

The Poetics of Difference and Displacement

Twentieth-Century Chinese-Western
Intercultural Theatre

Min Tian



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Hong Kong University Press is honoured that Xu Bing, whose art explores the complex themes of language across cultures, has written the Press's name in his Square Word Calligraphy. This signals our commitment to cross-cultural thinking and the distinctive nature of our English-language books published in China.

"At first glance, Square Word Calligraphy appears to be nothing more unusual than Chinese characters, but in fact it is a new way of rendering English words in the format of a square so they resemble Chinese characters. Chinese viewers expect to be able to read Square word Calligraphy but cannot. Western viewers, however are surprised to find they can read it. Delight erupts when meaning is unexpectedly revealed."

— Britta Erickson, *The Art of Xu Bing*

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Introduction

Intercultural theatre is one of the most prominent phenomena of twentieth-century international theatre. With the rise of European avant-garde theatre, the interest in Asian theatrical traditions has been instrumental in changing the orientation and complexion of the twentieth-century Western theatre. Antonin Artaud's experience and interpretation of the Balinese theatre and his seminal conception of "Oriental Theatre" had significant bearings not only on the formation of Artaud's own theatre aesthetics but also on the ways Western avant-garde theatre (since Artaud) has encountered and used Asian theatres. Chinese and Japanese theatres inspired Vsevolod Meyerhold's efforts to "re-theatricalize" the theatre and to redefine the course of twentieth-century theatre both in Russia and in the West. Edward Gordon Craig was keenly interested in Asian theatres in the first two decades of the twentieth century while he was waging a battle against naturalism in European theatre. Bertolt Brecht's experience of Mei Lanfang's performance helped to define and articulate his concept of the "Alienation-effect" — one of the most circulated and influential ideas in the twentieth century world theatre. Of our contemporary practitioners of intercultural theatre, Jerzy Grotowsky, Peter Brook, Ariane Mnouchkine, Eugenio Barba, Richard Schechner, Robert Wilson, and Peter Sellars have made great contributions to the development of the twentieth-century international theatre. Grotowsky had maintained a spiritual connexion with Asian theatres and cultures throughout his theatrical career. Brook's production of the Indian epic *Mahabharata* is not only a milestone in his search for a "universal language of theatre" but has also triggered heated debate on the practice and theory of contemporary intercultural theatre. Drawing on her own intercultural experiments with various Asian theatrical forms, Mnouchkine reasserts Artaud's position that "the theatre is Oriental"

(Mnouchkine 1996, 97). In his study and experiments of Theatre Anthropology, Barba, perhaps the most ambitious and dedicated artist in contemporary intercultural theatre, has conducted field studies in a number of Asian countries and has long been engaged in direct experimental collaboration with artists from Bali, China, India, and Japan, leading to his vision of a "Eurasian Theatre." The postmodern intercultural experiments by Wilson and Sellars have proven highly innovative and controversial and have opened up new vistas for the development of intercultural theatre in our postmodern age.

In Asia, at the turn of the twentieth century, the necessity of social and economical changes brought intellectuals and theatre artists in Japan and China to Western realist theatre. The introduction and practice of realism fundamentally transformed the composition of Asian theatrical scenes in the first half of the twentieth century. In recent decades, under the impact of Western avant-garde theatre — represented by Artaud, Meyerhold, Brecht, and others — Asian theatres have been undergoing even more profound changes with revived interest in Asian traditional theatrical forms as well as interest in Western avant-garde theatre.

With the flourish and fruition of twentieth-century intercultural theatre, critics, theorists as well as practitioners have advanced theories and models explicating the making and working of this international phenomenon. These theories and models provide critical insights, sophisticated analyses as well as utopian visions. However, because of their cultural and geographical location and placement, they are often culturally and geographically centralized or re-centralized positions in spite of their universalist presumptions that often ignore or downplay the social, historical, cultural, political, and ideological factors of twentieth-century intercultural theatre.

In contrast, this study of the twentieth-century Chinese-Western intercultural theatre views intercultural theatre as a process of displacement and re-placement of culturally specified and differentiated theatrical forces, rejecting any universalist and essentialist presumptions. But prior to presenting and positioning my arguments, it is necessary to place some of the current leading theories and models in a critical perspective.

Erika Fischer-Lichte is among the first critics who have attempted to assess contemporary intercultural theatre with a theoretical and critical awareness. She notes that in intercultural theatre like Brook's "cosmopolitan theatre," theatrical interculturalism "is not concerned with specific cultural identities, but is aiming towards the 'universal,' the whole human homogeneity beyond the differences determined by one's own culture." She is fully aware that this desire for universality could be "an opportune revival of cultural imperialism and cultural exploitation" and that "the intermelting of all differences is legitimized by a 'universally valid' centralized culture, which is actually defined and dominated by Western culture." But she does not investigate this aspect of intercultural theatre, even though "a political aspect concerning the actual power relationships between cultures which should not be

overlooked." Instead, she defines "the aesthetic function of interculturalism" in contemporary theatre as "the revitalization of traditional theatre forms and in general as the re-creation of theatre" (Fischer-Lichte 1990, 280), a process of "productive reception" (Fischer-Lichte 1990, 284; Fischer-Lichte's emphasis) which "allows any elements of any number of foreign cultures to undergo cultural transformation through the process of production, thereby making the own theatre and the own culture productive again" (Fischer-Lichte 1990, 287).

What seems to me most problematic in Fischer-Lichte's view is that she does not question the assumption of "a universal language of theatre" (Fischer-Lichte 1996, 37-38) in contemporary intercultural theatre and that she looks at the aesthetic function of intercultural theatre only as a revitalizing and productive process and ignores its destructive effects on different theatrical traditions, which inevitably erode or redefine their cultural and aesthetic identities, therefore simplifying the inherent contradiction and complexity of intercultural theatre as a result of its displacement of different theatrical forces. In Brook's *Mababbarata* and Mnouchkine's *L'Indiade*, Indian culture and theatre are displaced, transformed, and re-placed in accord with the domestic needs of Brook's and Mnouchkine's experiments and reinventions of their theatrical identities. In adaptations of Shakespeare in traditional Chinese (or other Asian) theatrical forms, while certain aspects of both Shakespeare (in terms of theatrical and acting stylization) and the Chinese theatre (in terms of in-depth characterization and philosophical content) are supposed to be enriched or revitalized (by way of displacement), other aspects (for example, the integrity of both Shakespeare's text and Chinese acting) are subject to displacement and deconstruction. Fischer-Lichte believes in the role of contemporary intercultural theatre in "the creation of a world culture in which different cultures not only take part, but also respect the unique characteristics of each culture and allow each culture its authority" (Fischer-Lichte 1996, 38). But the realities of contemporary intercultural theatre and the debates it has generated are rather mixed and complicated and in effect necessitate a critical and self-reflexive approach on the part of contemporary practitioners and theorists of intercultural theatre.

Patrice Pavis is well aware of the role of ethnocentrism in the practice and theory of intercultural theatre. Like Fischer-Lichte, Pavis cherishes a utopian vision of intercultural theatre, arguing that "[t]he fact that other cultures have gradually permeated our own leads (or should lead) us to abandon or relativize any dominant western (or Eurocentric) universalizing view" (Pavis 1992, 5-6). But his theory does not transcend entirely the limits of its Eurocentric placement because it is of and for the Western theatre's interculturalization of foreign cultures, as Pavis' statement attests: "We will be studying only situations of exchange in one direction from a source culture, a culture foreign to us (westerners), to a target culture, western culture, in which the artists work and within which, the target audience is situated" (Pavis 1992, 7). Such a discourse tends to valorize the target (Western) culture's

appropriation of its source cultures because it fails to look at intercultural theatre necessarily as an *inter-* or *mutual-*negotiation and displacement of different theatrical and cultural forces.

Although Pavis senses that the current definitions of culture "tend to isolate it from its sociohistorical context" and their need to be completed by "a sociological approach, better grounded in history and ideological context," and although he emphasizes the "sociological premises" of his theory of "the hourglass" (Pavis 1992, 12), Pavis nevertheless sticks to his semiotic approach and does not consider fully its social and political aspects. Instead, he chooses to "put those contradictions in brackets for a moment" (Pavis 1992, 212). Thus, methodologically, Pavis' proposal of "a materialist theory of intercultural appropriation" (Pavis 1992, vi) is in its application far short of fulfilling its premises. Pavis writes: "We must avoid two exaggerations: that of a mechanical and unreconstructed Marxism that neglects the importance of cultural phenomena and their relative autonomy, and that of a culturalism that turns the economic and ideological infrastructure into a form of unconscious discursive superstructure" (Pavis 1992, 183). Pavis' caution against methodological exaggerations is well justified, but his approach more often than not runs against the premises of materialism.

To some extent, Pavis is self-conscious and self-reflexive of the pitfalls of contemporary intercultural theatre (Pavis 1992, 211–12). He is keenly aware of the political and economic roles in contemporary intercultural theatre. While endorsing Richard Schechner's conception of "the culture of choice," Pavis cautions that "[a]t the same time external contemporary reality is somewhat less radiant and optimistic; economic and political conditions probably play a rather more devious and destructive role than Schechner suggests" (Pavis 1996, 41). This reflexive voice, however, never rings through the narrative of Pavis' theory and is constantly stifled by his vocal approval of contemporary Western intercultural theatre's desire for "universality." With regard to Wilson's use of "Japanese traces" in his postmodern experiments, Pavis argues that "[t]he values of these traces is not on the level of 'proof' or 'authenticity,' for they are constructed from the spirit of Japanese culture rather than its detailed reality" (Pavis 1996, 105). While Pavis' first assertion is true, questions should be raised concerning his second assertion: How can we conceive "the spirit of Japanese culture" without attending to "its detailed reality"? The fact is that those traces, as displaced from the specific context of Japanese theatre and culture, are no longer, and cannot be, in the spirit of Japanese culture; they are displaced and replaced or re-constructed in conformity with Wilson's own aesthetic. Affirming Wilson's transcultural universal approach, Pavis nevertheless acknowledges that "it does continue the Western tradition of the director as *author*" (Pavis 1996, 106). *The Intercultural Performance Reader* framed by Pavis' short introductions to the included articles is as a whole fundamentally affirmative of the theory and practice of Western intercultural theatre. Dissenting voices of "another point of view" are negated by the

structure of the book that first presents "the Western point of view" of intercultural performance and that concludes the debate by reaffirming the views of Barba and Grotowsky.

In response to modern and contemporary Western theatre's interculturalization of Indian theatrical and cultural traditions, Rustom Bharucha has provided the first major critique of Western intercultural theatre as represented by noted theatre practitioners and theorists such as Artaud, Craig, Grotowsky, Barba, Mnouchkine, Brook, and Schechner (Bharucha 1993; 1996). First and foremost, Bharucha questions the ahistorical and universal assumptions of contemporary intercultural theatre and its ahistorical approach to Asian, primarily Indian, theatre and cultural traditions. He accuses contemporary Western interculturalists of imperialist and neo-colonialist appropriations of Indian theatre and cultural resources. He proposes an "intracultural" approach as an alternative to intercultural theatre, which takes into full account the social, historical, and cultural contexts and immediacies of India's multiculturalism. Bharucha's project of intracultural theatre as a reaction and resistance to what he considers the neo-colonialist practice of Western intercultural theatre certainly has its own legitimacy and it may well apply to intracultural theatre in other countries of the Third World with multiple indigenous theatrical traditions. But with the inevitable advance of globalization, intercultural theatre will continue to have an inevitable and even greater impact on the survival and development of indigenous theatres and intracultural theatres in countries of the Third World.

While arguing for intracultural theatre as a counter-discourse, Bharucha seems to believe that the pitfalls of interculturalism can be avoided and its logic reversed so long as interculturalists have sufficient respect for the Other in its social, cultural, and historical context and assume their ethical responsibilities. It seems to me that Bharucha's desire for "a genuine exchange" and a fair negotiation (Bharucha 1996, 208), effectuated by the moral and ethical accountabilities and sensitivities of interculturalists, is ironically at odds with the premises of his critique of Euro-American intercultural theatre, which stress the importance of social, political, and economic determinants. My argument is that, given the significant and sometimes decisive role of social, political, and economical factors, it is the *differences* in cultural, social, ideological, political, economical, and ethnic dimensions that serve as a common denominator determining the mechanism of intercultural exchange. So long as such differences exist, we cannot avoid the Other being perceived differently, displaced, and re-placed from different, centralized, and re-centralized perspectives.

Like Bharucha, John Russell Brown emphasizes the determining significance of social, economical, and historical factors in the practice of contemporary intercultural theatre. In the West, Brown, who has done field studies in India and South Asian countries, is perhaps the most outspoken critic of Western intercultural theatre as represented by Brook and Mnouchkine. Brown likens Western intercultural practitioners to "raiders across a frontier": "They bring back strange clothes as their

loot and try to wear them as if to the manner born" (Brown 1998, 9). According to him, "Exchange cannot work equitably in two directions between two very different societies and theatres: West and East, modern and ancient, economically advantaged and disadvantaged" (Brown 1998, 12). The practice of intercultural theatre — exchange, borrowing, trade, or looting — inevitably "diminishes any theatre because it transgresses its inherited reliance on the society from which the drama takes its life and for which it was intended to be performed." Therefore, in spite of the practitioners' intention, "intercultural theatrical exchange is, in fact, a form of pillage, and the result is fancy-dress pretence or, at best, the creation of a small zoo in which no creature has its full life" (Brown 1998, 14). Brown's argument may appear extreme to intercultural universalists, it nevertheless forcefully underscores the destructive effects of intercultural theatre as a displacement (exchange or pillage) of traditions and cultures. But Brown admits of no real creative or constructive influence of intercultural theatre on the development of Western and Eastern theatres.

As an alternative, this study approaches the twentieth-century Chinese-Western intercultural theatre both from an aesthetic-artistic perspective and from a cultural-social-historical-political perspective. It attempts to examine both the Western theatre's interculturalisation of the Chinese theatre and the Chinese theatre's interculturalisation of the Western theatre and approaches intercultural theatre as a phenomenon, both constructive and deconstructive. Homi K. Bhabha has proposed to focus on the "inter," the "inbetween," the "borderline," or the "Third Space" in the study of cultural engagement and exchange. He argues that it is in the "inter" or the "inbetween" space — "the overlap and displacement of domains of difference" — that the difference, value, and meaning of culture are articulated and negotiated (Bhabha 2004, 2, 56). I believe that Bhabha's argument has a significant relevance to the study of intercultural theatre in general and, in particular, to my study of the twentieth-century Chinese-Western intercultural theatre, which focuses on the "inter" space of engagement, exchange, and displacement of the Chinese and Western theatres. I hope to demonstrate that what is central to the making of the twentieth-century Chinese-Western intercultural theatre is what I call the poetics of difference and displacement, which underlies its most significant aspects.

Aesthetic and Artistic Displacement

In intercultural theatre, aesthetic and artistic interculturalisation of the Other necessitates displacement in the sense that the Other is inevitably understood, interpreted, and placed in accordance with the aesthetic and artistic imperatives of the Self pertaining to its own tradition and its placement in the present, irrespective of the extent of the Self's true knowledge of its Other. In her explanation of the reason that the audience in West Germany enjoyed the Peking Opera although they were innocent of

understanding it, Fischer-Lichte notes that in the German audience's reception, "the code underlying the Peking Opera is simply displaced by the code brought to the performance by the members of the audience" (Fischer-Lichte 1985, 87). In this case, it is the code of the circus and the code of Western postmodern theatre that displaced the codes of the Peking Opera. According to her, the audiences understand the non-verbal acrobatic body movements and gestures of the actor in terms of the familiar non-verbal code of the circus and the familiar code of anti-illusionistic and anti-psychological postmodern theatre, dissociating them from the special dramatic character the actor is impersonating both physically and psychologically. She concludes that

The aesthetic pleasure the Peking Opera gives the spectators who come to them with premises drawn from our Western culture can be said to have arisen from a deep misunderstanding. A total lack of knowledge of its underlying theatrical code makes possible the application of codes which are found in our culture. (Fischer-Lichte 1985, 90)

But in my view, even if the spectators bring true knowledge and understanding of the code to their experience, displacement cannot be avoided. First of all, intercultural knowledge and understanding inevitably involve displacement and re-placement of the Other by the Self. Western audiences understand traditional Chinese theatre in terms of their own theatrical and cultural tradition and contemporary reality, the latter determining the understanding (displacement as re-placement) of not only the Other but their own tradition. In most cases, Western audiences understand and appreciate traditional Chinese theatre in terms of the Greek theatre, the Elizabethan theatre, the *commedia dell'arte*, and modern and contemporary anti-realist avant-garde theatre; traditional Chinese theatre is displaced and re-placed in the Western imagination of those lost non-illusionist traditions and in the anti-realist discourse of modern and contemporary avant-garde theatre. In this process of displacement and re-placement, the imaginative and anti-realist reconstruct of both the Chinese theatre and those Western traditions is subject to the conditions and needs of modern and contemporary avant-garde theatre.

In the twentieth-century Chinese-Western intercultural theatre, displacement is central to its aesthetic and artistic construction. In its interculturalisation of traditional Chinese theatre, Western avant-garde theatre displaced the Chinese theatre in conformity with its own aesthetic and artistic needs of re-positioning itself against naturalism. Mei Lanfang's art did not influence contemporary Western theatre (especially the avant-garde) through shared affinities and principles but rather through a mechanism of displacements of the different (the art of Mei Lanfang and the Chinese theatre) in terms of the familiar (the avant-garde). Such seminal concepts as Brecht's "Alienation-effect," Meyerhold's "Conventional Theatre," and Barba's "pre-expressivity" have less to do with the essence of Mei's art (and the Chinese

theatre) than with their displacements of it in the context of the twentieth-century Western theatre.

In Brecht's and Meyerhold's interpretations of traditional Chinese theatre, stylization and other conventions of traditional Chinese theatre were displaced out of their aesthetic and artistic context and were re-placed as anti-illusionistic techniques and devices in Brecht's and Meyerhold's aesthetic and artistic constructs, notably Brecht's theory of the "Alienation-effect" and Meyerhold's idea of the "Conventional Theatre," which are fundamentally European. The property man in *The Yellow Jacket* and its different stage versions by European and American avant-garde directors was displaced and re-placed as an over-accentuated anti-illusionistic theatrical device. In Barba's idea of "Eurasian Theatre" or in his construct of the idea of "pre-expressivity," ideas, principles and techniques of various Asian theatres were eclectically displaced out of their aesthetic and artistic contexts and were re-placed in conformity with Barba's anthropological vision of the universal and the essential underlying different theatrical forces. Theatrical interculturalisation is not an organic fusion or integration, but rather a clash and displacement, of different theatrical forces.

Likewise, modern and contemporary Chinese theatre displaced Western realism and avant-garde in the service of its aesthetic and artistic necessities of self-invention and self-re-placement in its negotiation with its own tradition. The New Youth of the May Fourth Movement displaced Western realism as represented by Ibsen in their displacement of China's indigenous theatre; in its re-placement of the indigenous theatre, the National Theatre Movement displaced Western avant-garde theatre. In contemporary Chinese theatre, the displacements of Stanislavsky, Brecht, and Meyerhold involve a re-placement of the Self (traditional Chinese theatre). Such displacements are not a one-way affair starting from the Other (as the source) to the Self (as the target) or from the Self (as the source) to the Other (as the target), but are often an inter-displacement of both the Other and the Self, as exemplified in those adaptations of Shakespeare and Greek tragedy in traditional Chinese and other Asian theatrical forms.

Cultural and Ideological Displacement

Intercultural theatre is not a purely aesthetic and artistic meeting of different theatrical forces; nor is it a purely professional exchange between individual artists, as Barba would like it to be. Theatre is essentially a social, communal, and cultural event. Any theatre aesthetic, whether it concerns a time-honoured tradition or is representative of the vision of an individual artist, is influenced and conditioned by the cultural givens of a society. Even representations of the bodies of individual artists, physical or biological, are informed and imprinted by the specificities of the cultural and

artistic tradition they are subject to in daily life and in the process of artistic training. Michael Foucault's studies have revealed the inevitable inter-relationship of knowledge, truth, and power (Foucault 1977; 1979). Foucault's view can be equally applied to intercultural theatre that necessitates knowledge and translation of different theatrical and cultural traditions. The making and function of such cross-cultural knowledge and translation are conditioned by power and ideology discourses. In intercultural theatre, the exchange between individual artists with different cultural heritages is inescapably an exchange of different cultural givens in terms of performing conventions, bodily techniques, energy modelling, and the like. Central to this exchange, whether it is an act of appropriation or a form of "barter" (Barba), is displacement, or more precisely, inter-displacement of different culturally infected conventions and methods. Displacements of the Other by the Self are guided by the Self's desires and needs originated within the Self's own specific cultural as well as theatrical context. In twentieth-century intercultural theatre, the displacement of the Other by the Self was inextricably tied up with certain ideological placements. Brecht's and Meyerhold's displacements of traditional Chinese theatre were affected by their ideological inclinations. Sellars's postmodern experiments with the Chinese theatre were loaded with political and ideological meanings. In a more pronounced manner, Chinese displacements of Shakespeare, Ibsen, Stanislavsky, Brecht, and Meyerhold were interwoven with the ebbs and flows of dominant and emerging Chinese ideologies.

Nationalistic and Ethnocentric Displacement

The displacement of the Other by the Self in the history of intercultural theatre of the last two centuries was conditioned by the Self's nationalistic and ethnocentric imperatives. This is especially true with the Eurocentric or European Orientalist approach to the Chinese theatre during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With the rise of the European avant-garde theatre at the turn of the twentieth century, the Eurocentric or Orientalist approach appeared to have been reversed. Yet intercultural theatre has since not been freed from its predicaments although efforts have been made to transcend and overcome the limitations of nationalism and ethnocentrism on the part of contemporary interculturalists who tend to proclaim themselves universalists. In his critique of Gottfried Leibniz's project for a universal script of language, which uses Chinese as a model, Jacques Derrida argues that "[n]ot only does this model remain a domestic representation, but also, it is praised for the purpose of designating a lack and to define the necessary correction." He further notes that the Leibnizian "hyperbolic admiration" is a form taken by "the occupation" from which our century is not yet free: "each time ethnocentrism is precipitately and ostentatiously reversed, some effort silently hides behind all the

spectacular effects to consolidate an inside and to draw from it some domestic benefit" (Derrida 1967, 79–80). Seen from Derrida's perspective, Brecht's and Barba's admiration of Mei Lanfang and the Chinese theatre obeyed an "inside" and "domestic" necessity of defining what needs to be corrected, rejuvenated, or reinvented in the Self. This reversed Eurocentric displacement of the Chinese theatre re-centralized the Self's position vis-à-vis the Other, as it has significantly affected the Chinese view of their own theatre tradition. In our postmodern era, Sellars's multicultural eclecticism has been highly political, ideological, and most importantly, distinctly American-centred.

The Chinese nationalistic and ethnocentric displacement of Western theatre also has had seemingly different manifestations. The New Youth's radical anti-traditional displacement of Western realism in opposition to traditional Chinese theatre had unmistakable nationalist social and political underpinnings. The National Theatre Movement's aesthetic displacement of Western avant-garde theatre to traditional Chinese theatre was not innocent of nationalism. Contemporary Chinese theatre's displacement of Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, and Brecht has been interwoven with the Chinese social, political, and ideological movements.

Orientalist and Neo-Orientalist Displacement

In his exposition of Orientalism and its ways in which the West used the Oriental Other for its own purpose, Edward Said demonstrates that "the imaginative examination of things Oriental" was based more or less exclusively upon a centralized "sovereign Western consciousness" which defined things Oriental according to "a detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections" (Said 1978, 8). Drawing on Foucault's theory on knowledge and power relations and Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony, Said further reveals how European culture treated and constructed the Orient politically, sociologically, ideologically, and imaginatively. He asserts that Orientalism is "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient"; because of Orientalism, "the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action" (Said 1978, 3). In the Orientalist readings and interpretations of Asian theatres during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Asian theatres were constructed as the different, exotic Other in order to foreground the Eurocentric position prescribing the superiority of the classical tradition of European theatre. This Eurocentric position is characteristic of the West's first encounters with the Chinese theatre. In the twentieth-century intercultural theatre, although direct theatrical contacts and exchanges between the East and the West have taken place and have increased with unprecedented scope and speed, the main drive of the Orientalist discourse has remained potent and, at the same time, has

assumed a seemingly reversed trajectory that re-defines or re-centralizes its position in accordance with its domestic needs and necessities. I define this reversed Orientalism as the neo-Orientalism in the twentieth-century intercultural theatre. In this neo-Orientalist discourse, the Western avant-garde anti-realist and anti-illusionist theatre (Artaud, Craig, Meyerhold, Brecht) and our contemporary universalist theatre (Grotowsky, Brook, Mnouchkine, Barba) perceive Asian theatres as their ally in their struggles against European realism and in their searches for a universal language of theatre; Asian theatres are praised, displaced, reconstructed, and appropriated as materials in the service of the desires, investments, and projections of their competing and ever-renewing experiments and theories. Furthermore, this discourse of neo-Orientalism invents its currency and authority by gaining consent and endorsement from the Orient and by what I call the neo-Orientalization of the "Oriental theatre" undertaken by the Orient through self-Orientalization. As I will demonstrate later, the Chinese anti-realist and anti-illusionist interpretation and practice of China's traditional theatre affected by Brecht's and Meyerhold's interpretations is a primary example of this self-Orientalization.

The Mechanism of Displacement

Intercultural theatre as a site of displacement is contested by different theatrical forces, both constructive and deconstructive, with due consequences as these forces are subject to displacement and inter-displacement. Displacement that occurs at all levels of intercultural theatre obeys a multifaceted operational mechanism that manifests itself in the process of interculturalization of different theatrical and cultural forces. The following are the primary modes that characterize the mechanism of displacement in the twentieth-century intercultural theatre:

Displacement by Interpretation Interpretation, especially intercultural or cross-cultural interpretation, is perhaps the most common and basic mode of displacement. Intercultural interpretation of the Other in the theatre is always conditioned by the Self's received traditions (historical, social, ideological, political, cultural as well as theatrical) and theoretical and practical desires and needs. By virtue of the Self's subjective and imaginative cross-cultural interpretation of the Other in accordance with the Self's domestic desires and needs, the Other is displaced in the renewal or reinvention of the Self and in the placement or re-placement of the Self versus its Other. The effect of intercultural (mis)interpretation is thereby both creative in the sense that it serves the renewal or reinvention of the Self, and destructive in the sense that it tends to corrupt and erode the identity and integrity of the Other.

Displacement by Appropriation Appropriation, especially intercultural or cross-cultural appropriation, is the most simplistic act of displacement. In intercultural theatre, certain theatrical elements, techniques or ideas from the Other are taken

out of their historical, cultural, and theatrical contexts, appropriated and assimilated into the theatrical practice or theoretical discourse of the Self. This form of displacement takes no account of the similarities or differences between the Other and the Self and is totally conditioned and dictated by the practical or theoretical needs of the Self.

Displacement by Parody Linda Hutcheon has defined parody as "a form of inter-art discourse" (Hutcheon 2000, 2), a form of imitation or repetition with ironic inversion and critical distance and difference (Hutcheon 2000, 6–7). Simon Dentith characterizes parody as "any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice" (Dentith 2000, 9). Intercultural parody in the theatre is characterized by textual (dramatic), theatrical, and performance imitation by one culturally defined theatre of another theatre. Textual (dramatic) parody consists of dramaturgical, stylistic, and character imitation; theatrical parody features imitation of theatrical and scenic styles and components; and performance parody is defined by imitation of acting styles and conventions. Parody (pre-modern, modern, or postmodern), in particular, intercultural parody that involves parodic imitation of one culture by another culture, is conditioned by, and charged with, historical, cultural, ideological, and political determinants. In the twentieth-century Chinese-Western intercultural theatre, displacement by parody manifests itself particularly in the parodistic use of the Chinese theatre in the European and American productions of *The Yellow Jacket* and *The Chalk Circle* and Peter Sellars's productions of *Nixon in China* and *Peony Pavilion*. Sellars's productions exemplify what Hutcheon has characterized postmodern parody as "both deconstructively critical and constructively creative" (Hutcheon 2002, 94).

Displacement by Translation Walter Benjamin challenges the traditional theory of translation that attaches paramount importance to fidelity and likeness to the original. Benjamin states: "a translation issues from the original — not so much from its life as from its afterlife" (Benjamin 1968, 71). Benjamin treats translation from a literary and linguistic perspective. But intercultural translation must take into account its cultural, ideological, political, and ethnical aspects that, to a greater extent, determine the identity and afterlife of the original. In addition, intercultural translation for the stage involves not only textual and dramaturgical translation, but more importantly theatrical and performance translation through theatrical means and the performer's body (Pavis 1989, 25–44; 1992, 136–59). Therefore, intercultural translation can be considered a displacement of the original, paradoxically both creative and destructive. Brook insists that "*The Mahabharata* does not attempt to explain the secret of dharma, but lets it become a living presence . . . Here lies the responsibility of the theatre: what a book cannot convey, what no philosopher can truly explain, can be brought into our understanding by the theatre. Translating the untranslatable is one of its roles" (Brook 1987, 164). Pavis argues that Brook's *Mahabharata* is an example of intercultural translation turning into "intergestural

translation": "Gesture for Brook is not the pivot of ideology, but the terrain of a universal encounter among actors of different cultures" — "this gestural universality" (Pavis 1989, 39–40). However, I would argue that the afterlife brought to the Indian epic by Brook's theatrical and cinematic translation as displacement is no longer inherent to the Indian epic and is infected by Brook's Western humanistic view of culture, ideology, politics as well as theatre, which is by no means universal. This kind of intercultural translation as displacement also applies to the twentieth-century Chinese–Western intercultural theatre as an inter-translation of Chinese and Western theatres and cultures.

This study is divided into two parts, the first dealing with the Western theatre's interculturation of traditional Chinese theatre, and the second with the Chinese theatre's interculturation of the Western theatre.

The first part is further divided into six chapters. Chapter 1, "From the Neo-Classical to the Early Avant-Garde: Europe's First Encounters with Traditional Chinese Theatre," is a critical examination of the ostensible Eurocentric displacement of traditional Chinese theatre in the West. It maps the West's first indirect contacts with the Chinese theatre before Mei Lanfang's visits to the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1930s and argues that the Western displacement of traditional Chinese theatre prior to the arrival of the Western avant-garde theatre is overtly Eurocentric and ethnocentric. With the rise of the Western avant-garde theatre, the Eurocentric and ethnocentric displacement of the Chinese theatre appeared reversed. But it seems to me that this reversal did not primarily stem from a direct and improved knowledge of the Chinese theatre but from a desire and necessity for the re-placement and innovation of Western theatre traditions.

Chapter 2, "The Effect of Displacement: Brecht's Concept of 'Alienation Effect' and Traditional Chinese Theatre," provides a critical analysis of Brecht's interpretation and use of traditional Chinese theatre as exemplified in his concept of the "Alienation Effect." In Brecht's theoretical construct of the concept, traditional Chinese theatre is clearly displaced and used as a means to valorize and legitimize Brecht's domestic theoretical desires and projections.

Chapter 3, "Re-Theatricalizing the Theatre of the Grotesque: Meyerhold's 'Theatre of Convention' and Traditional Chinese Theatre," investigates and offers a different perspective on Meyerhold's and Eisenstein's use of Mei Lanfang and traditional Chinese theatre, focusing on Meyerhold's idea of the "Theatre of Convention." It concludes that, owing to different theatrical, cultural, historical, and political contexts, the essence of Mei's art and the Chinese theatre differs from that of Meyerhold's, their seeming similarities in techniques notwithstanding. Meyerhold, like Brecht, used traditional Chinese theatre (and Mei's art) rather as a means of legitimizing his own theoretical needs, of meeting his own practical and political contingencies.

Chapter 4, "The Danger of Knowing All About the East': Gordon Craig, Mei Lanfang and the Chinese Theatre," drawing on previously unpublished archive materials and other rarely used sources, documents Gordon Craig's knowledge of Mei Lanfang and the Chinese theatre before 1935 and his contacts with the Chinese actor during his visit to Russia, and investigates his interest in the Chinese theatre in the context of his theoretical construction of the art of the theatre and his overall interest in the traditions of Asian theatre.

Chapter 5, "Traditions, Differences, and Displacements: The Theoretical Construct of Eugenio Barba's 'Eurasian Theatre,'" analyses Barba's ideas of intercultural theatre as related to the Chinese and other Asian theatre traditions, demonstrating that the construct of Barba's concept of "Eurasian Theatre" is a homogeneous displacement of various heterogeneous traditions, including Chinese and other Asian traditions.

Chapter 6, "Intercultural Theatre at the New *Fin de Siècle*: Peter Sellars's Postmodern Approach to Traditional Chinese Theatre," focuses on Sellars's productions of *Nixon in China* and *Peony Pavilion* and offers a critical analysis of Sellars's politically and ideologically charged postmodern approach to the Chinese theatre.

The first chapter (Chapter 7 overall) of Part Two, "In Search of the Modern: Intercultural Transformation of Modern Chinese Theatre," deals with the Chinese intercultural displacement of Western realism and avant-garde in the first decades of the twentieth century. The dynamics of modern Chinese theatre resided precisely in the constant negotiation and displacement of different and competing theatrical forces. Such negotiations and displacements ensured that no grand synthesis of different theatrical forces was possible, nor was the essentialist or the universalist assumption of the legitimacy and superiority of the one over the other.

Chapter 8, "Wiping Real Tears with Water-Sleeves: The Displacement of Stanislavsky to Traditional Chinese Theatre," is concerned with the Chinese displacement of Stanislavsky to their traditional theatre, which attests to the lasting and indelible imprints of Stanislavsky's theory on the Chinese theatre, including traditional Chinese theatre.

Chapter 9, "From 'Avant-Garde' to 'Tradition': Contemporary Chinese Theatre in Search of Identity," demonstrates the ways Western avant-garde theatre is displaced in contemporary Chinese theatre in its formation of an anti-realist and anti-illusionist trend as a reaction to the predominance of Ibsen and Stanislavsky and to the changing social conditions in contemporary China, and investigates the Chinese search for a true national and indigenous identity for their contemporary theatre.

Chapter 10, "When Cathay Meets Greek: The Adaptation and Staging of Greek Tragedy in Traditional Chinese Theatrical Forms," and Chapter 11, "Sinicizing the Bard: The Adaptation and Staging of Shakespeare in Traditional Chinese Theatrical Forms," are case studies of adaptation and staging of Greek tragedy and Shakespeare

in traditional Chinese theatrical forms, demonstrating how Greek tragedies, Shakespeare, and the Chinese theatre are displaced and inter-displaced in these intercultural practices.

Conclusion:

The Matrix and Dynamics of Intercultural Displacement

In his study of contemporary intercultural theatre, Patrice Pavis has acknowledged the difficulty of formulating a theory of interculturalism: "There is something presumptuous or at best naïve in proposing a theory of interculturalism in contemporary *mise en scène*, given the complexity of the factors at stake in all cultural exchange and the difficulty of formulating them" (Pavis 1992, 183). In my study of the twentieth-century Chinese-Western intercultural theatre, I am fully aware of the complexity of this intercultural phenomenon and the difficulty of formulating a theory that can encompass and explain every aspect of the phenomenon without risking being reductionistic or redundant. I do believe, however, that my study has shown that the model I have proposed at the beginning of this book helps to identify and explain the essential component and mechanism underlying the making of this intercultural phenomenon. Indeed, my study has demonstrated that the twentieth-century Chinese-Western intercultural theatre has been conditioned and dominated by a trajectory of displacements, inter-displacements, and re-placements of different theatrical forces.

The Western approaches to traditional Chinese theatre during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had been overtly nationalistic and Eurocentric. The Chinese theatre had been judged as the Other in accordance with European classical and contemporary paradigms, which served the purpose of self-definition and differentiation on the part of the European theatre. The rise and dominance of the twentieth-century Western avant-garde theatre with its interest in Asian theatres seemed to have marked a different and reversed approach, but the Chinese theatre was in reality displaced in accordance with the "new," anti-realist paradigms of the avant-garde that had its roots in various Western traditions. This is especially true

with Brecht's, Meyerhold's, and Barba's intercultural displacements of the Chinese theatre in their theoretical construct of the theatre of alienation, the theatre of the conventional, and the "Eurasian Theatre." These theories drawing on traditional Chinese and other Asian theatres suggest a reversal of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Eurocentrism and Orientalism, but seen from their interpretations and uses of traditional Chinese and other Asian theatres and from their claims for universality, they in fact represent a re-defined and re-centralized position — a neo-Eurocentrism and a neo-Orientalism. Like that of Artaud, Brecht, Meyerhold, or Barba, Craig's approach to Chinese and other Asian theatres is marked by his modernist admiration for the otherness of Asian traditions in contrast to European naturalist or realist tradition and for the usefulness of Asian traditions in recuperating or reinventing the laws of European theatre and in establishing a universal law for the theatre according to his European modernist imagination. Thereby, although Craig's approach seems highly ambivalent, it is ultimately Eurocentric because of his suspicion of, and his vigilance against, the imitation and assimilation of Asian traditions by European theatre. In contrast, Sellars's approach to the Chinese theatre and culture is seemingly characterized by his postmodern eclecticism and multiculturalism, but in effect, it is highly political, ideological, and distinctly American-centred.

Likewise, displacement was indeed essential to the formation and development of modern Chinese theatre. The vitality of modern Chinese theatre was based on and sustained by a mechanism of displacements, inter-displacements, and replacements of different and competing theatrical forces, such as the introduction of Western realism, the Chinese traditionalists' claim for the superiority of traditional Chinese theatre, the New Youth's over-accentuation of the Ibsenite realism and its sociological and ideological displacement of traditional Chinese theatre, the National Theatre Movement's aesthetic re-placement of traditional Chinese theatre, and the radical ideas of the left-wing theatre movement with its assumption of the sole legitimacy of a proletarian ideological realism. The dynamics of displacement as it manifested itself in modern Chinese theatre was first and foremost driven by a complex and contradictory network of cultural and ideological forces in response to the changing social realities in China at the turn of the twentieth century.

The Chinese displacement of Stanislavsky's theory had been driven by the politically, ideologically and nationalistically charged desire of the Chinese to elevate the practice and aesthetic of traditional Chinese theatre to the level of a "scientific system." However, given the potential positive effects of the application of Stanislavsky's theory on the innovation of traditional Chinese theatre, a naturalistic modernization has proved destructive of its integrity and identity. In the formation and practice of an anti-illusionist theatre as a reaction to the predominance of Ibsen and Stanislavsky, contemporary Chinese theatre has drawn on the theories and practices of Brecht, Meyerhold, Artaud, and Grotowsky. Yet, in due course,

contemporary Chinese theatre has turned to Chinese *xiqu* in search of a true national and indigenous identity for a theatre transplanted from Western realism and re-defined from the perspectives of Western avant-garde theatre.

The rationale and approaches underlying the adaptations of Shakespeare and Greek tragedy in traditional Chinese theatrical forms are in agreement with our modern and contemporary anti-realist, anti-literary, and anti-logocentric desire for a non-illusionist and stylized Shakespeare and Greek tragedy. While the Chinese adaptations necessitate the sinicization (as displacement) of Shakespeare and Greek tragedy to conform to the forms of Chinese *xiqu* and to serve the domestic needs of Chinese *xiqu* for innovation and revitalization, Shakespeare, Greek tragedy, and Chinese *xiqu* are subject to an inter-displacement in accordance with the perspectives and approaches of our modern and contemporary avant-garde theatre.

Finally, while acknowledging fully the effect of deconstruction inherent in intercultural displacement — the inherent and inevitable erosive and destructive effect on the integrity and identity of the culture displaced, I do not intend to approach intercultural displacement in merely negative (or positive) terms, but recognize it as an essential component and a transforming mechanism — the matrix and dynamics underlying the twentieth-century intercultural theatre, both constructive and deconstructive. Intercultural displacements of various Asian theatre traditions have proved instrumental in Western avant-garde theatre's self-innovation and self-redefinition. It is precisely such constant displacements and negotiations of different and competing theatrical forces that had sustained and reinforced the dynamics and diversity of modern Chinese theatre and that have contributed to the liberation and revitalization of contemporary Chinese theatre.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. For European adaptations of Prémare's rendition, see Ch'ên (1936); Appleton (1951, 81–89); Liu (1953).
2. It is ironically interesting to note that in 1990 Voltaire's *Orphan of China* was staged by Tianjin People's Art Theatre in association with Tianjin Hebei Bangzi Theatre. Lin Zhaohua, director of the production, chose to juxtapose Voltaire's play with the scenes from the Yuan play. Voltaire's play was performed in the style of *huaju* while the scenes of the Yuan play were in the style of *hebei bangzi*, one of the traditional Chinese theatrical forms. Lin's production is a contrast and confrontation between the two cultures: the Yuan play focusing on imperial loyalty, filial piety, and revenge by feudal patriarchal clans, and Voltaire's idea of humanism, reason, tolerance, and freedom. Lin's critical and subversive approach to the Yuan play, inspired by Voltaire's play, likewise underlines his 2003 *huaju* production of an adaptation of the same Yuan play.
3. See the Prologue of the play (Murphy 1759).
4. See the Epilogue of the play (Murphy 1759).
5. Notably, Johnston (1921); Buss (1922); Zucker (1925); Arlington (1966); and Zung (1937).
6. See Hazelton's and Benrimo's "Foreword" to *The Yellow Jacket* (1913).
7. See Fischer-Lichte 1995, 23, and Harbeck 1996, 238–47. For a list of the productions of this play in at least 12 languages from 1912 through 1929, see "The Record of 'The Yellow Jacket'" (Hazelton and Benrimo, 1939, 116–17).
8. See Hazelton's and Benrimo's "Foreword" to *The Yellow Jacket*.
9. For a description of the property man's active involvement in the *mise-en-scène* of Oldklovov's production, see Southard (1980, 89–92).
10. For a discussion of the reception of *The Chalk Circle* in the West, see Du (1995, 307–25).
11. When the play was staged in London in 1929, the reviewer for the London magazine, *Punch*, observed that "[w]ith a patient sweetness which no Christian saint could surpass,"

Haitang “pleads for forgiveness of her enemies” and that in Klabund’s “spoof” there were “some obviously modern references and moods, such as the up-to-date Bolshevism” of the dissolute Chang Ling, Haitang’s brother (T. 1929, 356).

12. About Anna May Wong’s performance in London, see Chan (2003, 55–63); Dean (1973, 64–68). Wong’s tour of Europe was such a sensation that she had a particular impression on Walter Benjamin. In 1928, Wong met Benjamin in Berlin. The German philosopher, dazzled by her beauty, likened her name to “the specks in a bowl of tea that unfold into blossoms replete with moon and devoid of scent” (quoted in Hodges 2004, 77), and rhapsodized about her garment: “the fabric was donned divinely/But the face was even finer” (quoted in Hodges 2004, 79).

Chapter 2

1. Bertolt Brecht, “Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting” (Brecht 1964, 91–99). A slightly different version was translated by Eric Walter White, titled “The Fourth Wall of China: An Essay on the Effect of Disillusion in the Chinese Theatre,” *Life and Letters Today* 15 (6) (Winter 1936): 116–23. Eric Bentley’s translation, “On Chinese Acting,” which is based on the same text as White’s, first appeared in *Furioso* (Fall 1949) and was reprinted in *Tulane Drama Review* 6 (1) (September 1961): 130–36.
2. *Xiqu* is a generic term used to refer to various traditional or classical Chinese theatrical forms characterized by singing and stylized acting.
3. Brecht’s description is not accurate. In fact, in Chinese *xiqu*, the general always wears four flags, regardless of the number of regiments he commands.
4. For a detailed reconstruction of Brecht’s staging of the play, see Fuegi (1987, 132–67); for a photograph illustration of the production, see Hurwicz (1964).
5. For studies in the performance of Yuan drama, see Crump (1980); Tian (2005).
6. In his essay on Chinese acting, Brecht emphasizes that “[s]o far Asiatic acting has exerted no influence” on the experiments by the modern German theatre that “led to a wholly independent development of the A-effect” (Brecht 1964, 96).
7. This “document” was published in Chinese in *Zhonghua xiqu* (Chinese Traditional Theatre) 7 (1988): 1–34, and was reprinted in *Zhongguo Mei Lanfang* (1990, 709–43).
8. I would like to thank Professor Lars Kleberg for providing me a copy of the original minutes.
9. It should be noted that the very first work ever published that carries information on the forum is an essay written by Percy Chen (Chen 1935, 394). Chen’s recollections fresh from his observation on Mei Lanfang’s performances in Moscow are consistent with what we now know about Meyerhold’s and Eisenstein’s comments on Mei Lanfang’s performances from other sources. Chen’s essay does not indicate the presence of Brecht or Craig at the forum.
10. It is interesting to call attention to Jean-Paul Sartre’s experience of the performance of traditional Chinese theatre. Sartre saw a performance of Beijing Opera in Paris in 1956. The French playwright describes in his lecture on Brecht’s Epic Theatre how the Chinese actors conjure up the illusion of a river and a boat or create the illusion of night in the full blaze of the footlights solely by their pantomimic actions without the assistance of properties (Sartre 1976, 103–04).

Chapter 3

1. Meyerhold's experience of a *kabuki* performance testifies to the significance of such direct contact. After watching the performance of a *kabuki* theatre troupe in Paris in 1930 Meyerhold reflected in 1931: "I know the *kabuki* theatre by way of theory. I know the techniques of *kabuki* theatre from some books and iconographic materials, but when eventually I have attended one of its performances, it seems to me that I had not read anything, that I did not know anything about it" (Meyerhold 1980a, 99).
2. *Uslovnost* ("convention" or "conventionality") and *Uslovnyi* ("conventional") [Meyerhold 1968, 123–42, *passim*]. Edward Braun's translations of the Russian words are: "stylized" or "stylization," as in "stylized theatre" and "conscious stylization" (Meyerhold 1969, 36–39, 49, 58–63); Beatrice Picon-Vallin's are: "convention," as in "theatre of convention" and "conscious convention" (Meyerhold 1973, 105–09, 119–23); Nina Gourfinkel's are: "stylization," or "stylized," or "convention" (Meyerhold 1963, 31–33, 275); George Petrov's are: "relativistic" or, occasionally, "conditional" (Rudnitsky 1981, 138–41). Chinese translations read as *jiadingxing* (hypothetical or suppositional). In this chapter, "convention" and, correspondingly, "conventional," "conventionality," and "conventionalized" are adopted throughout.
3. Vladislav Ozerov was the author of a number of tragedies in the style of French neo-classicism.
4. See Meyerhold, "The New Theatre Foreshadowed in Literature," "The Theatre-Studio," "First Attempts at a Stylized [Conventional] Theatre," and "The Stylized [Conventional] Theatre" (Meyerhold 1969, 34–64).
5. Eisenstein made this point in his speech delivered at the forum on Mei Lanfang's performance, organized by the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and held on 14 April 1935 after Mei's final performance in Moscow. Like Eisenstein, Tretyakov and Tairov, who also spoke at the forum, tried to defend the Chinese theatre from being labelled as formalistic. Tretyakov stressed its "quantitative and qualitative supplies of realism" (Kleberg 1992, 133; 1993, 4; 1996a, 87); Tairov called attention to its "exceptional organic nature" and argued that "in Mei Lanfang's theatre those so-called conventionalized performance elements are entirely only certain necessary forms used to organically and expediently reveal the inner structure of the performance" (Kleberg 1992, 135; 1993, 9; 1996a, 92).
6. Aleksandr Pushkin's original statement is: "Verisimilitude is still presumed to be the primary condition and basis of dramatic art. What if it were demonstrated that the very essence of dramatic art distinctly precludes verisimilitude? ... Where is the verisimilitude of a building divided into two parts, one of which is filled with spectators who have agreed, etc.?" (Pushkin 1981, 9)
7. It should be noted that ancient Chinese and Japanese theatres did not feature a "director" in the modern sense.
8. For works on the music aspect of Chinese *xiqu*, available in English, see Wichmann (1991); Pian (1971, 114–31; 1979, 19–25).
9. See Eisenstein (1983, 217–18). Eisenstein quotes from Lin (1935, 292).
10. For an analysis of the grotesque in the *commedia dell'arte* and the work of Hoffmann, Wedekind and Gogol, see Kayser (1981, respectively, 37–40, 68–76 and 105–06, 131–33, 124–28); for a discussion of Meyerhold's debt to the *commedia dell'arte*, see Moody

(1978, 859–69); for Meyerhold's notes on Callot and Goya, see Meyerhold (1969, 139, 141, 285); for an examination of "the carnivalesque grotesque" in Meyerhold's work, see Picon-Vallin (1990, 83–85, 335–37).

Chapter 4

1. For Craig's interest in Japanese theatre, see Lee (2000); for Craig's interest in Indian theatre, see Bharucha (1984, 4–7).
2. EGC MS B 642 (3), the Bibliothèque nationale de France. I would like to record my sincere thanks to Anne-Elisabeth Buxtorf for her assistance.
3. EGC MS B 642 (2), the Bibliothèque nationale de France.
4. Gordon Craig's handwritten note, in *Mei Lan-Fang and the Chinese Theatre: On the Occasion of His Appearance in the U.S.S.R.*, published by the All Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (Moscow, 1935), 17. The programme is in the Gordon Craig Archives at the Bibliothèque nationale de France.
5. Gordon Craig's handwritten note, in *Mei Lan-Fang and the Chinese Theatre*, 21.
6. Gordon Craig's highlights, in *Mei Lan-Fang and the Chinese Theatre*, 34.

Chapter 5

1. For a study of the history and art of female impersonation in traditional Chinese theatre, see Tian (2000).
2. See Case (1988, 24); Tian (2000, 86–90).

Chapter 6

1. In his study, Tom Sutcliffe underscores Sellars's "invariable Americanizing" in his production of European operas (Sutcliffe 1996, 222); Marcia J. Citron also talks about Sellars's "American-centered productions" of European operas (Citron 2000, 210).
2. Another reviewer also described the "Maoettes" as "a Motown-style back-up group" who echoes Mao's pronouncements like "a Greek chorus" (Solway 1987). For a summary of the press reviews of *Nixon in China*, see Holmes (1987).
3. *The Secrets of the Chinese Drama* by Cecilia S. L. Zung is a practical and explanatory guide to the performance of classical Chinese dramas. In addition to synopses of Chinese plays, it provides detailed descriptions of the costumes, stage properties, musical instruments, and character types, and includes short explanations and 240 illustrations of acting conventions and techniques, many of which are performances or demonstrations by Mei Lanfang (Zung 1937).
4. My analysis is based on a DVD recording of the world premiere of *Nixon in China* at the Houston Grand Opera in 1987 (Adams 2000).
5. For an introduction to Mao's revolutionary idea of literature and art as pronounced in his "Talks at the Yan'an conference on Literature and art," see McDougall (1980, 3–54).
6. For an account of Jiang Qing's role in the revolution of the Chinese theatre, see Witke (1977, 405–37). Goodman listed Witke's work as one of her readings for writing her libretto for *Nixon in China* (Goodman 1994). For studies of Jiang Qing's life and political career, see Witke (1977); Terrill (1999).

7. For a study of gender politics in *Nixon in China*, see Daines (1995a, 6–34; 1995b, 179–202).
8. For a history of *kuang* performance, see Lu (2002); for an introduction to theatre performance during the Ming dynasty and, in particular, the Ming private theatre, see Shen (1994; 2005).
9. For example, Liu Huiji's design for one of the private performances used lavish scenery and special effects. See Zhang (1985, 44); see also Shen (2005, 118–22).
10. About Tang Xianzu's life, see Xu (1993); Cheng (1980); or Chiu (1997).
11. The Lincoln Center Festival once decided to commission a full-length (nine hours) production of *Mudan ting* to be directed by Chen Shizheng and to have it staged in conjunction with Sellars's version. Sellars, however, chose to withdraw from the festival because, according to Swatek, "Sellars was loathe to participate in a 'battle of the bands' that would pit his version of the work against that of a director who claimed to be resurrecting *Mudan ting* in an historically authentic form" (Swatek 2002b, 204). For studies of Chen Shizheng's production of *Mudan ting* at the Lincoln Center, see Swatek (2002b, 231–41); Rolston (2002, 134–46).
12. About Luo Rufang's teachings, see Huang Zongxi's *Studies of Ming Confucians*, selected by J. C. Cleary (1991, 117–21).
13. For a study of Tang Xianzu's four plays of dreams, see Chiu (1997); for a study of *The Peony Pavilion*, see Lu (2001).
14. About the nature and characteristics of postmodern music, see Kramer (1995, 11–33; 2002, 13–26).
15. In his review of Tan Dun's new works at the Barbican's *Fire Crossing Water* festival in 2000 (London), Mark Pappenheim notes that Tan Dun's music, with its eclectic mix of Orientalism, ancient ritual, modern multimedia, avant-garde electronics, and Western pop, is "no longer the music of lived experience; more the rampant plagiarism of a cultural kleptomaniac let loose among the World Music racks at his local record store" (Pappenheim 2000).

Chapter 7

1. See *Xin qingnian* 5 (1) (1918): 79.
2. For a discussion of Ibsen's intellectual influence, see Eide (1987).
3. It is interesting to note that while acknowledging the affinity between his "Environmental Theatre" and traditional Chinese theatre, Richard Schechner argued that it is "a big irony" to call the proscenium arch stage *wenming xi* (civilized theatre) when it was first introduced into China in the wake of its exportation as a result of Western colonialist expansion (see Schechner's introduction to a Chinese version of his *Environmental Theatre* [Schechner 1997, 29]).
4. In Japan, the impact of *shingeki* brought about what was called "neo-*kabuki*," which adopted technical devices from Western realist representational theatre. As Earle Ernst noted, the neo-*kabuki*—"a bizarre collision of forces"—is "no more than a futile attempt to combine two antithetical forms of theatre" (Ernst 1956, 256–57).
5. For a synopsis of the play and Xiong's other two plays produced in Ding County, see Eberstein (1990, 282–84).

Chapter 8

1. Eisenstein made this point in his speech delivered at the forum on Mei Lanfang's performance.
2. For an introduction of A (Ah) Jia's general theory of *xiqu* performance, see Liu (1988).
3. Stanislavsky stated: "Actually in each physical act there is an inner psychological motive which impels physical action, as in every psychological inner action there is also a physical action, which expresses its psychic nature. *The union of these two actions results in organic action on the stage*" (Stanislavsky 1968, 11–12; Stanislavsky's emphasis).

Chapter 9

1. In contemporary Chinese theatrical debates, naturalism, Ibsenism, and Stanislavsky were attacked as causative of the crisis in contemporary Chinese theatre, which, in fact, has had much more to do with the officially sanctioned, ideologically didactic and tendentious (socialist) realism. Since the 1950s, naturalism has never become an actuality in the Chinese theatre.
2. For a study of the history of *nuo*, see Tian (2003).
3. Norris Houghton mentioned the debates and gave a brief account of Okhlopkov's argument (Houghton 1962, 104–06). Houghton saw Okhlopkov as a descendant of the "Meyerhold tradition" and tended to downplay the significant discrepancy between the master and the disciple. His statement that "[n]ever in his exposition does he clearly define what he means by 'popular traditions of theatrical convention'" (Houghton 1962, 105) seems perplexing. Granted the political and ideological overtones resonant in his concept of "the people" and "the popular," Okhlopkov saw the conventionalism of the popular theatre as an antithesis to those of naturalism and modern theatricalism. For him, the popular or the people's theatrical conventionalism invites and necessitates the actor's and the spectator's imaginative and creative identification with the character and dramatic action, in opposition to the passive identification featured by naturalism or "crawling" realism and to the alienation pursued by modern anti-realist theatricalism.
4. In their work on the theatre of Okhlopkov, Nick Worrall (Worrall 1989, 140–96) and Gail Lenhoff (Lenhoff 1973) provide detailed analyses of Okhlopkov's major productions, but barely touch on his idea of the *uslovnosti*.
5. For full studies of Gao's major plays, see Zou (1994) and Quah (2004).
6. For an English translation of the play, see Gao (1996b).
7. For an English translation of the play, see Gao (1996c).
8. For an English translation of the play, see Gao (1990).
9. For an English translation of the play, see Gao (1999).
10. For an English translation of the play, see Chen et al. (1998). For a more detailed analysis (in English) of Xu's production of the play, see Pan (1999, 112–18).

Chapter 10

1. For a critical study of the Contemporary Legend Theatre's adaptations of *Medea* and *Oresteia*, see Diamond (1999, 142–64). Diamond's article on Asian productions of Greek tragedy does not cover *bebei bangzi* productions.

2. For a history of *bebei bangzi*, see Ma and Mao (1982); on *bebei bangzi* as demonstrated by Pei Yanling, one of the most accomplished performers of *bebei bangzi*, see Moscoso (1998).
3. For reports on this production, see Mao (1996), Krompacky (1996), Melvin (1996), and Kilroy (1996).

Chapter 11

1. For studies of the reception and staging of Shakespeare in China, see Cao and Sun (1989); Zhang (1996); and Li (2003).
2. A search in the full-text database, *China Academic Journals*, yields more than 470 articles (published from 1950 through 2006) that mention or fully discuss Marx's concept of "Shakespearization." I was surprised to find out that in his *Shakespeare and Marx*, Gabriel Egan does not mention Marx's concept at all (Egan 2004). More surprisingly, it has not become an important topic in Western Marxist criticism of Shakespeare.
3. In this chapter, all Shakespeare citations are from *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Shakespeare 1974).
4. The published adaptation does not have the scene "Ci du"; instead, the assassination of Du Ge is reported to Tie Shi and Ma Pei at the beginning of the banquet scene (Zheng 2000, 243).
5. For the multiple functions of the Porter Scene, see Harcourt (1961) and Tromly (1975).
6. For studies of adaptations of Shakespeare in traditional Asian theatrical forms, see Brandon (1997) and Tian (1998).

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