Tamkang Review 45.1 (December 2014): 131-149.
DOI: 10.6184/TKR201412-7

Navigating Between Shakespeare and *Jingju*: Wu Hsing-Kuo's *Li Er Zaici*

Lia Wen-ching Liang
National Tsing Hua University

Abstract

This article discusses *Li Er Zaici*, a performance created by Taiwanese actor Wu Hsing-Kuo, the artistic director of the Contemporary Legend Theatre. In this production Wu performs ten characters from Shakespeare's *King Lear* in three acts, drawing on performing styles and techniques from the *jingju* (Peking Opera) tradition. This internationally touring production offers an example of the dilemmas encountered by many intercultural theatre performances that explore the possibilities of mingling different cultural elements. Several scholars have discussed the personal dimension of this production, suggesting that it can be seen as the artist's attempt to reconcile with his mentor, who severed their relationship because of Wu's desire to step out of the confines of the tradition. Drawing on concepts proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, which raise questions about taken-for-granted assumptions about onstage performance and cultural representation, this paper calls for a reconsideration of the presumed link between *jingju* and Chinese cultural identity. I argue that, reflective of the affliction brought upon by the modern situation, Wu's response was more a complication than a straightforward answer. From this perspective, Wu's rendition produces deterritorialisations of both the traditional confines of *jingju* and the staging history of *King Lear*, and opens up new possibilities in both fields.

Keywords: intercultural theatre, Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Deleuze and Guattari, assemblage, Contemporary Legend Theatre

Lia Wen-Ching Liang (PhD, Royal Holloway, University of London) is Assistant Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan. She teaches Contemporary British Theatre, Shakespeare, and Deleuze and Literature. She has published articles on Shakespearean productions, intercultural theatre, postdramatic theatre, and popular entertainment. She is currently a board member of the Taiwan Shakespeare Association. Her e-mail address is lia.liang@gmail.com.

(Received: 31 October 2013; Accepted: 19 May 2014)

Investigating Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's discussion of "minor" theatre, such as Carmelo Bene's *Richard II* and Antonin Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty*, scholars in theatre and performance studies have advocated applying Deleuze and Guattari's concepts to assess works in the theatre.[1] While some suggest that "Deleuze and Guattari's aesthetic favors radical and innovative forms of performance" and the "extreme dismantling of texts" (Auslander 88), I argue that their ideas are equally useful in assessing a text-based theatre performance, such as an intercultural performance inspired by a classic play. Deleuze's works, and his collaborations with Guattari, encourage readings beyond conventional associations between cultural identity and artistic attempts. Their writings are particularly incisive in challenging taken-for-granted assumptions about onstage performance and cultural representation. This paper will focus on an intercultural theatre production as a point of departure to explore further theoretical possibilities.

The production is *Li Er Zaici* (*King Lear Is Here,* hereafter referred to as *Lear),* a one-man show based on Shakespeare's *King Lear*,[2] created by Taiwanese actor/director, Wu Hsing-Kuo, the artistic director of the Contemporary Legend Theatre (hereafter referred to as CLT). Developed out of a short piece originally presented by Wu in Paris during a workshop with Théâtre du Soleil in 2000, *Lear* evolved into a full-length solo performance that premiered at Taipei Novel Hall in 2001. It has since toured internationally.[3] This distinctive approach presented not only Wu's reading of Shakespeare's play, but also his reflections on a reality in which traditional cultural hierarchy has lost its dominance. From this perspective, Wu's performance can be regarded as an imaginative response from an established theatrical tradition, the *jingju* (Peking Opera, Beijing Opera), to the challenges posed by the shifting cultural landscapes of today. At the same

[1] For instance: Kowsar's article is an early example; Fortier discusses possibilities of Shakesperean adaptations by way of Deleuze's concepts; Puchner explores the relationships between Deleuze's philosophy and theatre, both in "The Theatre in Modernist Thought," his thought-provoking article, and in *The Drama of Ideas*, his latest book; as an editor on one occasion and an author on another, Cull's recent books are dedicated to Deleuze and Performance.

[2] The title literally means *King Lear Is Here*. The programme for international touring as well as the bilingual souvenir programme (2006), simply put it as *King Lear*. However, it is rendered as *King Lear: Wu Hsing-Kuo Meets Shakespeare* in the Chinese programme provided at its premiere in Taipei Novel Hall in July 2001.

[3] The production has been touring internationally since 2000, to Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Macau, South Korea, Denmark, the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Germany, China, the United States, Australia, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Italy, including an appearance in the Edinburgh International Festival at Lyceum Theatre. The production toured nationally in Taiwan several times, most recently in 2013. For the detailed touring information, see the company's website: http://www.twclt.com/DramaShow.aspx?Drama=C.

time, by presenting the story of *King Lear*, the performance highlighted Wu's encounter with another tradition, that of staging Shakespeare, especially when it toured to London and Edinburgh.[4]

Julie Holledge and Joanne Tompkins have defined intercultural theatre as "the meeting in the moment of performance of two or more cultural traditions, a temporary fusing of styles and/or techniques and/or cultures" (7). From this perspective, Wu's *Lear* could be considered exemplary of intercultural performance. In utilising *jingju* style to stage a Shakespearean play, Wu's *Lear* also joins the growing list of "foreign Shakespeare," which has come to be a prominent topic in the study of intercultural theatre.[5] Other scholars argue that Wu's *Lear* originated from the artist's need to address the relationship with his mentor and the tradition of *jingju*, which was becoming problematic at the time when Wu started to work on the play.[6] This paper begins by examining the scholarship on Wu's production that reads Wu's *Lear* in the context of the artist's personal background and artistic motivation. Yet an ambitious and innovative intercultural theatre production like Wu's *Lear* invites more ways of reading. The latter part of this paper adopts concepts from Deleuze and Guattari to read Wu's *Lear* and further explore theoretical possibilities for intercultural theatre.

A Different *King Lear*

Wu's version of *Lear* consists of fragmentary excerpts from and sporadic contemplations on Shakespeare's original *King Lear*. The three acts, respectively entitled "The Play," "Playing," and "A Player," illustrate the attempt to deliver a *King Lear* that is different from the familiar story-line about an aged monarch. Wu's performance is informed by his extensive knowledge of *jingju*, presenting "a spectacular display of Wu's unique skills in the diverse styles of performance and stage techniques of martial arts, dance, and aria singing" (Li, "Lear's Shadow," 196). Wu's proficient use of props and costumes enables him to make swift

[4] *Lear* toured to London 9–11 October, 2004, and to the Edinburgh International Festival 13–16 August, 2011.

[5] Dennis Kennedy coins this term in his edited collection *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Perofrmance* (1993). There is a long list of publications dedicated to the study of intercultural Shakespeare. To name a few: *Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage* edited by Takashi Sasayama, Ronnie Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (1998); *New Sites for Shakespeare: Theatre, the Audience and Asia* by John Russell Brown (1999); *Shashibiya: Staging Shakespeare in China* by Ruru Li (2003); *World-Wide Shakespeares: Local Appropriations in Film and Performance* edited by Sonia Massai (2005); and *Shakespeare in Culture* edited by Bi-qi Beatrice Lei and Ching-Hsi Perng (2012).

[6] For instance, B. Lei, and Huang (*Chinese Shakespeares*).

shifts in acting and singing styles so as to deliver eight characters from Shakespeare's *King Lear*, as well as appearing as himself.

The performance begins with Wu as King Lear, dressed as a general (*wusheng* in *jingju*), venturing into the thunderstorm in anguish. Without presenting the signature map scene from Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Wu, in movements and styles inspired by "traditional repertoire of the old male singing role of the Qi school" (Li, "Lear's Shadow," 199),[7] reveals to the audience his division of the kingdom. Towards the end of Act One, Wu takes off pieces of costumes (headdress, beard and wig) as the gesture to step out of his character, and transforms himself into a contemporary *jingju* actor in a plain undercoat. In contrast, Act Two parades an array of multiple characters from Shakespeare's play. Wu appears first as the Fool, and then enacts the roles of Kent, a dog, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, Gloucester, Edmund and Edgar.[8] Wu presents the love-test episode almost in its entirety by enacting the three daughters, each requested by the monarch to vouch her love for him, with occasional lines delivered by the character of King Lear.[9] Performing styles often change abruptly as Wu jumps from one character to the next. Yet, on some occasions, differences between characters are made through subtle variations, such as by slightly adjusting the position of the outer gown so as to indicate which daughter is being performed. In Act Three, Wu again enacts both King Lear and himself so as to present "the changing nature of life and reflect the loss of his past" (souvenir program). Wu takes Lear's question "Who is it that can tell me who I am?" as a point of departure and further ponders:

> Who am I? I am me. I am looking for me! I think of me. I looked at me, I know me. . . . I am still me! Would I be me? I must face me. I want to find me.[10]

Reflecting upon his life story as both himself and Lear in this act, Wu concludes the performance in an ode to the moon: "Lonely and quiet, I look coldly at the moon. That rises, sets, waxes, and wanes" (*ibid*.).

The assumption that Wu's interpretation of *King Lear* is entwined with personal dilemmas seems to be most prevalent among viewers of his "hometown

---

[7] The "Qi School" refers to the performing style established by the Peking Opera master Zhou Xingfang (1895-1975), known by the stage name Qiling Tong. "Qi School" is among other schools established by different artists, such as the "Mei School" by Mei Lanfang.

[8] Kent was not seen in its later performances. The character of Kent is neither shown in the DVD version, a recorded performance on Taipei City Stage on October 28, 2006, nor introduced in the Souvenir Programme of *King Lear*, which is a commemorative bilingual programme for the CLT's 20th anniversary. Instead, by way of enacting the Fool's joke, a "dog" emerged as a character. For an account of Wu's performance as Kent, see, in particular, Li's "Lear's Shadow."

[9] Wu's enactment as King Lear in this section was a mere delivering of bypassing lines, such as short responses to his daughters, with his back to the audience.

[10] Translation as appeared in the subtitles of the *King Lear* DVD.

performance" (Huang, "Autobiographical Interventions," 44). Li Ruru connects this production with Wu's "severe personal crises" and considers the work "a turning point in [Wu's] life and career" ("Lear's Shadow," 196). Part of this personal crisis is Wu's relationship with his mentor, Zhou Zheng-rong.[11] In addition to the formal pupil-master bond that is customary in the traditional training, Zhou also provided a paternal image to Wu, who lost his own father at a young age. In their relationship, Wu was expected to act "like a dutiful son before his father" in the presence of Master Zhou (Li, "Lear's Shadow," 212). Yet Wu's founding of the CLT in 1986 with the purpose of "intergrat[ing] traditional Chinese Opera with modern theatre" (as stated on the souvenir programme), eventually led to his estrangement from Zhou. "[V]owing to save *jingju* from its demise" (Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares* 217), Wu's CLT productions successfully experimented with stories and performing styles that were outside the orthodox *jingju* repertoire. However, these attempts to "revitalise" the tradition of *jingju* won little approval from Zhou and the two had not reconciled by the time Zhou passed away (Li, "Lear's Shadow," 195). It is therefore suggested that the production was Wu's attempt to reconcile with his mentor. This opinion is further supported by Wu's own account in the souvenir programme.[12]

In addition to the relationship with his mentor, Wu's "severe personal crisis" included the CLT's troubled finances (Li, "Lear's Shadow," 201), which had been affected by political events in Taiwan and changes to government funding policy that became less favourable to *jingju*. Since the Kuomintang government relocated to Taiwan in 1949, troupes of traditional *jingju* were heavily subsidised in spite of the limited audience for the genre on the island. In order to maintain "authentic" Chinese forms of art as an important edge in its struggles against the Communist regime on the mainland, *jingju* was further proclaimed by the Kuomintang government as the "National Opera" in the Republic of China.[13] With democratisation and nativist campaigns emerging in

[11] Zhou is also romanized as "Chou Cheng-Jong." The two different spellings could both be found in the souvenir programme. Here I follow the established spelling in scholarly work and use "Zhou" instead of "Chou."

[12] Wu describes, "As I was adapting *King Lear* in France, I dreamed a dream, in which my master wanted to kill me with a sword, and I was forced to take away his sword and kill him. The dream shocked me. Two months after my coming back to Taiwan, my master passed away unexpectedly. The whole thing explains why I could understand the father/son conflict and the emotional pain between Gloucester and Edgar, the conflict and pain that made Edgar opt not to recognise his own father even when they met."

[13] One should be reminded that the "tradition" of Peking Opera, which was established and stabilized around the Qing Dynasty, is also a relatively recent invention in the long cultural history of the Middle Kingdom. For instance, Kun Opera developed and matured earlier than Peking Opera. For a study of Kun Opera, see, for instance, Catherine Swatek.

Taiwan in the 1990s, this subsidy policy became increasingly difficult to sustain. Since 2000, the nativist-oriented government under President Chen Shui-bian of the Democratic Progressive Party began reforming cultural policies. The new administration sought to make the subsidy policy more inclusive, which resulted in a sharp cut of state funding for *jingju* troupes.[14] Wu's creative vision for the CLT, which was "not only to safeguard tradition but also allow it to confront modernity, thereby giving birth to a third approach that will extend the future of *jingju*" (Wu 19), is nonetheless considered to offer "a good model inheriting the legacy of Chinese Peking Opera" (Tuan 119), and thus the company became caught in the wake of political changes.[15]

While I would agree that an artist's background and life experiences may be linked to their artistic creation, this should not prevent us from seeking other ways to engage with the work. In reading *Lear* alongside Wu's personal events, the production is interpreted as Wu's attempt to come to terms with multiple identities resulting from his deviation from the tradition of *jingju*. While "the great empathy that Wu had with Lear's feelings of loneliness and betrayal" (Li, "Lear's Shadow," 201) was evidently significant to Wu, and Wu's onstage presence may be read as a site at which identity conflicts unfold, the multi-threaded performance in *Lear* also raises interesting theoretical questions about intercultural theatre. When it comes to Shakespearean productions incorporating theatrical traditions from Asia, attention is often drawn to their hybridization of performance styles along an axis from local to foreign cultures.[16] In particular, the idea of cultural identity is highly contested in intercultural Shakespearean productions, constantly bringing up the binary opposition of self/other in question.[17] At the same time, as the name Shakespeare has come to represent a

[14] For instances, Nancy Guy has provided a detailed study in this respect; Daphne Lei also examines new forms of *jingju* in Taiwan against the backdrop of changing political climate (*Alternative Chinese Opera*); Jonathan Sullivian and Will Lowe provide more details of political background of this changing period.

[15] However, the future of Peking Opera in Taiwan is more complicated as its decline should not be attributed solely to the DPP's cultural policy. The KMT regained political power in the 2008 presidential election, yet, as Lei argues, Peking Opera in Taiwan is still facing difficulties. On 2 June 2010, some of Taiwan's most celebrated Peking Opera actors, including Wu, staged a protest against budgetary cuts in front of the Ministry of Education. See Lei, *Alternative Chinese Opera* 183.

[16] See, for instance, Bharucha, "Foreign Asia"; Erika Fischer-Lichte; Grehan; Kennedy; and Tompkins.

[17] Marvin Carlson draws out a seven-layered model, between the end of source culture and the end of target culture, in order to understand intercultural theatre. In *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*, Patrice Pavis provides the much-cited "hourglass" model to further illustrate the interaction in the making of intercultural theatre. Both models imply a one-way traffic in the course of adaptation. Based upon a "notion of differentiated hybridity" (45), Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert later propose a matrix to address the problematic source-target distinction, yet, the binary opposition of self/other could still be detected in this latest model.

"powerful cultural institute" (Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares* 28),[18] these productions are also imbricated with various kinds of political agenda that may invite, for example, a postcolonial reading. In this respect, an intercultural Shakespearean production is inevitably political, even though it may not appear to be dealing directly with current political issues.

Questioning Identities

Is it possible to understand an intercultural performance as more than a question of cultural identities, authenticity and (in)complete comprehension of other cultures? These issues are important because ambitious and innovative intercultural theatre like Wu's *Lear* is likely to open up new visions that invite diverse readings that extend beyond the extra-personal dimensions of the work of art. Wu's border-crossing of artistic conventions in *Lear* also provides an opportunity to dissociate the seemingly natural connection between an artist's personal identity and the artistic force generated by the work. One of the questions emerging from the production concerns the political anxiety that underlines the performance. Such anxiety perhaps has less to do with issues of sovereignty and political change, which are considered central to the original play, although these issues linger in the background of Wu's performance. Rather, I wish to stress that Wu's *Lear* may be seen as an innovative attempt to respond to the cultural politics at the time of production.

Wu's proficient delivery of various roles illustrates his desire and ability to break the *jingju* convention that proscribes such transgression. At the same time, he also establishes himself as an authority who can readily apply the conventions of *jingju*. As Alexander Huang argues, "[t]he repositioning of Shakespeare's plays as autobiographical solo performances reasserts the value and authority of the local readers of a globally circulating text" (*Chinese Shakespeares* 220). If Wu attempts to reconcile with his various identities, it is through his cultural authority, both as a renowned *jingju* actor and as someone who could perform a Shakespearean play, that he achieves this goal. Yong Li Lan comments that, in mirroring personal stories with his characters, an entwined "double enactment" was evident in Wu's performance, one which might "disclose or exacerbate an anxiety over authenticity and authentication" (543). From such a perspective, Wu's *Lear* becomes a problematic about cultural identity and authority.

[18] See also Bristol for his detailed study on how Shakespeare becomes a cultural institute.

Wu's "double enactment" raises the question of subjectivity in a novel way. The relationship between the actor himself and the iconic fictional king presents a split between the actor and his character, one that invites an interpretation which is "ultimately concerned less with cultural identity than with cultural authority," as suggested by Yong Li Lan (547). In choosing to use a theatrical format generally considered non-realistic to unfold personal and dramatic conflicts, Wu's *Lear* unfastens the presumed connections between political/cultural identities and issues of representation. The connections concern Deleuze in his contemplations of theatre:

> But why do conflicts generally depend on representation? Why does theatre remain representative each time it focuses on conflicts, contradictions, and oppositions? It is because conflicts are already normalized, codified, and institutionalized. They are "products." They are already a representation that can be represented so much the better on stage. A conflict that is not yet normalized depends on something more profound. . . . But just how do we break free of this situation of conflictual, official, and institutionalized representation? ("One Less Manifesto," 252-53)

Whereas some might suggest that *jingju* should be viewed as a theatrical form that ubiquitously stages "an unmistakable Chinese identity" (Lei, *Operative China* 22), Wu's interpretation of *King Lear* problematised such a connection. We may go on to argue how cultural identities are bundled up with political preferences or with representations in Taiwan that have trapped Wu and his company. Yet, in line with Deleuze's questions quoted above, we should first ask: Is it possible to conceive a strategy of reading that does not take theatre performances to be attempts to represent the world or manifestations of cultural identities, especially in intercultural theatre that is not performed in front of groups of a hometown audience?

Even a seemingly apolitical staging of *King Lear*, such as the 2006 production by London-based Yellow Earth Theatre directed by David K. S. Tse, could hardly escape the highly politicised territorial and sovereignty issues presented in Shakespeare's play.[19] Emily Sun agrees:

> At the heart and origin of the history *King Lear* opens up, I argue, is a *crisis of sovereignty*. Shakespeare's plays repeatedly interrogate sovereignty as the onto-theological principle that has traditionally guided political life, a life that depends for its consistency and stability on an absolute center of authority from which everything else receives its legitimacy. . . . Lear exercises the political and legal authority, which belongs to him alone, to put himself outside the political realm, parceling out the kingdom in exchange for promises from his daughters to secure the freedom he thinks

[19] See Liang.

> he will gain thereby. In bringing to light the assumptions behind this logic, and in dramatizing its disastrous consequences, the play performs an implicit analysis and critique of the sovereign conception of political life, particularly its relationship to freedom as represented by Lear. (2, Sun's emphasis)

It is certainly possible to favour Wu's personal aspects over "larger national politics" (Huang, "Autobiographical Interventions," 43), yet, the decision to stage a performance based on an inherently political play like *King Lear* is already ripe with political connotations. Indeed, Wu seems acutely aware of the political implication of his adaptation when referring to his performance in Act One:

> King Lear, actor, and Wu Hsing-Kuo co-exist in the same space and time, and tradition and modernity are at war with each other inside me. And the scene also questions the meaning of *national* existence and the essence of drama.[20] (souvenir programme, emphasis added)

Lear, as enacted by Wu, might not directly portray an ontological crisis of sovereignty. Yet his pursuit of artistic subjectivity, at the expense of a stressed relationship with his mentor, reflects an artistic decision that is contentious enough in the *jingju* tradition. If Wu's personal connection with the play is examined thoroughly, one cannot fail to register the cultural politics relevant to such a decision.

Speaking allegorically, as a pupil who had "kowtowed" to a master in the tutor-pupil system of *jingju*, Wu was considered officially an inheritor of an artistic lineage. Yet, Wu eventually refused the role set by the tradition. Instead he went on to found a company of his own, a decision not unlike Cordelia's utterance of "nothing" which marks her rejection towards "the theatrical contract [Lear] wants his daughters to validate in staging his last act as king" (Sun 21). Should *jingju* be considered representative of "Chinese identity," as proposed by Lei (*Operative China* 22), then Wu's search for artistic freedom questions this viewpoint, for his quest for artistic subjectivity and freedom is similar to Cordelia's politically "free act" (Sun 22). Opinions favouring personal connections over political implications could not, in the end, elude the politics so central to Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

These viewpoints also illustrate a possible danger in reading onstage performances solely on the basis of cultural or personal identities. Our lives, in such reasoning, are to be mimed on the stage—here I follow Martin Puchner's argument that mimetic theatre "turns performing human beings, along with stage

[20] These words are cited in the Q&A part of the bilingual English-Chinese souvenir programme. However, the word "national" is left out in the English version. This English version is also used in *King Lear*'s programme in the international touring.

props and light, into material used for the purpose of representation" (Puchner, *Modernist Thought* 521). As such, *reality* remains the common reference for understanding theatre. As Puchner argues, Deleuze and Guattari's works provide one way of seeing theatre not as a mimetic art but as a *performing* art, regardless of how "realistic" a production may appear. This entails considering the actions and events unfolding in front of the audience "without always inciting us to attribute to them a representational status" when one is attending a theatre performance (Puchner, *Modernist Thought* 526). If we treat a theatre performance as a series of singular events, and break with the urge to consider it a copy or reflection of reality, then we can begin to see the art of theatre—alongside the art of cinema or modern painting—as presentational and expressive rather than representational and interpretative.[21] In this way, theatre can be seen as "the power of fiction itself: not making a claim about what the world *is*, but about the imagination of a possible world" (Colebrook 12, emphasis in the original).[22]

Detteritorializing *Jingju* with *King Lear*

While Wu's background and personal experiences help his audience to learn more about his works, Wu's *Lear* invites theoretical discussions in the field of intercultural theatre. It is not only about reading Wu within the political contexts of Taiwan, or a postcolonial approach to Wu's production, but also about taking the production as a point of departure in order to illustrate theoretical possibilities in intercultural theatre. Wu's performance untied the assumed connection between identity and representation that is elucidated by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*:

> The primacy of identity, however conceived, defines the world of representation. But modern thought is born of the failure of representation, of the loss of identities, and of the discovery of all the forces that act under the representation of the identical. (xix)

As if Deleuze's doubt about representation is not explicit enough, Martin Puchner puts it even more bluntly, and explains the inevitable tie between identity and representation:

[21] For discussions of representations and other art forms, see, for instance, Gregory Flaxman; Dorothea Olkowski; Simon O'Sullivan; and David Rodowick.

[22] For more discussions on Deleuze's theory and performance, see Laura Cull (ed.).

> *Representation* is the second bad term in Deleuze's book, one that is intimately tied to the first (*identity*) . . . representation is always geared toward the principle of identity: in the act of representation you assert the identity . . . of what you represent. (*Drama of Ideas* 168, Puchner's emphasis)

To illustrate this point with Wu's work, it might seem counter-intuitive to untie Wu's identity as a *jingju* actor in Taiwan, yet his *Lear* demonstrates that there is a degree of artistic freedom to break away from what he might represent. To use a Deleuzian term, it is a line of flight, or a deterritorialisation that we observe in Wu's *Lear.* As Helena Grehan argues, Deleuzian thinking encourages us to see intercultural theatre productions as sites of contestation since intercultural theatre is "flexible, contingent and constantly concerned with shifting boundaries, limits and borders" (Grehan 27). She elaborates:

> Performance can provide a platform that presents ideas in a layered fashion without proposing singular answers or static formulae for interpretation. It is a site for exchange in which contradictions are highlighted and responses encouraged from spectators as participants rather than as viewers. (147)

Grehan's argument highlights the "rhizomatic" character of intercultural performances, in which different assemblages can be observed and multiple viewpoints often co-exist. Moreover, because of the complexity and ambiguity created as a consequence of cultural mixture, intercultural theatre is likely to result in diverse opinions and interpretations.

From this perspective, two sets of deterritorialisations, of the traditions of *jingju* and Shakespearean performance, can be observed from the assemblages created by Wu's *King Lear*. By deterritorialisations, in this case, I mean the creation of new artistic possibilities of performing both Shakespearean plays and *jingju*. Theatre director Eugenio Barba, who founded Odin Theatre in Denmark, certainly noticed the unusual artistic force of Wu's works. He once said to Wu after having seen his performance: "You shook the tradition of *jingju*. You also shook the understanding of Shakespeare" (quoted in *King Lear* souvenir programme). Barba's comment points to the uncanny results from the merging of elements from two traditions into one performance. Yet the achievement is more than the disruption of expectations from both traditions so as to create something new; it is the confirmation of the presumed correspondence between cultural practices and personal identities.

In the case of *jingju*, Wu's performance challenged the conventional rules regarding the typified roles in the tradition. Unlike many *jingju* actors who usually specialise in performing one type of character, Wu performed several types of character all by himself. Li explains the "system" of *jingju*:

> In this system, categorization of roles is central. Different role types have specific requirements for voice, gesture, body movements, makeup, and costuming. From the outset, Wu's creation of *King Lear* broke through the traditional boundaries of role types by combining the stage techniques of the *laosheng* or old male role type (i.e., the characteristic aria singing and steps) with those of the *wusheng* or male warrior role (the acrobatics), plus elements borrowed from the *jing* or painted-face role. In addition, by wearing the traditional armor backward and with sleeves extended, he gave himself the freedom to employ the long-sleeve movements of an old male role that would not have been feasible for a conventional male warrior. (*Shashibiya* 200)

Wu's performance deviated significantly from the "traditional" model of *jingju*, and this is precisely where the politics of staging *jingju* can be observed. Such creative diversity is perhaps what prompts Rustom Bharucha to consider the production "a theatrical landmark that actually changes the existing premises of viewing a particular performance tradition" ("Foreign Asia," 20). The division of Lear's kingdom, resulting from a crisis of sovereignty, was here exemplified through fragments of monologues and collages of performing styles from *jingju*. By weaving together relevant yet spasmodic sequences of performance, Wu established his own politics of dealing with the "inheritance and destruction of tradition" (Q&A section, *King Lear* souvenir programme) without venturing into the presumed connection between cultural identities and their doubles in the political realms. Wu's "life history of a *jingju* actor born and raised in Taiwan" (*King Lear* souvenir programme) was politically integrated into Lear's story through constant change of dramatic personas and acting styles, which not only crossed performance boundaries, but also questioned and disjointed the connection between the theatrical form of *jingju*.

On the other hand, Wu delivered a version of *King Lear* that was quite different from the play written by Shakespeare. Wu's *Lear* was not merely a deviation from or reworking of *King Lear*, as the case in Edward Bond's *Lear* (1972) or The Women's Theatre Group's *Lear's Daughters* (1987). Breaking with conventional expectations that cast an actor for each character, Wu's *Lear* performed monologues/dialogues associated with each character, such as the map-reading/love-testing scene for the Lear family, and the cliff episode for Edgar and Gloucester. Wu's enacting of representative segments from the original play is similar to *jingju's* "tradition" of staging *zhezixi* instead of the whole play in a typical performance.[23] Wu's negotiations and deterritorialisations transform and expand both traditions

[23] A *zhezixi* literally means a "selected scene." It can be understood as the highlights of a play. Performances in traditional Chinese theatrical genres do not usually stage a full play. Instead, a programme for one performance often consists of several scenes of *zhezixi*, sometimes from different plays. For more detail accounts in English, see, for example, Catherine Swatek.

and extend our understanding of intercultural theatre as an assemblage.

In a more commonplace manner, we might assume that there is a subject who "assembles" various things or elements such that an entity is formed. Yet, an assemblage in Deleuze and Guattari's conception is an abstract one that should be considered centre-less. Elaborated in their co-authored works *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of assemblage can be seen as a "political ontology that provides tools to describe transformative, creative, or deterritorialising forces and movements" (Patton 9). The ontological presence of an assemblage cannot be reduced to the doing of an author or the presumed centre that controls or engulfs the resulted relations. Thus the emphasis of the concept of the assemblage has less to do with the image of an entity that is clearly labelled with well-defined boundaries. Rather, it refers to the potentiality of new possibilities opened up by connecting widely disparate elements, concepts, and practices, which cannot be foreseen prior to the creation of such an assemblage.

In Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualisation, "assemblage" does not merely mean the assembling of random materials. The point is also to observe how heterogeneous elements can come together and form a multiplicity without a centre. With this line of thinking, emphasis is shifted from an investigation of identity to a study of the assemblage created as heterogeneous components come into alignment and undergo continuous change as it moves along and engages new connections. The point is not to single out, let alone celebrate, the "new" and stable forms of cultural identities because of such mixture. In other words, the task here is to observe how the coming-together of heterogeneous elements can form into new assemblages, which have no stable identities and go through continuous deterritorialisation as new relations are brought into play. In particular, the lines of flight and changing borders of assemblages in a production are brought into focus with this approach.[24]

The debate on Peter Brook's *The Mahabharata* provides an informative case of conflicting views towards the mixture of cultural elements and the problem of cultural identity. While Indian commentators, such as Rustom Bharucha ("Somebody's Other"), appear offended by what they consider the arbitrary borrowing in this production, others point to the novelty and innovativeness that can be observed only in an intercultural performance like this. A similar situation arises with Wu's *Lear*. On the one hand, admirers could praise the

[24] For discussions on hybridity and Deleuze's work, see, for instance, Ansell-Pearson; Moslund. For discussion on intercultural performance and hybridity, see, for instance, Lo; Schechner. For a general discussion on hybridity and art, see Papastergiadis.

production for creating new links between modern society and the centuries-old tradition of *jingju*. On the other hand, traditionalists could lambast the production as a disgrace to the venerable tradition because of its unconventional use of *jingju* theatrical styles, and discount Wu's legitimacy as a *jingju* actor because he was trained outside of mainland China.

Yet it is precisely by juxtaposing and questioning such connections that Wu's *Lear* opened up to unknown territories. *Lear* is exemplary of "alternative Chinese opera" described by Daphne Lei. She argues that these alternative productions, quite often developed to keep up with recent changes of Taiwan's governmental funding as well as audience's tastes, would provide "a sense of new possibilities, different approaches, and perhaps a chance to look into the future rather than lamenting the unobtainable past" (*Alternative Theater in Taiwan* 179). Thus, while it may be tempting to see Wu's *Lear* as an example of hybridity with its use of diverse cultural elements, such a reading underestimates the problem of politics raised in the production, with an interpretation in terms of origin and identity. Therefore *Lear* should not be understood simply as an artistic endeavour in search of personal belonging to be fulfilled by the assertion of a particular cultural tradition. Despite the personal point of departure, the ingenuity of Wu's *Lear* lies in the choice of adapting Shakespeare's *King Lear*, which is already a tell-tale of the willingness to confront today's fragmented cultural landscape that is inescapably undergoing globalisation at an unprecedented pace. But if we observe the production as a passing between specific points, we can see that Wu indeed rightly questions the usability of the concept of origin and cultural tradition in one's sense of belonging in a fast-changing world, as returning to traditional authority seems neither possible nor plausible. In Wu's *Lear*, the search results in no definite, congenial endpoint. Instead, what is left presentable amounts to an array of moments in which any sense of a coherent self has to retreat due to the torment inflicted, not by the imposition of an external authorial will, but by the abundance of available referential frameworks once the act of self-identification gets underway.

Conclusion

Reading Wu Hsing-Kuo's *Lear* in the light of concepts from Deleuze and Guattari's work draws into consideration the presumed link between *jingju* and Chinese cultural identity, and the politics of staging an intercultural theatre production. Other scholars have pointed to the link between Wu's solo performance in *Lear* and the crisis in his personal life and career. Trained as a

traditional *jingju* actor, Wu's rite of passage was, however, quite unlike that of actors in earlier generations who adhered to conventional expectations. In this one-man performance, Wu adapts from Shakespeare's story to account for the ruptures caused by his urge for creativity. In narrating and performing the story of Lear, Wu also tackles the theme of filial piety, which is of particular import among *jingju* circles. By pushing beyond such reading a broader perspective can be adopted, for Wu's *Lear* gave no straightforward answer to the situation his generation faces today.

Through the enactment of various characters from *Lear*, Wu's performance questions the conventional notions of cultural identity that often plague forms of traditional Chinese arts such as *jingju*. Reflective of the affliction brought about by the modern situation, Wu's response is nonetheless more a complication than a straightforward answer resting upon hierarchical or essentialist presumptions. This point is made explicit as Wu takes up elements from both *jingju* and Shakespeare in his performance, but refuses to bow acquiescently to the authorities in both. As such, Wu's rendition can be said to have produced deterritorialisations of the traditional confines of *jingju*, as well as the staging history of *King Lear*, and brought forth new visions in both fields.

This has wider consequences for studies of intercultural theatre, as discussions of intercultural theatre can find a way to go beyond the conventional East/West or traditional/modern divides. Rushing to apply such a binary schema can amount to a reification of cultural differences, and therefore risk going back to the kind of essentialist thinking that many practitioners in intercultural theatre aim to challenge. By helping to destabilise presumed binaries, concepts from Deleuze and Guattari's work can assist in developing new tools to observe the intricate connections machined by the adoption of diverse intercultural elements in the realm of theatre and to challenge the conventional reading of theatre as representing the world outside. At the same time, theatre studies should prove to be a fruitful field in which Deleuzian thinking can be further propelled, as contemporary theatre continues to engage in the search for new possibilities in defiance of old demarcations.

Works Cited

Ansell-Pearson, Keith. *Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.

Auslander, Philip. *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. London: Routledge, 2008. Print.

Bharucha, Rustom. "Foreign Asia/Foreign Shakespeare: Dissenting Notes on New Asian Interculturality, Postcoloniality, and Recolonization." *Theatre Journal* 56.1 (2004): 1-28. Print.

_____. "Somebody's Other: Disorientations in the Cultural Politics of Our Times." *The Intercultural Performance Reader*. Ed. Patrice Pavis. London: Routledge, 1996. 196-212. Print.

Bond, Edward. *Lear*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1972. Print.

Bristol, Michael D. *Big Time Shakespeare*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.

Brown, John Russell. *New Sites for Shakespeare: Theatre, the Audience and Asia*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.

Carlson, Marvin. "Brook and Mnouchkine: Passages to India?" *Peter Brook and the Mahabharata: Critical Perspectives.* Ed. David Williams. London: Routledge, 1991. 79-91. Print.

Colebrook, Claire. *Gilles Deleuze*. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.

Cull, Laura, ed. *Deleuze and Performance*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2009. Print.

_____. *Theatres of Immanence: Deleuze and the Ethics of Performance*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Print.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Difference and Repetition*. Trans. Paul Patton. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. Print.

_____. "One Less Manifesto." Trans. Eliane dal Molin and Timothy Murray. *Mimesis, Masochism, and Mime: The Politics of Theatricality in Contemporary France*. Ed. Timothy Murray. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1997. 239-58. Print.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature.* Trans. Dana Polan. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986. Print.

_____. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987. Print.

Feinstein, Elaine, and The Women's Theatre Group. "Lear's Daughters." *Adaptations of Shakespeare: A Critical Anthology of Plays from the Seventeenth Century to the Present.* Ed. Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. 215-32. Print.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. "Interculturalism in Contemporary Theatre." *The Intercultural Performance Reader*. Ed. Patrice Pavis. London: Routledge, 1996. 27-40. Print.

Flaxman, Gregory, ed. *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2000. Print.

Fortier, Mark. "Shakespeare as 'Minor Theater': Deleuze and Guattari and the Aims of Adaptation." *Mosaic* 29.1 (1996): 1-18. Print.

Grehan, Helena. *Mapping Cultural Identity in Contemporary Australian Performances*. Brussels: Peter Lang, 2001. Print.

Guy, Nancy. *Peking Opera and Politics in Taiwan*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2005. Print.

Holledge, Julie, and Joanne Tompkins. *Women's Intercultural Performance*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Huang, C. Y. Alexander. *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*. New York: Columbia UP, 2009. Print.

_____. "Shakespeare, Performance, and Autobiographical Interventions." *Shakespeare Bulletin* 24.2 (2006): 31-47. Print.

Kennedy, Dennis, ed. *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993. Print.

King Lear (*Li Er Zaici*). Souvenir Programme. Contemporary Legend Theatre, 2006. Print.

King Lear (*Li Er Zaici*). Dir. Wu Hsing-kuo. Contemporary Legend Theatre, 2007. DVD.

Kowsar, Mohammad. "Deleuze on Theatre: A Case Study of Carmelo Bene's *Richard III*." *Theatre Journal* 38.1 (1986): 19–33. Print.

Lei, Bi-qi Beatrice. "Vision and Revision of Filial Piety: Analogues and Adaptations of *King Lear* in Chinese Opera." *Journal of Theatre Studies* 1 (2008): 253-82. Print.

Lei, Bi-qi Beatrice, and Ching-Hsi Perng, eds. *Shakespeare in Culture*. Taipei: National Taiwan UP, 2012. Print.

Lei, Daphne. *Alternative Chinese Opera in the Age of Globalization: Performing Zero*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.

_____. *Operatic China: Staging Chinese Identity Across the Pacific*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Print.

Li, Ruru. *Shashibiya: Staging Shakespeare in China*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong UP, 2003. Print.

_____. "'Who Is It That Can Tell Me Who I Am?'/ 'Lear's Shadow': A Taiwanese Actor's Personal Response to *King Lear*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 57.2 (2006): 195-215. Print.

Liang, Lia Wen-Ching. "Negotiating New Terrains: Yellow Earth Theatre's *Lear's Daughters* and *King Lear*." *Contemporary Theatre Review* 19.3 (2009): 289-97. Print.

Lo, Jacqueline. "Beyond Happy Hybridity: Performing Asian-Australian Identities." *Alter/Asians: Asian-Australian Identities in Art, Media and Popular Culture*. Ed. Ien Ang, Sharon Chalmers, Lisa Law, and Mandy Thomas. Annandale: Pluto, 2000. 152-68. Print.

Lo, Jacqueline, and Helen Gilbert. "Toward a Topography of Cross-Cultural Theatre Praxis." *TDR: The Drama Review* 46.3 (2002): 31-53. Print.

Massai, Sonia, ed. *World-Wide Shakespeares: Local Appropriations in Film and Performance*. London: Routledge, 2005. Print.

Moslund, Sten Pultz. *Migration Literature and Hybridity: The Different Speeds of Transcultural Changes*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.

Olkowski, Dorothea. *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1998. Print.

O'Sullivan, Simon. *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation.* Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Print.

Papastergiadis, Nikos. "Hybridity and Ambivalence Places and Flows in Contemporary Art and Culture." *Theory, Culture & Society* 22.4 (2005): 39-64. Print.

Patton, Paul. *Deleuze and the Political*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Pavis, Patrice. "Introduction: Towards a Theory of Interculturalism in Theatre?" *The Intercultural Performance Reader.* Ed. Patrice Pavis. London: Routledge, 1996. 1-21. Print.

_____. *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1992. Print.

Puchner, Martin. *The Drama of Ideas*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010. Print.

_____. "The Theater in Modernist Thought." *New Literary History* 33.3 (2002): 521-32. Print.

Rodowick, David. *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*. Durham: Duke UP, 1997. Print.

Sasayama, Takashi, Ronnie Mulryne, and Margaret Shewring, eds. *Shakespeare and the Japanese*

Stage. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. Print.

Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. 2002. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Sullivian, Jonathan, and Will Lowe. "Chen Shui-bian: On Independence." *The China Quarterly* 203 (2010): 619-38. Print.

Sun, Emily. *Succeeding King Lear: Literature, Exposure, and the Possibility of Politics*. New York: Fordham UP, 2010. Print.

Swatek, Catherine. *Peony Pavilion Onstage: Four Centuries in the Career of a Chinese Drama.* Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, U of Michigan, 2002. Print.

Tompkins, Joanne. "The Politics of Location in *Othello*, Djanet Sears's *Harlem Duet*, and Ong Keng Sen's *Desdemona*." *Contemporary Theatre Review* 19.3 (2010): 269-78. Print.

Tuan, Iris Hsin-Chun. *Alternative Theater in Taiwan: Feminist and Intercultural Approaches*. Youngstown: Cambria, 2007. Print.

Wu, Hsing-Kuo. "Director's Note." *Lincoln Center Festival, July 10-July 29, 2007*. New York: Playbill, 2007. Print.

_____, dir. *Li Er Zaici*. Contemporary Legend Theatre. Web. 31 Mar. 2013. <http://www.twclt.com/DramaShow.aspx?Drama=C.>

Yong, Li Lan. "Shakespeare and the Fiction of the Intercultural." *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*. Ed. Barbara Hodgdon and W. B. Worthen. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005. 527-49. Print.

穿行於莎士比亞與京劇之間：吳興國的《李爾在此》

摘　要

本文運用法國哲學家德勒茲與瓜達希發展出的概念，以當代傳奇劇場《李爾在此》爲例，探討跨文化劇場中之政治性。《李爾在此》爲當代傳奇劇場藝術總監吳興國編導演之作品，吳興國在作品裡跨越行當的限制，一人擔任十個角色的演出。學者已經指出，吳興國的個人面向影響此作極深，尤其反應吳興國與其師父之間的關係；然而，除了對照藝術家的個人經驗之外，此作亦開展其他的閱讀可能性。德勒茲與瓜達希的概念，對舞台再現性與文化認同之間的連結提出質疑，並有助於理解跨文化劇場展演脈絡中的政治性；以此閱讀《李爾在此》，則可觀察出，作品中對於京劇藝術以及莎士比亞《李爾王》演出史的去領域化。

關鍵字：跨文化劇場，莎士比亞，《李爾王》，德勒茲與瓜達希，聚合，當代傳奇劇場