 (Jun 22, 2006) pp. 31-47.

[33] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, pp. 197-98.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

however, in a country where Shakespeare is not mentioned in the high school curriculum, and his plays are listed as only optional courses in universities' English departments, it is doubtful that the majority of the population is familiar with Shakespeare. On the contrary, when Shakespeare's name makes more impression than the actual content of the texts, *King Lear* is both Occidentalised and idolised for Wu's multi-faceted purposes.

As a reflection of the political atmosphere, directors in Taiwan in the twenty-first century are more concerned about themselves as Taiwanese rather than a branch of the Chinese. The traditional theatre of *jingju* has been affected by a common anti-China ideology and, in spite of the success of *The Kingdom of Desire*, Wu Hsing-Kuo had to suspend all activities of the Contemporary Legend Theatre in 1998 because of the lack of financial means and performing talents. Although he had been adapting the Western canon to change the perception of *jingju*, his previous adaptations were not set in a particular Taiwanese locality. His choice of Shakespeare would have been to receive more media attention, to secure funding for the company, and to draw a younger audience to the traditional theatre.[35]

This has been one of the main motivations for the Chinese and Taiwanese adaptations of Shakespeare. Huang observes that 'Shakespeare's "worldly" afterlife focuses on the two most prevalent modes in which "Shakespeare" has been disseminated around the world: the nationalist and the (post)colonial appropriations'.[36] When applied to Taiwanese directors, these two notions take on a quite different angle, especially the latter. Though Taiwan has been colonised by Japan, it is against the Chinese cultural and political imperialism that the new Taiwanese national identity was founded. With Shakespeare, Wu found a way to take *jingju* a step away from its Chinese origin in *The Kingdom of Desire*. In *King Lear*, Wu tried to locate himself within present-day Taiwan, thus defining himself as a *jingju* artist who is Taiwanese rather than Chinese.

Playing nine of the characters in *King Lear* by himself, Wu Hsing-Kuo's performance was neither a straightforward adaptation nor a parody of Shakespeare's play, but rather

[35] Huang, 'Shakespeare, Performance, and Autobiographical Interventions', p. 38.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

his personal response to it. Huang argues that the notion of the 'universality of Shakespeare' has become 'retrograde', and the 'Asian interpretations for the stage attests [sic] rather to the creativity of imaginative directors willing to create new hybrids of dramatic spectacle by combining the personal with the fictional'.[37] Interestingly, there were only five Shakespearean lines in the first act of this three-act production, and Wu's *King Lear* did not follow any academic nor theatrical interpretation but his own.

The motivations for Wu to adapt *King Lear* can be generally understood as his personal battle between tradition and innovation, incarnated in his *jingju* master and himself respectively, and the loneliness he felt after his previous large cast productions. In *Elsinore* (1996), a solo performance of *Hamlet*, Robert Lepage 'turned to *Hamlet* with a significant personal loss very much in mind' (that of his father).[38] Lepage also explored the difference between acting with a large group and alone, and he celebrated the artistic freedom of a solo performance.[39] For Lepage, his main achievement in his work is for 'Shakespeare to be seen differently'.[40] However, while Lepage's work can be identified as 'responsive to textual and theatrical probing' since it is strictly set inside the critical context of *Hamlet*'s performance history (especially when it was performed in English 'with an assumed British accent')[41], Wu's adaptation confronts the legacy and the burden not of Shakespeare, but of the Chinese culture that is left for the Taiwanese to claim.

The play was first put on stage in 2001, two years after Wu disbanded his Contemporary Legend Theatre. Following *The Kingdom of Desire*, although his CLT had consecutive successes in combining western dramaturgy with the traditional *jingju* such as *War and Eternity* (*Hamlet*, 1990), *Medea* (1993) and *Oresteia* (1995, directed by Richard Schechner), these large-scale productions exhausted the company's finances as well as the pool of Taiwanese *jingju* actors. In the following three years, he was unable to

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[37] *Ibid.*

[38] Andy Lavender, *Hamlet in Pieces: Shakespeare Reworked by Peter Brook, Robert Lepage, Robert Wilson* (London: Hern, 2001), p. 95.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 103.

[41] Margaret Jane Kidnie, Margaret Jane Kidnie, *Shakespeare and the Problem of Adaptation* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 89, 102.

secure more funds or performers for such works. His smaller project *Waiting for Godot* was also rejected by the Taipei Theatre Season Programme Review in 1998, and it became the 'last straw that crushed Wu'.[42] Two years later, he was invited by director Ariane Mnouchkine to conduct a workshop in France. In the interview recorded in the programme, Wu explains that 'I felt like *King Lear*. I lost my playing company, wandered alone in France, and felt the pain of being exiled'.[43] He adapted *King Lear* into a 25-minute solo performance, and Mnouchkine insisted that Wu must return to the stage. In 2001, Wu returned with his three-act *King Lear* in Taipei, signifying the rebirth of CLT and his persistence in art.

Huang notes that 'Wu chose Lear because the play coincidentally manifests a psychological process with autobiographical resonances'.[44] After his graduation from Chinese Culture University, he faced the choice between a career in modern dance, the film industry, and the withering *jingju*. He decided to stay within *jingju* and began training in the elderly male type (*lausheng*) as apprentice to Master Zhou Zheng-Rong, under the condition that he was not to do modern dance ever again.[45] Without a father, Wu's relationship with master Zhou was bound by filial piety, which deepened the struggle between modernity and tradition. As the tradition goes, an actor of *jingju* must conform to the type in which he is trained, and the apprentice must not touch upon plays that have not been taught by his master. Wu's artistic ambition, however, prompted him to break the rule, which enraged Zhou and led to their artistic break-up. His solo performance of ten different characters (nine of which are from Shakespeare's *King Lear*), and his engagement of various styles, including three female styles, the combatant male, the elderly male and the clown can be seen as 'a statement against his master's classical training'; through the three acts of the play, 'Wu dramatises his resistance to the dominating father figure, while at the same time he imagines his master's response by impersonating the father'.[46] In the final scene, the actor Wu Hsing-Kuo took off Lear's costume, and exclaimed

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[42] Lu, *The Contemporary Legend*, p. 206.
[43] Wu Hsing-Kuo, *Programme for* King Lear, The Contemporary Legend Theatre, 2006.
[44] Huang, 'Shakespeare, Performance, and Autobiographical Interventions', p. 38.
[45] Wu has been trained as the combatant male type (wusheng), but most of the leading roles in *jingju* require lausheng, and it is also of 'the highest literary delicacy in all types'; hence it would secure his career in *jingju* (Lu 130).
[46] Huang, 'Shakespeare, Performance, and Autobiographical Interventions', p. 35.

I want to know who I am!

I am back!

I am still what I was, what I am, what I will be!

I am coming back to my essence.[47]

In Lu's biography, it is explained that while Lear signifies the father/master figure for Wu, the taking off of the costume then signifies both his inheritance and break from his master and *jingju* tradition.[48] Wu internalised *King Lear* and, neither following the text nor the structure, he presented his personal connection with the play on stage.

Wu thus offered his reading of the play that redefined and relocated both Shakespeare and the traditional *jingju*. Examining the issue of locality and foreignness, Huang further argues that 'Wu's performance employs an artistic strategy that prioritises the performer's subjectivity and thereby reconfigures a globally articulated locality (Asian Shakespeare) in personal and autobiographical terms'.[49] Confronting his personal conflicts between tradition and postmodernity, the significance of Wu's *King Lear* was to provide evidence for the possibility of a Shakespearean reading that was neither academic nor postcolonial, but relevant to the Taiwanese consciousness among the conflicts of China's cultural imperialism, Taiwan's own eager search for an independent identity, and the positioning of the Taiwanese in a global context.

The Characters: Claiming Shakespeare

In the three-act performance, Wu played nine characters from Shakespeare's *King Lear* in the first two acts, and played himself in the last one. In Act One he played Lear in the storm scene, but he changed into himself near the end of the act. He was the actor who played the character Lear; but he played it because he empathised with the character. He had performed with large groups; he had had his kingdom full of knights. He had been at the centre of the traditional theatre stage, but he was exiled from his beloved master, and by the difficulties in modern reality. He was enraged by the madness caused by his pride in art, and now he was left alone on stage, desperately

[47] All the lines quoted are transcribed from *King Lear* DVD (performed at Taipei Metropolitan Hall, 2012, published by The Contemporary Legend Theatre). The translation is the researcher's own.

[48] Lu, *The Contemporary Legend*, pp. 136-37.

[49] Huang, 'Shakespeare, Performance, and Autobiographical Interventions', p. 31.

grasping his own self. It was the reflection of himself on Lear that urged Wu to come back to the stage with *King Lear*. With the clear reference to the present reality, his audience 'came for the transformation of Wu, not just the representation of Lear'.[50] The play is as much about the journey of the actor Wu Hsing-Kuo as the reflection of the character Lear.

In the second act, Wu played the roles of the Fool, a Dog, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, Gloucester, Edmund and Edgar. The act was a brief account of what transpires in *King Lear*, which could be roughly divided into two parts. In the first part, Wu played the Fool, who recounted the division of Lear's land and the exile of Cordelia. The second part consist of the agony of Gloucester, the betrayal of Edmund, Edgar's enforced pretension of madness and his leading Gloucester to Dover. As Li Ruru observes, 'Wu's unique performance skills were showcased across a remarkable range of roles'.[51] In order to differentiate the characters he enacted consecutively, sometimes at a very fast pace,

> Wu exploited the conventionalised system under which every *jingju* character type has its own distinctive singing voice and style, as well as its own mode of acting, gestures, body movements, and steps. Hence, whenever Wu switched from one role to another, his alterations of voice and behaviour would immediately help the audience comprehend the change.[52]

The daughters were enacted according to three schools of the female role, under the instruction of Wei Hai-Min, who played Lady Aushu (Lady Macbeth) in *The Kingdom of Desire*. Goneril was portrayed as *qingyi*, the formal female role; Regan was *poladan* or *huadan*, the vivacious female, who waved her skirt and danced exuberantly; Cordelia was *kudan*, the tragic female, who wore a hood and hid her face with the long sleeves, singing in a much more timid way.

His acting of the two brothers was the combatant male type, and that of Gloucester was

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[50] *Ibid*., p. 40.
[51] Li Ruru, '"Who is it that can tell me who I am?"/ "Lear's shadow": A Taiwanese Actor's Personal Response to *King Lear*', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 57:2, summer 2006, p. 204.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 204-5.

the elderly male type: he trained in the former when he first attended the *jingju* school, and the latter under Master Zhou. As noted earlier, by playing different role types Wu had already breached the rules set by his master, as well as all *jingju* masters who came before him. When he played the three daughters under Wei Hai-Min's instruction, he also defied the rule that one can only have one master, which was the reason for Master Zhou to banish him years ago when he was taught another play by another master. In order to pursue his own artistic path, Wu had to resist the master whom he revered as a father. As Huang puts it, 'versatility and amalgamation are artistic breakthroughs and have become signs of resistance themselves'.[53]

In the final act, Wu played himself, an actor who, by playing Lear, was enabled to search for his own self. He spoke as both himself and Lear, as he shared Lear's profound sadness in the tragedy taking place on stage. The embodiment of Lear by the actor Wu Hsing-Kuo was the final statement of his empathy for Lear - an empathy that would not have been lost on his Taiwanese audience, who cheered and applauded to the actor's final confession on stage, and who would see the Chinese culture as a father-figure that must be respected and left alone in order to find their own national and cultural identity.

Questioning a Shakespearean Surrogate Parent who Bears the Name of China

The crucial moment of transformation for the meaning of Shakespeare and China to the Taiwanese took place in Act One. In the first five minutes, Wu's Lear did not utter a sound; with the choreographed shaking and waving of the tremendous beard and the long sleeves of the costume, Wu 'translate[d] the storm scene and Lear's remorse' through 'strides, minced steps, [and] somersaults'.[54] The coded gestures of *jingju* evoked unseen elements such as the rain, and were accompanied by modern dance movement to express more realistic human feelings. The crazed Lear then burst into arias:

> As we grow old and worthless,
> Children discard us,
> For all our wealth and honour,

[53] Huang, 'Shakespeare, Performance, and Autobiographical Interventions', p. 39.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

They are all useless.
People say paternal care will be repaid in three lives,
Yet all my daughters are thankless.

As Li Ruru observes, music and dance are essential to *jingju*. When an actor sings, he does not 'stand still, concentrating on his vocal delivery as a Western opera singer might do, but [enacts] highly demanding stage conventions'.[55] Wu's Lear also combined three stylisations: the elderly male type, the combatant male and the painted-face role.[56] At once Wu crossed both the boundaries of Shakespeare's text and the conventions of *jingju*, thus creating his personal world of the stage.

The second scene continued with Lear's madness. Instead of singing arias, he now spoke in an exaggerated modulation of tone particular to the convention of *jingju*. He took off his right shoe, talking and singing to it as if it were Cordelia. He questioned 'do you know who I am? I am Lear!' Lear's lonely figure on the stage illustrated 'the great empathy that Wu had with Lear's feelings of loneliness and betrayal'.[57] The play began with Lear's madness, and unravelled the cause of it only in almost nonsensical utterances in rage. The story behind his madness was to be revealed in Act Two which signified the priority of emotions over storyline. The play did not follow Shakespeare's structure because it was Wu's re-evaluation, inspired by Shakespeare's play, of 'his own life as a practitioner of the traditional theatre in Taiwan's postmodern industrial society'.[58] And the contemplation leapt out of the convention of Shakespeare's stage in the next scene.

After stumbling stiffly to the ground, Lear slowly woke. Taking off his wig and beard, Lear was transformed, in full view of the audience, into the modern Taiwanese *jingju* actor Wu Hsing-Kuo. He spoke, suddenly, in an everyday tone, without the *jingju* accent: 'I am back. The decision is tougher than entering into some monastery!' This conformed to Wu's acknowledgement of the returning of his CLT after two years of suspension. At once the character was out of the story and came close to the audience's

[55] Li, 'Who is it that can tell me who I am', p. 199.
[56] The painted-face is a brutal, loud-voiced, and straight-hearted person, who is often applied to the roles of powerful generals. *Ibid.*
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 201.
[58] *Ibid.*

reality.

Here, the imaginary space of the theatre provided Wu a chance to voice the Taiwanese anxiety of identity. The character Lear had been real for the actor Wu; but now it was a costume in his hand, as if the Chinese cultural legacy had been taken off from the Taiwanese and was now viewed as nothing beyond the materialistic value. In the next moment, he used Shakespeare's lines to question the character he had just played. Looking at his wig and beard, he asked 'Who am I?' followed by a line-by-line translation of Shakespeare as he smeared his makeup from his face:

> Does any here know me? This is not Lear.
> Does Lear walk thus, speak thus? Where are his eyes?
> Either his notion weakens, his discerning are
> Lethargied—Ha! Sleeping or waking? 'tis not
> So. Who is it that can tell me who I am? (*King Lear* I.iv.217-21)[59]

While taking off his royal costume, the Taiwanese actor Wu answered the Shakespearean character Lear in Wu's own language:

> My kingdom, my wit, and my power all abuse me!
> They want me to believe that I am of this place!
> I am back!
> I'm still I that was, I that am, and I that shall be!
> I revert to my nature.
> This feat is nobler than entering into some monastery!

The audience's thundering applause was clearly recorded in the 2006 performance DVD. It was for the symbolic meaning of CLT's comeback as the actor Wu came out from behind both the Chinese *jingju* and Shakespeare and 'reverted' to his natural state of being a contemporary Taiwanese. The confrontations presented on stage were not only Wu versus Shakespeare, but also Wu versus his Chinese burden; even the

[59] William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. R. A. Foakes, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Cenage Learning, 1997). Subsequent references are to this edition.

Taiwanese independent ideology versus the 'Big China Theory'. When at the end of Act One Wu questioned 'Why Lear? Who is Lear?', he was expressing his doubt at what Shakespeare's meant to him as a Taiwanese; a discussion barely detectable in *The Kingdom of Desire* but blatantly confronted in *King Lear*, because the political context when the performance premiered in 2001 permitted, even encouraged such discourse among the Taiwanese; and in 2006, when the production examined in this chapter was recorded, this ideology grew even stronger. Thus, the actor Wu's answer 'I am Lear himself! Every inch a Lear!' declared the recognition of the filial obligation to China's cultural legacy as well as the acknowledgement of Taiwan's foreignness for China through Shakespeare, marking the most crucial turning point in the development of Taiwanese *xiqu* Shakespeare.

As mentioned earlier, Act Two was a synopsis of Shakespeare's *King Lear* where Wu showcased various *jingju* role types. Before his Cordelia exited, he turned from the audience and changed his voice back to a man's, shouting 'what an ungrateful daughter, get thee gone!' Later in the same act, Wu's Gloucester shouted his remorse for having wronged his son Edgar:

> Edgar, my son!
> I did thee wrong.
> I...I should be damned...
> My son! Thou must come back bravely
> To avenge thy father for the brutal damage!
> My son! ...Thy father will be gone now!

It was the only thing he said before the leap. Wu's Gloucester did not speak of the gods (IV.vi.34), and he did not linger on the thoughts of life and death. The only thing that mattered was that he had wronged his beloved son. In Huang's analysis[60], such a moment is proof of Wu's liberty in claiming Shakespeare for his personal purpose, as Wu's Gloucester embodied his late master Zhou, whose regret for banishing Wu was vehemently wished for by his pupil. However, no reconciliation was presented on stage. Act Two ended with Wu speaking as a voiceover, commenting that:

[60] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, pp. 216-28.

My father gave me a chance to kill him.
But I did not kill him.
After this encounter,
Both father and son are reborn.
This must be the most tender moment in *King Lear*!
But Lear is still a madman,
Roaming here and there with a wreath on his head.

Lear, the master/father figure was mad and always would be in Wu's *Lear*. Unlike Shakespeare's play, Act Three did not provide any opportunity for Lear to meet with Cordelia, nor Gloucester with his sons. Wu returned to his initial purpose of searching for an identity: the identity of Lear as well as of himself. In the final act, it was the actor Wu who returned with Lear's costumes in his hands. Again he questioned:

Lear, Lear, Lear, Lear!
Wherefore art thou Lear?
Why art thou named Lear?
Why dost thou happen to be King Lear?

By questioning the choice of being Lear, Wu was also questioning his choice of taking up *jingju* and of adapting Shakespeare. For choosing *jingju*, he had become lonely, as the traditional theatre was dying both in China and Taiwan. For adapting Shakespeare to recreate *jingju* he had been expelled from his tutelage with Master Zhou, and cast out of the traditional legacy he had always held on to. As Li observes, to adapt *King Lear* into this production was the only way for Wu to 'deal with his fundamental loneliness, the disturbing question of his identity, and his complex emotional relationships with his master and profession'.[61] However, while Wu's superimposition of his personal urgency on Shakespeare leads Huang to conclude that this production is 'not to serve larger national politics, but to reconcile personal identity crises'[62], Wu's audience was invited, whether self-consciously or not, to see through and share the

[61] Li, 'Who is it that can tell me who I am', p. 214.
[62] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 226.

struggles confronting his Lear. Viewed from the historical perspective of the modern Taiwanese, Wu is not the only castaway of the Chinese traditional culture, and Shakespeare can be called upon to personify the surrogate parent in place of such a culture. Wu had to be Lear because *jingju* was his root; Wu had to take leave of Lear because the cultural root of *jingju* was deprived by Taiwan's political environment. The production seemed to be saying that the Taiwanese must be Chinese, because China is Taiwan's cultural parent; yet Taiwan must depart from China, because the political history separates the two countries. The character Lear, acting as the Shakespearean surrogate parent, can and does offer the Taiwanese a way out of the identity crisis.

Adapting the Lines to Linguistic Contemporaneity

In this performance the lines, including the few direct translations from Shakespeare, were tailored to meet the need of a *jingju* performance. As observed in the last chapter, the arias and the stressed accent demanded in *jingju* would distance most of the audiences in the twenty-first century Sinophone world: unlike spoken dramas, a *jingju* performance has to be accompanied by subtitles, even when the audience is entirely made up of native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. The distancing effect would be the same for both the Taiwanese and the Chinese audiences; Shakespeare's linguistic foreignness is simply transformed to yet another linguistic unfamiliarity.

As noted in the previous section, Wu frequently adopted the everyday tone in the spoken parts, especially when he played the Actor and the Fool. Though it can be seen as his effort to localise *jingju*, it was still too stylised compared to the spoken drama form. Surprisingly, in a revived production in 2006, Wu took a further step towards localisation by bringing the Taiwanese dialect as well as the Taiwanese-accented Mandarin into Act Two.[63] When Lear demanded a joke, the Fool told one to reveal Lear's bitter memory of his daughters:

> The old fool savours funny laugh,
> I shall jest with him by spinning a yarn:
> There was some strange thing in Taiwan,

[63] This linguistic localisation will be observed again in the next case study of *The Tempest*.

An old man bequeathed properties unto three children (*Taiwanese Mandarin*),
He allotted each a separate building (*Taiwanese dialect*)
The children promised to look after their dad in turn (*Taiwanese Mandarin*)
But it turned out they denied the matter the next day,
The mad old papa got into such a huff,
He rented a big bulldozer late in the dark,
One by one, he razed the houses flat.[64]

The surprising insertion of Taiwanese dialect and accented Mandarin into the yarn suggests that Wu added the lines in his 2006 production to conform to the present national identity of the Taiwanese.[65] Although these were only three short lines in the production compared with the more stylised and elaborate Mandarin forming the linguistic majority, the contrast between the dialect of the Taiwanese daily usage and that of a *jingju* stage could not have been missed by the audience. Li points out that, in this scene of the 2004 production, Wu played Kent with a Sichuan dialect, which 'derived from the fact that many military personnel who came with the Nationalists to Taiwan in 1949 were originally from Sichuan'.[66] But in the 2006 production, Kent's part was omitted, and the reference to the veterans was replaced with localism. The alterations through the years are evidence of a growing accentuation of the locality of Wu's adaptation.

Departing from his previous method of following a Japanese influence in *The Kingdom of Desire*, Wu created a *Lear* that presents both his personal insight into his own life and local Taiwanese theatrical appreciation. By this time, Wu has brought *jingju* into Taiwan's local consciousness by way of adapting Shakespeare and other Western texts; Shakespeare was also transformed into a personal journey for the Taiwanese, whom Wu represented in his combined identity as a Chinese-influenced *jingju* actor and as a contemporary Taiwanese looking for a definite identity. The liberty of Wu as actor/director to freely adopt whatever suited his purpose in Shakespeare, whether it was the existing elements of the play or what was read in Wu's own consciousness,

[64] The lines are taken from the subtitles of the DVD; italic parenthesis are added by the author.
[65] Li also notes that changes have been made to the play during his European tour. Some alterations of the costume were observed in 2004 (Li, 'Who is it that can tell me who I am?', p. 206).
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

gave birth to a new presentation of Shakespeare's *Lear*. In the next and final case study, the Taiwanese *xiqu* Shakespeare works to globalise the localised art.

Defining Contemporaneity for Taiwan's Chineseness: *The Tempest,* directed by Tsui Hark and Wu Hsing-Kuo (2004)[67]

With *The Kingdom of Desire*, interest in *jingju* was temporarily revived, and Shakespeare helped *jingju* gain a different outlook, invoking new curiosity and a new audience. With *King Lear*, the lifting of restrictions in *jingju*'s forms and Shakespeare's texts were accepted. The desire for marketability[68] is evident from the successful global touring of these productions. Shakespeare's adaptability, when placed alongside the necessity of *jingju*'s theatrical style, was able to set a distinguishable boundary, for the Taiwanese, between China and the Chinese culture. Wu's next step, a grand project that transformed the barren stage of traditional Chinese theatre into visual magnificence, as well as the addition of whatever discourse was of interest to him and the audience, led to *The Tempest*.

A Mixture of Film and *Jingju*

The Tempest was a cooperation between some of the most prominent figures from Taiwan and Hong Kong, a region where the political presence of China is no more

[67] Wu Hsing-Kuo and Tsui Hark, dir., Wu Hsing-Kuo, perf., *The Tempest*. The Contemporary Legend Theatre. Taipei, 2004; Hong Kong, 2008; Seoul, 2009. All discussions about the production in this chapter are based on the DVD recording of the performance at National Theatre, Taipei, 2004. The DVD was published by The Contemporary Legend Theatre in 2009.

[68] Global marketability for *xiqu* via Shakespeare is, in fact, noted and has been employed by many *xiqu* directors. Besides the productions discussed in this thesis, the Taiwan Banzi Opera has sought to bring *yuju*, a sub-genre of *xiqu* to the West, by adapting *The Merchant of Venice* (2009). Directed by spoken drama director Lu Bo-Shen with a script adapted by Shakespearean Professor Perng Ching-Hsi, the production team travelled to and showcased at the British Shakespeare Association Conference at King's College, London in 2009, prior to its premiere in Taiwan. During the conference, Perng explained that the purpose of this production was to present Shakespeare in his originality by means of a traditional Chinese art form. Like any other *xiqu* production, this adaptation, renamed *Yue/Shu*, omitted parts of the play to highlight a certain theme. In this case, Jessica's elopement and Lancelot's departure were omitted, reducing the potential sympathetic theme for Shylock. Nevertheless, the scholarly claims from Perng and the showcase of this production at an international Shakespeare conference served as an Occidentalist endorsement for the company. The international marketability of Sino-Shakespeare is discussed further in Chapter 6. Duan Hsin-Jun, *Western Canon in Taiwan Theatre: Adaptation and Transformation* (Taipei: Naitonal Chiao Tung University Press, 2012) p. 219.

welcomed than it is in Taiwan. As the artistic director for this production, Wu invited film director Tsui Hark to be chief director, and Academy Award winner[69] Tim Yip to act as stage and costume designer. While Yip had cooperated with The Contemporary Legend Theatre in productions such as *Lo Lan Nu* (an adaptation of *Medea*), director Tsui did not have any experience with the stage prior to *The Tempest*. In an interview, Wu expresses his expectation of something innovative and 'with more distance from the tradition' he so loves.[70] In the same interview, Tsui also indicates his intention to bring modernity to *jingju*.[71] Contributing writer Andrew Huang observes in this production that 'with his background in film, Tsui drew scene-by-scene rough sketches from his movie practice. What Tsui clearly brings in are the clear structure, tight pace, layered characters and fast-rolling dramatic momentum that are the trademark of his film works'.[72]

In *The Kingdom of Desire*, Wu had already borrowed from cinematography when constructing *jingju* as a complete story; in *King Lear*, Wu boldly reconstructed the whole play to express his personal insights. Bringing Tsui in as director would therefore seem to have little impact for both Shakespeare and *jingju*. However, Tsui's participation served mainly two purposes: first, the combination of Tsui's and Shakespeare's fame was expected to raise great interest among the Taiwanese and the Chinese audiences; second, mixing filmography with traditional theatre was thought to endorse the contemporaneity of the traditional art form.

Widely known in the Sinophone world for action feature films such as *A Chinese Ghost Story* (1987) and *Once Upon a Time in China* (1991), Tsui collaborated with Wu in creating a two-act-twelve-scene structure, each scene meshing seamlessly with its successor. With Yip, who envisioned a more 'fashionable' costume that retained the symbolic functionality of *jingju*, and a grand stage on which various scenes were played and yet which still left blank spaces for imagination 'as the Chinese paintings do', Tsui and Wu focused on the creation of the magical, without which Wu claims that 'the plot

[69] Yip won the Academy Award for costume design in Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000).
[70] From the interview recorded in the DVD of the production's 2004 premiere at National Theatre Taipei (2010).
[71] *Ibid.*
[72] From the brochure of *The Tempest* DVD (2010).

of *The Tempest* is actually quite straightforward and a little too simple'.[73]

The cinematic aspects set this production apart from Wu's previous theatrical efforts, the stagecraft of which was mostly centred on the traditional *jingju* conventions. As magic was one of the key elements in this production, the first two scenes exemplified *The Tempest*'s emphasis on cinematic visual and sound effects. While the stage remained bare except for a gigantic movable rock on which Prospero could be seen in key scenes where he 'directed' the actions that took place, sound and visual effects dominated the play. The play opened with a dimly lit stage, on which four fairies appeared with the sound of thunder and flash of lightning, singing 'Prospero, Prospero, the monster of the sea, the devil of the sky'.[74] As the fairies approached the centre, each of them picked up a corner of a large cloth and began to wave it. The waving of the cloth and the shaking of two white 'flags' on their back were accompanied by Prospero's chanting at the back of the stage, and the sound of thunders, clanging Chinese music, sudden flashes, and a dark blue lighting initiated the mystical yet violent opening of a tempest.

At the beginning of the second scene (titled *The Book of the Beach*), an actor was dressed in drapes and a crown, signifying the head of the ship. The lighting was changed to red as fire burned the ship. As the ship sank, the actor heading the ship was elevated toward the roof by suspension wires, waving his arms as flapping wings. After the characters of the courts exited, the sailors performed acrobats with fairies, manifesting the last struggle in the sinking ship. When the struggle was over, the suspended actor returned to ground, and slowly retreated with the fairies as the light turned dark green, and the gigantic moveable stone inched into the centre of the stage, introducing a calmer third scene, *The Book of Time*, in which Prospero related his tale to Miranda.

These are a few examples of how cinematic visual and sound effects were emphasised to draw the attention of an audience who had, at the time of the premiere in 2004, long been immersed in the special effects of films. As previously discussed, *The Kingdom of Desire* had been Wu's early attempt to tone down *jingju*'s convention for the

[73] *The Tempest* DVD.
[74] All lines are transcribed from *The Tempest* DVD (2010). The translation is the researcher's own.

Taiwanese audience; *The Tempest* was one step closer to what Lanier calls 'Shakespop': while adaptation disregards the linguistic fidelity to Shakespeare's texts, it is the 'spirit' of the Bard that the directors of film/stage pursue. Shakespeare can lend authority to a pop production, particularly when the production is set in a historical background.[75] For a Taiwanese audience who grew up with Tsui's action films, Tsui's name undoubtedly lends an authoritative voice to the popular side of the production. When *The Tempest* opened with visual and sound effects so similar to a film, *jingju* was firmly linked with popular culture, while maintaining its highbrow status with the cultural authority of both *jingju* and Shakespeare.

Reflecting Local Concerns with a Global Approach

While Tsui's filmography invoked the popular side of the production, the adapted script and plots served as a significant reflection of the contemporary Taiwanese consciousness. As the majority of the Taiwanese theatregoers are unable to follow closely either *jingju*'s convention or Shakespeare's original lines, both the accuracy of *jingju* style and the authenticity of the script cease to be a significant concern for the director as long as the rough outline of the performance and the script tell the Shakespearean story faithfully enough for a Taiwanese audience. Sufficiency in the faithfulness is once again proclaimed as a pursuit for *jingju*'s Chineseness and Shakespeare's 'true spirit'; an ambiguous term, yet gratifying in terms of the audience.

After the solo performance of *King Lear*, in which Wu made radical changes to the source text, *The Tempest* was first presented in four versions online, open to voting by users, with the most popular to be performed.[76] Eventually the chosen version was not the most popular (this featured solo performances of Prospero, Alonso and Caliban by Wu) but the version that followed the chronological order of the original play, and was divided into twelve scenes, each with a theme attached to it. Interestingly, the version in which Caliban was cast as the narrator was not picked as the favourite, which could

[75] Lanier, *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture,* pp. 98-99. In the next chapter, Chinese director Feng Xiaogang's feature film *The Banquet*, an adaptation of *Hamlet*, also invokes the concept of Shakespop to elevate the genre of martial art film. In Chapter 7, Lee Kuo-Hsiu's *Shamlet* turned *Hamlet* into a comic parody that relied heavily on Taiwan's popular culture to generate Shakespeare's currency for the modern Taiwanese audience.

[76] Lai Tingheng, 'Wu Hsing-Kuo to Perform Shakespeare's *The Tempest*', Art Village section of *Chinatimes*, 24 May, 2004, quoted from Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 191.

suggest that an overtly post-colonial interpretation was not welcomed among the Taiwanese. However, Caliban symbolises the barbaric, the uncivilised - the aboriginal. While Taiwan's main ethnic/cultural/political conflict is between the Mainlanders and the Islanders, the aborigines are often marginalised in the Taiwanese social narrative.

Alexander Huang defines 'the tensions between the aboriginals and Taiwanese as well as the post-1949 immigrants in Taiwan – that is, the "present" of the audience's world - became the "stage" that framed the world of *The Tempest*'.[77] Taiwanese theatre scholar Duan Hsin-Jun explains that such a 'present' is an artistic reflection on the identity of a Taiwanese audience, on the oppression against the aborigines from immigrants of different stages, and on the colonisation of the Chinese.[78] *The Tempest*, a play widely studied in the context of post-colonial discourse, seems fitting to express the colonised depression of Taiwan, an island itself, taken over by the onslaught of Chinese culture.

As Wu expresses in the DVD commentary, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* seems to him a dull tale if not for the magic. On the other hand, Duan argues that Wu's *The Tempest* is 'not radically inspiring' compared to *The Kingdom of Desire* which broke free from tradition, while *The Tempest* is still set in a more or less straightforward copy of the original storyline but for Tsui's cinematic opening of the play.[79] However, Duan also notes that, while the general telling of the story is faithful to the original, it is the deconstruction of elements meaningful to the present time that makes this production work.[80] While Caliban and Ariel occupy the centre of the colonial theme, their significance is greatly elevated through the adaptation.

Caliban was portrayed by actor Yang Jing-Ming, who is well-trained in martial arts. He was donned not in traditional *jingju* costume, but with rags covering his body and head, exposing both arms and legs, with a 'tail' trailing after him. When he entered, he rolled, somersaulted and danced around, resembling Jack Birkette's portrayal of Caliban in Derek Jarman's 1979 film adaptation. When he spoke, Yang's Caliban did not use the

[77] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 192.
[78] Duan, *Western Canon*, p. 70.
[79] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[80] *Ibid.*

traditional dialects of *jingju* (which contains more heightened and prolonged phonetic syllables); he spoke with the dialect of the Taiwanese Islanders (the most common dialect of Chinese in Taiwan, sparsely used in Wu's other productions to make the storytelling clearer or to tone down *jingju*'s heavy linguistic codification). As opposed to Prospero's elaborate *jingju*-like costume and his arias of the *laosheng* style (a *jingju* form for elderly protagonists), Caliban's costumes, movements and dialects stood for the uncivilised and exploited. In Shakespeare's original, Caliban exclaims 'You taught me language, and my profit on't/Is I know how to curse' (I.ii.362-23).[81] The linguistic hegemony in Taiwan makes it convenient for this line to be adapted to resonate in a Taiwanese environment, given that the Chinese language, especially the Mandarin Chinese dialect (the official language in both China and Taiwan) was imposed on the Taiwanese Islanders and the aborigines from 1945. In the seventh scene 'Dream', Caliban, accompanied by the Taiwanese aboriginal music, sang

> You taught me civilization,
> Changed my clothing and appearance,
> But in the end,
> You forced me to wander homelessly,
> Lost in my own land.

Taking Shakespeare's original further, Yang's Caliban represented the oppression from the Chinese culture on stage by contrasting his aboriginal forms against the orthodoxy of the Chinese *jingju*. Curiously left behind, however, was the struggle between the Mainlanders (pro-Chinese, therefore *jingju*) and the Islanders (anti-Chinese, therefore *huaju*). This could be because the historicity demanded to present the authenticity of culture was considered weaker if the Islander's *huaju*, or the more modern form of spoken drama, is staged against a *jingju* backdrop. In this light, though the play opened with a modern brush of visual effects, modernity was still deemed not suitable to represent the conflict between China and Taiwan. On the other hand, if the Taiwanese local *xiqu* (the Hakka *xiqu* for the Hakka ethnic group, or the *guahi* for the Min ethnic group) was to be put on stage, the form and the dialects would have been too close to

[81] William Shakespeare, *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Tempest*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). Subsequent references are to this edition.

that of the Chinese theatre to be easily distinguished by a contemporary Taiwanese audience.

Therefore, to make the contrast between the Chinese hegemony and the Taiwanese locality as distinctive as possible, this scene included the addition of Caliban's dream. After Caliban finished his cursing of Prospero with invocations to his 'grandmother', an aboriginal term for ancestor, he collapsed on the ground. In the background, a female voice was heard calling out Caliban's name. The audience later learned that this was Sycorax, who claimed that she would avenge Caliban's loss with a magical war for the right to rule the island. The rest of the scene was played out between a group of fairies, all dressed in white as Ariel was, and a group of aborigines. The two groups battled, and Caliban woke to find it a dream after the battle was completed with no apparent victor.

A feminist reading of Sycorax often laments the absence of women in the power struggle of men.[82] Wu's production brought not only a female Ariel, but also Sycorax as the powerful spirit of the aboriginal ancestor who could bring a balance to Caliban's struggle with Prospero. Yet her appearance was restricted to a dream, which, as Duan argues, at once signified the inevitability of feminisation/weakening of the less powerful while dramatising the localisation and de-colonisation of Taiwan.[83] However, Duan does not specify the relationship between the dramatic action of Sycorax in this play and Taiwan's de-colonisation. Sycorax in this production represented the dream of the Taiwanese aborigines, who had aspired to be free from Japanese colonisation. This dream was conjured up to represent the Taiwanese dream to be liberated from China's cultural and political imperialism; yet the Taiwanese, except for the aborigines, would seek assistance from Japan, Shakespeare, or any other foreign forces to realise this dream. The aboriginal spirit embodied by this Sycorax was thus seen also as the longing of other Taiwanese for a mother figure to protect them from China's oppression. However, the protection was weak; and as the play moved beyond the dream, Trinculo and Stephano came on stage and provided Caliban with a mockery of a solution found in the dream.

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[82] Lara Irene, 'Beyond Caliban's Curses: the Decolonial Feminist Literacy of Sycorax', cited from Duan, *Western Canon*, p. 60.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

While Sycorax was awakened in dream-form to exert her magical power, Ariel was given a more substantial, yet potentially marginalised power. Dressed in white with flags signifying wings behind her back and acting in a *jingju* 'Dan' style (a form assigned to female characters), Ariel personified the concept of sky. Yip, the costume/stage designer, reveals his intention to make Ariel as sky-born as Caliban is earth-bound.[84] Ariel moved in with tiny, rapid steps, making her watersleeves flow and her 'wing-flag' tremble as if in flight, while chanting lyrics written in the style of classic Chinese. Though native to the island, Arial was presented as educated and as civilised as Prospero and the members of Alonso's court. While it goes against the main trend to cast Ariel as male and alien ever since the character was cast as male in 1930, Wu's Ariel (enacted by the professional Dan actress Zhu An-Li) was portrayed as more closely connected with Prospero than Caliban in that Ariel and Miranda, apart from the dress, sang and spoke with equal civility. It was as if Ariel's inherited spirit stood for the highest form of civilisation, paralleling the Chinese ideal of *Tian Ren He Yi*, or Nature and Men being One.

Duan defines Wu's Ariel as 'the obedient colonised', as befit her conforming attitude and stylisation.[85] It also reflects much truth in terms of Taiwan's contemporary society: before the DPP was set to change Taiwan's national identity during its reign from 2000 to 2008, many Taiwanese had considered themselves Chinese, both culturally and politically, following Chiang Kai-Shek's 'Big China Theory'. Adopting the Chinese language and preferring the Chinese culture over the aboriginal or the Islanders' is still considered natural for many Mainlanders and their descendants. At the time of *The Tempest*, both Wu and Duan observe that Taiwan was moving into a more politically complicated condition as the DPP's de-Sinicisation activities were failing. Ariel, speaking as Prospero spoke, therefore symbolised the representation preferred by the Taiwanese who still aspire to the Chinese cultural legacy.

Ariel's submissiveness was greatly enhanced in Wu's production. During the second scene, after Caliban expressed his wish to make Miranda pregnant and was consequently punished by Prospero, Ariel stepped up and chided:

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[84] *The Tempest* DVD.

[85] Duan, *Western Canon*, p. 57.

You deserve it, Caliban! (*striking Caliban in the head*)
You should have behaved yourself.
My master treats you with benevolence,
You should have gratitude in your heart!

In Shakespeare's original, the chiding of Caliban is assigned to Miranda or traditionally reassigned to Prospero (I.ii.350-61), but Wu's Ariel reminds the Taiwanese of the pro-nationalist propaganda that had dictated Chiang Kai-Shek's benevolence when he and the old KMT forced the Chinese culture and language on the Islanders, initiating the White Terror era. The potency of such a reminder of a sad history was deluded only because it was directed toward a representative of the aborigine (Ariel was chiding the aborigine Caliban, not a representative of a Taiwanese Islander), and this serves to recall not the oppression of the Islanders, but that of the Japanese against the aborigines, which is always a beacon for Taiwanese rebellion against outlandish intruders.[86] While Ariel's lines practically said to the Taiwanese that any rebellion against the highbrow Chinese art deserved 'old cramps', aches in the bones and a roar in agony (I.ii.367-79), Caliban the aborigine took the blame away from the Taiwanese audience, for whom the main political discourse is actually the oppression of the Taiwanese Islanders. Through Caliban, the oppressive reality was shifted to a more restricted representative, and Wu's production relieved the Taiwanese audience of the full force of the main discourse against China.

For Wu's Ariel, compliance with the ruling power granted even more powerful rewards when Prospero's speech on the etherealness of his art (IV.i.148-58) was given to Ariel. In the eleventh scene, entitled 'Justice', Prospero brought Alonso's court out of a trance with his forgiveness. When Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano were chased on stage by dogs, Caliban tried to imitate Prospero's voice to defend against the dogs to no avail. At this point, Ariel entered, addressing Caliban

[86] Though the Taiwanese Islanders had led numerous rebellions against the Japanese colonisers, the most notable was the Wushe Incident during the 1930s. The popularity of the film *Seediq Bale* (dir. Wei De-Sheng, 2011) based on the incident is evidence of the Taiwanese recognition of the aboriginal rebellions during the Japanese colonisation.

This is but a show by my master,
(Caliban: Him again?)
Behold, how real the performance is!
(The actors who played the dogs barked to the audience's applause.)
We are but some humble spirits,
Transformed into a thin shred of cloud and smoke,
And this ethereal scene of lively actions,
Is but a dream woven from airy nothing.
Be it the lonely isle, or great halls and castles,
All that exist in this great globe shall dissolve with no trace left behind.
And now the revels are ended,
Caliban, should you be returning the costumes to me?

Nearing the end of the play, when forgiveness to Prospero's secular equal was laid out, Ariel was thus ascended to the sublime power of conjuration. The learner became the most learned, as Prospero was presented on stage, silently watching Ariel take all the credit for herself. Though Ariel acknowledged that the show still belonged to her master, it was she who was distributing decrees not only to Caliban, but also to Alonso's court earlier in the scene. The power here was borrowed, but the exercise of the power lied not in the master. Wu's adaptation invited the Taiwanese to draw a parallel between Ariel's significance and the meaning of Chinese culture in Taiwan: it may be borrowed, but the master will leave, the authority is transferred, and servitude will be elevated into an independent mastery. At the end of the play, Prospero wedded Ariel to Caliban, signifying the ultimate union between Heaven and Earth. The marriage was given, or even forced upon the formerly submissive and rebellious, yet Wu's Caliban and Ariel were content with the order. In the end, Prospero repeated a few times 'set me free', turned his back, and walked into the back stage. The dream of a colony was thus fulfilled: whatever ideology the colonised may hold, the colonial master leaves behind him with only harmony and peace. Thus, *The Tempest* was adapted to realise Taiwan's dream of liberation from China on stage.

Conclusion

Both *jingju* and Shakespeare had been foreign to Taiwan. While Shakespeare still remains outside of the main cultural narrative, his cultural authority, granted by not only the Western canonisation of his works but also by his usefulness in cultural liberation in China and Japan, is invoked to localise *jingju* in Taiwan. In this chapter, Shakespeare is not merely Sinicised, nor *jingju* Westernised. The elements in Shakespeare's plays have been carefully selected to make a supposedly outlandish and withering art form take root in Taiwan. While in a post-colonial narrative it is not new that the former coloniser's cultural power is borrowed by the formerly colonised to consolidate power, the Occidentalist use of Shakespeare in the context of Taiwanese *xiqu* is anything but a classic post-colonial discourse.

Prior to the mid-1980s, Shakespeare was only sparsely performed and studied in Taiwan, and *jingju* was dwindling with the 'Big China Theory'. Wu Hsing-Kuo, representing a generation that was born into Chinese culture, lamented the seemingly inevitable loss of the culture brought to Taiwan, a land that had separated from China, yet which shares the culture and the written language. While an outright adaptation of Japanese materials might have incurred condemnation for bowing to the former colonial master, Wu's borrowing from the Japanese adaptation of a Western source material led to the success of *The Kingdom of Desire*. Freedom from the conventionality in *jingju* has come from three sources: firstly, the rising anti-China sentiments make any changes to the strict rules of *jingju* lamentable to the old masters but welcome to the Taiwanese audience, only too eager to claim a transformed Chinese culture as its own. Secondly, Shakespeare provides the name representing the powerful and modern West, and a move toward a Westernised structure and presentation of the tradition gives new life to old theatre. Thirdly, the close proximity of the Japanese Buddhist idea in Kurosawa's film and the Taiwanese culture makes *The Kingdom of Desire* easy to be recognised as a Chinese story donned in a Shakespearean premise - something the Taiwanese can accept without the negative sentiments they would have towards an old (therefore authoritative) Chinese tale.

Two of these three elements were left out when Wu moved on to *King Lear*. The Japanese influence was set aside, and a Taiwanese consciousness was added into the

play. The adaptation of Shakespeare became more liberal, and it was safe for Wu to claim Shakespeare as his own because the Taiwanese had acknowledged Shakespeare's modernity and internationality without the critical history of his plays. Looking at Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Wu claims that he found a connection with his personal sentiments and history; yet the majority of the play was cut out, leaving the central theme of self-realisation and self-salvation to take the stage. Also, the beginning of the twenty-first century was the beginning of a more intense Taiwanese consciousness. Dwelling on *King Lear*'s theme of filial piety, which resonates with the core social value of the Sinophone world, Wu took Shakespeare into Taiwan's local consciousness.

As Shakespeare's global brand was localised, and *jingju* was again permitted to be named Taiwanese, *The Tempest* went on to stamp Taiwan's presence on Shakespeare. Cooperating with prominent figures from Hong Kong, *The Tempest* has an outlook of contemporaneity through its visual and sound effects. The theatricality of the production linked Taiwan with the twenty-first century, while the form retained the inherited Chineseness. While the bulk of the production was still the Shakespearean 'spirit' that Wu has always been keen to grasp, Wu's adaptive gesture moved from the tragedies to the romances, signifying a growth of his artistic confidence that no longer needed to rely solely on the craving for power. Pushing the post-colonial narrative to its extreme with the adaptation, Prospero's voice was at once reduced to seeming insignificance, while being potently preserved in Ariel's and Caliban's stories. Thus, the Chinese metanarrative was directly confronted with the maturing Taiwanese consciousness.

The previous chapter argues that Chinese *xiqu* directors searched for an authoritative voice through adapting Shakespeare to a Chinese purpose: creating new forms for the traditional theatre and of asserting the global attraction of the Chinese culture. In this chapter, the auto-Orientalist discourse which states the self-inspected Orientalness is invoked again, albeit in a very different light. The Taiwanese are simultaneously reluctant and eager to embrace the Chineseness; reluctant because of the historical separation and the political conundrum, and eager because it is an inheritance that is undeniable and convenient for the nationalist discourse. Through Shakespeare, not only is Chineseness made palatable, but Taiwaneseness is also defined and becomes exportable to anyone concerned with the semi-country's status quo and cultural

standing in the Sinophone world. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Wu's latest adaptation of *Metamorphosis* is another example of how the Chinese *jingju* has become one of Taiwan's most internationally recognisable and marketable cultural assets. In an interview with the BBC, when Wu (as well as Lin Zhauhua's postmodernist Chinese *Coriolanus*) was questioned for his adaptation of Western canons rather than bringing an Asian story to the West, Wu replied that 'it really depends on the art agents. We've done that before; we brought our own stories to the West. But most agents picked the Western works'.[87] Whilst the BBC reporter Will Gompertz indicated the anxiety of risking an Orientalist view of such productions, it is exactly the latest Taiwanese/Chinese Occidentalist view of Shakespeare: the international marketability, which is the theme of the next two chapters.

[87] Wu Hsing-Kuo, Interview by Will Gompertz, BBC News, 2013.

Chapter 6

Global Shakespeare in Twenty-First Century China

Prologue: Twenty-First Century Chinese Occidentalism

In 2008, China held its first Olympic Games in Beijing. The significance of the event lies in China's demonstration of its economic and technological power to the world. Beijing National Stadium, nicknamed the Bird's Nest for its appearance, was built as a symbol of the rapid development of the country. As discussed in Chapter 4, the present political agenda for China is to seek the leading position in the world. The Western interests in the Orient would have been the most marketable selling point of Chineseness. However, as Alexander C. Y. Huang notices, this 'core narrative built around Chinese politics and aesthetics' was gradually replaced by a more avant-garde approach to a more 'modern' culture, including the architectural achievement shown here and, of course, theatre.[88] China, with its fast-paced modernisation, began to produce Shakespeare's plays from a more globalised perspective, or so it would seem.

This is only partially true; in fact, more productions are being created from directors' personal perspectives, and Huang's concept of a 'small-time Shakespeare' not only dominates the Taiwanese stage as discussed in Chapter 5 (which will continue to be the central issue in the next chapter), but also prevails in China. According to Li Ruru's study, in spite of the official Chinese agenda to globalise the country's collective narrative, Shakespeare is still regarded as 'essentially foreign, exotic, and Other'.[89] Shakespeare's exoticism had generated interest in his plays, as well as in the *huaju* or spoken drama influenced by the Western culture from which Shakespeare was born. At the same time, owing to the long history between Chinese intellectuals and Western culture, Shakespeare is not a stranger in Chinese classrooms, where students study his plays both in English and Mandarin Chinese. Nevertheless, Shakespeare's 'usefulness' as the origin for theatrical innovation is receding in the present time. For example, while

[88] Alexander C. Y. Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 199-200.

[89] Li Ruru, 'Millennium Shashibiya: Shakespeare in the Chinese-speaking World', in *Shakespeare in Asia*, eds. Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 170.

Wu Hsing-Kuo's *The Kingdom of Desire* continuously receives box office success in Taiwan, it was not as well-received when it came to Beijing in 2001.[90] While the *xiqu* genre is still thriving, the appeal of a Shakespearean *xiqu* renovation is declining in China.

The phenomenon of Shakespeare's declining utilitarian value for *xiqu* can be examined via the decline in general interest in Shakespeare. China's main direction is currently heading toward a society defined by its materialistic worth. Chinese theatre critic Lin Kehuan observes that 'the political and commercial ideologies form an alliance, while the government and the market capitalists are sharing the financial gains of all realms in the Chinese society', leading to 'the severe consequence of the marketisation of the national behaviourism and the nationalisation of the market behaviourism'.[91] Cultural or aesthetic value in such a context is given up for the market-orientated perspective; the intrinsic value of a Shakespearean revitalisation for *xiqu* is rendered unnecessary, because the Occidentalist point of view is now directed towards international marketability, for which the Orientalist attraction of *xiqu*'s spectacles is already sufficient.

Shen Lin further explains the cultural devaluation of Shakespeare by observing the Chinese craze for the English language.[92] Shakespeare, Shen argues, has come to symbolise not the cultural authority after which Chinese artists aspire, but the language in which his plays are written. The English language, required by the global business sector, is 'a requirement to enter the land of hope and riches'.[93] Therefore, when English-speaking companies tour China the tickets are always sold out, as the promotional materials all stress the linguistic usefulness for English learners to watch the play not only in its original form, but also the original language.[94] Shakespeare, Shen concludes, is worth no more than his marketable value in current China.[95]

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[90] Shen Lin, 'What use Shakespeare? China and Globalisation', in *Shakespeare in Asia*, eds. Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 220.
[91] Lin Ke-Huan, *Theatre in Consumer Society* (Taipei: Shulin, 2007), pp. 11-12
[92] Shen, 'Why Use Shakespeare?', pp. 222-24.
[93] *Ibid.*, p. 223.
[94] *Ibid.*
[95] *Ibid.*, p. 231.

Shen's explanation leads to a dismal picture of Shakespeare in the twenty-first century China. In Li Ruru's discussion on Lin Zhaohua's 2001 *Richard III*, the formalist production subverted the Chinese Shakespeare convention that had persisted in finding Shakespeare's spirit through a Sinicised medium. In this play, neither the *mise-en-scène* nor the costumes denoted Chineseness; and the reading of Shakespeare put Richard's victims to blame. In the crowning scene, both the citizens and the mayor were careless of each other's existence; and Richard's ascension to the throne was accompanied by video footage of swarms of ants, signifying that plebeian mindlessness was the cause of Chinese people's suffering.[96] While such a reading also conforms to Huang's observation of a trend towards a personal value of Shakespeare to the Chinese (similar to the analysis of Wu Hsing-Kuo's *King Lear*), the creative process and marketing strategies are called into question in Shen's study of the same play. The poster for the play, observed Shen, stressed how the play was 'tailor-made for major art festivals in London, Paris and Berlin, with only twelve performances for domestic audience'.[97] By turning away from the domestic audience, Shen argues, such productions are sold to the Chinese based only on an Occidentalist view that sees the superiority of the West without any 'intellectual inquiries' to Shakespeare.[98] In other words, Shen's argument takes the discourse of Chinese Shakespeare back to that of the early twentieth century: whatever is Western is superior to whatever is Chinese; if the theatre is designed for the Western audience, then it is beneficial to the Chinese. In this sense, the attempt to interpret Shakespeare's works is lost to the oldest form of Occidentalism: a blind and vehement worship.

However, this chapter takes a different perspective from Shen's by examining two productions that were also designed for the West. The first case study is Feng Xiaogang's 2006 feature film *The Banquet*, an adaptation of *Hamlet* set in ancient China. While the rest of the case studies in this thesis are stage production, the cinematic medium, which requires a different mode of appreciation, is chosen for two reasons.

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[96] Li, 'Millennium Shashibiya', pp. 178-80.

[97] Shen, 'Why Shakespeare?', p. 228. The phenomenon of Shakespeare's marketability for international festivals can also be observed in many other contemporary Asian adaptations where local culture seeks a global audience, as seen in a Korean Yohangza's adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* during the 2012 Globe to Globe season. Yong Li Lan, 'Intercultural Rhythm in Yohangza's Dream', in *Shakespeare Beyond English*, eds. Susan Bennett and Christie Carson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 87-91.

[98] Shen, 'Why Shakespeare?', p. 228.

Firstly, since Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, Asian cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare have been rendering interpretations imbued with visuality in order to carry the essence of the Oriental aesthetics in a comprehensive presentation. Secondly, the international transferability and marketability unique to the cinematic genre, especially the period and romantic categories prevalent in present-day China,[99] exemplify the consumer-orientated social culture which defines modern China. As Lin Kehuan argues, commercial performances may not be completely without artistic value.[100] In fact, if a Shakespearean adaptation is to be successful commercially, popular culture will demand the work '[address] several different levels of learning and taste within a single work, and not necessarily in compatible ways'.[101] Therefore, by looking at *The Banquet*, the capitalistic side of Shen's argument can provide an innovative reading of *Hamlet* through both the Chinese culture and China's current agenda of a globalising ambition.

The second case study is Wang Xiaoying's *huaju* adaptation of *Richard III*. Like Lin Zhaohua's adaptation of the same play, this production was designed for the West; more specifically, the play premiered in London as a part of the Globe to Globe season during the 2012 London Cultural Olympiad, three months before it was first staged in China. Similar to *The Banquet*, this production incorporated many Chinese theatrical elements; however, the Oriental visuality was replaced by an Oriental reading. Unlike Lin Zhaohua's production, Wang aims to reconcile Shakespeare's original play and the contemporary Chinese viewpoint. Though it was conceived through Wang's (hence personal, 'small-time' Shakespearean) reading, this Chinese *Richard III* carries the weight of Chinese historicity, confronting both the Chinese cultural legacy and the question of modernity in the face of the Occidentalist view of the West that had led to Shen's dismal view of an overtly materialistic approach to Shakespeare. In fact, after the production was staged at the Shanghai International Art Festival in 2012, Luo Hwaizhen, Vice President of the China Theatre Association, comments that 'the Chinese people have been trying to talk about Shakespeare in the Chinese terms for so many years, and finally tonight the conversation [between Shakespeare and Chinese

[99] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 230.
[100] Lin, *Theatre in Consumer Society*, p. 16.
[101] Douglas Lanier, *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 23.

culture] reached a natural state'.[102]

The two case studies in this chapter establish the current state of Shakespeare in China with a much more optimistic view. From the early development of an Occidentalism that had focused more on the cultural value, the Chinese have acquired a deeper understanding of the West through that process, and the Sino-centric confidence, when confronting the materialistic Occidentalism, plays a pivotal role in the process of appropriating the Other. This process helps the Chinese to pick through the understanding of the West, and the two case studies will examine Shakespeare's meaning to the Chinese beyond the global marketability and his link with the English language's economic usefulness. Therefore, though the heavy emphasis on commercialism seems to confine Shakespeare within the discourse of marketability, this market-orientated trend enables directors working now to bring the concerns of China and Chineseness to the global stage.

Modernised Tradition: *The Banquet*, directed by Feng Xiaogang (2006)[103]

Hamlet Retold as a Chinese Romance

The appeal of cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare's plays is long recognised. Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*'s disregard for the text distances its audience, who may already have a fairly good knowledge of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (especially in an English-speaking context), thus enabling an examination of the story in a brand new light. In his examination of cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare, Michael Anderegg writes, '[*Throne of Blood*] received extensive cultural support; it was embraced by Shakespeareans in part because its translation to another medium was so complete that comparisons to the original could be made in general rather than specific terms'.[104] The 'general comparisons to the original' have come to be applicable not only to Kurosawa's

[102] *Theatre News*, the Official Website of National Theatre of China, 13 November 2012, http://www.ntcc.com.cn/ . Accessed on 15th August, 2013.
[103] Feng Xiaogang, dir., *The Banquet* (China and Hong Kong: Huayi Brothers and Media Asia, 2006).
[104] Cited in Mark Thornton Burnett, 'Appropriation', in *Reconceiving the Renaissance*, eds Ewan Fernie, Ramona Wray, Mark Thornton Burnett, and Clare McManus (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 160.

works. As Mark Thornton Burnett notes, 'in recent films such as Tim Blake Nelson's "*O*" (2002) or Gil Junger's *Ten Things I Hate About You* (1999), there is only a passing regard for the playtext, with Shakespeare having been transformed into no more than a vaguely symbolic "essence"',[105] thus replacing the authoritative text and allowing directors more possibilities for personal interpretations. Many subversive adaptations and spin-offs, such as *Shakespeare in Love* and the BBC's *Shakespeare Re-Told*, have since re-invented Shakespeare in their own ways. Film adaptations of Shakespeare are thus entitled to transform the text into whatever context suits the idea the director wants to deliver.

As with *xiqu* Shakespeare, non-English speakers have an advantage over the English speaking community when it comes to re-inventing Shakespeare; that is, non-English-speaking directors and audiences who are less familiar with the original texts are less likely to worry if Shakespeare is translated into a totally different idiom.[106] This proves to be true for *Throne of Blood*. Though 'Kurosawa had wanted to make this film for some time…. He had long been fond of the play, once called it "my favourite Shakespeare"' and that 'the single source [of the film] is Shakespeare and the film follows the play very closely'.[107] Kurosawa does not share the cultural and historical backgrounds of the European directors, and these differences estrange his film from Shakespeare's authority, and consequently offer an aesthetic otherness that generates new interpretations.

For the purpose of entering the international market, a film adaptation of Shakespeare (as proved by the example of *Throne of Blood*) is an ideal strategy. In 2006, the Chinese director Feng Xiaogang undertook an exemplary venture to reinvent Shakespeare for an international audience. His epic film *The Banquet* uses *Hamlet* as the backbone of its story, but does not use Shakespeare's text as the primary source; rather, the film is based on a novel, also called *The Banquet*, written by Sheng Hoyu and Qian Yu, who are responsible for the actual adaptation from *Hamlet*.[108] Feng's *The Banquet* thus makes a bold and significant departure from Shakespeare's play. The film not only

[105] Burnett, 'Appropriation', p. 147.
[106] *Ibid*, p. 162.
[107] Donald Richie, *The Films of Akira Kurosawa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 115-7.
[108] Sheng Hoyu and Qian Yu, *The Banquet* (Taipei: Rye Field Publications, 2006).

excludes almost all of the original text, but the sequences are also truncated and the outcomes of events are changed. For instance, though all of the soliloquies are omitted, Hamlet's line of his final moment 'I am dead, Horatio' (V.ii.275)[109] is preserved, although it is spoken by the Crown Prince Wu Luan (Hamlet's counterpart) when he barely escapes assassination during a rehearsal for the sword-play performance, which is a part of the coronation of Empress Wan (Gertrude's counterpart).

In another example, in Shakespeare's play, Hamlet utters a final farewell to Gertrude (V.ii.327), but in *The Banquet* Empress Wan is still alive and explains to Wu Luan that his supposed death stems from his mistaking 'a deadly combat for a show'.[110] This scene, unlike the corresponding one in *Hamlet*, occurs early in the film, yet it can be equated with Hamlet's match with Laertes: the Prince of Denmark does indeed choose to see a potentially deadly combat as a show, and dies out of his seeming ignorance of the fatal nature of that match. *The Banquet*'s rearrangement of the plot thus provides an alternative version of *Hamlet* that offers a clear answer to questions about Hamlet's indecisiveness, whilst retaining the particular personality that causes the complex issues raised by Shakespeare's play.

Setting up the Stage for Conversation

Similar to Wu Hsing-Kuo's *The Kingdom of Desire*, *The Banquet* is set in ancient China. In 907 CE, it was the period succeeding the mighty Tang dynasty known as the 'Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms'. This setting initiates Feng's attempt to fuse the Chineseness and Shakespeare through reliance on the historicity of both his sources. The film opens with a voiceover explaining the background and describing this period as 'an era plagued by widespread turmoil, treachery amongst government officials, and a bitter struggle for power within the imperial family'.[111] This backdrop sets up the tension in the warring country similar to that of Shakespeare's Denmark, a country threatened by the foreign forces of Norway, which are 'The source of this our watch, and the chief head /Of this post-haste and rummage in the land' (I.i.106-7). In the story

[109] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* ed. T.J.B. Spencer, Penguin Shakespeare Series (New York: Penguin, 2005). Subsequent references are to this edition.
[110] Movie subtitles.

[111] *Ibid.*

of *Hamlet*, however, external turmoil - the foreign political and military power oppressing Denmark - is not the source of woe, for the conflicts inside the court outdo that external pressure through their intensity, complexity and deadliness. These qualities are much enhanced in *The Banquet* by China's memory of the historical turmoil; thus, the internal conflicts at court - or at the core of the film - become the more bewildering but at the same time more recognisable as the Chinese theatricality exploited by this production.

After the context is established, the story unfolds Feng's choice of his central focus of the film. As is the convention with adaptation, especially Chinese Shakespeare, simplification of the central character serves to enhance the focus on the theme the film intends to convey. The choice of theme is based not only on director Feng's artistic purpose, but also on international and domestic marketability. Finding a universal truth easier to digest than Hamlet's indecision thus leads Feng to decide on the theme of romance and tyranny, wrapped in a historical story-telling mode typical to the Chinese. In the following sections, the three main characters in *The Banquet*, Prince Wu Luan, Empress Wan and Emperor Li, demonstrate how the radical changes made to their Shakespearean counterparts are justified according to what the Chinese director deems appealing to a Western audience.

Prince Wu Luan/Hamlet

The characterisation of Prince Wu Luan/Hamlet is largely simplified in the film for two purposes. Firstly, for the international audience, the focus is given to the Empress Wan in order to make use of actress Zhang Ziyi's commercial value. Secondly, for the domestic audience, the complexity of Shakespeare's Hamlet can be too demanding. On the one hand, since *The Banquet* is designed as a martial arts film to showcase the Chinese cinematic aesthetics, it is perhaps too difficult to accommodate the philosophical debate in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, especially when Feng alters the story to a romantic tale for this reason. On the other, while Feng's intended audience is the Western cinema-goers, Feng's Chinese cultural perspective would have rendered textual fidelity unnecessary for the domestic audience, as the Chinese audience would not have required a faithful representation of *Hamlet* when what it wants would have been Shakespeare's English, not his story.

After a few shots of the warring state of China, we are introduced to a tranquil place, while the voiceover begins to explain the main plot. The audience is told that a certain Little Wan has had a romantic relationship with the Prince Wu Luan, yet the Prince's father, the Emperor, has made her Empress. Wu Luan, out of despair, flees the court and looks for consolation in music and dance in the Southern heartlands. By making Wan Wu Luan's stepmother rather than his real mother, *The Banquet* justifies the oedipal complex diagnosis that has been put forward by many critics of *Hamlet* since Ernest Jones. But at the same time, making the affection between the Prince and the Empress explicit simplifies the Prince's inner struggle, while complicating the Empress's.[112] In this respect, Wu Luan's passion for Wan is not forbidden by blood, so he does not have to fall into what Ernest Jones calls the 'intellectual cowardice' and 'reluctance to dare the exploration of his inmost soul'.[113] The opening sequence, therefore, serves to underscore the alteration to Shakespeare's play as it foretells the complexity intended to Sinicise *Hamlet*.

Shakespeare's Hamlet does not have to be aware of his oedipal complex, if he has one, because his subconscious would have repressed his secret desires on his behalf. In Jones' words, '[Hamlet's] moral fate is bound up with his uncle's for good or ill'; therefore, 'he cannot kill him without also killing himself'.[114] For Wu Luan, however, being in love with Wan before his uncle the Emperor steps in means he has to repress his feelings for Wan only for formality's sake. Unlike Hamlet, Wu Luan not only has no reason to hesitate to take revenge, but he is also given a motivation to kill his uncle for romantic reasons. This greatly simplifies the character, and might lead to a quick revenge that would undo the tragedy; hence, Feng Xiaogang rearranges certain crucial subplots and prevents this from happening. Firstly, although the audience is told by the voiceover that Wu Luan's father has been murdered by his uncle, and that Empress Wan is also aware of the murder, the Prince does not know about it until late in the film. Secondly, Empress Wan does not admit Wu Luan's father's fate even when she is confronted by the furious Prince, and begs him to stop questioning her about it. Empress Wan conceals the truth out of anxiety, and this anxiety, resulting from her tenuous position at court,

[112] Ernest Jones, 'Hamlet and Oedipus', in *Hamlet: A Selection of Critical Essays*, ed. John D. Jump (London: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 51-63.
[113] *Ibid.*, p. 62.
[114] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

marks the final and most brilliant change Feng makes to the story. While the Prince is no longer afflicted with a great spiritual conflict, the role of chief protagonist is thus switched from the Prince to the Empress.

Empress Wan/Gertrude

Giving the focus to the Empress Wan has twofold significance. In terms of marketability, the actress Zhang Ziyi is arguably the most internationally known China-based film star in the world today. With the success of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, Zhang's recognisability can easily catch the attention of an international audience, assuring the film's commercial success. The main supporting actress, Zhou Xun, is also a well-recognised face in China. However, her role is also reduced for the same reason as Prince Wu Luan's. Zhou Xun plays the character Qing Nu, the equivalent of Shakespeare's Ophelia. The Sinicised Ophelia is betrothed to Wu Luan for political reasons preceding the beginning of the film, and her affection for Wu Luan is made much clearer than Ophelia's. However, as the main romantic narrative is already assigned to Empress Wan, such political betrothal is disregarded by the film's master narrative. From a Chinese perspective, Qing exemplifies the traditional Chinese woman who has no choice but to willingly accept whatever is bestowed upon her. Though this would have been faithful to the representation of Shakespeare's Ophelia (Qing also loses her sanity near the end of the film), whose fate and sanity are under male dominance, Feng's choice is to use Empress Wan's character to highlight the modern Chinese ideal of a powerful female figure, especially under China's current One Child Policy, forcing the elevation of the female social status. Thus, Empress Wan not only represents Gertrude's role, but also partially occupies and significantly accentuates the romantic theme belonging to Ophelia in the original play.

In terms of narrative, the switch of focus from the Prince to the Empress invokes a feminist reading and the theme of a romantic tragedy. The film's tragic aspect is therefore centred on the pivotal role of the Empress Wan. Sharon Ouditt, in a discussion of feminist readings of *Hamlet*, examines three feminist approaches to the character of Gertrude: Rebecca Smith sees Gertrude as a 'real person' and tries to defend her against patriarchal manipulation and belittling; Jacqueline Rose points out that it is the 'inscrutability of femininity' that makes Gertrude 'a decoy, an easy target' to 'blame for

the play's failure', as critics such as T. S. Eliot would put it; Lisa Jardine, adopting a new historical approach, views Gertrude as 'a "subject" […] who is constructed by the cultural position of her femininity at a particular historical moment', and combines that specific period with 'all its conflicting multiplicity'.[115] Ouditt concludes that although each of the three approaches, singly, is deficient in certain aspects, they contribute to a feminist reading of Shakespeare which is still in progress within ever-changing social and cultural contexts. Feng Xiaogang's Empress Wan, unlike Shakespeare's Gertrude (who has fewer chances to speak her mind), exemplifies and furthers that feminist reading, rendering an imposing female character that the director creates to market an unconventionally 'new and strong' Chinese female image to the West.

As previously mentioned, Empress Wan's concealment of the true nature of the late Emperor's death forces the Prince into endless melancholy. This emotional trait is accentuated several times in this film by Wu Luan's needs for protection from Wan. When they are reunited in the palace, after stopping Wu Luan from questioning further, Empress Wan tells him 'the best way to soothe your father's spirit is to make sure we are both safe, especially you'.[116] On the one hand, her unwillingness to reveal the truth makes her responsible for the postponement of revenge rather than the Prince; on the other hand, throughout the film she emphasises her reason for doing so is to secure the safety of the Prince and herself. Empress Wan expresses her anxiety to Wu Luan after she saves him from being killed by the Imperial Guard during the rehearsal of the sword performance. Convinced of Wu Luan's incapability of hiding his feelings in these dangerous surroundings, she defies Wu Luan when he describes her face as written with 'arrogance, disquiet and guilt for [her] late husband', and tells him that it is actually because of her 'disappointment in you' that she can 'no longer look to you to fulfil my dream', which is their safety.[117]

Here, the traditional feminine inferiority, both physical and mental, is transformed into a much more controlling status. Such inferiority would have been expected from an Orientalist view. But Orientalism is, from this view point, deemed obsolete; so is the Chinese traditional restriction on women. As Sycorax and the female Ariel were given

[115] Peter J. Smith and Nigel Wood, *Hamlet* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996), pp. 83–107.
[116] Movie subtitles.
[117] *Ibid.*

a much more explicit presence in Wu Hsing-Kuo's *The Tempest*, Wan's overpowering Wu Luan can be interpreted as Feng's attempt to further Hamlet's timidity in Shakespeare's original to the point where masculinity, along with the traditionally perceived subjugation of China to the modern West, is completely toppled.

Even when equipped with martial arts, the Chinese cinematic and theatrical convention suggestive of the Chinese physical prowess, Wu Luan is still portrayed as feeble. Hamlet's indecision leads him to exclaim 'O cursèd spite /That ever I was born to set it right!' (I.v.188–189); yet Wu Luan's melancholy makes him first shun the marriage between his father and Wan, then shrink to indifference towards his surroundings. Even when Wu Luan puts on a dumb show of an emperor dressed in red being poisoned in the ear while he naps (this is equivalent of *The Mousetrap*), the prince succeeds in nothing except being banished to Khitan – a historical enemy of China at that time, the equivalent of Norway in *Hamlet*. Hamlet and Wu Luan share the same fate of catching the 'conscience of the king' (II.ii.603) at the price of their own banishment[118] and their mother's/stepmother's distress. Gertrude, as Harold Bloom puts it, 'had much to endure, and little to enjoy, in her brilliant son'.[119] The Empress Wan, bound to Wu Luan by romantic love rather than by blood, has to endure more than Gertrude and Ophelia combined, and Wan's tragedy in this adaptation is made even more prominent by Wu's significantly weaker personal strength than that of Hamlet.

Emperor Li/Claudius

Empress Wan's profound sense of insecurity comes from two sources: the first is that she has to endure and worry for the life of her lover/stepson, who allows danger to stalk him while consumed by melancholy; and the other is to endeavour to please Emperor Li (the far more powerful equivalent of Claudius). G. Wilson Knight sees Claudius as 'a good and gentle king, enmeshed by the chain of causality linking him with his crime', arguing that 'he can hardly be blamed for his later actions', namely the plot to take Hamlet's life using Laertes.[120] Though Knight's observation might not be completely

[118] It is worth noting that Hamlet is ironically banished because of Claudius's desire to conceal the prince's madness in order not to demeans Denmark's national image. While this does not happen for Wu Luan, Khitan is never considered as a viable candidate for China's throne. The different historicity leads to different approaches of the same theatrical elements.

[119] Harold Bloom, *Hamlet: Poem Unlimited* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2003), p. 60.

[120] *Extracts from Earlier Critics, 1710–1945*, in *Hamlet: A Selection of Critical Essays*, ed. John D. Jump

convincing, Claudius is at best a 'minor-league Machiavel', to use the words of Harold Bloom, and in front of the 'most formidable ironist to ever walk upon a stage' - Hamlet - he can hardly be the 'mighty opposite' Hamlet speaks of.[121] Claudius is capable of quick and accurate execution in terms of foreign affairs, as is illustrated in Act I Scene II; yet he never wields, or shows his capability to wield, absolute power over his subjects' lives. Emperor Li, on the other hand, does not hesitate to exercise his ultimate power as a Chinese emperor whenever he feels anxious about or even displeased by his subjects.

The absolute power wielded by Emperor Li is one of the essential Chinese elements in the film. From historical emperors to the present General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, the leaders of China are given supreme sovereign power by the Confucian doctrine that obedience to one's superior is the most emphasised essence of social stability. To enhance the impression of Chinese sovereign power, Feng relies on the Shakespearean Polonius in his Governor Pei Hong of You Province to exemplify this ultimate power. Pei Hong hails Empress Wan, calling her the 'Empress Dowager' rather than merely 'Empress', and Emperor Li instantly takes the hint about his usurpation. Without hesitation, Emperor Li gives the order that Pei Hong's governorship be transferred to General Yin (the equivalent of Laertes), and Pei Hong, along with his entire family, is taken away to be tortured and executed. This image of Emperor Li fits almost perfectly with the Oxford Dictionary of English's explanation of the word 'tyrant' as 'a person exercising power of control in a cruel, unreasonable, or arbitrary way', except that this right is his legitimately as emperor.[122] No one dares to speak against his majestic presence, let alone employ the ironic wit which is Hamlet's most powerful weapon. Thus, Emperor Li becomes another adaptive strategies employed in this film to deliberately distinguish its Chineseness from Shakespeare's play – a process radically different from that when the Chinese eagerly sought after an 'authentic' Shakespearean experience a century ago.

(London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 40.

[121] Bloom, *Hamlet: Poem Unlimited,* pp. 61–5.

[122] Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson eds, *Oxford Dictionary of English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), under Tyrant, *n*.

Love and Fate: the Chinese Theme

Central to this film is no longer the authenticity of Shakespeare, but the marketability of Chinese culture under a Shakespearean disguise. When the story is transformed from Hamlet's personal struggle to Empress Wan's romantic tragedy, the feminine physical charm is heralded as the main motivation that drives the plot. While not a perfect analogy, the deliberate selection of this feature (feminine appeal) over the conventional reading can be seen as an instance in which the Chinese mode of appreciation supersedes the priority to read Shakespeare from a Western point of view.[123]

When Empress Wan makes her first appearance in the film, she is slowly, perhaps reluctantly, walking towards a chamber where the armour of her late husband is displayed. We do not find an empty set of armour, however, for the armour is being worn by Emperor Li. Immediately, Empress Wan expresses her contempt for him, saying 'this helmet does not sit well on you'. With a smirk on her face, Empress Wan addresses Emperor Li as 'you' and 'brother-in-law'. With blood-freezing calmness, Emperor Li corrects her address to 'your majesty'. Before he walks away, he delivers a single line: 'the kingdom shall not wait'. A close-up of Wan's face reveals her profound anxiety and her struggle between morality and survival. In the final shot of the scene, we see the Emperor's outstretched hand, waiting silently, and Wan slowly puts her hand on his, with her calm voice correcting the Emperor's address to her from 'sister-in-law' to 'Empress'.[124]

This sequence initiates the instalment of Wan as the centre of the film's narrative. Wan's decision to envisage herself as an empress not only establishes her character as the focus of the film's narrative, but also marks the final fall of Emperor Li. In Emperor Li she detects a single weakness under his seemingly impenetrable majesty: his desire for her beauty and carnality. More than once the Emperor declares that the kingdom means nothing to him, since his utmost desire to wed his sister-in-law has been achieved. Taking advantage of this, Empress Wan does not hesitate to wield her sexual charms to distract the Emperor from his murderous plans against Wu Luan. A good example

[123] Centralising the feminine sexuality is a recurring theme in recent Chinese cinematic efforts that aim toward the Western market. In John Wu's epic war film *Red Cliff* (2008-09), the historical driving force behind a decisive battle in ancient China is shifted from a political ambition to a romantic pursuit for a beautiful woman.

[124] Movie subtitles.

occurs when Pei Hong is about to die and Emperor Li offers a royal pardon if Wan should ask for it. Wan refuses and saves the Emperor's face by reasoning that Emperor Li 'has given her what the late emperor failed to give'; that is, sexual satisfaction.[125]

Claudius explains to Laertes that one of the reasons he cannot punish Hamlet for killing Polonius is the concern he bears for Gertrude; and while Emperor Li does not actually tell anyone why he would postpone Wu Luan's assassination until the dumb show, he nonetheless does so partially for the same reason as Claudius. From a close reading of the character of Emperor Li, it is quite clear that Feng Xiaogang's reading of *Hamlet* is directed toward a romantic tragedy rather than philosophy, as Shakespeare's story concentrates on Hamlet's 'dull revenge', to use Rene Girard's words, more than on King Claudius' sexual fantasies.[126] As examined earlier in this thesis, the Shakespearean philosophy has caused a heavy burden on Chinese *xiqu*. In this film, such burden can be interpreted to be as heavy on theatrical productions as on the collective Chinese artistic consciousness: the film is targeted to the West, while its creation still bears this trait of avoiding philosophical portrayal of the story.

The climax for the character of Claudius comes during his prayer after fleeing from *The Mousetrap*, oppressed with guilt. He exclaims, 'O, my offence is rank!' (III.iii.37) because

> What if this cursèd hand
> Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
> Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
> To wash it white as snow? (III.iii.43–6)

Claudius is obsessed with his fratricide, but his marriage to Gertrude does not touch his conscience at that moment of regret. Perhaps it is because he sees the remarriage as legitimate and natural (although Gertrude expresses regret when Hamlet forces her to the point). Emperor Li, however, is quite aware of the potentially dangerous

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[125] *Ibid.*

[126] René Girard, 'Hamlet's Dull Revenge', *A Theatre of Envy: William Shakespeare* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 256-70.

consequences of the marriage, having every reason to fear the Prince's resentment of it, Wu Luan being the legitimate successor to the throne and the abused former lover of Wan.

The Emperor's denial of his fratricide to Empress Wan, who, as we are informed by the voiceover at the beginning of the film, already knows the truth, only adds frost to snow. Although Emperor Li chooses to ignore his potentially unstable relationship with Empress Wan, he nonetheless perceives the cause of his downfall in his final, and the film's only, soliloquy, which is worth quoting in full:

> Was it the desire for revenge that hauled you out of the valley of death? Or was it your melancholy that touched the hearts of women, so that their tenderness wove a web of protection around you? Or perhaps a million calculations cannot compare with one pure heart? Or maybe it is you, my brother, who have been protecting your son all along, so that he can spill my blood and restore your honour? If this is what you want, brother, then let me appease you tonight. (To Empress Wan) You offered me a toast, how can I refuse? (Drinks the poisoned wine and dies.)[127]

The context of Emperor Li's soliloquy is the death of Qing (Ophelia's counterpart) and her brother General Yin at the banquet which Emperor Li holds after he learns of Wu Luan's reported death, and thus the consolidation of his throne. The event that bears the name of the film kicks start a series of intricate plots, which serve to showcase Chinese martial arts and, more importantly, to appeal to an audience accustomed to cinematic sensationalism.

Right before the banquet, Empress Wan conspires with General Yin to overthrow Emperor Li, but the General plots to take Wan's life and claim the throne for himself. For this purpose, Empress Wan and General Yin prepare a cup of poisoned wine and an envenomed blade respectively. When Empress Wan proposes a toast to the Emperor, however, Qing steps in to perform a song and dance to commemorate Wu Luan's death. The Emperor offers Qing the poisoned cup in recognition of her effort, and the poor maid dies, leaving the court stunned. Wu Luan, revealing himself as one of the dancers

[127] Movie subtitles, directions added by the researcher.

accompanying Qing and resolved to take his revenge, begins to assault the Imperial Guard.

At this moment, the Emperor suddenly realises that he can no longer stop Wu Luan from taking revenge and that his beloved Wan has been plotting to take his life. The force that pushes him to forfeit his throne and his life at once is the love he bears for Wan. Though in his soliloquy he mentions Wu Luan's desire for revenge, Qing's innocent insistence on Wu Luan's behalf and his fratricidal guilt, he opens and ends the meditation with thoughts on the Empress Wan. It is the 'tenderness' that forms a protective 'web' around Wu Luan that he cannot penetrate and in which he is finally ensnared, which makes the deadly toast impossible for him to refuse. Emperor Li's consummation of his earlier proclamation that the beauty of the Empress surpasses his kingship and kingdom marks the final departure of *The Banquet* from *Hamlet*: it is no longer a tale of revenge laid out by a Renaissance European master, but a tale of love told by a Chinese director.

In Feng's adaptation of *Hamlet*, the texts, characterisations, plots and even the master narrative of Shakespeare's play are edited, omitted or transformed. *The Banquet* is hardly Shakespearean, and the ending would remind a Shakespearean more of *Macbeth* than *Hamlet;*[128] yet the presence of *Hamlet* is still detectable under the multi-layered cinematic techniques that derive from an Occidentalist view on *Hamlet*. In fact, the Shakespearean presence was so strongly perceived when the film premiered at the Venice and Cannes film festivals that 'many European judges found the film to be too "Shakespearean" in outlook to be a viable Chinese film'.[129] For the Chinese director Feng, his use of Shakespeare serves to 'revitalise the loneliness and magnificence of Chinese culture',[130] to avoid being overshadowed by Ang Lee's internationally successful *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* within the genre of Chinese 'Wuxia

[128] In the end, Empress Wan is proclaimed Emperor, as both Wu Luan and General Yin are killed in a final fight; yet she is murdered by an unknown killer, which signifies the circulation of fate deeply rooted in Chinese Buddhist tradition as seen in Kurosawa's films and Wu's *jingju* productions, and is reminiscent of Roman Polanski's 1971 *Macbeth*.

[129] Alexander C. Y. Huang, 'Asian Shakespeares in Europe: From the Unfamiliar to the Defamiliarised', in *Shakespearean International Yearbook*, Vol. 8 (2008), p. 55.

[130] *The Banquet* DVD, released in 2009.

Pian'[131], and to create a romance that guarantees a commercial success.[132] Thus, *The Banquet* exploits the exportability of both the cinematic representation and the aesthetic value of the Chinese theatrical conventions. *Hamlet* is not merely Sinicised; it is retold as an authentic Chinese tale, ready to be marketed back to Shakespeare's cultural territory.

Chinese Confidence in the Globe: *Richard III*, directed by Wang Xiaoying (2012)[133]

The World Shakespeare Festival in 2012 was a project to foreground Shakespeare as the UK's representative cultural icon when the world came to London for the Olympics and Paralympics. Shakespeare's appropriateness in occupying the centre of the cultural stage from which the world could 'benefit' was evident, as he is 'unquestionably global, yet simultaneously crucially "English"'.[134] As the Olympic Games provided 'an opportunity to re-establish a narrative of Great British centrality to global history and politics', the World Shakespeare Festival presented Shakespeare not to reassert 'the superiority of English as the medium for Shakespearean cognition', as Dennis Kennedy observed twenty years ago in his study of foreign Shakespeare,[135] but to enable a perspective from which the Anglophone audience could appreciate Shakespeare by means of intercultural negotiations.[136] In the programme for the Globe to Globe Festival, held at Shakespeare's Globe as the centre of the World Shakespeare Festival, Kennedy states that the Elizabethan venue 'has also long recognised that the definition of "original" must include radical reformulations from the world at large'.[137] Hence,

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[131] The genre literally means 'martial arts movies', and is always set in one of the ancient periods of China, both historical and fictional.

[132] *The Banquet* is one of the largest investments ever made in the Chinese film industry, and though it did not receive enthusiastic reviews at first, it enjoyed one of the best box office results, with more than 12,000,000 people going to see it on its first day of public release in September 2006.

[133] Wang Xiaoying, dir., *Richard III*, National Theatre of China. London, Beijing, and Shanghai, 2012.The discussion of this production is based on a recording of the production at Shakespeare's Globe in April, 2012.

[134] Josh Abrams and Jennifer Parker-Starbuck, 'A "United Kingdom: The London 2012 Cultural Olympiad' in *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, Vol. 35, Number 1, January 2013 (PAJ 103), p. 23.

[135] Dennis Kennedy, 'Introduction: Shakespeare without His Language', in *Foreign Shakespeare,* ed. Dennis Kenndey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 2.

[136] Abrams and Parker-Starbuck, 'United Kingdom', p. 23.

[137] *Ibid.*

international productions during the Globe to Globe Festival played a pivotal role in defamiliarising the Anglophone audience from the canonical reading of Shakespeare at the familiar venue. For the international companies, communicating with such an audience at the cultural site also provided a chance to display interpretations of Shakespeare familiar to the companies' home audiences, who would otherwise deem Shakespeare as exotic as the means by which the plays were presented on Shakespeare's own ground.

Wang Xiaoying's *Richard III* was born for this dynamic dialogue between Shakespeare's own culture and a Chinese reading. In an interview recorded after the first performance at the Globe in 2012, Wang explained that the production was designed for (and premiered at) the Globe,[138] not the Chinese stage; it was not until November that year when this production was put on stage in Shanghai.[139] The significance of such a decision process is two-fold. First, through the task of designing a Shakespearean play for the Globe, Wang was agreeing to the Cultural Olympiad's idea of re-establishing the UK's cultural centrality. However, to read this as a post-colonial retaliation or conformity is to misunderstand the cultural and historical relationship between the UK and China. Both countries had been great empires, and both had lost the imperial power during the last century. In the twenty-first century, both countries are redefining their present states of worldly influence. It is interesting to note these two countries held two Olympic Games consecutively. In 2008, the Beijing Olympics gave China an excellent opportunity to demonstrate its economic and technological advancement to the world, claiming a central position among the international powers; in 2012, the UK was striving to do the same.[140] While both relied for their statements of centrality, to a large extent, on their cultural and political historicity, Wang's designing a production for the Globe must be interpreted as a shared sentiment of positioning the country's culture in the present world. Therefore, designing

[138] The recorded interview can be found on the Globe's website at http://globetoglobe.shakespearesglobe.com/plays/richard-iii/interview. Accessed on 24th June, 2013.
[139] *Theatre News*, Official Website of the National Theatre of China, 13th November, 2012, http://www.ntcc.com.cn/. Accessed on 24th June, 2013.
[140] In the epilogue to *Shakespeare in* Stages, Christie Carson examines Shakespeare's utilitarian usefulness in assisting 'educational policy and ideas about citizenship and shared values' in contemporary England. Christie Carson, 'Shakespeare's Audiences as Imaginative Communities', in *Shakespeare in Stages: New Theatre Histories*, eds. Christine Dymkowski and Christie Carson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 277-92.

out of China's local context and into that of Shakespeare is the Chinese acknowledgment of Shakespeare's cultural capital that can inspire national pride.

Secondly, this cooperation signifies a different positioning of the Chineseness in this process. As discussed in previous chapters, adapting Shakespeare into the *xiqu* genre enables the Chinese and the Taiwanese to reassert the value of this traditional theatre in the Sinophone world, and such adaptations witness what is perceived in and conceivable through Shakespeare according to *xiqu*'s requirements. However, when the designated audience was English speakers who know their Shakespeare (at least culturally and linguistically, much more so than the Chinese audience), and the stage one which is natural to Shakespeare, Wang's *Richard III* was adapted to Shakespeare as much as it was adapting Shakespeare. Although the *xiqu* genre also has to undergo a series of innovations to accommodate the narrative of Shakespeare's plays, Wang's *huaju* adaptation would have risked complete subversion to the Western mode of presentation: Wang's division of the scenes was almost exactly the same as that in Shakespeare's text 'as a respectful gesture toward the original'.[141] Also, when the Chinese have as strong an intention as the British to position their culture in the world, the consequent desire to emphasise Chineseness could have produced a *xiqu* Shakespeare too Sinicised to transcend the local mode of presentation. While Sinicising Shakespeare, this production also had to make Chinese culture sit comfortably on the Globe's stage. Well-experienced in experimental theatre and dedicated to demonstrating Chineseness under the international spotlight, Wang was therefore keen to strike a balance between Chinese elements and Shakespearean dramaturgy.

Spectacular Chineseness, Oriental Modernity

The Chinese elements in this production were mainly presented by the utilisation of *jingju* conventions. While the company had designed a series of elaborate costumes as part of the presentation of the intended Chineseness, these costumes never reached London due to problems with sea freight. Assisted by the Globe, the company were able to dress the actors and actresses with simple black Chinese clothing, as well as

[141] Cha La, 'Chinese-style History Play', in *Wenyi Shenghuo Weekly*, 20th August, 2012 (http://www.zhoukan.cc) accessed on 13th July, 2013.

obtaining 'a set of Chinese drums and gong indispensable for the production'.[142] With the plainest costumes, the production had to rely on its dramaturgy, which was manifested mainly through the inclusion of *jingju* conventions. Though the moments where these most conspicuous demonstrations of the Chinese theatre were scarce, they stood out to give the audience an overall impression of the production's Chineseness. The *jingju*-style narration of stylised movements (as opposed to the natural tone of Mandarin Chinese) and acrobatic movements also led British reviewers to agree that the loss of the elaborate costumes actually 'made the production even more effective.[143] Peter J. Smith even ventured to declare that he was 'relieved to see the production unadorned by visual extravagance', for 'the superlative acting, the balletic movement and the astonishing vocal range', done in rehearsal–like costumes were befitting on the simple stage of the Globe.[144] As the actors and actresses stepped out of the modern theatre in which they are comfortable to rely on their performance, they were also forced to depend solely on their actions to convey Chineseness.

A Chinese Lady Anne

Lady Anne was portrayed by Zhang Xin, an accomplished young actress from the China National Peking Opera Company, in the *qingyi* role type - the convention for young women. While Lady Anne's part was limited to Act I Scene II only, her stylised gestures and aria-styled delivery of the lines defined the Chinese framework of the production early in the play. In an interview, director Wang expressed his desire to avoid 'a simple layout and exhibition' of his Chinese elements 'only to satisfy a foreigner's curiosity for the grotesque'.[145] While a *xiqu* Shakespeare could have escaped from such accusation for its radically different requirements of narration, Wang justified the decorative *xiqu* elements by deliberately throwing Lady Anne's *xiqu* acting to contrast the otherwise naturalistic performance of Richard Gloucester. By such contrast, the conflict between Lady Anne and Richard was elevated, making their confrontation compelling, as each character gained more distinctiveness.

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[142] Wang Xiaoying's Blog, 28th May, 2012, cited from Cha, *Wenyi Weekly* 2012.

[143] Warren Chernaik, 'Review of five plays from the Globe to Globe season, Shakespeare's Globe, London, 21 April-9 June 2012', *Shakespeare*, 9:2, p. 243.

[144] Peter J. Smith, *Blogging Shakespeare*, 1 May 2012 (http://bloggingshakespeare.com/year-of-shakespeare-richard-iii#sthash.vkQoiTjo.dpuf), accessed on 25th Agust, 2013.

[145] Cha, *Wenyi Weekly* 2012.

Wang's wooing scene was, therefore, using the clash between the Chinese and the Shakespearean modes of presentation to empower the dramatic action. In Shakespeare's plays, the switch between prose and verse often signifies the distinction between low and high social status. During this scene, the stylised gestures and tones of Lady Anne were put in stark contrast to Richard's more naturalistic utterances, as Lady Anne's innocence was confronted by Richard's base intent. As in a proper *xiqu*, the dialogue was greatly cut down to accommodate the elongated syllables of the *xiqu* arias and narration, and the action of servants carrying the body of Henry VI was omitted.

The Scene opened with Lady Anne coming on stage to Richard (who remained on stage at the end of Act I Scene I), accompanied by simple rhythms of the castanets to signify her trotting. With a flourishing gesture, she began to lament for her husband by repeating the phrase 'my husband!' twice. Though it might have taken a split second to deliver the line in both English and Mandarin, the syllables of this sentence in classical Chinese sound like '*wo dee fu jun ya*!*'* which took much longer for Zhang to sing. The sound of the arias, as discussed in previous chapters, was not only lengthened but also piercing, leading to Kate Bassett's description of Lady Anne as 'a meowing cat' in her review for *The Independent.*[146] As the audience had just finished watching Act I Scene I performed in Mandarin, the *xiqu* style would not have eluded their recognition, even when the language did.

Beyond the differences between the stylised and the naturalistic, the two performing styles can inspire two deeper recognitions: one of delicate nobility versus brutal bluntness as discussed above, and the other of tradition versus modernity. Since the operatic form of *jingju* has a canonical stand in Chinese theatre's history, the new and 'foreign' naturalism takes a lower position. For a Chinese audience, the aristocratic aura of a singing Lady Anne would not have been missed. A British audience would also recognise the concept of an aristocratic tradition being superseded by a modern and intercultural one. As Chernaik observes, the comparison between 'a waning tradition' and 'a cynical, opportunistic modernity' was palpable on stage.[147]

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[146] Kate Bassett, '*Enquirer*, the Hubat Pacific Quay, Glasgow; *Richard III*, Shakespeare's Globe, London; *Making Noises Quietly*, Donmar, London', *Independent*, 6 May 2012.
[147] Chernaik, 'Review', p. 243.

Nevertheless, the Chinese *xiqu* has been brought into the contemporary narrative by both the Chinese and Taiwanese directors in the last three decades, especially when Shakespeare is the bridge between tradition and modernity, as seen in previous chapters. Zhang's Lady Anne, therefore, cannot be entirely categorised as the 'waning tradition'. After she was informed that '[her] beauty was the cause of that effect' (I.ii.120)[148], Lady Anne began to oscillate between the arias and conversational Mandarin. As Richard praised her eyes, her 'Would they were basilisks' was spoken, and 'to strike thee dead!' was sung (I.ii.148). To a Mandarin speaker, the sung part would have been accentuated by the sudden contrast while the spoken part was easily picked up and connected with Richard's conversational lines. Also, when Richard offered the sword for her to exercise justice, Lady Anne's movements became more stylised while Gloucester's were natural. This development can be read as Lady Anne's desperate attempt to remain haughty, but the growing rigidity of her stylisation was evidence of her crumbling will. Later, when Lady Anne refused to kill Richard, her lines were spoken. At this point, Lady Anne was overpowered; the abandonment of the arias could be read as her desertion of her higher moral principles and as her dissention to Richard's baseness. Her acceptance of Richard, however, returned to the stylised *jingju* convention. 'Put up your sword' was uttered in arias again (I.ii.182); and when she received the ring, she was stylised once more, holding one hand over her face to signify shyness, at the same time checking out the ring in a very materialistic way. The stylisation here signified a different meaning from the earlier, nobler one, as if the high status of *jingju* was brought down by Richard's earthliness/worldliness. As she made her exit, Lady Anne went full circle: from a virtuous moral high ground she descended to Richard's baseness, only to realise that she had given up on her ideal of virtue in exchange for the hope of survival.

In this instance, the *jingju* conventions were given a meaning similar to that in Wu Hsing-Kuo's *The Tempest*: Chinese culture (*jingju*) was represented as not only artistically but also morally superior to that of the West (spoken drama). As *xiqu* uses physicality to externalise Shakespeare's texts, here the vocal attributes were invoked as much as the physical to replace half of the texts, while interwoven with the other half. This other half was not without physical representation either. When Richard presented

[148] William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, ed. John Jowett, The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford Univ4rsity Press, 2000). Subsequent references are to this edition.

himself as the better husband (equivalent to I.ii.134-39), the disturbed Lady Anne spat on Richard with a gentle breath accompanied by a thump of drums. Receiving this, Richard gracefully smeared the spit all over his face and neck as if wearing cologne. The stylised physical representation was thus met with the naturalistic physical action: Lady Anne acted out the spitting with the slightest of gesture, conforming to *jingju*'s convention for a refined young lady, and Richard's ostentatiousness illustrated his daring confidence in his enterprise. The scene may be short (less than seven minutes) and Shakespeare's texts were greatly truncated, but the dialogue between China and Shakespeare was never more dynamic, and the truncated texts only made room for the intricate layers of meaning. Dennis Kennedy suggests that Shakespeare's verbal resourcefulness may not have the same gravity in the scripts of foreign Shakespeare, and 'scenography and physical modes' are more likely to generate theatricality[149]; Wang's juxtaposition of the two verbal modes that define Chinese theatre, old and new, works to represent textual faithfulness to this scene.

The Clownish Murderers

However far from a *xiqu* production, the Chinese *Richard III* could not avoid the utilisation of physical theatricality to attract attention. While Zhang's Lady Anne's *jingju* stylisation was merely registered in the English reviews, the performances of the two murderers won universal praises. Both Smith and Chernaik called them 'extraordinary'; Bassett described them as 'surprisingly entertaining'; and Dickson referred to them as 'two glorious exceptions' to the otherwise limited characterisation of Lady Anne, and 'a welcome reminder that their boss doesn't get all the best things'.

The 'best things' in term of the murderers were the dazzling acrobatics and the delivery of the lines in a style 'equivalent to London Cockney'.[150] Their acrobatics were of the highest standard, but they were not confined within the stylised movements. Their lines were delivered with intended humour; yet a line-by-line examination will find that they were close to a faithful translation of Shakespeare's lines, with minor alterations only. These alterations and the contrast between their acrobatic and the other characters' naturalistic movements were once again evident to Wang's fusion of Chinese and

[149] Kennedy, *Foreign Shakespeare*, p. 5.
[150] Smith, *Blogging Shakespeare* 2012.

Shakespearean cultural elements.

They made their first appearance in Act I Scene IV. After Clarence fell asleep, the murderers, each carrying a Chinese broadsword, came on stage in somersault. As if groping in darkness, they pantomimed blindly until they touched the pondering Brakenbury. Startled, Brakenbury demanded their business, to which the murderers (now as Shakespeare's executioners) replied with the exact translation of lines 78-83, except that the First Murderer, surprised by Brakenbury and trembling in fear, asked 'who are you?' in English, inciting rounds of laughter in the audience. Their argument over their indecision whether to kill Clarence in his sleep (I.iv.91-115), like the rest of their lines in this scene, followed Shakespeare's original in an almost line-by-line fashion, with only two exceptions. As the Second Murderer urged the First Murderer to 'stay a while' for his 'holy humour will change' (I.iv.106-7), the First Murderer counted from one to ten in English; and the curse in line 114 'Zounds' was replaced by a Mandarin curse. But starting from line 120, as the Second Murderer was convincing himself of the fruitlessness of conscience (sometimes speaking to members in the audience), the First Murderer's lines were completed omitted; instead, he was struggling to put himself to the task of murdering the sleeping Clarence. Trembling in fear, he failed several times in his attempts, and finally gave up by crossing himself first and holding up one palm in a way that signifies worship to a Chinese deity.

The scene transcribed here has three layers of significance. Firstly, the acrobatics not only provided theatricality unique to the Chinese traditional theatre (when Clarence hid himself under a table, the murderers cornered the intended victim via a pair of simultaneous sideways somersaults), but also worked (as did Lady Anne's stylised arias) to juxtapose Chinese cultural capital with that of Shakespeare. Secondly, the inclusion of English spoken on stage reminded the audience of the Englishness of the play, while the awkwardness of *jingju* actors speaking heavily accented English accentuated the comic relief already present with the overtly elaborate movements. Thirdly, as the English lines were easily recognisable to both the English-speaking and Mandarin-speaking members in the audience, the First Murderer's crossing himself would also translate to both sections of the audience. By ending his prayer in an Oriental style, the First Murderer unconsciously invoked divine assistance in both the East and the West, manifesting once again the production's theme of fusing Chineseness with

Shakespeare's West.

Predetermined Fate, Predominating Chinese Spirit

While Chinese directors always declare an intention to capture Shakespeare's 'spirit' in their adaptations, their interpretations constantly invoke the sense of predetermination, a cultural aspect essential in the Buddhist/Taoist Sinophone world. The consistency of the comic relief induced by the murderers was exemplary for the theatrical device that invokes a sense of inescapability. After the flamboyant killing of Clarence, the two murderers, instead of Catesby, executed Hastings in Act II Scene IV and carried Hastings' head to Richard in the next scene; also, the killer Tyrell was played by the two murderers, the Second Murderer standing and the First crouching, a black shroud covering them to create one person with two voices in Act IV Scene II. Death in Wang's *Richard III* was always brought by the nonchalant duels, denoting the invariableness of each character's demise.

The defining scene for predetermination, however, came earlier and more potently than in the comic representation of the two murderers. Wang admitted in an interview that he felt 'slightly sorry' that the company did not get the chance to produce his favourite Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, while *Richard III* made an ideal compensation with its themes of 'humanity, desire, bestiality and soul'.[151] Throughout this thesis, *Macbeth* has been seen to occupy the Sinophone stage on numerous occasions, because there has never been a lack of ambitious warlords overthrowing their sovereigns in China's long history. Moreover, the three witches in *Macbeth* resonate deeply with the Chinese belief of karma; the devouring nature of ambition recurs with such inevitability that it must be divine intervention. All of these could account for Wang's decision to bring the three witches into *Richard III* to portray the despair of an ambition-bound Richard.

In Shakespeare's text, the prophecy of 'G' is mentioned (I.i.39) but never enacted on stage. In Wang's adaptation, after Richard lamented his under-compensated position of being a war hero, three witches appeared on the stage. In the original design, they were supposed to be wearing masks; but because of the loss of the costumes, they would later

[151] Cha, *Wenyi Weekly* 2012.

be recognised easily as the three pivotal female characters: Lady Anne, the Queen and Queen Margaret (the part of the Duchess of York was omitted from this adaptation). Swerving around Richard, each of them pronounced a title for him: first came the dukedom of Gloucester, then the position as the Protector of the Crown, and finally the kingship of England. Upon hearing their proclamations, Richard admitted the first, showed certainty for the second, and began to question the third with the prophecy of 'G', the probability of which was subsequently confirmed by the witches.

In Act IV of *Macbeth*, the witches appear again to reaffirm their prophecy; in Act IV Scene IV of Wang's *Richard III*, when King Richard stepped onto the stage to the lamenting Lady Anne (replacing the part of the Duchess of York), the Queen and Queen Margaret, the three women transformed themselves into the three witches again, cursing King Richard until he was prostrated on the floor. These two scenes followed so closely with *Macbeth* that the theme of an ambitious tyrant of the two plays was Wang's manifestation of the extent of his comprehension of Shakespeare, as well as the ability of an adaptation to emphasise a particular theme.

The ominous destinies of the characters in *Richard III* were further intensified by the persistence presence of Queen Margaret. In Shakespeare's text, when Queen Margaret steps on stage to curse the House of York, her lines are assigned as an aside until later in the scene. The same opening lines for Queen Margaret - 'And lessened be that small, God I beseech thee/Thy honour, state, and seat is due to me' (I.iii.111-12) - were delivered as a hunchbacked Margaret strode onto the stage. Her presence was so forceful that, whenever she spoke, all of the characters on stage were forced to listen to her. To make her presence even stronger, Wang made Queen Margaret appear on the balcony every time a character was about to die, and the old Queen would repeat the specific curse designated to the particular character. For example, Queen Margaret turned to Hastings and cursed

> …you were standers-by,
> And so wast thou, Lord Hastings, when my son
> Was stabbed with bloody daggers. God I pray him
> That none of you may live your natural age,
> But by some unlooked accident cut off (I.iii.207-11).

In Act III Scene IV, Hastings's last words (III.iv.101-8) were altered into a declaration of the coming of a dark age. As soon as he finished, Queen Margaret appeared on the balcony with a clash of the gong, and shouted down the exact same lines delivered in Act One. The two murderers then covered Hastings's head with a large black cloth, signifying his death. At the end of the play, after Richmond was crowned Henry VII, Margaret's voice was heard again, relating the prophecy of 'G'. All the characters on stage were instantly brought out of the celebration and began to look for the voice in fear. Richard was left on stage as dead; but as the crowd was posed as if in a trance, he rose and cried out 'A horse, a horse! My kingdom for a horse!' (V.iv.7). Richard's posthumous exclamation echoed with Margaret's ethereal threats, shrouding all the surviving characters with the unbreakable confinement of fate.

As in Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, Feng's *The Banquet* and Wu Hsing-Kuo's *Kingdom of Desire*, the Buddhist concept of predetermination was inevitable for Richard in Wang's play. Ambition is less a choice than a destiny. With this premise, it is not difficult to understand why *Macbeth* would have been preferred, but *Richard III* also offers a director the chance to portray the theme of boundless ambition. By conjuring up the witches from *Macbeth*, Wang created a Chinese Richard not through any stylised movements or arias, but a spiritual sense of despair which has prevailed in many other Sino-Shakespeares.

Richard, Prince Charming

While Chinese aesthetics permeated the production, its central figure was firmly set on the side of modernity. In the interview at the Globe Theatre, Wang spoke of watching *Hamlet* when the Old Vic toured China in 1979. In another interview, while comparing his adaptation to the tradition of Shakespearean interpretation represented by the Old Vic's *Richard III* (which was brought to China in 2011), Wang believes that his adaptation 'carries more sense of modernity, [as it is] filled with interrogations for the present era and the contemporary humanity'.[152] This belief in representing humanity has led him to produce the most radical aspect of the play: a Richard who is robust, charming, confident, and without the slightest trace of deformity.

[152] Cha, *Wenyi Weekly* 2012.

On stage, the deformity of Shakespeare's Richard III can be seen as a well-used device to signify his sinister nature. His fraudulent decency earlier in the play conflicts with his physical unpleasantness, and the other characters' acceptance of his deceits despite the revulsion his deformity must provoke provides the complexity in Richard's strategies in the play.[153] In a report from the National Centre for the Performing Arts, where the Old Vic's and Wang's versions of the play were put on stage in 2011 and 2012 respectively, Wang explains that:

> For the western narrative in Shakespeare's time, inborn deformity emblemised a sinister character. However, I believe that a modern audience would find an excuse for his deformity and marginalisation as a compensation for the unjust treatment that must have been imposed on him. But Shakespeare's original intention was to demonstrate the damage that human desire and ambition can inflict upon humanity. So I don't think either an external deformity or an excuse is necessary.[154]

For the part of Richard, Wang found the *huaju*-trained actor Zhang Dongyu, whose attractive physical appearance and energetic showmanship transformed, if not elevated, the motivation of Shakespeare's Richard to absolute determination, defined only by his destined ambition.[155] At the beginning of the play, the first four lines were given to Edward IV as a proclamation of the York's recent victory over the throne of Lancaster. The next four lines were intended to continue the festive atmosphere, as they were being delivered also by Edward IV:

> Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,
> Our bruisèd arms hung up for monuments,
> Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
> Our dreadful marches to delightful measures (I.i.5-8).

At this moment, a fit of coughing caught Edward IV mid-sentence, and a smirking

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153 Joel Elliot Slotkin, 'Honeyed Toads: Sinister Aesthetics in Shakespeare's *Richard III*', in *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring - Summer, 2007), p. 7.
154 NTC, *Theatre News* 2012.
155 Smith, *Blogging Shakespeare* 2012.

Richard repeated the lines with irony in his voice. Instead of complaining to be 'not shaped for sportive tricks' (I.i.14), the Chinese Richard remarked how he was infuriated by the King's neglect in rewarding the battle achievements that had crowned him - reminiscent of Iago who, like Macbeth, has also appeared on the Chinese stage numerous times. Sure of his course, the Chinese Richard was thus immediately encouraged when the three witches appeared to prophesise his advancements.

Thus, the Chinese Richard was 'charismatic' and 'attractive in his single-minded pursuit of his own advantage', forming the 'cynical, opportunistic modernity' of the production.[156] As Laurence Olivier's portrayal of Richard in his 1955 film adaptation induces a palpable attraction in the vulnerable Lady Anne, Zhang Donyu's Richard was self-assertive and sometimes humorous, as described earlier, to win over both Lady Anne and the audience. Like many of its predecessors discussed in this thesis, without the limitation of the *xiqu* conventions and with the liberty innate to all non-English speaking adaptations, the Chinese Richard simultaneously kept the Chinese theatrical tradition of highlighting a central figure and rendered a new reading on one of the most zestful of Shakespeare's characters.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the possibilities of Chinese interpretation of Shakespeare's plays under the current position of China from a global perspective. As capitalist ideology occupies the main social discourse, the cultural aspect seems to be forced to the personal mode of interpretation in order to gain innovativeness. Shakespeare's universality, as Shen argues, is disillusioned and superseded by a restrictive sense of locality.[157] However, commercialism is undeniably the defining feature of globalisation. In the Elizabethan era, Shakespeare's plays were presented as marketable commodities while retaining literary as well as theatrical values.

The Banquet, while headlining the star-littered cast, did not utilise *Hamlet* in its promotional strategy; neither Shakespeare nor *Hamlet* appears on the posters. Also, in

[156] Chernaik, 'Review', p. 243.
[157] Shen, 'What Use Shakespeare?', p. 231.

this instance, it cannot be said that Shakespeare merely provides a story for the film, because the film diverts so radically from the original text that it is hardly recognisable as Shakespearean. Shakespeare's spirit may not be preserved, but it is not discarded altogether either. Motivated by the need to meet the taste of modern film viewers, Feng Xiaogang re-created *Hamlet* as a romantic tragedy, making *Hamlet* so hidden that, for the less informed, Shakespeare is invisible behind huge arrays of Chineseness that equip the film with ready international marketability; the search for Shakespeare is thus rendered unnecessary, as the aesthetic value lies with the film, not Shakespeare. However, for the informed audience – e.g. the film's intended international film-viewers – these fragments serve as pleasant surprises alongside the enjoyment of a Chinese tale, as Shakespeare's authority gives way to the Chinese narrative.

The collaboration between the National Theatre of China and Shakespeare's Globe offered the greatest relief from the condemnation of the Chinese artists' catering to Western tastes. Simultaneously, the invitation to London invited the director to showcase Chinese theatrical elements to a Western audience, while the inclusion of the complete works encouraged a more faithful textual representation. If Lin Zhauhua's avant-garde theatre is overtly Westernised and Feng Xiaogang's feature film Sinicised, Wang Xiaoying's *Richard III* has finally found the perfectly balanced solution to the question of Chinese Shakespeare. By designing not for the West in general, but for Shakespeare's theatricality, the Chinese *Richard III* acknowledged the cultural capital of Shakespeare as well as necessitated the process of accommodating Chinese theatricality on the stage where Shakespearean performance originated. When two cultures both rely so heavily on their historical legacy, the only way to reach universality is to mutually benefit one another, whether such benefit comes from financial or cultural capital, or both.

Chapter 7

Taiwanese *Huaju Shakespeare*: A Shakespearean Liberation

In 2000, Chen Shui-Bien of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) of the Republic of China (ROC, or Taiwan) was elected president. In order to maintain the party's principle of Taiwanese independence, the DPP launched a series of de-Sinicisation activities to root out all Chinese cultural, as well as historical, connections to Taiwan. The movement included the changing of all institutional titles that read 'China' or 'Chinese': for instance, the Chinese Culture University was asked to remove 'Chinese' from their name. Inevitably, the dictatorial ideology was not successful, but its influence on the anti-China sentiment of the Taiwanese is deeply rooted in any Taiwanese social, political, historical or cultural discourse. The political dictatorship in movement was not dissimilar to that of the Cultural Revolution that had taken place in China several decades earlier: while the natures of the two movements are decisively different, in both cases the overtly radical sentiment backfired. For China, it was a vehement resurgence of interests in Western culture; for Taiwan, it was a secured reign of the pro-China KMT from 2008 to the date of this thesis.

From the first decade of the twenty-first century, the political tension has thus been stretched between two poles: on one end is the pro-independence ideology that seeks to cut the umbilical connection with China, and on the other the inevitability of relying on China's cultural heritage and economic influence. But neither of these ideologies can exist alone. The strength of the anti-China, pro-independence ideology was reduced as Taiwanese nationalist confidence grew, rendering a complete eradication of Chineseness unnecessary. The potency of the pro-China ideology is also fused with such nationalist confidence to the extent that Chineseness has taken a distinctively Taiwanese perspective. Thus, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Taiwanese Occidentalism began to have a very different utilitarian purpose from Chinese Occidentalism. When a foreign political intervention is impossible yet necessary, theatre practitioners interested in Shakespeare would conjure up his name and works to be used as a cultural liberator. Chapter 5 has seen how Shakespeare can provide a space where even the Chinese heritage can be freed from its origin and enter the local

consciousness by autobiographical representation of Shakespeare's plays. This chapter aims to examine, through two case studies on *huaju*, how the Taiwanese assimilate Shakespeare into their theatrical and social environment in such a context.

Throughout the last decade, Shakespeare's plays have been staged in Taiwan more frequently than ever.[1] The political impasse between Taiwan and China has incited the need to rely on the media to claim a cultural independence when a political one is impossible. *Huaju*, as a form derived from the West, becomes an ideal vessel to carry the present Taiwanese ideological sentiments. Shakespeare's cultural capital and foreignness are invoked, but for purposes radically different from those discussed in Chapter 6. While the Chinese are securing their own cultural capital at this point, the Taiwanese are not. Hence, as the Chinese put Shakespeare on screen and stage to declare to the world the potency of their own culture, the Taiwanese are striving to convince themselves that 'Taiwaneseness' does exist. In Chapter 5, such insecurity has been seen as hidden beneath the form of *xiqu*, with its inherited cultural authority from China; for the Taiwanese *xiqu* Shakespeare, once the Chineseness was accepted as a part of Taiwanese culture and was localised by Taiwan's political currency and indigenous elements, it could be carried onto the international stage with artistic values that were open-ended, removing the absolute need to read into Taiwan's political context.

However, *huaju* is not privileged with such a ready-to-be-claimed cultural capital. Though the language can be connected to China, the dramaturgy cannot. As discussed in the introductory chapters, Taiwan's *huaju* has relatively little influence from the West; the dialogue through *huaju* between Taiwan and the West has been less intense than those between China and the West. Moreover, though Taiwan has been more open to Western ideas and commodities, since the turn of the century, China's growing interest towards the West has made Taiwan's self-proclaimed openness obsolete. What is left

[1] For *xiqu* productions, there were Wu Hsing-Kuo's *jingju* adaptations from the 1980s to the present days, Taiwan Bangzi Company's *bangzi* productions in the 2000s, and the puppetry *Henry IV* in 2002. Besides the Tainaner Ensemble's and Ping-Fong' Acting Group's works discussed in this chapter, Godot Theatre, one of the most prominent *huaju* companies in Taiwan, also adapted *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Othello* to great commercial and critical success. These are but a few examples (many of which have been enthusiastically revived throughout the recent years) to show Shakespeare's increased popularity (in the theatre circle at least, if not the general public) compared to the relative silence of his works before the 1990s.

for the Taiwanese is popular culture, making the entertainment value of the Taiwanese *huaju* Shakespeare as significant as the political motivations. Therefore, while Chinese Occidentalism makes use of Shakespeare to open up a more dynamic dialogue with the world, Taiwanese Occidentalism borrows from Shakespeare a kind of literary fantasy that liberates (on stage, at least) the Taiwanese from its isolated international status.

The two case studies in this chapter examine how Shakespeare has been presented from the Taiwanese Occidentalist viewpoint. The first case study is *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* by the Tainaner Ensemble[2], directed by Wang Hong-Yuan in 2009. Aiming to familiarise the audience with Shakespeare, the time and space of the play was adjusted to suit the common knowledge and taste of the young Taiwanese. Wang changed the Western references and English puns; by localising the play and retaining the conflicts between love, friendship and loyalty, and the poetic flow, Wang created a Shakespeare that is relevant to the local mode of viewing. The second case study is *Shamlet: the Crazy Version* by the Ping-Fong Acting Group, directed by the late Lee Kuo-Hsiu in 2000. *Shamlet* was an adaptation/parody of *Hamlet*. In this production, Shakespeare's text was fragmented and taken out of its original context into a Taiwanese one. By fragmenting *Hamlet*'s text, Lee offered a distorted version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, comprehensible only to the local viewers or those who are equipped with enough understanding of Taiwan's status quo to understand the references. Through the two case studies, this chapter will explore the conflict between two opposite forces: on one side is Taiwan's more open history with the West than that of China; on the other is Taiwan's more domestic-oriented of *huaju* Shakespeare, compared to the Chinese adaptations' more international intention.

Wang Hong-Yuan's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* aims to create a popular Shakespeare that is relevant to the young Taiwanese, as opposed to the Shakespeare taught only in certain universities as an optional course. To inspire the interest in the young Taiwanese generation, Wang created an adaptation based on popular culture. Since the discussion of popular Shakespeare 'is still in its infancy, with much of the work centred on study of Shakespeare on film'[3], films and television are frequently used as the vessel to carry

[2] Tainaner literally means 'people from Tainan', a city in southern Taiwan, representative of the Taiwanese locality in contrast to the more modern and international Taipei City.

[3] Douglas Lanier, *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.

Shakespeare to the contemporary audiences around the world. In an interview[4], Wang acknowledged that his impression of Shakespeare mainly came from John Madden's 1998 hit film *Shakespeare in Love*. The choice of the play, lesser-known in the Sinophone world than plays such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*, can be clearly linked with the play's being staged in the film, where the heroine Lady Viola admits that her love for the author Shakespeare stems from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. For Wang, Shakespeare's plays are not different from popular television drama, especially in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, where 'Shakespeare seems not to have any serious theme to convey', but 'the play is all about what the contemporary young people care about the most: the cares and worries of love, the love triangle, or the choice between love and friendship', which 'remind [him] of the beautiful simplicity of life when [he] was at school'.[5] Like Wu Hsing-Kuo, Wang imposed his own life as a young Taiwanese man on his reading of Shakespeare, the resonance of which enabled the production to attract a young Taiwanese audience to Shakespeare's play. The resonance, however, came from Wang's adaptive choice of bypassing a significant proportion of Shakespeare's textual aesthetics and references. Such disregard, however justifiable under the premise of popular culture, was claimed by Wang as a straightforward adaptation. Thus, the significance of Wang's *Two Gentlemen* is that a contemporary Taiwanese version could be deemed acceptable Shakespeare; the juxtaposition of Wang's adapted lines along with the scholarly translated ones actually signifies an educational process, 'teaching' the young Taiwanese audience about Shakespeare.[6] This case study is thus essential in the examination of the direct process of Occidentalisation between the Taiwanese and Shakespeare, without the Chinese *xiqu* to act as an excuse for any ambiguity in terms of theatrical or literary interpretation.

While Lee also made use of popular elements for *Shamlet*, the second case study, though dated earlier (the first version was performed 17 years before Wang's *Two Gentlemen*), is the result of the same adaptive strategy: when Shakespeare means nothing more than his cultural capital, textual faithfulness signifies nothing beyond the language barrier

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[4] The interview was conducted through emails between Wang Hong-Yuan and the researcher from 23rd to 27th March 2009.

[5] The Tainaner Ensemble, *Programme for The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 2009.

[6] This aspect makes the production similar to the American teen movies or the Hip Hop *Othello* at the Globe to Globe Festival.

imposed by the most basic understanding of English. Thus, any serious reading of Shakespeare's play is discarded, and a parody of *Hamlet* suffices to represent Shakespeare for the Taiwanese audience. Featuring some of the most famous Taiwanese comedians, the play invites the Taiwanese to rely on their knowledge of these comedians when seeing the fragments from *Hamlet*. Unlike Wang's production, *Shamlet* does not attempt to guide its audience to know *Hamlet* through the play, nor does it require any degree of knowledge about Shakespeare, because such knowledge is non-existent in mainstream Taiwanese culture. *Shamlet* questions the authority of Shakespeare's cultural stature and textual authority. For Lee, 'bardolatry has more to do with "Shakespeare" as a consumable cultural icon, rather than a model to be emulated'; therefore, reconciliation between 'the authenticity of the texts and the authority of performance' was a non-issue for Lee.[7] Taking a more radical approach, *Shamlet* is reminiscent of plays such as Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* in that modern language is inserted to reconstruct Shakespeare's plays. However, Lee's adaptation, like those of Wang and Wu Hsing-Kuo, focuses on the superimposition of his autobiographical perspective.[8] While decentralising Shakespeare and centralising the Taiwaneseness, the director aimed to instigate a debate both on and off stage.

Thus, the two case studies in this chapter confirm the definite mode of Shakespearean adaptation in present Taiwan. Without an apparent Chinese model to follow as with the *xiqu* Shakespeares, *huaju* adaptation gives the directors the liberty to adapt whatever passages or mode of reading they choose into a form of theatre that is immediately relevant to the Taiwanese. In both cases, popular culture plays the most significant role to offer contemporaneity to the modern Taiwanese audience; Shakespeare is revered and followed, but only as an exploitable cultural icon, while the supposed spirit of the play is transformed to fit the Taiwanese consciousness via mechanisms such as language and references to popular culture. Shakespeare's value as a foreign provider of a safe space for such promotion is widely welcomed by the contemporary Taiwanese audience, evident in the fact that such experimental theatre is not restricted to a small

[7] Alexander C. Y. Huang, 'Impersonation, Autobiography, and Cross-Cultural Adaptation: Lee Huo-Hsiu's *Shamlet*' in *Asian Theatre Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 127, 131.
[8] *Ibid.* p. 134.

audience, but is immensely popular in Taiwan.[9] Thus, the Taiwanese Occidentalist reading of Shakespeare departs from the Chinese, asserting a unique local mode of representation that has to be understood in its own context.

Teaching Shakespeare to the Taiwanese: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (2009)[10]

The Tainaner Ensemble was formed in 1987, and was the first spoken drama company in Tainan City, a major city in southern Taiwan. Its objectives are to 'cultivate drama practitioners in southern Taiwan' and 'experiment on interdisciplinary and local drama performances'.[11] The company has experimented with adapting *Antigone* (2001), *Macbeth* (2003) and *Endgame* (2004) into the Taiwanese dialect. The language greatly localises the Western canons, and while Mandarin is the official language of Taiwan, the Taiwanese Fukien dialect is still widely used in southern Taiwan and is considered to represent the Taiwanese local consciousness, which conforms to the people's national identity.

The performance, first put on stage at the Experimental Theatre in late February 2009, was the fourth of the series called Shakespeare Unplugged beginning in 2004. The first three, directed by the artistic director Lü Bo-Shen, were *Romeo and Juliet* (2004), *Hamlet* (2005) and *Macbeth* (2007). These productions used Mandarin as their language. The company's website states that the series aims to 'blend the refined words of Shakespeare to create a new way of performing Shakespeare in Chinese', and the target audience is 'young students'. It is understandable that Mandarin was chosen to deliver Shakespeare's lines since the students in Taipei, who form the majority of the Taiwanese academia, would face difficulties listening to poetry in Taiwanese dialect which has no written form, and is thus impossible to convert into subtitles. Also, Lü's intent was to create a younger Shakespeare in the series in order to 'make Shakespeare a genuine contemporary dramatist', and to bring the great British writer down from the

[9] Alexander C. Y. Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 200.
[10] Wang Hong-Yuan, dir., *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, The Tainaner Ensemble, Taipei, 2009.
[11] The Tainaner Ensemble's website (http://www.tainanjen.org.tw/).

unreachable height to face young Taiwanese audiences.[12] Using the vocabulary of popular culture tones down the textual difficulties.

However, the company's geographic location prompts the question of cultural identity in the series' choice of spoken language. Tainan, a city representative of the Taiwanese locality, would have urged the usage of the Taiwanese dialect. In the discourse of Taiwanese national identity, it is also often argued that the Taiwanese dialect is more suitable than Mandarin Chinese, a language imposed on the Taiwanese Islanders by the Chinese imperial force. Such discussion recalls Homi Bhabha's notion of the silenced voice in speaking of colonial nonsense.[13] Two aspects of Taiwan's position, however, differ from Bhabha's. Firstly, the 'foreign nonsense' is Shakespeare, from whom no colonial oppression has ever occurred; on the contrary, Shakespeare is the 'imagined friend' coming to 'rescue' Taiwan from the Chinese imperialism or colonialism. Secondly, when China is seen as the colonial master, its culture is not only accepted as part of the Taiwanese culture, but also holds a part of Taiwan's national and cultural pride, since the Taiwanese claim to have preserved the best essence of Chinese culture. Therefore, as Chineseness has been gradually internalised by the Taiwanese, claimed to be representative of the country as much as Wu's *jingju* has been, the language itself also signifies the colonial master's (in this case, China's) cultural superiority. An ideological conflict could have arisen, given the prevalence of anti-Chinese feeling in Taiwan; but Shakespeare's foreignness, like that observed in Wu's productions, once again provides the distance to safeguard Mandarin's cultural stature: if China is resented, this is *huaju* and Shakespeare, a Western culture that is recognised as superior to both the Chinese and the Taiwanese, so the debate for Taiwanese locality can be temporarily disregarded.

Calling to the student community in Taipei was to centralise the argument in the political and cultural capital in Taiwan, where the ideological value resides mostly in the emphasis on cultural sophistication. Lü states that the purpose of the adaptation of *The Two Gentlemen* was to 'let Shakespeare stay young'.[14] Graduating from Royal

[12] The Tainaner Ensemble, *Programme for The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 2009.
[13] Homi K. Bhabha, 'Articulating the Archaic: Cultural difference and Colonial Nonsense', in *The Location of Culture* (London: Rutledge, 1994), p. 194.
[14] *Programme.*

Holloway, University of London with a Master's degree in Drama, Lü has his cultural authority inherited from the UK safely superimposed on the entire series. His educational background lends an authoritative voice to the adaptations. The director, Wang Hong-Yuan, having graduated from National Taiwan University with a degree in Drama, also shares such cultural authority for the Taiwanese. Thus, when Wang attempted to familiarise Shakespeare's play for his young Taiwanese audience through various modern Mandarin phrases/lines interspersed among Ruan Shen's 2003 translation, as well as gestures and tones that belong to the '7th and 8th grade Taiwanese'[15], the omissions and risk of losing the very faithfulness to Shakespeare that the series had proclaimed to preserve were forgiven even before the production was put on stage.

The notion of modernising Shakespeare is not unfamiliar in the West; scholars such as Douglas Lanier, Mark Thornton Burnett and Richard Burt have explored the relation between Shakespeare and popular culture. Popular culture is itself a global phenomenon; therefore it forms an ideal vessel to carry Shakespeare to any given locale. When Shakespeare is transported to other European countries, as Burnett has noted, the audiences will be less concerned about the authenticity of the lines in the context of translation, since Shakespeare's lines will be less familiar for the European audiences.[16] Lanier also argues that 'popular audiences are not particularly respectful of Shakespeare's intended meanings; they fasten on (and even embellish) some elements and ignore others; they fragment plays and reassemble what they select into something that speaks to their own sense of lived experience'.[17] This 'textual poaching'[18] was exactly how Wang directed his adaptation for his Taiwanese audience to digest.

Taiwaneseness: Western and Japanese

The adaptive approach began with the 'Western manner' discussed in Chapter 4. From the outset, Wang's production followed closely the scene-division of Shakespeare's

[15] The expression is a common reference to the younger generation in Taiwan, indicating those who were born in Minguo 70s and 80s, equivalent to 1980s and 1990s.

[16] Mark Thornton Burnett, 'Appropriation', in *Reconceiving the Renaissance*, Ewan Fernie et al. eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 162.

[17] Lanier, *Shakespeare and Popular Culture,* p. 52.

[18] Lanier borrows the term from Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 165-76.

original.[19] Also, the *mise en scène* was kept in the simplest manner: an amphitheatre, with only a few props. The simplicity conforms to Lü's idea to 'recreate and return to the performance style in Shakespeare's time: that is to return the stage to the actors by not interfering with the audience with extravagant *mise en scène*, costumes, and lighting'.[20] With Lü's English educational background, it is understandable that the return to simplicity is in accordance with a wish to return to Shakespeare's Globe, whose bare stage posed great challenges for the Chinese Wang Xiaoying when he designed his *Richard III* for The Globe in 2012.

Aiming instead for a domestic audience, the *mise en scène* and the plots in Wang's *The Two Gentlemen* adopted and essentialised the West. However, unlike *Aosailuo*, Wang's production, taking place more than twenty years after the Chinese *jingju* production, represented an essentialisation after the assimilation of Western culture into the local narrative. Taiwan had been more open to the West than China was, and part of the Taiwanese culture was already Westernised. For instance, in Wang's production, Valentine and Proteus did not have to attend the court of the Duke of Milan; instead, they were students of a British-style private school in Milan, under the jurisdiction of the female Principal. Setting Milan as a school is not unprecedented; in Robin Philip's 1970 RSC production, Milan was depicted as a university.[21] However, in all Taiwan's major metropolitan metropolises (Taipei, Taichung, Kaohsiung etc.), American schools have existed for decades (for example, Taipei American School was founded in 1949). These schools, while originally designed for the children of American diplomats, are also open to the upper social class. The aristocracy of Wang's school, different from Taiwan's American schools, was accentuated by the students' uniforms. The additional Britishness further expanded the extent of the haughtiness of Wang's Milan; and the fact that there is no British private school in Taiwan also witnesses the Taiwanese essentialist view of the West.

[19] Textual differences from Shakespeare's are based on the script sent by The Tainaner Ensemble via e-mail in 2009. Where Wang's scene corresponds to that in Shakespeare's, a footnote will be provided.

[20] *Programme.*

[21] William C. Carroll, 'Introduction', in William Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, William C. Carroll ed., The Arden Shakespeare (London: Cenage Learning, 2004), p. 89. Subsequent references to Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* are to this edition.

Wang's school in Milan thus makes the concept of Shakespearean gentry readily understandable for the Taiwanese. Both the Principal and Silvia moved and talked elegantly, sometimes coquettishly so, adding more loftiness to the British-style school uniform. The Britishness, for the Taiwanese, is in accordance not only with the broader discourse on the 'Cool Britannia' phenomenon, but also with the local Occidentalist perspective. In the interview with the researcher, Wang stated that it did not have to be a British private school, but he was merely 'following the trend of fashion'.[22] The 'fashion' that he was following was (and still is at the time of this thesis) able to be described as a 'Cool Western' concept: anything from the West must be superior to Taiwan's own.[23] If he were to choose a Taiwanese uniform, it would not have worked for him to represent the aristocracy in the play; and if he were to choose an American-style school and uniform, it would not have inspired the awe for the less familiar Britishness necessary for establishing as well as cooperating with Shakespeare's cultural capital.[24]

Besides the uniform, Wang also used several other devices to enhance the Britishness of his play. For instance, a British telephone booth was put on the stage, serving as the hiding place for Valentine when Proteus disclosed his friend's plan of meeting Silvia in private to her mother the Principal. In another instance, in Shakespeare, at the beginning of II.i, Speed gives the glove to Valentine. Wang postponed the giving by inserting a new scene where Valentine and Speed were playing croquet. The classic English game immediately defined the difference between Milan and Verona, as well as that between Silvia and Julia: Milan/Silvia is casual and friendly, Verona/Julia formal and elitist. When the Principal and Silvia entered, Valentine and Speed froze to salute. After they were gone, the playful exchange between the two Veronians at once signified the intrusion of common youths into too rigid a place.

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[22] The interview was conducted via email between the author and Wang on 27th March 2009.

[23] The same concept is applicable to the contemporary Chinese society, as discussed in the previous chapter and observed by many, such as Li Ruru (Li, 'Millennium Shashibiya: Shakespeare in the Chinese-Speaking World', p. 170).

[24] In 2009, the number of Taiwanese students applying for student visas for the US was almost four times as many as those for the UK; in 2010, the gap enlarged to almost five times. While the US holds more educational institutions and a more powerful global marketing mechanism, this also signifies the comparative unfamiliarity of the UK in Taiwan. The Ministry of Education, *Statistics of Domestic Students Applying for Overseas Student Visas*, 2012 (http://www.edu.tw/), accessed on 20th October, 2012.

The Britishness of the play was presented in an essentialised form of the British-style private school, the uniform and the phone booth. These all served to bring Wang's audience's focus onto the Westernness of the play. As discussed in Chapter 4, the 'Western manner' was written into the local representation of *jingju*. But Wang's *huaju* did not bring Shakespeare's foreignness into a theatre specifically presented in a non-Western dramaturgy; instead, he invoked the Taiwanese conception of the West, calling on what is already present in the Taiwanese society that is at once familiar yet different from the fundamental level. The next instance examines Wang's strategy to familiarise his audience with Shakespeare through other forms of the familiar Westernness.

Before the show began, fluorescent sticks were distributed to the audience. After saying that he 'must go send some better messenger' (I.ii.145), Proteus gave fluorescent sticks to more audience members, asking that they should wave them if he was 'lucky enough to have a date with her on Christmas Eve'.[25] In an invented scene at the end of I.ii where Julia found written on one of the shreds of Proteus's letter that he wanted to meet with her on Christmas Eve, the light went dark when the couple entered, the audience's waving of the fluorescent sticks becoming the sole lighting of the stage. At this point the audience literally took part in the production, and the scene of waving sticks resembled that of popular concerts. It also preceded the singing scene in IV.ii: when Lance set up a stage for Proteus and Turio to sing to Silvia, the audience would have little doubt as to what to do.

This scene integrated the Westernness perceived from an Occidentalist perspective with the popular culture local to the Taiwanese. On one hand, Christmas does not have any historical significance in Taiwan, as it ceased to be an official holiday in 2001. The celebration of Christmas, as in East Asian countries such as Japan and Korea, remains a private and commercialised event, usually celebrated for romantic motives rather than religious or family-uniting purposes (the latter is assigned to the Chinese New Year in Taiwan). On the other, the waving of the fluorescent sticks has the same function as that of Christmas, the *huaju* form, and the Shakespearean source of the play: the internalisation of global/Western culture in the local presentation. As a gesture of audience participation, this also departs from the traditional theatre, because *jingju*, or

[25] Wang, *Script*, p. 4.

other *xiqu* productions do not allow active participation from members of the audience. Thus, the integration of Christmas, Western theatrical devices and popular culture brought the Taiwanese audience closer to Shakespeare's Westernness.[26]

Incorporating references to popular films was also a way to bring the audience closer to the Britishness of the play. In IV.iv, when Proteus unwittingly gave the ring Julia gave him back to her (now disguised as Sebastian), for Silvia, she unintentionally acknowledged that 'isn't that the one I gave you?'[27] To cover her slip of tongue, she then joked that the ring was 'the lord of the rings'. Remembering that joke made earlier in II.iii when they first exchanged their rings, Proteus, surprisingly unaware of the same reference, appreciated the joke and thus was willing to let Sebastian know where the ring came from. After Proteus's exit, Julia lamented that 'How many women would do such a message?/Alas, poor Proteus, thou has entertained/*A Gollum to guard your magic ring*' (IV.iv.88-90).[28] Line 90 in Shakespeare reads 'A fox to be the shepherd of thy lambs'. As a fox is drawn by its nature to lambs, Gollum, the fictional creature in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, is drawn by his centuries-old desire that forces him to the ring. While the film adaptation of Tolkien's work is ranked the eighth all-time bestseller in Taiwan,[29] the Chinese translation of the books also made translator Zhu Xue-Heng one of the most important literary figures in Taiwan.[30] The connection between the Taiwanese recognisable literary stature of Zhu and the British cultural capital of Tolkein confirms the audience's expectation for the cultural capital of Shakespeare, as well as the cultural superiority of Britain. At the production which the researcher attended, rounds of laughter and enthusiastic applauses from the audience attested to the effectiveness of this particular reference.

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[26] An adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by the Korean Yohangza Theatre Company (a participant in the 2012 Globe to Globe season) also involved the actors 'threw glow-in-the-dark armbands to the audience right at the beginning of their performance, igniting a high level of excitement in them and building up a shared mood of interactive festivity', which is one of the aesthetic techniques in Korean theatre. Yong Li Lan, 'Intercultural Rhythm in Yohangza's Dream', in *Shakespeare Beyond English*, eds. Susan Bennett and Christie Carson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 91.

[27] Wang, *Script,* p. 38

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[29] *Kaiyan Movie Database* (http://app.atmovies.com.tw/), accessed on 29th, August, 2013.

[30] Lin Ling-Zhu, 'Breaking away from Tradition, Creating Innovation — Zhu Xue-Heng', from *YouthWant* website, 28th June 2004.

Besides invoking the audience's familiar notions with the West, Wang also turned to the Japanese Manga/Anime culture, particularly influential among his target audience. The following two examples demonstrate how Wang incorporated such a cultural element shared between Japan and Taiwan to define the locality of the adaptation. Julia, nicknamed 'the scooter girl', disguised herself as a geek to 'prevent/The loose encounters of lascivious men' (II.vii.40-41).[31] The Asian 'geek', or more suitably named 'otaku' (literally 'home' and practically a second-person pronoun in Japanese) in the Taiwanese context is an Asian phenomenon among young people. While the English word 'geek' describes 'an unfashionable or socially inept person',[32] an 'otaku' indicates an obsession for a particular object (usually that of a Manga or an Anime) bordering on perversion, and is consequently seen in the Japanese and the Taiwanese (in recent years, Western) societies as repulsive. Thus, Julia's camouflage as a geek, not a 'stylish man', was also to prevent homosexual attraction, as it is 'quite probable nowadays'.[33] It was 'probable' not because Julia's disguise was unfashionable; it was because she was perceived on and off stage as so abhorrent that she practically begged to be rejected.

The extravagantly comical nature of Japanese popular culture was also adopted to humorous effect in Scene II. When Silvia entered at the beginning of this scene, she flouted her sexuality by making her hair dance. Amazed, Valentine took out two heart-shaped cardboards, acting as if his eyes had turned into hearts. When Proteus first met Silvia II.iv, she danced again, and Proteus's eyes also turned into hearts by the same gesture. This cartoonish gesture, while also common in the American/Anglo culture, is ubiquitous among the Taiwanese, as popular Manga and Anime constantly utilise such comical effect.

With representations of the existing American schools, with allusions to the British cultural currency, and with comical effects shared between Taiwan and Japan, Wang set the stage for his play firmly in a Taiwanese metropolis. In Shakespeare's original, the Italian city of Verona does not signify any Italian locality either: there is no suggestion of its name through Act I; it is only mentioned four times; and 'the "Verona" in the play

[31] *Ibid.*, p.22.
[32] Geek, n., *Oxford Dictionary of English*.
[33] *Ibid.*

seems… to be a fairly generic small town, from which the ambitious youth leave to go to the sophisticated court world of Milan'.[34] Without any indicative landmark, Shakespeare's Verona is seen through the people there. With signs that indicate the twenty-first century Taipei, Wang's characters represented the people in the cities of Taiwan; and what they do on stage would eventually turn the metaphorical Verona into an actual Taipei, ready for Wang's Taiwanese audience to watch a Shakespearean play tailored to its mode of appreciation.

Juxtaposing Two Modes of Speech: A Language Lesson

The translation of Shakespeare's language always includes the task of preserving his textual beauty, whether the translation is more poetic or prosaic. In the case of a prosaic translation, the language used is also elaborated to carry the textual fidelity to Shakespeare. For Wang, however, if his characters spoke in elaborate lines, it could lead to awkwardness for the audience. While Shakespeare's language offers a kind of 'pre-modern pastoralism', it also poses the greatest challenge for a modern audience not used to Shakespeare's 'association with over-refinement, artificiality, and elitism'.[35] And when Al Pacino urges the contemporary American film-goers to 'tune up' to Shakespeare's language in his *Looking for Richard* (1996)[36], Wang decides that his audience does not have the capacity for Shakespeare's linguistic art.

In the interview with the researcher, Wang expressed his doubt that the modern audience would laugh at lines written to entertain people in a totally different time and place. 'Based on the spirit of the original', he then adapted the script 'at great risk', because as much as he respects the text, he finds it 'totally boring and impractical'.[37] The 'spirit' that Wang intended to pursue was the comic effect in *The Two Gentlemen*; and fidelity to Shakespeare is evident in the retaining of the scene division. However, Shakespeare's 'over-refinement, artificiality, and elitism'[38] can only serve as a Petrarchan expression: archaic, therefore respectable, yet at the same time kept to the minimum. As the context of the play was set in the modern Taiwanese metropolis, the

[34] Carroll, 'Introduction', p. 76.
[35] Lanier, *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture*, pp. 69, 74.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 75.
[37] Wang, *Interview.*
[38] *Ibid.*

script was adapted to demonstrate to the audience a Shakespeare ready to be understood; therefore, an examination of the textual adaptive process can offer a clear explanation of how the contemporary young Taiwanese audience perceives Shakespeare.

The latest translation of Shakespeare's plays in the Chinese countries is the *New Complete Works* by Fang Ping in 2000. The translation is in new Chinese poetry to recreate Shakespeare's lines in an artistic form that is not lost on the modern Chinese reader, and it is widely used in recent spoken drama productions, as in *The Tempest* by the Theatre Department of Chinese Culture University in 2004.[39] Ruan Shen's translation of *The Two Gentlemen*, on which Wang based his adaptation, conforms to Fang's style. However, instead of following the translation closely, Wang's script is a loose adaptation. Most of the poetry is omitted, used only for the more sentimental occasions; the longer speeches and soliloquies are shortened into two or three lines to speed up the pace, as well as to lessen the dramatic sentimentality; and the overall tone of the script is contemporary urban Taiwanese.

In the interview with Wang, he notes that 'in [Shakespeare's] earlier plays… the train of thoughts is often leaping, leaving it illogical', so he sometimes brought prose in contrast to lines of verse to comical effect, or broke down a long soliloquy into different places to 'justify the character's development of thoughts'. The first case has an obvious root in Wang's adaptive inspiration, John Madden's *Shakespeare in Love*, in which Philip Henslowe urges the young Shakespeare to 'speak prose' when the latter chants in verse. At the beginning of Wang's production, instead of the refined argument of love and adventure between Shakespeare's characters, Wang's Proteus brought out a band of hip-hop dancers to perform a farewell dance to Valentine, and began to chant his verse for love after the dance, while Valentine teased him in prose. Proteus's poetic Chinese, juxtaposed with Valentine's casual tone, was directed to the effect that Wang's audience could easily pick up the different linguistic level, and assume Proteus's pompous speech must be Shakespeare's equal.

[39] The Theatre Department of Chinese Culture University has a long tradition of staging Shakespeare every year; they have produced 25 Shakespeare's plays from 1967, and are indicative of the development of Taiwanese Shakespeare. Wang Wan-Rong, 'A Conversation between Shakespeare and the Contemporary Taiwanese Theatre', p. 338.

On the other hand, what Wang claims to be 'leaping' and 'illogical' in Shakespeare illustrates the reluctance of the Taiwanese audience to follow long monologues or soliloquies.[40] At the beginning of II.vi, Proteus hung up his cell phone, and began to struggle between his duties to his friend and his lover, and to his newly found desire for Silvia. The 43-line soliloquy that solely forms the scene in Shakespeare was divided into three parts. First Proteus argued how 'Love bade me swear, and Love bade me forswear' (II.vi.6), and how he was torn apart in betraying Julia, Valentine and Silvia (II.vi.1-6)[41]. He stopped here when Silvia and Valentine stepped onto the stage and interrupted his thoughts. They playfully practised the dance for the school ball, which ended in Proteus dancing with Silvia while Valentine sat innocently aside. During the dance, Proteus justified himself for choosing a sun over a star (2.6.9-13). He then called Julia 'a swarthy Ethiope' (II.vi.26)[42], and chided himself for calling her that. The last comparison was picked up by Silvia, and Proteus performed an African dance to get away with the escaped thought. The scene ended with Valentine and Silvia retreating to sharing private intimacy in the corner of the stage, while Proteus decided that 'Valentine I'll hold an enemy/Aiming at Silvia as a sweeter friend' (II.vi.29-30).

Here Shakespeare's Proteus has already come up with a solid plan to betray Valentine's secret to the Duke (II.vi.31-43), but Wang prolonged his self-debate into III.i. Proteus entered alone, sewing the dog-doll, which he was to give Silvia later, and his lines were mixed with Shakespeare's and Wang's:

> I cannot leave to love, and yet I do;
> But there I leave to love where I should be.
> *I think I must be in love with Silvia too, too much,*
> *So I have to turn my back on my oath's to Julia,*
> *As well as the friendship with Valentine.*
> I to myself am dearer than a friend,
> For love is still most precious in itself.
> Julia I lose, and Valentine I lose;

[40] In Chapter 5, a similar sentiment is shared by Wu Hsing-Kuo when he claims that without more physical presentation, the narrative of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is too plain for his audience.
[41] Wang, *Script*, p. 20.
[42] In Wang's script, simply 'an African native', p. 21.

If I keep them, I needs must lose myself.
If I lose them, thus find I by their loss,
For Valentine, myself, for Julia, Silvia.[43]

Two forces are at work to make the poetic translation of Shakespeare's text digestible for the audience. First, an almost self-indulgent amount of thoughts without a solid plan, interspersed with Proteus's improvisational confession to the Principal, could lessen the audience's impression of his betrayal, and his final reconciliation with Valentine and Julia would seem more plausible. Similar to Wang Xiaoying's treatment of his Richard Gloucester discussed in the previous chapter, by enhancing Proteus's romantic motivation and reducing his scheming, Shakespeare's Proteus was made more melodramatic and suitable to the Taiwanese's taste. Second, by breaking up a long soliloquy into parts across scenes, the audience did not have to digest one continuous speech at once, and was given time to follow the character's train of thought. Similar to the invented explanation of the young Shakespeare for the creation of *Romeo and Juliet* in *Shakespeare in Love*, or Al Pacino's justification of Shakespeare's text in *Looking for Richard*, the juxtaposition of poetic and prosaic modes of speech eases the Taiwanese audience into the translated text that preserves Shakespeare's textual authenticity.

Recomposition into Taiwanese Currency

While the juxtaposition of two modes of speech served as a linguistic guidance for Wang's audience to understand the translated poetry of Shakespeare's text, the remaining task for Wang was to tone down the lines when prosaic intersession was not possible, and to replace the puns with contemporary Taiwanese Mandarin to retain the humour in Shakespeare's play, thus preserving Shakespeare's cultural immediacy for his audience. The first approach can be seen in the song 'Who is Silvia' (IV.ii.38-52), which was re-composed into modern Mandarin verses. In the context of a rock and roll gig on campus, Proteus sang the lyrics like a pop song. The comparison between Shakespeare's and Wang's songs below reveals the differences between what was and

[43] The first two lines are from II.iv.17-8; the third to the fifth (in italic) are from Wang's script, p. 24, which could be taken from 'O, but I love his lady too too much' (II.iv.202); the next two lines are II.vi.23-4; the final four are II.vi.19-22.

is a love song for the British and Taiwanese playwrights respectively:

Who is Silvia? What is she, That all our swains commend her? Holy, fair and wise is she; The heaven such grace did lend her, That she might admired be. Is she kind as she is fair? For beauty lives with kindness. Love doth to her eyes repair To help him of his blindness, And, being helped, inhabits there. Then to Silvia let us sing, That Silvia is excelling; She excels each mortal thing Upon the dull earth dwelling. To her let us garlands bring. (IV.ii.38-52)	Silvia? Is it thee? No man can himself deceive. Saintly, pretty and witty, Even the moon daren't compare with thee. In my heart hides secrets so many, Could you grant me a 'maybe'? Your dainty hair warms my heart, Your natural beauty holds me hard. My tears run for you, My heart beats for you. And in your impossible gaze Lies the end of my love, Let us sing a song just for you, Every line sings 'I love you', A thousand good mornings for you, Two thousands good nights, I miss you.[44]

In Shakespeare's second stanza, there is a metaphorical reference to Cupid's blindness, which Wang avoided for the sake of possible confusion amongst the audience. Wang's lines are not of the highest poetic value; they are easily picked up because lines like 'could you grant me a "maybe"' exist in numerous pop songs which the audience would be only too familiar with. But does not Shakespeare's use of Cupid work on his audience in a similar way? Lanier argues that, when Shakespeare's lines are presented in popular culture, 'holding Shakespeare to a standard of textual fidelity may blind us to other principles of fidelity at work', and risk productivity.[45] If Wang's lyrics cannot escape the all-too-familiar sentimentality and clichés, Shakespeare's can be seen as

[44] The piece titled 'The Sentimental Song' and subtitled 'Who is Silvia', is written in Mandarin by Wang Hung-Yuan and composed by Wang Liu (*Programme*).
[45] Lanier, *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture,* p. 99.

'dopey and formulaic' as well.[46] Dennis Kennedy notes that a translation, when replacing the out-of-date expressions, can offer 'a significantly different theatrical experience which may have been much closer to that provided by [the original] text in Shakespeare's own day'.[47] It might be argued that if Shakespeare's text conveys the Petrarchan clichés, Wang's popular lyrics with much simpler metaphors can express the modern clichés.

Besides the toning down of the elaborate language, Wang also translated some of the English puns to those of Mandarin Chinese, accentuating the Taiwaneseness in the process. Take the following exchange between Speed and Valentine for example:

Speed	If you love her, you cannot see her.
Valentine	Why?
Speed	Because Love is blind. O, that you had mine eyes, or your own eyes had the lights they were wont to have when you chid at Sir Proteus for going ungartered. (II.i.65-8)

A literal translation might risk losing the comic effect for two reasons. Firstly, Greek mythology is not part of the general educational background of an average Taiwanese; in the previous example of the love song, the allusion to Cupid was omitted in Wang's lyrics for this reason. Secondly, in the history of Chinese clothing, there has not been any style involving garters. To amend these linguistic and cultural predicaments, Wang relied on the modern Taiwanese (in this case also Chinese) usage of the word 'blind'. After saying 'love is blind', Speed commented that 'you've become as blind as Proteus, how dare you reproach him earlier'. While the first 'blind' indicates the inability to see, the second carries a rather metaphorical meaning in modern Taiwanese Mandarin slang, which generally means being nonsensical.[48] For the members in the audience who were knowledgeable of Shakespeare's text, this instance would have brought a pleasant

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[46] *Ibid.*

[47] Dennis Kennedy, 'Introduction: Shakespeare Without His Language', in *Foreign Shakespeare*, ed. Dennis Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 25.

[48] The slang was recently popularised by the top-rated Taiwanese male singer-songwriter Jay Chou when he made his fame in 2000. It is taken from the phrase *xia che*, which means 'to waffle baselessly and topiclessly' (The Ministry of Education Dictionary of Chinese, http://dict.revised.moe.edu.tw/. Accessed on 25th May, 2009)

surprise of recognition; for the majority who were not acquainted with the original text, however, since the meaning of the phrase was so interwoven with their local culture, it was impossible to tell if any Shakespeare was detected. The comprehensive force at work here would have led these members of the audience to believe that Shakespeare does intend to convey the meaning they perceived. The audience reaction to this phrase was yet another round of laughter at the production, signifying that the joke was well received.

When a pun's linguistic locality is set more firmly in modern Taiwan, the audience would have to fantasise about a Shakespearean equivalence. In V.ii, when Silvia's flight was discovered, Turio wanted to know if his outfit was good enough to see Silvia:

Turio	Am I well-dressed enough to meet Silvia?
Proteus (carelessly)	You are the worst ever.
Turio (furious)	What?
Julia (as Sebastian)	You are the *chao*est ever.

The word *chao*, sounding similar to *zao* (worst), is taken from the phrase *chao-liu*, which literally means 'swag'. It has also recently been popularised by the media in Taiwan, to indicate young people who follow a certain Japanese or Hong Kong street fashion. As the school of *chao-liu* has rapidly become the mainstream subculture in Taiwan, it would certainly catch the attention of the audience; and it did, evident in the audience's recognising laughter. The insertion that made Turio look more foolish, however, has its precedence in the first recorded production of Shakespeare's play. In Benjamin Victor's 1762-3 production/adaptation of *Two Gentlemen*, he gave Turio 'additional lines revealing him to be even more full of himself than Shakespeare's text allows'; he also notes, however, that 'these additions…were eventually dropped from productions' because 'directors apparently [have] concluded that Shakespeare makes Turio quite foolish enough in the original'.[49] It seems reasonable for British directors to stay true to Shakespeare's script, given that more than 240 years have passed since Victor's adaptation in London. While *Two Gentlemen* is still new on the Taiwanese stage, Wang's insertion of lines would not raise a serious issue of authority, but lend

[49] Carroll, 'Introduction', p. 88.

cultural currency to Shakespeare. As Wu Hsing-Kuo's *King Lear* and *The Tempest* incorporated the usage of the Taiwanese dialect to highlight the local voice, Wang's inclusion of the latest Taiwanese slang made his production comprehensible only to the contemporary Taiwanese.

Wang wished to retain as many of Shakespeare's lines as possible. Being respectful of the text, he also feared losing the Shakespearean elements in his play. However, his decision to conform to the Taiwanese modernity may mean his audience understands the play better than it would a straightforward adaptation. If Shakespeare's text must be preserved, the risk would be losing the cultural immediacy. But Wang did not merely translate the lines; he translated the space, the time and the *mise en scène* for his young Taiwanese to create a world in which they, and only they, can be comfortable. This production began with invoking Western popular culture and cultural authority to consolidate Shakespeare's iconic stature, and the scene divisions were kept almost intact to demonstrate the intention of staying faithful. But the cultural authority was partially pre-existing in the Taiwanese society, and Japanese popular culture was called for to assist in familiarising the Taiwanese with the general context of the play. When Wang asserted that he intended to retain as much textual faithfulness as possible, he juxtaposed two modes of speech in order to let the dialogues explain themselves for the audience. Finally, the script was finished with terminology existing only in the contemporary Taiwanese narrative. The supposedly straightforward presentation, while aiming at the young Taiwanese audience, thus became anything but straightforward - what was perceived as Shakespearean was conceived through the Occidentalist view of Shakespeare in particular and the West in general. Seemingly more in touch with the Western culture, the present Taiwan holds only a reminiscence of that international contact while Shakespeare's foreignness is more tangible than ever, to such extent that confronting with his text with any literary effort is evidently a task deemed unnecessary. Therefore, in the next case study, the justifiable fragmentation of one of Shakespeare's best-known plays defines the pretext for Shakespearean *huaju* adaptation in present Taiwan when the Taiwanese call for Shakespeare as an exploitable literary source as well as the provider of a space free of any ideological burden where debates about identity are made possible.

Taiwan Needs Shakespeare: *Shamlet* (2000)[50]

Outline of Shamlet: the Crazy Version[51]

Shamlet consists of ten acts, and tells the story of a fictional Fengping Company (a meaningless word that plays on the company's real name, Ping Fong, which means screen), led by the character Li Xiuguo (playing on the actor's real name, Lee Kuo-Hsiu). In this 2000 performance, Act One sees a performance of *Hamlet*'s Act V Scene II on a stage in Taipei City. This act is a straightforward performance with minor mistakes, familiarising the audience with the fighting scene at the end of *Hamlet*. However, Hamlet's name is changed to Shamlet.

Act Two to Four are performed as rehearsals for *Shamlet* in Taichung City. Act Two begins with a rehearsal of *Hamlet*'s Act I Scene V, and ends with a mechanical problem when the suspension wire that is supposed to lift the Ghost out of the stage malfunctions. Act Three begins with a rehearsal of Act II Scene I, but a quarrel between members of the company again bring the rehearsal to an abrupt stop. The quarrel continues and is exasperated by more personal problems among members of the company in Act Four, when a rehearsal for Act IV Scene V takes place.

In Act Five, *Hamlet*'s Act V Scene II is staged again. However, because of the problems depicted in the previous acts, some characters are changed, and actors are forgetting lines or deliberately interrupting the others vengefully. The performance ends in complete chaos.

Act Six is a rehearsal of Act III Scene IV, and the company is now rehearsing in Tainan

[50] Lee Kuo-Hsiu, dir., *Shamlet: the Crazy Version*, Ping-Fong Acting Group, Taipei, 2000. The production discussed in this chapter is based on the 2000 version, titled *Shamlet: the Crazy Version*. A full video of this production is available on MIT's research website, Shakespeare Performance in Asia, at http://web.mit.edu/shakespeare/asia/ , which is a part of the online digital archive Global Shakespeare. The discussion in this chapter is also supported by the scripts of the 1992 version (Taipei: Shulin, 1992), and the 2006 version (Taipei: INK Literary Monthly Publishing, 2013). The latest version is to be performed from September to December 2013, after Lee Kuo-Hsiu passed away in May 2013.

[51] The play has a highly complicated plotline. Due to the limited space given in this chapter, here only a synopsis is outlined. Huang Ya-Hui's doctoral thesis, *Performing Shakespeare in Contemporary Taiwan*, gives a thorough structure of the 1992 version of the play (Huang Ya-Hui, *Performing Shakespeare in Contemporary Taiwan,* Diss. University of Central Lancashire, 2012).

City. Act Seven is a performance of Act III Scene II. Both acts are constantly disturbed by the sudden changes of actors and actresses due to personal affairs. In Act Eight, the actors and actresses rehearse the graveyard scene without their costumes, and Laertes's lamentation for Ophelia becomes a story of a break-up between two members of the company.

Act Nine stands as a special event, because it is neither a rehearsal nor a performance; instead, Li is leading the company members to pray to Heaven for good luck before their last show. In the final act, Act Ten, Act V Scene II is again performed (in Kaohsiung City), only the improvisations and character changes all stem from previous disorders within the company, creating the ultimate chaos of the three versions of the scene.

'What does *Hamlet* have to do with the Taiwanese?'

While Wang's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* exemplifies the positioning of Shakespeare in the contemporary Taiwan, Lee Kuo-Hsiu's controversial *Shamlet*, endorsed by its popular success, follows more closely the development of Taiwan, as Lee offers a personal reading of both *Hamlet* and *Shamlet* through the different versions of his play. Like Wu Hsing-Kuo's *jingju* adaptation of *King Lear*, *Shamlet* deals more with what Shakespeare means to Lee as a Taiwanese director than with how Shakespeare should be presented on the basis of international scholarship. However, while Wu's *King Lear* reconstructs Shakespeare's play to convey Shakespeare's 'spirit' from Wu's perspective, *Shamlet* invites not the global audience but the Taiwanese to contemplate the meaning of declaring that the spirit of Shakespeare can be readily presented, whatever theatrical form is in use. The contradiction between what all other directors discussed so far in this thesis see as the Shakespearean spirit (many even go as far as to claim a cultural authority by adaptations that preserve the 'original gravy' of Shakespeare's plays) and what the Taiwanese audience can perceive in a literary work as unfamiliar and exotic as Shakespeare highlights the historical significance of *Shamlet*.

To capture Shakespeare's spirit has been the most manifested motivation in all other productions discussed in this thesis. Lee Kuo-Hsiu, however, states in the brochure for

Shamlet in 1995 that 'it is a play that has no connection with *Hamlet*, but has an affair with Shakespeare'.[52] By declaring to have an 'affair' with Shakespeare, Lee playfully admits that he intends to pay homage to Shakespeare, arguing that players like himself and his company must 'be well used, for/they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time' (*Hamlet* II.ii.521-22).[53] As the Player King in the seventh act of *Shamlet*, Lee spoke the line to Claudius, as if humbling himself before the mighty Shakespeare; yet this mighty figure is distorted through *Shamlet*'s absurd parody of *Hamlet*. As the players in *Hamlet* are asked to perform *The Murder of Gonzago* as a representation of Denmark's condition, the players in the fictional Fengping Company were asked by the actor/director Lee Kuo-Hsiu to make a representation of Taiwan's condition.

Studying *Shamlet* is thus equivalent to studying *Hamlet*'s meaning to the contemporary Taiwanese.[54] As noted by Alexander Huang, the English title signifies a relationship to 'Sham', 'Shame', or 'Shameless' to the English Speaker, while *Sha* comes from Shakespeare's Chinese transliteration Shashibiya (as Li Ruru titles her work *Shashibiya: Staging Shakespeare in China*).[55] For an English-speaking audience, *Shamlet*'s nature of parody is obvious, and the production can easily be understood as a sham *Hamlet* that shamelessly exploits Shakespeare, as 'Henry Fielding's burlesque *Shamela* (1741)…was a sham *Pamela* [a novel by Samuel Richardson (1740)]'.[56] For the Taiwanese audience, without the knowledge of Shakespeare's theatrical history, the title *Shamlet*, pronounced in Chinese as *Shamuleite*, the first syllable *Sha* invokes a recognition to Shakespeare, who the Chinese-speaking population generally revere as Sha-Wong (Wong is a respectful expression for an elderly man). Also, while the first syllable in a Chinese name is the person's family name, the title gives Shakespeare's family name to Hamlet, signifying the cultural heritage of the play. Thus, for the Taiwanese, the title suggests a combination of the exploitable cultural commodity of

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[52] Lee, *Shamlet: Mad*-Wave, p. 32.

[53] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, T.J.B. Spencer ed., Penguin Shakespeare Series (London: Penguin, 2005). Subsequent references are to this edition.

[54] Reading Shakespeare in relation to the audience's comprehension of the present would bring to mind the Presentist criticism of Shakespeare (Hugh Grady and Terrence Hawkes eds, *Presentist Shakespeare*, 2007). However, the literary distance between the Taiwanese and Shakespeare is so great that a reference to a direct reading into Shakespeare's text or the theatrical presentation behind the plays in relation to the Taiwanese comprehensibility of Shakespeare's plays would be a subject for future studies.

[55] Huang, 'Impersonation', p. 126.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

Shakespeare and one of his plays - it does not have to be *Hamlet*, because it only needs to hold an internationally recognisable cultural endorsement: Shakespeare's capital.

In a review of *Shamlet*, the renowned Taiwanese theatre scholar Ji Wei-Ran notes that *Shamlet* does have a certain connection with Shakespeare while *Hamlet* serves only as a starting point from which the theme shared between *Shamlet* and *Hamlet* - 'humans' selfishness and the society's chaotic disorder' - is clearly conveyed.[57] Perng Ching-Hsi also finds that while Lee runs in the opposite direction from that which is set down by Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Shamlet* is actually very close to Shakespeare's original in that both *Shamlet* and *Hamlet* negotiate the issues of loyalty and betrayal, of honesty and conspiracy, and of love and hate[58]; in *Shamlet*, the personal quarrels and misfortunes of the actors and actresses are juxtaposed with their rehearsal of *Hamlet*, making the parody at once hilarious by its failure to faithfully present the tragedy in Shakespeare's play, yet empathetic because the failure to rehearse well stems from the distraction of the personal problems so closely connected with *Hamlet*.[59]

In his analysis of *Shamlet* through three different layers - the parody, the (auto)biography and the mixture of both, Huang observes that 'the relationship to the People's Republic of China has made everyone [the Taiwanese] a Hamlet of sorts'.[60] This notion conforms to what he calls 'small time Shakespeare'. As discussed in Chapter 5, Wu Hsing-Kuo's autobiographical reading of Shakespeare's *King Lear* turns the play into a narrative for contemporary Taiwanese *jingju* actors. In Taiwan, the stagnant situation with China that leaves Taiwan's national identity unresolved is indeed forcing the Taiwanese to do nothing other than debate in the domestic media. While

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[57] Lee, *Shamlet: Premiere Version,* pp. 158-59.

[58] Perng Ching-Hsi, *Perusing Shakespeare* (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2004), p. 435.

[59] Juxtaposing Shakespearean rehearsals to theatrical performances can be found in many adaptations in popular culture. For example, a Canadian TV series *Slings and Arrows* (2003-2006), similar to *Shamlet*, utilises rehearsals to explore the relationship between occurrences on and off stage, affecting the fictional New Burbage Festival. Francesca T. Royster observes that, by moving 'ingeniously between the tensions of the play at hand, and the tensions between the ensemble of actors and directors', the show invites its audience 'to see the performances through multiple viewpoints', thus appealing to the audience with 'the richness of inside Shakespeare-ophile jokes, its critique of commercialism and lack of artistic integrity, and its ability to capture, through the framework of situation comedy, the difficulty of articulating the magic of putting on Shakespearean theater.' (Royster, 'Comic Terror and Masculine Vulnerability in *Slings and Arrows: Season Three*', in *Journal of Narrative Theory*, Vol. 41, Number 3, Fall 2011, pp. 343-361).

[60] Huang, 'Impersonation', p. 127.

Shakespeare's Hamlet stops his revenge every time a thought gives him pause, the Taiwanese can only indulge themselves in discourses about the national identity crisis, without actually fighting against China's hegemony, in the international arena. Among the Taiwanese, the lack of international support has led to a disinterested attitude toward the international recognition of the One China Policy; in *Shamlet*, while the debate of the relevance of *Hamlet* is restricted to the local audience in Taiwan, such a site-specific comprehensibility is, therefore, inevitable.[61]

Hamlet put into Taiwan's context thus challenges Shakespeare's universal adaptability. In Ji Wei-Ran's satirical criticism on Shakespeare, *Misunderstood Shakespeare*, Ji criticises how inappropriate it is for the Taiwanese to aspire to Hamlet's example.[62] Ji reasons that Hamlet's indecision is actually a sign of his strength against his father's ghost, as revenge is only a 'short-sighted justice' and his true heroic act is to fight against the destiny imposed on him.[63] In the meantime, the Taiwanese politicians are bound by the ideological conundrum of pro- and anti-China, thus are leading the people to a narrow-minded materialism.[64] The narrow-mindedness leads to the lack of any philosophical ideal in contemporary Taiwan, and any production of *Hamlet*, full of philosophical reasoning, will only be viable for 'a snoring contest'.[65] Ji's observation is purposefully cynical, yet it is also why a distorted *Hamlet* such as *Shamlet* has so much resonance among the Taiwanese, whether or not they are familiar with Shakespeare's original tale of revenge. The Taiwanese are eager to seek a straightforward self-help reference to replace the emptiness in inaction, and *Hamlet* provides the exact opposite of such assistance craved by a society whose only thrift is materialistic.

The inappropriateness of putting *Hamlet* on the contemporary Taiwanese stage is the

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[61] *Hamlet*'s world is itself metaphorical; either Denmark or Elizabethan England acts as the graveyard that inspires Hamlet's meditation on his presence as well as invites the reader/audience to examine his own world outside of the text (Maynard Mack, 'The World of *Hamlet*', pp. 86-107). But the Taiwanese audience is invited to enter not *Hamlet*'s world, but *Shamlet*. Therefore, as this chapter proposes, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* can only have significance to the Taiwanese when Shakespeare's original text is marginalised.

[62] Ji Wei-Ran, 'Anti-Self Help White Paper', in his *Misunderstood Shakespeare* (Taipei: INK Literary Monthly Publishing, 2008), pp. 10-26.

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[65] *Ibid.*

core value of *Shamlet*. In Act Nine, Li Xiuguo, the artistic director of the fictional Fengping Theatre Company (played by Lee Kuo-Hsiu), uttered his frustration when confronted by a member of his failing company. When this member expressed her confusion about the absurdity of calling this play *Shamlet* instead of the proper name *Hamlet*, Li agitatedly pointed to Shakespeare's original text as the source of absurdity:

> First, in the first, forth, and fifth scene of Act One in the script, even the soldiers in the castle and Horatio can see the Ghost of the King; why then can the Queen in the Bedroom Scene of Act Three Scene Four not see the Ghost? (Asking the members) Isn't it self-conflicting? Perhaps the soldiers have ghost-seeing eyes? Second, hasn't it occurred to you that the opportune moments for the Prince's revenge are so many, why would he use a theatre company to perform a play to agitate the King, so he could disclose the King's conspiracy? Right? Haven't you noticed the contradictions here? What if the company refuse to cooperate? Non-cooperation would have led to non-agitation for the King, which would have caused the Prince to be unable to prove the King's guilt! And then there will be no story of revenge, right? Is the theatre company really that significant? Contradictions and ill logics are ubiquitous […] Why would you question if the script is illogical? Isn't it contradictory per se? And for what?! Let me tell you this. The greatest contradiction for Fengping Company is - we should never have staged a Shakespearean play! (Agitated, to everyone present) What does Shakespeare have to do with the Taiwanese?[66]

Earlier in this act, Li had explained that the name *Shamlet* was misspelled by Lee Kuo-Hsiu, who later corrected the mistake but was too late.[67] However, in Li's agitation, the mistake was justified on two levels: one textual, and the other psychological. On the one hand, if *Hamlet*'s plot makes little sense, faithfulness to the original plot would have been nonsensical if the company was expected to perform a logical play. Consequently, all of the disruption in both rehearsals and performances during the whole play are also justified: if *Hamlet* is illogical, why not make the play as illogical

[66] Lee, *Shamlet: Mad-Wave* Version, pp. 154-56. The lines quoted conform to the 2000 video recording of the play, and are referenced for accuracy. In this discussion, the lines will either be quoted from the script published from 2013, or transcribed from the 2000 footage if changes between these two productions are present.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

as it is? Eventually, *Hamlet*'s textual authority can be disrespected because it is questionable, therefore unreliable; since the textual authority is disregarded, the title itself is insignificant as well.

On the other, Li called Fengping's decision to perform a Shakespearean play contradictory because he could not, at this moment, find any immediacy with Shakespeare anymore. In Act Four, the frustration with the rehearsals led Li Xiuguo's wife to question Li's theatrical ambition; an affair between his wife and another man aggravated Li's dissatisfaction. Before the end of this act, Li vowed that the success of *Shamlet* would serve as a revenge on his unfaithful wife.[68] But in Act Nine, when the story was close to an end, any revenge that Li might have had had not been executed; and Li would have realised by now that talks of revenge were as fruitless as his ambition to stage a successful Shakespearean tragedy with his second-rate and too-easily-distracted company. The domestic frustration - in Li's family as well as his company - was expected to be resolved by outside help from Shakespeare; yet the wishful thinking was disillusioned as Li realised the absurdity of *Hamlet*'s coming to his rescue.

Here, the idea of cultural independence through Shakespeare adaptation becomes the content of the play rather than just the form; the enacted adaptive process on stage is the representation of the audience's present. Outside of the theatre, a frustration permeates the Taiwanese society; the fervent wish to be independent of China is constantly oppressed by the reality in which the Taiwanese government has been unable to act according to the mainstream ideology. Looking for help from the US and Japan has been the most optimistic hope of the Taiwanese; yet it is absurd to wish for the world powers to provoke an economic and military entity as powerful as that of China. *Hamlet*, for the audience of *Shamlet*, transcends the text and the tragic elements represented by it. Lee has wished to know if the mathematical law 'two negatives make a positive' can work for his theatre.[69] Via *Shamlet*, he demonstrates that *Hamlet* can be relevant to the Taiwanese consciousness only through bordering on irrelevance, and the act of adaptation signifies the admitted relevance of Shakespeare as a medium for the ideological debate that cannot be realised off stage.

[68] This part only existed in the 2000 version.
[69] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Defamiliarising the Unfamiliar Text

In the previous case study, Wang's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* made use of the contemporary Chinese expressions to familiarise his audience with Shakespeare's text. But in *Shamlet*, as both Huang and Ji observe, Lee used Shakespeare as a pretext to explore the contingency of the theatre.[70] In *Hamlet*, revenge is the narrative focus; in *Shamlet*, revenge was executed on stage, and *Hamlet*'s story was used to exact vengeance stemming from quarrels off stage. However, the execution of vengeance on other members of the fictional Fengping Company was realised in the form of disrupting the rehearsals and performances. As discussed above, the comedy comes from the absurdity of relying on a foreign force to resolve domesticate issues. Since the absurdity disrupted *Hamlet,* it also threw the original meanings of the elements from *Hamlet* into disarray.

The use of fragments from *Hamlet*, Huang argues, denotes a clear intention by Lee to 'exploit the cultural capital of *Hamlet* and write a satire on Taiwanese society'.[71] As with all productions discussed in this thesis, Shakespeare's name has sufficient authority; however, his texts do not have the same authority. The general Taiwanese public are not familiar with the English texts; Lee himself based his play on Liang Shiqiu's and Zhu Shenghao's translations.[72] In Act One, the fictional Fengping Company was giving a supposedly faithful performance of *Hamlet*'s Act V Scene II, and Shamlet began by leaning on a chair in a pose that would have reminded the informed members of the audience of Sir Laurence Olivier.[73] Shamlet then spoke to Horatio:

> We defy augury. There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow.
> If it be now, 'tis not to come. If it be not to come, it will be now. If
> it be not now, yet it will come (V.ii.213-16).

[70] Huang, 'Impersonation', p. 128; Lee, *Shamlet: Premiere Version*, p. 155.
[71] Huang, 'Impersonation', p. 126.
[72] Huang, *Performing Shakespeare*, p. 137.
[73] In Act Eight, Ni Ranmin (played by the Taiwanese comedian Ni Min-Ran) asked Li Xiuguo to grant him the part of Shamlet, because 'famous actors such as Laurence Olivier had played the same role' (transcribed from the video footage). The invocation of Olivier's name would have been lost to the majority of the audience; yet the reference to the great English name also served as Lee's intention to exploit the Western cultural capital as much as he could.

The familiarity of this passage was established by repetitions in various different acts. For example, in Act Seven, Ni Ranmin (played by the Taiwanese comedian Ni Min-Ran) spoke the lines as Shamlet. However, he was supposed to be rehearsing for *Hamlet*'s Act III Scene II, and Horatio had to remind him that the lines were spoken too early. Such (mis)placements of Shakespeare's texts bear witness to Lee's declaration to pay homage to as well as to challenge Shakespeare by *Shamlet*.[74] By means of repetition, Lee familiarised his audience with Shakespeare's text. In this process, Shakespeare's textual authority was established for the Taiwanese. In the same instant, however, such authority was destroyed by the comic effect. When Ni Ranmin spoke the lines out of place and time in Act Seven, and when Li Xiuguo hurried the same lines in Act Ten as he was distracted by the chaos on stage, the lines were received with laughter in the audience. Shakespeare's textual authority was called for yet sent away in the same breath, defamiliarising the text and the audience knowledge of it. This oscillation between familiarisation and defamiliarisation of Shakespeare exemplifies the dilemma in Taiwanese cultural confidence. Shakespeare can be ridiculed because he exists outside of the Sinocentric ideology; it is unfamiliar, thus marginal and irrelevant. Yet at the same time, the Occidentalist ideology demands reverence for Shakespeare and his represented Westernness. The Taiwanese worship that which is discriminated, and demean that which is admired, providing *Shamlet* its unique dramatic tension from the context in which the production is set.

While numerous other fragments were employed in the same way as the lines quoted above, there is one line whose familiarity does not have to be established, and is ready to be defamiliarised: 'To be or not to be—that is the question' (III.i.56). One of the most quoted lines of all time in literature, this line is very recognisable to the Taiwanese. However, since the Chinese language lacks an equivalent to the verb 'be', this line is ripe for (mis)interpretation; and Lee seizes the opportunity to exploit the possibility to manipulate the well-recognised yet ambiguous line. Therefore, by examining closely how this famous line was used, the Occidentalist perception of the Taiwanese can be most clearly illustrated.

The line made its first appearance during Act Four. An ambitious actor Li Zhutian

[74] Lee, *Shamlet: Mad-Wave Version*, p. 31.

(played by Lee Tian-Zhu), took up Shamlet's role after the actor who had played the part resigned, was eager to show Li Xiuguo his talent. As *Hamlet*'s Act III Scene IV was being performed, however, Shamlet uttered the famous line after he declared that killing the King in prayers would only send him to heaven undeservedly. The line was delivered in the following fashion:

> Shamlet: To be or not to be—
> *Audience laughed*
> (*In Chinese*) to live on or to be destroyed—
> That is the question.
> *Audience laughed*
> (*In Chinese*) this is a question worthy of contemplation.[75]

Two things happened simultaneously at this moment. Firstly, the audience's laughter implied the acknowledgement of recognition of the line in English; therefore, Lee's intended exploitation of Shakespeare's textual capital was justified. Secondly, while the Chinese translation is accurate, the audience might not have detected the misplacement because the meaning was well-suited for the context - while Shakespeare's line is intended for Hamlet himself, Lee's misplacement directed the line toward Claudius. For Lee, his confidence in facing Shakespeare is evident in his textual understanding of *Hamlet*; however, as observed in Wang's *The Two Gentlemen*, such confidence was shared by the audience under the premise of unfamiliarity with Shakespeare's text. At once, the appearance of the line in English invited the audience to show recognition, yet it also drove away such recognition by the undetected misplacement.

The second appearance of the line came immediately afterwards. Ni Ranmin, who had a dispute with Li Zhutian earlier about accommodation, came forward and said, 'to be or not to be, (*in Chinese*) are you going to "be" or not to "be"?' Here, Ni played on the meaning of the pronunciation of 'be', which in Chinese means 'to avoid'. Ni's implication for the line was therefore whether Li Zhutian would 'avoid' Ni's company

[75] All quotations of the line 'to be or not to be' are transcribed from the video footage of the 2000 version.

in the same room, or 'avoid' stealing Shamlet's role. This time, the original meaning of the line was completely overthrown. All of the tragic weight of the line was transformed into a farce; an outright display of the relative insignificance of Shakespeare's textual authority in Taiwan. Also, the actor Ni Min-Ran, an elderly comedian (1946-2005) who was well-loved among the Taiwanese for his local (as opposed to Chinese and Western) style, was not expected to speak any English, let alone Shakespearean language. His delivery of the line had the effect of Taiwanese locality imposing itself on (or, as discussed in Chapter 4, being devoured by) Shakespeare, giving Shakespeare meaning the Taiwanese could empathise with, even as the meaning was already reinvented in a context radically departing from its origin.[76]

The third time the line was seen, it was projected onto the screen at the end of Act Six. Act Six had just seen a series of chaotic events of *Hamlet*'s Act V Scene II: Shamlet was stabbed by Laertes prematurely; Gertrude drank the wine before Claudius had the chance to put the poisoned pearl into the cup; and Laertes constantly forgot his lines; a serving woman tried to remind Laertes of his lines, but she forgot to bring the scripts, and committed suicide with Laertes's sword; Horatio forgot his lines and fled from the stage. After the act was finished, the light dimmed, a screen was lowered, and on it the following lines were projected:

> To Be or Not To Be
> That Is The Question
> *Therefore*
> *15 Minutes Intermission* (italics denote Chinese lines)

Though this instance can be explained, again, as to live or to die, the line was almost nonsensical. The lack of meaning conformed to the chaos that had just happened on stage, leading to the similarly irrational fourth appearance in the next act, when Ni

[76] Disrupting Shakespeare's lines has its precedence. The song *Brush up Your Shakespeare* from the Broadway musical adaptation *Kiss Me Kate* plays with the reverence for Shakespeare in a decidedly different context. The American audience of the musical would have a cultural, historical and curricular respect for Shakespeare exploited by the distorted usages of his lines in the song. For *Shamlet*'s Taiwanese audience, however, the line could signify a meaning to be disrupted only because it had already been explained in *Shamlet's* narrative. In this case, both Shakespeare and the lines are Occidentalised: essentialised and deified by Lee's adaptation, and delivered to the audience through the on-stage, instant Shakespearean lesson.

Ranmin took the role of Shamlet, and began to sing the line in the form of *goahi* (a Taiwanese *xiqu*). The nonsensical tone of the line was further strengthened by the context in which the line was spoken. Ni was rehearsing with his archenemy Li Zhutian (as Horatio). Since Ni kept a note under his sleeves, Li Zhutian took it by force and ate it. Not knowing his lines, Ni excused himself as playing a character suffering from insanity, and began to sing the line. Two layers of significance can be detected here. Firstly, Shakespeare's textual authority was rendered completely insignificant. Secondly, the force of localisation took over, making Shakespeare recognisable as a local product. By deconstructing the text and assimilating it into the local culture, Lee literally devours *Hamlet*.

When the line made its last appearance in Act Ten, it was Lee (as Li Xiuguo, playing Shamlet/Laertes/Horatio consecutively) who delivered the line; only the meaning was twisted even further. Act Ten was so chaotic that characters were being changed several times until almost every one on stage lost their grip on his/her identity. Trying to salvage the production for the last time, Li Xiuguo explained that:

> Everyone has a particular role to play in the society, but a king may be despised by his people, and the less socially advanced, such as the soldiers, may not be denied their significance. To be or not to be, that is the question (only the famous line was delivered in English).

This time, the line resonated with the identity crisis on and off stage.[77] As the characters on stage were unable to hold on to the roles assigned and reassigned to them, this loss of identity echoed the Taiwanese concern for their own national and cultural identity. In an unpublished interview, Lee explained that his challenge in adapting *Hamlet* was to 'find a productive way to articulate your true self through Shakespeare'.[78] By decentralising the most famous line in *Hamlet* from its original meaning, Lee went on to defamiliarise the one Shakespearean line familiar to his audience; he then localised and personalised the line, claiming Shakespeare as belonging to the Taiwanese collective consciousness. In the end, Hamlet's indecision was shared by the Taiwanese

[77] Quoted in Huang, 'Impersonation', pp. 129-30.
[78] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

society.

As examined by *Shamlet*, Taiwan's anxiety comes from the identity crisis posed by the political conundrum with China. Not dissimilar to situations in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other countries in the world where self-definition seems to be comparatively insignificant from the perspective of more powerful countries (e.g. the US and the UK,) that partially hold the cultural machine shared among these countries, the Taiwanese have to resort to humorous representations of the absurd; an approach also invoked in Irish comedies such as Oscar Wilde's and George Bernard Shaw's satirically humorous works.

While Taiwan's history allows the Taiwanese to be more open to the West than the Chinese are, this openness is but an Occidentalist fantasy restricted by the inability and unwillingness to advance beyond the island's borderline. For the Chinese, the powerful political and economic national machine allows them to pursue international recognition with relative ease; the formerly limited contact with the West is today remedied by an eagerness shared among the Chinese to carry Chineseness into the Western cultural narrative. However, the Taiwanese cannot and will not export the part of culture that is without the Chinese tradition. Thus, the Taiwanese independent ideology can only be debated in the safety of a domestic stage, where Lee devours Shakespeare for the modern Taiwanese audience. The director, representing those who inherit the former openness to the West, demonstrates cultural confidence both in Taiwan's local narrative and in the comprehension of Shakespeare. The audience, representing those who insist on the sufficiency of cultural essentialisation, base their cultural confidence on an imagined understanding of Shakespeare. The clash between the two created *Shamlet*, a legitimately localised adaptive mode for Shakespeare especially suitable for the contemporary Taiwanese.

Conclusion

The Necessity for Occidentalisation of Shakespeare

Sonia Massai calls Shakespeare 'a global cultural field', which 'can best be understood

as the sum of the critical and creative responses elicited by his work'.[79] In the two case studies in this chapter, Shakespeare's plays are evoked to act as a catalyst to the formation of Taiwaneseness. As a foreign playwright, Shakespeare is easily distanced from any existing ideological debate in Taiwan, therefore can be deployed for personal use of the directors; as a global brand of cultural authority, Shakespeare can be called to serve as the foundation to a new art - an art that is centred on Taiwan's current ideology and with entertainment as its major mode of presentation.

As the Taiwanese are establishing their own modern culture, they seek to define Taiwaneseness, and by using Shakespeare they could claim a cultural centrality that speaks for the current ideology of the country. The 'global modernity' that Murray J. Levith observes in the Taiwanese Shakespeare prior to the year 2000[80] has changed in these two productions. While modernity remains, 'global' has become 'local' for Wang Hong-Yuan's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and 'personal' for Lee Kuo-Hsiu's *Shamlet*. Shakespeare was first brought to the Chinese countries with globalisation, which has helped Chinese and Taiwanese directors to situate their works in the global modernity. However, when the two Chinese countries depart from each other's modern societies, their approaches to Shakespeare also vary.

For Wang, replacing a large portion of the translated poetry from Shakespeare's text is not only justifiable but also viable for his intention to introduce Shakespeare to his Taiwanese audience. In the English speaking world, if the majority of the lines are replaced by modern English, it will hardly pass as a Shakespearean play - at best a spin-off. For Lanier, 'a Shakespeare recast in the forms and practices of popular culture and thus returned to "the people"' is a 'fantasy'.[81] But in Taiwan, popular culture might be the best way to draw attention to Shakespeare. At the beginning of the script, it is stated that the adaptation is the result of work between the director and the cast. While no specification is made as to which part is whose work, the collaborative understanding of Shakespeare's text to the cultural immediacy can be representative of young Taiwanese theatregoers/practitioners. This understanding is equivalent to the

[79] Sonia Massai ed., *World-Wide Shakespeare: Local Appropriations in Film and Performance* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), p. 6.
[80] Murray J. Levith, *Shakespeare in China* (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 113.
[81] Lanier, *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture*, p. 55.

localisation of Shakespeare in Taiwan: if personalisation signifies the united voices of the majority, then Shakespeare is translated into a language that can be appreciated by the audience in a time and space much different from his.

Consequently, when Shakespeare must be translated into a local idiom to be understood, *Shamlet* exemplifies the justification of the Occidentalist interpretation of Shakespeare. By appropriating the line 'to be or not to be' and giving it new meanings to fit in the Taiwanese comprehension of both Shakespeare and the English language, Lee is compelling an Occidentalist reading of his play by asserting that such a reading is the only suitable mode of comprehension for the Taiwanese when it comes to Shakespeare. Moreover, such a mode of appreciation was put to the test when *Shamlet* was brought to China as part of the performances at the 1994 Shanghai International Shakespeare Festival. Li Ruru observes that not only did many critics refuse to review the production in 1994, but audiences also failed to understand the play at that time.[82] The 1994 production was a collaboration between the Taiwanese Lee Kuo-Hsiu and the Chinese director Liu Yun, whose patronising attitude toward the Taiwanese aspects of the play led to the eradication of anything he believed to be of no interest for the audience on 'this side' of the Taiwan Strait and to loose ends that made the play fail in 1994.[83] For *Shamlet*, the process of adaptation has to be Taiwanese, and it must also be appreciated within the Taiwanese social context. To Lee and to his contemporary Taiwanese audience, *Hamlet* can gain immediacy only by piecing the fragments of the text according to what the Taiwanese society sees as befitting its current position in the world. In this light, the Taiwanese are relying on the imagined space offered by Shakespeare the foreigner, localised and internalised via an Occidentalist perspective, to deliberate on their national status.

This position enables a linguistically contemporary yet acceptably authentic (for the Taiwanese) Shakespeare: contemporary because the linguistic elements are taken directly from the Taiwanese experience that aspires to depart from that of China, and authentic because the local reading of Shakespeare's plays derives from a sense of cultural authority the Taiwanese want rather than an educational lesson on what

[82] Li Ruru, 'Shakespeare on the Chinese Stage in the 1990s', in *Shakespeare Quarterly,* Vol. 50, No. 3 (Autumn, 1999), p. 363.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 365.

Shakespeare should have been according to the interpretation of Shakespearean scholarship. Whilst geographically restricted, appreciation for these Taiwanese adaptations of Shakespeare provides an answer to Lanier's question of 'what, then, to make of Shakespearean transpositions to cultures that have comparatively little history of Anglo colonialism?'.[84] In both Wang's and Lee's adaptations, the answer is clear: without the history of Anglo-colonialism, Occidentalised Shakespeare is an artistic and ideological result from the search for a Taiwanese identity in the twenty-first century.

[84] Lanier, *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture*, p. 239.

Conclusion

The world is a stage for Shakespeare the character. When the stage is defined geographically and historically, Shakespeare has provided a political means to all who were attracted by elements of his plays. From the representative of Englishness to post-colonial counter forces, Shakespearean adaptations form a fascinating history of various distinctive narratives. When the stage is described in terms of the medium used, Shakespeare has also offered an opportunity to be exploited as the adaptor sees fit. From an avant-garde stage production to a Hollywood blockbuster, Shakespeare has served as artistic inspiration as well as capitalist boost to profits. Shakespeare's success on the global stage is, as Dennis Kennedy suggests, best understood by the 'flexibility' rather than the 'universality' of his texts.[1] As the linguistic barrier between Shakespeare's and modern English is irrelevant in the face of a translated text, foreign adaptations of Shakespeare have found significance by selecting whatever Shakespearean aspects are of immediate relevance to the adaptors.

Just as Shakespeare the character is flexible, the stage itself is also constantly changing. When the stage is narrowed down to China, where the historical link with Shakespeare is no more than two centuries, Sino-Shakespeare is still as multi-faceted as the world's Shakespeare, because contemporary Chinese history is interwoven with ideological changes that fundamentally define the Chinese perception of the West that Shakespeare represents. This perception, termed Sino-Occidentalism in this study, has shifted according to ideological developments in China; and the contemporary development of the two Chinas, described as the Third Stage of Sino-Shakespeare in Chapter 3, compels an understanding that can accommodate the simultaneously different yet closely bound natures of the Chinese and the Taiwanese Shakespeares.

Among all the altering forms of Sino-Shakespeare, the Occidentalist perception of the English Bard has remained firmly in the background, no matter what the eventual outcome of an adaptation is. Behind Sino-Occidentalism, Sino-centricism persists. At

[1] Dennis Kennedy, 'Flexible Shakespeare', in Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, *Globe to Globe*, p. 3, cited from *Shakespeare Beyond English*, eds. Susan Bennett and Christie Carson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 8-9.

the end of the nineteenth century, the Qing Dynasty fell to Western imperialism precisely because of the Sino-centric hubris that produced stubborn resistance to opening China's door to modernisation. When this stubbornness backfired in a revolution that toppled the Qing, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen united his revolutionary forces under the banner of the *Minzu* Principle, which denotes the ethnic superiority of the Chinese over the Qing's foreign forces; at the same time, Sino-centric superiority was reinforced by the comparison of the singular Chinese ethnicity with Britain's mixed ethnic composition.

Therefore, when Shakespeare arrived in China to meet the Chinese enthusiasm for 'complete' Westernisation/modernisation, both the completeness and the idea of the West were perceived through an Occidentalist lens. The introductory chapters describe how Chinese Shakespeare began without any of his text; his reputation, or rather his representativeness as a figure of philosophy praised in the West, was more than enough for the Chinese. The next Shakespearean experience for the Chinese was still not the text, but a series of stories translated from oral readings. Not only the text, but also the English language used to summarise Shakespeare's stories was distanced from the Chinese narrative, estranging Shakespeare from the Chinese in every way. Although his texts would later arrive with the Westernisation of Chinese theatre, the crucial initial stage of Chinese Shakespeare created a mythical nature for Shakespeare that has never ceased to be.

In every stage of the development of Sino-Shakespeare, Shakespeare is treated as 'a phenomenon rather than a man and his works, and almost necessarily [an allusion] to an icon, even an idol'.[2] Shakespeare's status as an inspiration for modernity in China, however, has always been challenged by the Sino-centric view of the world. During the New Cultural Movement, Shakespeare was hailed as one of the perfect models for the Chinese to follow; the realism of Western theatre and the plain language movement dominated Chinese cultural discourse as the formation of Chinese modernity began. It is, however, not difficult to detect Occidentalism's essentialising nature: the plain language is never Shakespearean. The original texts are archaic for English speakers,

[2] Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan, 'Introduction: Why Shakespeare?' in *Shakespeare in Asia*, eds. Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan (Canbridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 3.

and the Chinese translations, following textual faithfulness, are overly formalistic for Chinese speakers. Such a view of Shakespeare was mixed with the recognition of modernity, exemplified by the Chinese love for realist theatre such as that of Ibsen. But this is the foundation of all discourses on Sino-Shakespeare: Shakespeare's cultural capital is always understood with the modern side of the West, as opposed to anything traditional, even when Shakespeare is firmly set in the tradition of Western canons – Kennedy and Yong rightly observe that 'in English *Hamlet* is a series of well-known quotations, in Chinese it is a new play'.[3] Everything non-Chinese is exotic, thus 'new', while posed against the millennia of Sino-centric history.

History does seem to be in favour of distancing Shakespeare from the Chinese. Without an Anglo-colonial history, the Chinese were given a period of time to popularise the translation and studies of Shakespeare; yet the time was short-lived, disrupted by wars. These wars were significant in two ways: on the one hand, Shakespeare in China was pushed back into the imaginary space established earlier; on the other, the Chinese were forced to rely on Sino-centricism to unite themselves against foreign invasion. But the short time during which Shakespeare and his theatre were studied did not pass in vain; neither did Sino-centricism. When the Cultural Revolution sought to topple Chinese tradition, as the New Cultural Movement had proclaimed to do, the political nature of the Revolution succeeded only in strengthening the Chinese consciousness of its own cultural identity; the official Occidentalism that Xiaomei Chen proposes was overthrown by the anti-official Occidentalism.[4] And while the latter thrived, the official agenda changed into the official Sino-centricism, not unlike the anti-Western Occidentalism discussed by Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit.[5]

Thus, the beginning of modern Sino-Shakespeare was marked by the imaginary space created for Shakespeare and the Westernness he represents. The imaginary Other has two founding principles: first, unequivocal Sino-centricism; and second, the desire to bring China into twenty-first-century international modernity. In Chapter 4, the first step to achieving Chinese contemporaneity is examined in two adaptive manners

[3] *Ibid.*
[4] Xiaomei Chen, *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
[5] Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies* (New York: Penguin, 2005).

described by Zhang Xiaoyang: the Western manner and the Chinese manner.[6] Both manners have lasting impacts on all Sino-Shakespeare productions throughout the thesis; and in the broader context of modern Sino-Shakespeare, the subject of the two manners – the Chinese *xiqu* – signifies the cultural centrality of the Chinese tradition in the Sinophone world. *Xiqu*, whether it is the Chinese *jingju* and *kunju* or the Taiwanese *goahi* and glove puppetry theatre, always occupies the traditional side of the Chinese/Taiwanese narrative.

Xiqu's defining nature for Chineseness, however, is the first and most crucial reason why the Chinese and the Taiwanese must be discussed separately. Mixing the Chinese and the Taiwanese *xiqu* would run the risk of ignoring the significance and definition of Chineseness to the Taiwanese, as if American Shakespeare were discussed within the critical category of English Shakespeare. In China, *xiqu* adaptations of Shakespeare had served mainly to revitalise the traditional theatre and to demonstrate the Chinese cultural ability to accommodate Shakespeare. Zheng Bixian and Ma Yong'an's *Aosailuo* illustrated how *xiqu* refuses to be localised. Insisting on the European title, character names and *mise-en-scène*, this adaptation of *Othello* attempted to Westernise the Chineseness; yet the physical and visual nature of the Chinese traditional theatre could not be dislocated, no matter how hard the director and actors tried to proclaim the Westernisation. Meanwhile, Lin Zuohua brought his earlier adaptation of *huaju Macbeth* to a fully localised *xiqu* adaptation; his *Blood-Stained Hands* generated a counter-effect to Ma's *Aosailuo*: since *xiqu* is in essence presenting Chinese aesthetics, such aesthetic sensitivity should be foregrounded, while Shakespeare remained behind the Chinese costumes and dramaturgical codifications.

With the Western manner, Chinese *xiqu* shows flexibility, which signifies not only the superiority of Western theatre, but also the cultural confidence of the Chinese traditional theatre; with the Chinese manner, China's cultural confidence is further enhanced by its ability to claim Shakespeare, the paragon of the Western model, as its own. The confidence was showcased in the Inaugural Shakespeare Festival in 1986, and was reaffirmed by the Shanghai International Shakespeare Festival in 1994. The Vice President of the Chinese Shakespeare Association, Zhang Junchuan, writes that the

[6] Zhang Xiaoyang, *Shakespeare in China* (London: Associated University Press, 1996).

Chinese need Shakespeare, since 'both Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had admired Shakespeare throughout their lives', and 'it is our responsibility to aid Shakespeare' in realising his humanism in China.[7] Such enthusiasm for Shakespeare was therefore conforming to the Chinese official ideology of a 'Chinese-style socialism'.

But official Occidentalism is never long-lived. While Zhang Junchuan might have been entitled, or even encouraged, to proclaim the nationalist approach to Shakespeare, Chinese directors and audiences are turning away from the political appeal of adapting Shakespeare as capitalism occupies the central position in the current Chinese national narrative. This lack of interest in Shakespeare has led to a decline in financial support for adapting Shakespeare on stage,[8] and the Chinese Shakespeare Association was closed by the government in 2002 because of a lack of funding. Such a situation has led Li to conclude that Shakespeare 'is in a fitful slumber',[9] because 'the story of Shakespeare in China is more about China than Shakespeare'.[10] The value of Shakespeare, as Shen Lin defines, seems only to 'be found when the theatre is willing to risk presenting a Shakespeare thematically in tune with contemporary Chinese reality'[11] – a reality confined within the capitalist boundary. Indeed, while the contemporary Chinese *xiqu* Shakespeare still exists, it treats Shakespeare as a provider of repertoire, a function unchanged since the late 1980s and now losing its appeal. In contrast, *huaju* Shakespeare is infused with avant-garde approaches that seek to dislocate Chineseness in search of a new global identity for China; yet such an approach fails to appeal to the Chinese audience, too: the twelve-performance run of Lin Zhaohua's 2001 adaptation of *Richard III* in China was a box office disaster.[12]

Nevertheless, the current state of contemporary Chinese Shakespeare is not a dismal picture. Li's observation of the centrality of Chineseness instead of that of Shakespeare actually prompts the Chinese to create adaptations that are more daring in terms of intercultural representation. Such daring ventures in seeking China's modern image in

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[7] Zhang Junchuan, 'We Need Shakespeare', in *Chinese Shakespearean Study: 1994 Shanghai International Shakespeare Festival Special Edition*, Vol. 5 & 6 (April 1993; September 1994), p. 4.
[8] Li Ruru, *Shashibiya* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), p. 230.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] Li Ruru, 'Millennium Shashibiya', in *Shakespeare in Asia*, p. 185.
[11] Shen Lin, 'What Use Shakespeare? China and Globalisation', in *Shakespeare in Asia*, p. 231.
[12] Lin Ke-Huan, *Theatre in Consumer Society* (Taipei: Shulin, 2007), p. 240.

modern capitalist propaganda must, once again, be understood alongside the acknowledgement of Sino-centric cultural confidence, as well as the sudden growth in China-West interactions in recent decades. From the late 1980s to the end of the 1990s, though China's Open Door Policy dictated a more open attitude toward the West, China was still relatively closed to the world compared with Taiwan. However, at the turn of the twenty-first century, with a more determined capitalist pathway than in all of Chinese socialist history, China now is eager to be regarded as a modern world power. Besides its leading economic status that fundamentally controls global economics, the Chinese government is also stressing the improvement of the image of Chinese overseas tourists in the world; an emphasis which never occurs to the Taiwanese.[13] Moreover, the number of Chinese overseas students has exploded to an unprecedented level and is still growing; between 2007 and 2012, the number of Chinese students in the UK more than doubled, topping 56,000.[14] How many of them are studying Humanities in the UK is yet to be confirmed by other demographics-based studies; however, it is not difficult to detect the swarming numbers of Chinese students in the Management and Business Departments of UK universities. Though the capitalist interest is obviously more powerful than the cultural one, the Chinese tourists and students demonstrate how the Chinese government is currently loosening its rein on Chinese civilian interaction with the West. In other words, the Chinese are finally able to carry their Sino-centricism to the West, particularly to the UK, to be face-to-face with Shakespeare.

As seen in Chapter 6, Feng Xiaogang's *The Banquet* exemplifies how the capitalist Chinese ideology can create a Shakespeare popular with the Chinese and the Western audiences. The blockbuster success of the film witnesses how the international stardom of the Chinese actress Zhang Ziyi, combined with huge capital investment in cinematic special effects, can promote Chinese aesthetics and demonstrate the financial prowess of the Chinese (by way of a cinematic medium which demands an enormous budget) to the West, while maintaining the story as Shakespearean, unmistakably detected by both Chinese and Western audiences. Wang Xiaoying's *Richard III* directly confronted Shakespeare's cultural capital on the stage of the Globe itself. While Feng's assertion

[13] 'Chinese Tourists Encouraged to Behave while Abroad', *China Daily USA*, 20th August 2013 (http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2013-08/20/content_16907039.htm), accessed on 1st September, 2013.

[14] *Education Online Report of the Trend of Overseas Studying in 2013*, (http://www.eol.cn/html/lx/baogao2013/page1.shtml), accessed on 1st September 2013.

of Chineseness is expressed in the elaborated Chinese aesthetics, Wang's original intention of following a similar path – showcasing Chinese aesthetics via elaborate costumes – was thwarted. It was a pleasant accident, as Wang's production at the Globe ultimately exemplified the global perspectives for both China and the UK: The Globe's ability to provide all necessary (though basic) Chinese props and costumes demonstrated London's theatrical history of intercultural assimilation; and the detectability of the Chineseness in Wang's production at The Globe without the ostentatious visual appeal commonly invoked in *xiqu* productions was evidence enough of the Chinese capability of showing the world an image of China that interweaves tradition and modernity.

In addition to the critical review of the 2012 *Richard III* at Shakespeare's Globe, four recorded interviews with audience members conclude the position of Shakespeare in China.[15] The interviews were conducted with a Chinese male, a Chinese female, a British male and a British female. All four of them confirmed the Chineseness in the production – the martial arts and the operatic arias. The two Chinese interviewees were both overseas students studying in London, and both showed difficulties in understanding the English of the interviewer. It is reasonable to deduce, then, that the basic linguistic barrier for the Chinese to understand Shakespeare through the original texts is so huge that the Chinese can only, and always, perceive Shakespeare through translations that almost certainly incorporate the adaptors' personal interpretation of the plays. In fact, the Chinese male expressed his relief that the production was 'a good chance to understand the British culture through our mother tongue'. Shakespeare's 'essence' was, therefore, the representation of a Britishness that has gone through so many layers of interpretations that a discussion of the authenticity is pointless – only what matters to the Chinese, the Occidentalist fantasy, is significant. Interestingly, the two British interviewees both expressed familiarity with the Chinese *xiqu*. The British male claimed that the traditional elements were what drew him to the production, and the British female stated that the Chineseness defamiliarised Shakespeare for her, so it 'can be sold to a wider audience'. In light of their experience of the Chinese traditional theatre, such comments can hardly be blamed for Orientalist essentialisation of the

[15] The recorded interviews were conducted by the Shakespeare Institute, included in Peter J. Smith's review of the production on *Blogging Shakespeare*, http://bloggingshakespeare.com/year-of-shakespeare-richard-iii#sthash.vkQoiTjo.dpuf , 1 May 2012. Accessed on 13th July 2013.

Chinese culture; what is significant in their assertions is the appeal of the Chinese traditional elements' ability to dislocate Shakespeare from his Eurocentric position. Therefore, this production of a Chinese *Richard III* confirms China's ability not only to adapt Shakespeare by its local mode of interpretation, but also to render such a local understanding appreciable by the contemporary world.

This global appeal of Chineseness is not lost on the Taiwanese. In fact, it plays a major role in Taiwanese Shakespeare and in defining the differentiation of Taiwanese from Chinese Shakespeare. Whereas Chinese Shakespeare began with a fantasy, and went through several stages of proximity with the texts before arriving at the current state of mutual benefits, Taiwanese Shakespeare has always remained a fantasy. In Taiwan's colonial history, the European influences have not survived, because these impacts were quickly replaced by conflicts with China. During the Qing Dynasty, Taiwan was defined as a headquarters for anti-China activities and was deliberately distanced from Qing narrative; during the establishment of the Republic, Taiwan was completely driven out of Chinese history by the Japanese colonisation; and during the early stage of the Republic in Taiwan, the Chinese narrative was violently imposed on the Taiwanese, turning the cultural nostalgia fostered during the Japanese colonisation into the anti-China sentiment prevalent in today's Taiwanese consciousness.

However, Sino-centricism persists in Taiwan's ideological discourses, and Shakespeare's relationship with Taiwan must be understood in the context of Taiwan's unique relationship with China. In the introductory chapters, Taiwanese Shakespeare was described as excluded from the first two stages of Sino-Shakespeare's development; its sudden importance in the third stage, proven by the shift from China to Taiwan in most studies on Sino-Shakespeare, exemplifies the comparatively straightforward development of Taiwan's history with the West. But even though Taiwan's modern relationship with the West had a more definite beginning in the late 1980s, locating Taiwanese Occidentalism is as complicated as locating Chinese Occidentalism, if not more so. Ironically, the international position of Taiwan is defined by the complex understanding of the historical separation from China, Taiwan's self-proclaimed independence as a national state, the international refusal to recognise Taiwan as a country, and the international admission of the national differences between Taiwan and China, evident in the different treatments of citizens of the two Chinas. Thus,

Shakespeare and his Westernness for the contemporary Taiwanese can only be fully understood in relation to China, with or without the Chinese elements in the adaptations.

In Chapter 5, director/actor Wu Hsing-Kuo represents the Taiwanese Mainlanders' narrative of viewing China as the motherland for the Taiwanese culture. While China was already distanced from the Taiwanese narrative when Wu began his first project to adapt Shakespeare, both Shakespeare and the Chinese *xiqu* were perceived as foreign cultural elements ready to be exploited. In *The Kingdom of Desire*, Wu invoked Shakespeare's cultural capital to internalise *jingju* for the Taiwanese audience. At that time, the Taiwanese were still unsure about their national identity; yet in 2000, the pro-independence Taiwanese consciousness was maturing, and such confidence in Taiwan's local narrative granted a much more confident take in Wu's *King Lear* – a production often discussed within the context of contemporary Chinese Shakespeare.[16] In addition to Wu's personal interpretation of Shakespeare's play, however, the initiation of the production (via encouragement from Ariane Mnouchkine) and its international reception (including participation in the 2011 Edinburgh International Festival) prove the usefulness of Chinese cultural heritage for the contemporary Taiwanese.

While Chinese Occidentalism can be defined as the simultaneous rejection (due to Sino-centric confidence) and embrace (due to the desire to showcase China's modernity) of the West, Taiwanese Sino-centricism can be defined as the simultaneous dismissal (due to China's political oppression in both the past and the present) and welcome (due to the global marketability of the Chineseness) of China. Taiwanese Occidentalism is built on Taiwanese Sino-centricism, thus is rendered different from, if not already more complicated than, the Chinese Occidentalist discourse. In Wu's *The Tempest*, for instance, its most prominent characteristics – the evocation of director Tsui Hark's international star power and the cinematic special effects – can immediately be linked to Feng's *The Banquet*: a globally marketable, Chinese-accented Shakespearean tale embellished with the appeal of the cinema. But while Chinese Shakespeare has to face the question 'Why Shakespeare?', Wu's production has to face an additional question, 'Why Chinese?' For Wu, the answer to both these questions is the same: the Chinese cultural heritage must be invoked because of Taiwan's bond with China, and because

[16] Li, 'Millennium Shashibiya', pp. 180-85.

of the global appeal of Chineseness; Shakespeare steps in for a distancing effect, creating a stage on which the Taiwanese can temporarily forget how assimilating the Chinese culture goes against the pro-independence Taiwanese consciousness.

Shakespeare's function as an ideological liberation, as discussed in Chapter 7, thus brings the thesis to its final stage. Unlike China, Taiwan has always enjoyed a laissez-faire political attitude towards the West. Before the late 1980s, the Taiwanese government relied on the US for military and economic support; after the lifting of martial law, almost all political censorship was also removed from Taiwanese society. Thus, while China saw an explosion of overseas students at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the number of Taiwanese students remains more or less the same, while the number of overseas students in the UK has actually been declining since 2006.[17] The reason for this decline could be assigned to Taiwan's receding economics, but Taiwan's interest in the West cannot be equated with China's. Though Taiwan is also eager for international visibility, this is less about creating a modern image for the world to see, but more about affirming and reaffirming Taiwan's status as a nation.

Therefore, while Chineseness is necessary for both China's domestic and international audiences and works for Taiwan in a similar way, it does not work in the same mechanism for the Taiwanese domestic audience. The possibility of the absence of Chineseness is not derived from the excusability of Sino-centricism; on the contrary, it is precisely because the Taiwanese are focusing on Sino-centric discourse that the deliberate lack of Chineseness can work for Taiwan's current local mode of theatrical appreciation: China is such an important element that Shakespeare is irrelevant but the lack of Chineseness is detectable and appreciated by the Taiwanese audience. In Wang Hong-Yuan's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the choice of a relatively unknown play highlights the significance of Shakespeare's brand name over his text, a notion observed by Kennedy and Yong. Chineseness is only remotely detectable through the interspersion of textual translation from Shakespeare; the master narrative, both the linguistic mode and the dramaturgy, is firmly set for the contemporary Taiwanese audience. Combining these two observations, the discussion on Shakespeare's current

[17] 'Statistics of Domestic Students Applying for Overseas Student Visas', 2012 The Ministry of Education (http://www.edu.tw/), accessed on 20th October, 2012.

position in Taiwan is clear: he needs to be introduced to the Taiwanese audience on stage as his play is being performed; his lines, in the translated form, are juxtaposed to the effect of evoking a recognition of something archaic, something that would be immediately related to China for the Taiwanese. Moreover, since the nature of the Taiwanese Sino-centricism is that of a counter-discourse against China's historical centrality, even the complete absence of allusion to Chineseness is acceptable. In Lee Kuo-Hsiu's *Shamlet*, no Chineseness is utilised. Also, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is so dislocated and fragmented that both Lee's confidence as an adaptor of Shakespeare and the audience's disinterest in textual, even cultural, fidelity to the Bard are powerfully presented by the immense popularity of this production. Shakespeare in contemporary Taiwan not only conforms to the model of understanding foreign Shakespeare in terms of the locality of the adapting country, but is also restricted to Taiwan's locality because of the multilayers of the Taiwanese Occidentalist perspective.

Geographically and ideologically a world away from Shakespeare's Eurocentric origin, the Occidentalism in contemporary Sino-Shakespeare is by itself a master narrative, written not as a post-colonial counter-force, but an essentialising process enabled by a narrative as powerful as Eurocentric Orientalism. When concluding her argument of Chinese Occidentalism, Xiaomei Chen warns that 'if Chinese producers of culture choose Occidentalist discourse for their own utopian ends, it ill behoves those who watch from afar to tell them condescendingly they do not know what they are doing'.[18] Alexander C. Y. Huang defines 'what they are doing' by concluding that 'the alternating absence and presence of Shakespearean and Chinese texts throughout history suggests that new readings of intercultural signs will persist, that cultural rootedness – even if articulated differently – will continue to matter'.[19] And it does, both in China and in Taiwan; and it matters to the Taiwanese in relation to China, the cultural provider that in every way affects and distances Taiwanese Shakespeare.

By juxtaposing the contemporary Chinese and Taiwanese Shakespeares, this thesis establishes a model for understanding Sino-Shakespeare. Whereas Chinese Shakespeare involves the interaction between China and Shakespeare's West,

[18] Chen, *Occidentalism*, p. 176.
[19] Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 238.

Taiwanese Shakespeare involves the Chinese complex on top of the relation between Taiwan and international politics. Both the Chinese and the Taiwanese use Shakespeare for Occidentalist 'utopian ends', while the intentions of both differ. For contemporary China, Occidentalism speaks of the worship of the discriminated West, ideologically supported by China's Sino-centric confidence. For contemporary Taiwan, Occidentalism denotes a utopian liberation, by which the Sino-centric can be centralised or marginalised according to the director's/adaptor's choice, and either way is acceptable due to the indifferent nature of Taiwanese Occidentalism. Therefore, in future studies of Sino-Shakespeare, whether it is a production from Hong Kong, Singapore, the Malaysian Chinese community, or Chinese diaspora around the world, the individual Occidentalism should be examined based on its respective relationship, not only with Shakespeare, but also with China and its own Occidentalist point of view that forms the master narrative for all Sino-Shakespeare. From China to Taiwan, Shakespeare is more than Sinicised or Occidentalised; he is written into the local narrative even without the local audience's recognition of his presence. Such is the nature of Sino-Occidentalism – a story that must be told in the two contesting voices of power: that of Shakespeare, and that of the Sinophone world.

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