

## From global London to global Shakespeare

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## **From Global London to Global Shakespeare**

Aneta Mancewicz, Kingston University

## From Global London to Global Shakespeare

### Abstract

In the twenty-first century, 'global Shakespeare' as an artistic practice and research paradigm is shaped not only by postcolonialism, nationalism, and neoliberalism, but also by the rise of global cities, such as London. With the shift from nation states to global cities, the worldwide presence of the playwright is largely sustained by the importance of London as a powerful financial and cultural centre which imports and exports performances on a worldwide scale. The enterprise is supported by the myth of 'universal' Shakespeare as a source of basic human values. The myth is no longer used as an instrument of an imperial policy but as part of neoliberal and national agendas. Two recent international initiatives vividly show the appeal of London as a global city and of Shakespeare as a universal playwright in the framework of globalization: the World Shakespeare Festival in the UK, which included the Globe to Globe Festival in London (2012), and the world tour of the Globe Theatre's *Hamlet* (2014 - 2016). Both projects manifest the intricate entanglement of postcolonialism, nationalism, neoliberalism, and globalization. Given the importance of London for global Shakespeare performance, the article opens and closes with the consideration of the city's future post-Brexit.

**Keywords:** Shakespeare, performance, city, globalization, neoliberalism

Cosmopolitanism is a key feature of contemporary London. In 2011 it was estimated that as much as 37% percent of London's inhabitants were born outside of the UK.<sup>1</sup> This might explain, at least partly, why in the Brexit referendum in June 2016, London was the only English region that voted to remain in the European Union.<sup>2</sup> It will be important to see long-term results of Brexit for Great Britain and for London, particularly in terms of regulations concerning the movement of people. Maria Delgado suggests that tightening the borders could undermine the possibilities for

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<sup>1</sup> The Migration Observatory, 'London: Census Profile' 20 May 2013 <<http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/london-census-profile>> [accessed 22 February 2016].

<sup>2</sup> Anushka Asthana, Ben Quinn and Rowena Mason, 'UK votes to leave EU after dramatic night divides nation', *Guardian*, 24 June 2016 <<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/24/britain-votes-for-brexit-eu-referendum-david-cameron>> [accessed 30 June 2016].

academic and artistic work that traverses disciplines, arts practices, and ideas.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, if migration policies become highly restrictive, London's global reach might be curbed. This in turn will affect the global Shakespeare performance that is travelling to and from London and the notion of Britishness that it endorses. The article examines two recent examples of such performance flows to argue that in the twenty-first century global Shakespeare is inseparably connected to global cities as sites of economic and cultural power.

'Global Shakespeare', in Martin Orkin's words, refers to 'undeniably remarkable worldwide travels of the Shakespearean text'.<sup>4</sup> It stands for the international practices of imagining, translating, adapting, performing, spectating, reviewing, and researching the dramatist. In the twenty-first century, 'global Shakespeare' as an artistic and research paradigm is shaped not only by postcolonialism, nationalism, and neoliberalism, but also by the rise of global cities, such as London. Thinking of Shakespeare in relation to globalization and global cities inevitably prompts a discussion about the playwright's commodification as well as the economic and cultural capital behind international theatre festivals, such as the World Shakespeare Festival (WSF) in London in 2012 (with the controversial sponsorship from the British Petroleum),<sup>5</sup> or worldwide theatre tours, such as the Globe Theatre's *Hamlet* (2014-2016). Their examination is the subject of this discussion.

The article relies on two premises. First, global Shakespeare is inherently linked with globalization, since it reveals political, economic, and cultural forces at play on a transnational theatre market. Second, Shakespeare's global presence in the twenty-first century to some extent continues the postcolonial models by upholding the division into the centre versus the periphery and the ideological appropriation of Shakespeare as a universal playwright. What the article identifies as a new phenomenon is the emergence of a revised model of globalization and global Shakespeare. This model can be described as follows. In the aftermath of decolonisation, international relations have become predominantly influenced by

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<sup>3</sup> Maria Delgado, 'The spaces between: reflections on Europe, culture and its others' (paper presented at the 'European Theatre Perspectives' Symposium, Wrocław, 8 November 2016), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Orkin, 'Bi-fold authority: this is and is not Global Shakespeare' (paper presented at *Shakespeare 450* conference of Société Française Shakespeare, Paris, 21-27 April 2014), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> The sponsorship caused a political protest from the Reclaim Shakespeare Company before the Royal Shakespeare's Company performance of *The Tempest* in Stratford-upon-Avon on 23 April 2012; Art Not Oil Coalition, 'Reclaim Shakespeare Company: Action is Eloquence' <<http://www.artnotoil.org.uk/blog/reclaim-shakespeare-company-action-eloquence>> [accessed 22 February 2016]

economic rather than political issues.<sup>6</sup> In the neoliberal model of economy, which advocates private entrepreneurship, free markets and free trade, and which has gained global prominence since 1970s,<sup>7</sup> the power is increasingly transferred from nation states to global cities.<sup>8</sup> Although the rising global centres in Asia are challenging Western dominance, London still retains its unique position as one of the world's top financial centres.<sup>9</sup> As a global city and cultural hub, London successfully imports and exports productions of Shakespeare, under the banner of the playwright's 'universality'. The recourse to universality, however, is I would argue, no longer used a civilising tool to impose an imperial authority onto the colonies; rather, it is an instrument for retaining a sense of national identity and importance in the global network of neoliberal economies.

### **Global Imports: The World Shakespeare Festival**

London as a cultural capital and Shakespeare's 'home' regularly hosts productions of the playwright from all over the globe, but the WSF offered a particularly wide array of international theatre. Produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company from Spring to Autumn 2012, the festival featured British and foreign companies staging their work alongside the Olympic Games in London, itself a global event on a grand scale. The RSC stated that its aim was to bring together local and foreign companies to foreground Shakespeare's global status: 'We invited UK and international artists and producers to explore Shakespeare as the world's playwright'.<sup>10</sup> As noted by Kathleen McLuskie, the project was managed by global networks of cultural ministries, international festivals, and major cultural organisations to 'attract an audience of mobile, comparatively affluent young people, equally at home in any number of global capitals and often forming the most privileged sections of diasporic communities in major cities'.<sup>11</sup> The outcomes of the WSF were shown across the UK,

<sup>6</sup> Raymond E. Betts, *Decolonization* (London and New York, Routledge, 1998), pp. 63, 69.

<sup>7</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

<sup>9</sup> London opens the 2016 Global Cities Index; A. T. Kearney, '2016 Global Cities Index' <<https://www.atkearney.com/documents/10192/8178456/Global+Cities+2016.pdf/8139cd44-c760-4a93-ad7d-11c5d347451a>> [accessed 12 March 2017].

<sup>10</sup> The Royal Shakespeare Company, 'History' <<https://www.rsc.org.uk/about-us/key-dates>> [accessed 22 February 2016]

<sup>11</sup> Kathleen McLuskie, 'Afterword', in *Shakespeare on the Global Stage: Performance and Festivity in the Olympic Year*, ed. by Paul Prescott and Erin Sullivan (London and New York: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2015), pp. 323-35 (p. 334).

but aimed at a global audience. The RSC estimated that the WSF reached over 1.8 million people through performances, films, digital commissions, exhibitions, and events.<sup>12</sup>

Presenting Shakespeare ‘as the world’s playwright’, the WSF placed the UK literally in the centre. This was reflected most clearly by the use of maps in the festival. Alexa Huang remarks that ‘the logo of the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival [...] is the Earth seen from over the North Atlantic, showing Britain nearest the center of the world’.<sup>13</sup> The repositioning and the cropping of the Mercator map was a gesture that blatantly proclaimed the importance of the UK as a cultural hub, in a manner reminiscent of imperialism. Similarly, the invitation of companies from around the world has served to reaffirm the significance of the British culture as a global host. As pointed out by Stephen Purcell, ‘A celebration of the periphery serves to consolidate the “centre”, [...] and for all its decentering of dominant notions of “Englishness”, the festival also made contradictory gestures towards repositioning Shakespeare, the Globe, and the English language as firmly central’.<sup>14</sup>

Purcell’s comment indicates that the assignment of the central position has occurred on several levels. It was not only the UK and Shakespeare that were the primary focus of the festival – there was also a special significance given to London and the Globe during the celebrations. Although the WSF was a UK-wide event, with several performances shown in Wales, Scotland, and the North of England, most of the productions could be seen in the capital. Some of the shows opened in London and then travelled, as for instance, the Tunisian *Macbeth: Leïla & Ben – A Bloody History*, directed by Lofti Achour, which premiered at the Riverside Studios and was subsequently presented at Northern Stage in Newcastle Upon Tyne. Other companies followed the opposite trajectory within the WSF circuit – the RSC brought many of their productions to London after a run at Stratford-upon-Avon. In their perceptive account of the festival’s presence in the North of England, Adam Hansen and Monika Smialkowska note that there was no particular rationale for bringing Achour’s

<sup>12</sup> The Royal Shakespeare Company, ‘History’.

<sup>13</sup> Alexa Huang, “‘What Country, Friends, Is This?’: Touring Shakespeares, Agency, and Efficacy in Theatre Historiography”, *Theatre Survey* 54.1 (2013): 51-85 (p. 76).

<sup>14</sup> Stephen Purcell, ‘Circles, Centres and the Globe to Globe Festival’, *Blogging Shakespeare*, <<http://bloggingshakespeare.com/year-of-shakespeare-circles-centres-and-the-globe-to-globe-festival>> [accessed 22 February 2016].

*Macbeth* and other WSF shows to Newcastle and Gateshead area.<sup>15</sup> This contrasts sharply with the careful planning of performances in London, where the Globe to Globe festival (G2G) was well interwoven into the fabric of the capital's migrant communities. The companies invited to G2G were often selected to attract members of major diasporic groups in the city. Such approach was particularly visible in the choice of the Bangladeshi *The Tempest* and the Polish *Macbeth*, both of which brought to the Globe substantial audiences from these two large migrant populations. G2G was also the key indication of the city's cosmopolitanism, and it hosted 37 productions of Shakespeare in 37 languages at London Southbank.<sup>16</sup>

G2G showcased London as a metropolitan centre capable of attracting companies from around the world, but it also revealed the possibility that the English language and culture might be displaced in the multilingual and multinational makeup of the city. Diaspora communities flocked to Southbank to see productions staged in their national languages. Since the actors were not allowed to use English and the subtitles gave only a brief indication of the plot, there was a clear division of the linguistic competence in the audience. In the open space of the Globe, those who could understand the speeches and cultural codes were privileged over the spectators who were exclusively Anglophone. According to Rose Elfman, 'As these groups demonstrated informed responses to the production, they conspicuously displaced English speakers as "expert" spectators at the Globe'.<sup>17</sup> On many occasions this created a sense of diasporic community and produced festive moments that overturned social hierarchies in the sense of Mikhail Bakhtin's carnival. It became apparent, for instance, in the joyful singing in Bangladesh's Dhaka Theatre's *Tempest* or in the performance of the national anthem in South Sudan Theatre Company's (SSTC) *Cymbeline*. In these moments, diaspora members rather than English speakers were the ones more at home with the language, the space of the Globe, and Shakespeare. As such, they experienced something akin to Bakhtin's carnival

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<sup>15</sup> Adam Hansen and Monika Smialkowska, 'Shakespeare in the North: Regionalism, Culture and Power', in *Shakespeare on the Global Stage*, ed. by Prescott and Sullivan, pp. 101-32 (p. 109).

<sup>16</sup> The event has been examined in such collections as *Shakespeare Beyond English: A Global Experiment*, ed. by Susan Bennett and Christie Carson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) and *Shakespeare on the Global Stage: Performance and Festivity in the Olympic Year*, ed. by Paul Prescott and Erin Sullivan (London and New York: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Rose Elfman, 'Expert Spectatorship and Intra-Audience Relationships at Globe to Globe 2012', in *Shakespeare on the Global Stage*, ed. by Prescott and Sullivan, pp. 163-90 (p. 166).

participants, who ‘for a time entered the utopian realm of community, freedom, equality, and abundance’.<sup>18</sup>

The eruption of the carnival spirit among the diaspora communities occasionally challenged the official festival rhetoric of the playwright’s universality as a unifying force. Such disruption is evident in Dame Harriet Walter’s commentary on Maja Kleczewska’s *Makbet* from Poland, shown at the G2G. Walter expounded her idea of universal Shakespeare as a shared experience. She remarked, ‘As to the whole idea behind the Festival (as with the RSC’s Complete Works Festival (in 2006) and their World Theatre season back in the 1960s), to me these are thrilling events and demonstrate Shakespeare’s complete universality’.<sup>19</sup> Walter described Shakespeare’s universality as something that goes beyond an individual style of each production and that resides in the appeal of the plays ‘to all of us’.<sup>20</sup> Kleczewska’s staging, however, did not appeal to Walter nor did it expand her understanding of *Macbeth* and Eastern European culture. The English actress saw the production as lacking ‘any kind of psychological journey’, as ‘one sleaze-ball succeeds another sleaze-ball’, while the witches are portrayed as transvestites rather than ‘wise women’ in a vulgar world reminiscent of ‘a degenerate cabaret’.<sup>21</sup>

Walter’s criticism of Kleczewska’s ‘very Polish take on the play’<sup>22</sup> suggests that the notion of Shakespeare as a universal playwright tends to be closely tied to an English perspective, which establishes the parameters for evaluating the success of a foreign production. *Makbet* failed in adhering to these parameters ~~by lacking. As a carnival turned cabaret it lacked what Walter saw as~~ psychological depth, ~~and disregarding the great moral and philosophical issues that characterise the play defied the decorum.~~ Despite ~~these flaws~~ her reaction to the Polish performance, ~~for~~ Walter ~~still praised the performance did not undermine~~ the principle of Shakespeare’s ‘complete universality’. This ~~suggests indicates~~ that the principle functions as a self-perpetuating, powerful myth, capable of reaffirming itself even when faced with foreign and unfamiliar modes of performing the playwright. Universality might be

<sup>18</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Harriet Walter, “Who dares receive it other”. Conversation with Harriet Walter (9 May 2012) following a performance of *Makbet*, in *Shakespeare Beyond English*, ed. by Bennett and Carson, pp. 154-156 (p. 156).

<sup>20</sup> Walter, “Who dares”, p. 156.

<sup>21</sup> Walter, “Who dares”, pp. 154-156.

<sup>22</sup> Walter, “Who dares”, p. 154.



thus a matter of national ownership rather than intercultural negotiation. What tends to be seen as ‘essential’ about Shakespeare is what is ‘essentially’ perceived as English, however problematic it might be to define Englishness as a national construct.

The WSF revealed not only how the rhetoric of universality might be linked to the idea of Shakespeare’s ownership and national identity, but it also showed how it might also be part of a neoliberal agenda. The latter aspect emerged clearly in the South Sudanese *Cymbeline* at the Globe. Advertised as the achievement of what at the time was the youngest nation in the world (the Republic of South Sudan gained independence in July 2011), the SSTC show was developed by local artists with the support of the Globe team and the British Council. Kim Solga’s insightful examination of this project, which focused not only on the staging itself, but also on the promotional materials and the media coverage, emphasised South Sudan’s enormous economic and political struggle. Solga argued that the press, and to some extent also the Globe, acknowledged this struggle but then evoked it mainly to construct the *Cymbeline* project as ‘a neo-liberal social good’<sup>23</sup> or a neo-capitalist narrative of overcoming the difference between the wealthy North and the impoverished South. Such an approach was likely to obfuscate the distressing reality of one of the most underdeveloped countries in the world:

Looking at *Cymbeline* as an almost mythical achievement by an extraordinary group of artists [...] risks giving audiences permission to look *away* from the profoundly mundane and absolutely criminal disparities between ‘North’ and ‘South’ that neo-liberal ideology works to obscure and that the SSTT’s journey to London brought forcefully to the Globe’s stage.<sup>24</sup>

The narrative of ‘an almost mythical achievement’, according to Solga, has downplayed the scale of disparity in terms of resources and opportunities between the SSTC and the Globe, and between South Sudan and the UK more broadly.

The success story might have indeed brushed over the immense challenges faced by a country suffering from decades of civil war, inadequate health care and education, as well as insufficient infrastructure. At the same time, Solga admitted that

<sup>23</sup> Kim Solga, ‘Neo-liberal pleasure, global responsibility, and the South Sudan *Cymbeline*’, in *Shakespeare Beyond English*, ed. by Bennett and Carson, pp. 101-09 (p. 101).

<sup>24</sup> Solga, ‘Neo-liberal pleasure’, p. 102.

given its enormous constraints and difficulties, the production did succeed,<sup>25</sup> and it was hailed abroad and at home as a triumph of a new nation and its culture, capable of competing on a prestigious stage with some of the best theatre companies in the world. A hopeful future seemed to have been ensured by the myth of Shakespeare as a universal playwright, who reflects all cultures in all periods. In addition, the South Sudanese *Cymbeline* was celebrated as part of the process of restoring peace and healing the wounds. The British Council keenly promoted this idea, explaining the choice of *Cymbeline* as ‘a play which ends with a philosophical examination of forgiveness and reconciliation after war’.<sup>26</sup> The local artists echoed these words in a British Council video, where they affirm the relevance of restoration themes for their national history.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, South Sudan did not share the happy ending of Shakespeare’s romance. The new republic was ravaged by another civil war from 2013 to 2015, which displaced 2.2 million people.<sup>28</sup> The political and economic troubles eventually led to the collapse of farming and to food shortages. In early 2017, the United Nations declared famine in South Sudan, with 4.9 million people, that is 40% of the population, ‘in urgent need of food’.<sup>29</sup>

The South Sudanese *Cymbeline* offers thus a striking case of a performance in which a new postcolonial republic stages its nationhood at an international festival held in a former colonial empire to affirm the universality of Shakespeare as a global playwright. As such, it illustrates the connections between nationalism, postcolonialism, and globalization at the WSF. Apart from occasional displays of national pride among visiting companies, particularly common during the performances at the G2G, the Festival might be seen as a celebration of Englishness, with Shakespeare positioned as the pinnacle of English literature and language. According to Colette Gordon, the tagline attached to G2G, ‘Shakespeare’s Coming Home’, suggested that it was ‘a tribute to Englishness, in which representatives from

<sup>25</sup> Solga, ‘Neo-liberal pleasure’, p. 109.

<sup>26</sup> British Council, ‘Globe to Globe’ <<http://theatreanddance.britishcouncil.org/projects/2012/globe-to-globe/>> [accessed 22 February 2016].

<sup>27</sup> British Council Arts, ‘South Sudan Theatre Company: Cymbaline [sic]’ 2 January 2014 <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4k8\\_AuITvw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4k8_AuITvw)> [accessed 22 February 2016].

<sup>28</sup> BBC News, ‘South Sudan country profile’, 7 December 2015 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14069082>> [accessed 22 February 2016].

<sup>29</sup> BBC News, ‘South Sudan declares famine in Unity State’, 20 February 2017 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-39025927>> [accessed 12 March 2017].

the furthest corners of the globe bring back Shakespeare as England's due'.<sup>30</sup> Huang notes that such narrative 'is part of the organizing principle of some festivals', and 'it is informed by internationalism and (paradoxically) a form of nationalism'.<sup>31</sup>

The Festival was an occasion to celebrate the English national playwright, but equally it might have been an opportunity to reassess the nation's colonial past. After all, many of the visiting countries were former colonies, in which Shakespeare was used as an educational and cultural commodity to promote the political and economic interests of the empire. Gordon argues, however, that the Festival has carefully distanced itself from postcolonialism, substituting it with 'an eagerly rehearsed rhetoric of "globalism"'.<sup>32</sup> Such rhetoric was to replace the colonial divisions with an international network, shifting the focus from economic and political aspects of globalization to the celebration of Shakespeare's global appeal.

The 'rhetoric of "globalism"', however, could not fully conceal the reality of globalization. Commenting on the uneven distribution of funding among regional and international participants, McLuskie argued, 'In spite of its extraordinary ambition and scale, the Cultural Olympiad could not fulfil a utopian promise of egalitarian access to culture because of a fundamental disconnection between its emotional narrative and the material world'.<sup>33</sup> The celebration of London and the UK during the festival placed them in the centre of the world's map, while making evident the privilege of being in the centre, with access not only to culture, but also to education, healthcare, food, and clean water. And as the companies from numerous cultures and countries brought Shakespeare 'home' in an array of theatrical forms and interpretations, the myth of universal Shakespeare emerged as a means of constructing the identity and strength of English culture in an increasingly fragmented and unequal world.

### **Global Export: Globe to Globe *Hamlet***

Following the enthusiasm for large-scale international Shakespeare projects in the aftermath of WSF and G2G, the Globe Theatre produced *Hamlet* for a worldwide tour. Directed by Dominic Droomgole and Bill Buckhurst, the show premiered in

<sup>30</sup> Colette Gordon, "'Mind the Gap': Globalism, Postcolonialism and Making Up Africa in the Cultural Olympiad," in *Shakespeare on the Global Stage*, ed. Prescott and Sullivan, pp. 191-225 (p. 197).

<sup>31</sup> Huang, "'What Country'", p. 76.

<sup>32</sup> Gordon, "'Mind the Gap'", p. 192.

<sup>33</sup> McLuskie, 'Afterword', p. 333.

April 2014, on the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, with performances in London at Middle Temple Hall and Shakespeare's Globe. Afterwards the company travelled around the globe, with the aim to visit every country in the world. The website of the project featured a large map which relied on a Mercator-derived standard representation that traced the progress of the tour, marking its origin in London, and more broadly, in England, Europe, and the Northern Hemisphere. In the course of two years, the company travelled over 300,000 km to visit 197 countries, giving 293 performances in 202 venues.<sup>34</sup> The tour concluded with performances on 23 and 24 April 2016 as part of the 400-year anniversary of Shakespeare's death, which was enthusiastically celebrated in London and across the world.

The project brought together key phenomena that have contributed to the globalization of Shakespeare in the twenty-first century. These were: worldwide commemoration, the myth of the Globe as Shakespeare's workplace, international touring, and the myths of Shakespeare's universality and of *Hamlet* as a play that captures the essence of the human spirit. The evocation of worldwide centenaries of Shakespeare's birth and death gave a compelling narrative to the project. The origin of the production at the Globe invested it with an aura of authenticity. The decision to perform *Hamlet* live to an unprecedented number of local audiences capitalised on the underlying principle of the Globe as a venue in which the spectators are visibly part of the performance. As a worldwide tour, the project explicitly addressed the use of different spaces and their impact on audiences. The materials posted by the company showed that in each case a local venue and audience influenced the performance in ways that are less predictable than at the Globe. Although Droomgole and Buckhurst's *Hamlet* originated in London, it directly reached spectators in other parts of the world, and the live contact meant that the Globe's production was localised. Even if the scale of the project and the intensity of the tour made it impossible to fully adapt each performance to its unique playing conditions, the company made adjustments along the way; for instance, in 'some Islamic countries no cross was shown, no kissing allowed and the women characters covered up more than usual'.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Shakespeare's Globe Blog. 'Globe to Globe Hamlet: Audience Reactions'. 27 April 2016. <<http://blog.shakespearesglobe.com/post/143484695488/globe-to-globe-hamlet-audience-reactions>> [accessed 29 April 2016].

<sup>35</sup> Keith Bartlett, *Hamlet: The Greatest Theatre Tour on Earth* (England: Inky Little Fingers: 2016), p. 12.

The advancements in transportation and technology, which have fuelled the process of globalization, enabled the company to travel on an unprecedented scale, while keeping the audiences at home interested in the project through regular Twitter messages. As Huang remarks, ‘Touring theatre is a place where theatre studies and globalization come into contact’,<sup>36</sup> and in the case of the Globe’s *Hamlet*, it is also where different myths surrounding Shakespeare come together in a powerful way. Touring was inscribed in the dramaturgy and the style of the performance, as well as the promotion materials. The cast consisted of twelve actors, dressed in contemporary costumes, who performed on a makeshift stage, using few props and travel trunks. In the course of about two hours and forty minutes they gave a brisk and lively version of the play, which was word-driven but which also involved music and dance. The central idea behind the staging was that of a touring company putting on *Hamlet* for a local audience, which was also a device used by several companies at the G2G. The materials accompanying the production further emphasised the tradition of the seventeenth-century travels of Shakespeare’s tragedy. Droomgole wrote:

In 1608, only eight years after it was written, Hamlet [sic] was performed on a boat – the Red Dragon – off the coast of Yemen. Just ten years later it was being toured extensively all over Northern Europe. The spirit of touring, and of communicating stories to fresh ears, was always central to Shakespeare’s work. We couldn’t be happier to be extending that mission even further.<sup>37</sup>

Evoking the historic performance on the Red Dragon, Droomgole presented the tour as true to Shakespeare’s spirit and to the tradition of staging *Hamlet*. Such a perspective invested the project with an aura of authenticity, in line with original practices developed at the Globe itself. The approach is typical of Anglophone Shakespeare performance after the war, which Dennis Kennedy has described as dependent on two tenets: the drive towards authenticity and a contemporary performance style.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Huang, ‘“What country”’, p. 54.

<sup>37</sup> Shakespeare’s Globe, ‘*Hamlet* by William Shakespeare’ <<http://globetoglobe.shakespearesglobe.com/hamlet/about-the-project>> [accessed 22 February 2016].

<sup>38</sup> Dennis Kennedy, ‘Introduction: Shakespeare without his Language’, in *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance*, ed. by Dennis Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 1-18 (pp. 6-8).

At the same time, the choice of *Hamlet* drew on the mythical status of the tragedy, proclaimed by Harold Bloom as a ‘poem unlimited’.<sup>39</sup> The project’s website features the definition of the tragedy by Peter Brook as ‘the most all encompassing of Shakespeare’s plays’.<sup>40</sup> Brook’s description is couched in absolute terms. He claims that ‘[e]veryone, young or old can today find an immediate identification with its characters, their pains and their interrogations’, while the Globe’s tour ‘can bring a rich journey of discovery to new audiences everywhere’.<sup>41</sup> Brook’s comment suggests that the myth of Shakespeare’s universality was entwined in the Globe project with the myth of *Hamlet*’s universality. Although, according to Holderness and Loughrey, the tragedy ‘will seem immediately resistant to global reading’ as being white and Northern-European,<sup>42</sup> it tends to function on the global stages ‘as a repository of universal human truth, transcending all boundaries of race, ethnicity and culture’.<sup>43</sup> This powerful narrative largely underlines *Hamlet*’s international success. Equally, the tragedy can be used to explicitly interrogate racial and ethnic representations, as in the recent all-black *Hamlet* adapted by Mark Norfolk and directed by Jeffery Kissoon (Watford Palace Theatre 2016).<sup>44</sup> In line with the understanding of universality as a transcendent truth, Globe’s production employed a racially diverse cast and evoked the myth of theatre as a collective experience that creates a sense of community beyond linguistic and cultural differences.

This theatrical myth emerged particularly visibly during one of the most memorable moments of the tour, which was the performance on 3 February 2016 at the refugee encampment, infamously nicknamed the Jungle, located in the vicinity of Calais, France. Writing for *Guardian*, Mark Brown estimated that at the time circa 6,000 migrants from 22 countries inhabited the camp, the majority with the hope of entering the UK.<sup>45</sup> The performance was extensively covered by the European

<sup>39</sup> Harold Bloom, *Hamlet: Poem Unlimited* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2003).

<sup>40</sup> Shakespeare’s Globe, ‘*Hamlet* by William Shakespeare’.

<sup>41</sup> Shakespeare’s Globe, ‘*Hamlet* by William Shakespeare’.

<sup>42</sup> Holderness and Loughrey, ‘Arabesque’, p. 32.

<sup>43</sup> Holderness and Loughrey, ‘Arabesque’, p. 33. The 2010 Shakespeare Festival in Craiova, Romania showcased productions of *Hamlet* from around the globe, including Lithuania, USA, China, and Japan.

<sup>44</sup> David Linton’s preface to Norfolk’s adaptation localises the production in the African and Black British experience, while emphasising the global and universal nature of Shakespeare’s tragedy; David Linton, ‘Preface’, in *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, adapted by Mark Norfolk (Twickenham: Aurora Metro Books, 2016), pp. iv-xiv.

<sup>45</sup> Mark Brown, ‘All the world’s a stage: Shakespeare’s Globe takes *Hamlet* to Calais’, *Guardian*, 3 February 2016 <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/03/shakespeares-globe-takes-hamlet-calais-jungle-camp>> [accessed 22 February 2016].

media,<sup>46</sup> some of which readily evoked the myth of *Hamlet*'s universality, drawing parallels between the doubt and despair experienced by Shakespeare's prince and the predicament of the young migrants.<sup>47</sup> Such accounts praised the Globe company for its humanitarian spirit and reflected on the power of theatre to bring solace in times of adversity. The actors were described as extending the message of empathy and compassion to the refugees in Calais, the audiences at home, and the outside world. This political interpretation turned the Globe performers into cultural emissaries of Britain representing their country as a cultivated and humane nation. The company was thus seen to be exporting a particular notion of Britishness to the world, projecting an image of the nation as inclusive, diverse, and ethically conscious. The myth of universal Shakespeare as a source of shared human values was a key element of this image.

The Globe's performance in Calais, however, revealed more complexities that could be encompassed by the universality myth, as some journalists subtly noted in their accounts. Carlos Fresneda, writing for the Spanish daily newspaper *El Mundo*, hinted at the differences in the experience of migration, shared by the racially diverse cast of performers and Calais refugees. He quoted Naeem Hayat, a London-born actor of Pakistani origin, who played Hamlet in Calais (alternating on tour with the Nigerian-born Ladi Emeruwa), as he expressed compassion with the audience.<sup>48</sup> Pointing to Hayat's emigrant background, Fresneda suggested that the performer was capable of comprehending the language used by the Afghan spectators, and this implied that he might have understood their plight better. Fresneda's comment, however, stands in sharp contrast with Brown's juxtaposition of the refugees in a makeshift camp and the actors on a world tour, who have just arrived from 'the Seychelles, a far cry from the bone-chilling cold of the post-apocalyptic Jungle'.<sup>49</sup> What these contrasting accounts indicate is that while the experience of migration is

<sup>46</sup> "'Hamlet' sale a escena ante los refugiados de la 'jungla' de Calais", *El País*, 3 February 2016 <[http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2016/02/03/actualidad/1454526102\\_498822.html](http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2016/02/03/actualidad/1454526102_498822.html)> [accessed 12 March 2017]; natszo, 'Słynny teatr Shakespeare's Globe wystawił "Hamleta"', *Gazeta wyborcza*, 4 February 2016 <<http://wyborcza.pl/1,75475,19583288,teatr-shakespeare-s-globe-wystawil-hamleta-w-obozie-dla-uchodzcow.html>> [accessed 12 March 2017].

<sup>47</sup> Carlos Fresneda, "'Hamlet'", en la jungla', *El Mundo*, 4 February 2016 <<http://www.elmundo.es/cultura/2016/02/04/56b2a018ca4741f2668b45cf.html>> [accessed 12 March 2017]; natszo, 'Słynny teatr Shakespeare's Globe wystawił "Hamleta"'.  
<sup>48</sup> Carlos Fresneda, "'Hamlet'", en la jungla', *El Mundo*, 4 February 2016 <<http://www.elmundo.es/cultura/2016/02/04/56b2a018ca4741f2668b45cf.html>> [accessed 12 March 2017].

<sup>49</sup> Brown, 'All the world's a stage'.

common, the reality of that experience tends to differ widely, depending on economic, political, cultural, and personal circumstances of the migrants.

This disconnect is one of the reasons why some of the audience members, for example, the Afghan and Syrian refugees cited by Fresneda,<sup>50</sup> were sceptical that the Globe's visit could improve their bleak conditions. Their scepticism posed a question about the efficacy of universal Shakespeare as an agent for raising awareness and empathy, particularly with the British borders being firmly shut to the Calais migrants. Similarly to the case of South Sudanese *Cymbeline*, the media coverage of the Globe *Hamlet* at the immigrant camp was overall enthusiastic; it tended to stress a success story of human solidarity and resilience, with theatre as a means of addressing (if not redressing) global poverty, war, and migration crisis. In both the cases, the optimistic messages were soon confronted with harsh reality. Indeed, few weeks after the Globe's visit, the southern part of the camp was dismantled despite resistance from the refugees and concerns from some of the humanitarian organizations.<sup>51</sup>

The media responses to the Globe's performance in Calais have placed it as part of global political considerations. Indeed, during their two-year tour the actors witnessed several humanitarian crises. According to the production's commemorative booklet, '*Hamlet* was [...] played for many dsiplaced [sic] people around the world [...] in the Zaatari camp on the border between Syria and Jordan, for Central African Republic refugees in Cameroon, and for Yemeni people in Djibouti'.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, the project reminded the audiences at home about economic disparities between world countries. It not only showed images from different parts of the world, but also drew attention to the financing of the tour, which depended mainly on a fundraising campaign with some institutional sponsorship from the British Council and the British embassies among others. This funding model revealed the unequal distribution of wealth around the world:

The initial idea was that the shows in the rich countries would be able to help finance those in the poorer countries. The equation worked up to a point but it soon became apparent how few rich countries there are in the world and how many poor countries.

<sup>50</sup> Fresneda, "Hamlet", en la jungla'.

<sup>51</sup> Associated Press, 'Workers finish dismantling Southern Calais Jungle', *France 24*, 17 March 2016 <<http://www.france24.com/en/20160317-french-workers-finish-dismantling-southern-jungle>> [accessed 29 April 2016].

<sup>52</sup> Shakespeare's Globe, '*Hamlet* by William Shakespeare'.



Poverty is so widespread that the resources and freedom available to us are unknown to 80% of the world.<sup>53</sup>

The booklet reminded the readers about inequality and poverty, seeking to take action against it. Put together by Keith Bartlett, one of the *Hamlet* actors, it provided a record and reflection on the tour in an effort to collect money for a charity that provides meals for school children in 12 developing countries across the world.

The tour established, thus, a complex set of relationships between the performers and their audiences at home and abroad. Exploiting the idea of *Hamlet* as a play that might speak to any nation or group of people, the Globe's production celebrated Shakespeare's popularity among local communities around the world. In doing so, it inevitably put the myth of Shakespeare's universality under close scrutiny. The company and the media coverage evoked the shared human experience in the play, but they also made the British and the international public more aware of cultural differences, political conflicts, and economic inequalities in different parts of the globe. More broadly, while the worldwide tour has foregrounded some of the most burning issues of our time, it has posed a fundamental question whether touring theatre has responsibility and a role to play in addressing them.

### **Touring**

Touring theatre continues to thrive in the twenty-first century, despite the development of digital theatre screenings. Research carried out by the Arts Council England, UK Theatre and the Society of London Theatre reveals that between 2014 and 2016 as many as 36% of theatre companies increased their touring.<sup>54</sup> A global circulation of theatre is particularly notable in Shakespearean performance. In the 1590s, English companies staged Shakespeare's plays on the Continent,<sup>55</sup> and in 1607 and 1608 *Hamlet* and *Richard II* were performed on board of Red Dragon, off the

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<sup>53</sup> Bartlett, *Hamlet*, p. 3.

<sup>54</sup> David Hutchinson, 'One in three theatre companies claim touring boost since 2014 – report'. *The Stage*, 12 October 2016 <<https://www.thestage.co.uk/news/2016/one-in-three-theatre-companies-claim-touring-boost-since-2014-report/>> [accessed 12 March 2017].

<sup>55</sup> Jerzy Limon, *Gentlemen of a Company: English Players in Central and Eastern Europe 1590-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Simon Williams, *Shakespeare on the German Stage: Volume 1, 1586-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Zdeněk Stříbrný, *Shakespeare and Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Aneta Mancewicz, 'Performing Shakespeare in Europe', *Literature Compass*, 13.11 (2016), pp. 711-723.

coast of West and then East Africa.<sup>56</sup> In the nineteenth century, renowned European actors and actresses, such as Italian Adelaide Ristori and Polish Helena Modjeska, made famous appearances on American stages,<sup>57</sup> whereas in 1880s and 1890s, the English actor-manager George Crichton Miln travelled with his company to America, Australia, and Asia.<sup>58</sup> In the last few decades international tours have gained momentum, given a greater affordability of air travel for artists and audiences alike and the establishment of international Shakespeare festivals and festival networks, such as the European Shakespeare Festivals Network, founded in 2010.<sup>59</sup>

Internationally acclaimed directors like Thomas Ostermeier, Oscaras Koršunovas or, until recently, Yukio Ninagawa, have regularly shown their work around the globe, with curators, academics and aficionados alike often following particular productions. Ostermeier's *Hamlet* was performed in 28 cities between July 2008 and January 2016, as distant as Sarajevo, Sydney, and Santiago de Chile.<sup>60</sup>

In the twenty-first century, the worldwide circulation of Shakespeare continues to depend on contradictory impulses and forces. It involves the pleasure of discovering and sharing the plays across cultures through international festivals, worldwide touring, live broadcasting, and digital Shakespeare archives. At the same time, global Shakespeare inevitably raises questions about the centre and the periphery, showing the ways in which the claims about the playwright's universality might play an ideological role. Such questions evoke those very debates that have shaped colonial and postcolonial discourses. Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey suggest that '[p]ostcolonial criticism operates within a framework consisting of a unified imperial culture and a fragmented diaspora of colonial outposts [where] "Shakespeare" is assumed to be an integrated ideological commodity before its

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<sup>56</sup> Gary Taylor, 'Travel to Africa. *Hamlet* in Africa 1607', in *Travel Knowledge. European 'Discoveries' in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna G. Singh (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 223-248.

<sup>57</sup> Marvin Carlson, *The Italian Shakespearians: Performances by Ristori, Salvini, and Rossi in England and America* (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1985); Beth Holmgren, *Starring Madame Modjeska. On Tour in Poland and America* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2012).

<sup>58</sup> Peter Holland, 'Foreword', in *The Globalization of Shakespeare in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney and John M. Mercer (Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), pp. i-iv (p. iii).

<sup>59</sup> 'About us', European Shakespeare Festivals Network, 2017 <<http://esfn.eu/about-us>> [accessed 12 March 2017].

<sup>60</sup> 'Hamlet,' *Schaubühne* <<http://www.schaubuehne.de/en/productions/hamlet.html>> [accessed 12 March 2017].

exportation to the rest of the globe'.<sup>61</sup> Global Shakespeare performances in the twenty-first century echo a postcolonial perspective in that they rely on the universality of the playwright as 'an integrated ideological commodity' as well as the domination of the English language. At the same time, worldwide touring is inevitably circumscribed by the conditions of the globalized neoliberal economy inasmuch that it involves inequalities of power, sites of privilege, and flows of international capital.

### **Maps, Markets, and Myths**

The concept of 'globalization' is complex, contested, and predominantly pejorative. Inherently associated with hierarchy and power, it refers to economic and social inequalities, which are produced by the unchecked power of transnational corporations, banks, and financial organisations. Globalization occurs on political, economic, and cultural levels; it involves transnational power structures, international production, exchange, and marketing of goods, as well as cultural homogenization.<sup>62</sup> The worldwide performance of Shakespeare is inevitably dependent on these phenomena, since international theatre projects – co-productions, festivals, and tours – are often created with a global audience in mind, which influences the company's artistic choices. They also tend to rely on corporate funding, while the location, programming and ticket pricing determine access, representation, and participation.

The existing global inequalities are largely the legacy of colonialism, as well as part and parcel of globalization. This is particularly clear when globalization is identified with 'global consciousness, cultural imperialism, universal communication'.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, Barry K. Gills argues that globalization is directly tied to the neoliberal economy – the efforts of accumulating the capital and protecting its interests on a global scale through the development of transnational forms of authority and 'the political exclusion of dissident social forces from the arena of state policy making'.<sup>64</sup> According to these definitions, globalization shares a great deal with

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<sup>61</sup> Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey, 'Arabesque: Shakespeare and Globalisation', in *Globalisation and its Discontents: Writing the Global Culture* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), pp. 24-46 (p. 36).

<sup>62</sup> Holderness and Loughrey, 'Arabesque', pp. 30-31.

<sup>63</sup> Holderness and Loughrey, 'Arabesque', p. 43.

<sup>64</sup> Barry K. Gills, 'Introduction: Globalization and the Politics of Resistance', in *Globalization and the Politics of Resistance*, ed. by Barry K. Gills (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave 2000), pp. 3-11 (p. 4).

colonisation as a process directed at securing control, gaining profit, and introducing cultural homogeneity on a global scale.

This colonial legacy emerges clearly when we look at maps not as geographical but ideological instruments. According to Huang, ‘The world map as a metaphor plays an important role in the rise of global Shakespeares as a field that is animated by political and aesthetic distances between cultures’.<sup>65</sup> The very representation of the globe in cartography is political, according to Richard Schechner’s examination of maps as performance acts. The need to translate the roundness of the world into the flatness of the map has meant that cartographers had to make choices about proportioning and positioning of the continents and countries. The model most used today is based on The Mercator Projection of the sixteenth century Flemish geographer and cartographer Gerardus Mercator. As Schechner notes, in terms of its representation of the globe, ‘Mercator’s map enacts the world as the colonial powers wished to view it’,<sup>66</sup> with Europe and North America of outsized dimension (with respect to Africa and South America) and occupying a privileged position. Although empires have collapsed and powers have shifted since the sixteenth century, Mercator’s Projection is still in use today and serves as a testimony of a colonial mindset. Many maps have sought to redress it; most recently, digital devices and online sites have revised the Mercator format. For example, Google Maps and GPS systems allow us to visualise and access data in a radically new manner, while websites and apps such as *The True Size of Africa*, or *The true Size of...*<sup>67</sup> seek to address geographical inaccuracies and distortions.

The postcolonial structures of supremacy and inequality forcefully emerge within the global paradigm of staging and study of Shakespeare. Shakespearean performance and scholarship continue to emanate from Western centres, predominantly metropolitan ones, to the rest of the world, in a striking similarity to the colonial model. For example, the screenings of Shakespeare productions as part of the National Theatre Live clearly exemplify the distinction between the centre and the periphery. They are broadcast from London to cinemas around the world, with theatre

<sup>65</sup> Alexa Huang, ‘Global Shakespeares as Methodology’, *Shakespeare* 9:3 (2013), 273-290 (p. 280).

<sup>66</sup> Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Media Editor: Sara Brady (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 41.

<sup>67</sup> Kai Krause, *The True Size of Africa* <<http://kai.sub.blue/images/True-Size-of-Africa-kk-v3.pdf>> [accessed 22 February 22, 2016]  
James Talmage and Damon Maneice, *The True Size of...* <<http://thetruesize.com/#/aboutModal>> [accessed 22 February 2016].

originating in an economic and cultural hub, from which it radiates to locations which are less privileged in terms of funding and resources.

The efforts to redirect the Western gaze to the East have a potential to challenge the existing sites of power that influence Shakespearean performance and scholarship,<sup>68</sup> but the division between the centre and the periphery remains. Rather than eradicating the inequalities, globalization introduces new powerful centres of economic and cultural capital that are located in the rising Asian economies, which rapidly emerge as key players on the global markets. This has a direct impact on global Shakespeare performance and scholarship. International theatre festivals in Europe and the US are now more likely to include Shakespeare productions from Asian powerhouses, such as China, Japan, and South Korea, while recent books that directly address global and postcolonial aspects in Shakespearean staging examine specifically Asian performance.<sup>69</sup>

As a result, global Shakespeare is becoming more diverse, with non-~~white~~ Western artists and researchers academics entering the mainstream – performing and researching the playwright at long-established Anglophone institutions that traditionally have been white and Eurocentric. ~~#~~ The field is also becoming less hegemonic, given that non-Western cultures successfully claim the playwright as their own. This means that directors like the Japanese Ninagawa and the Kuwaiti Sulayman Al-Bassam are increasingly not seen not just as representatives of their countries or creators of exotic spectacles, but are acknowledged as subtle interpreters of Shakespeare's dramas. Still the international theatre circuit, which displaces and decontextualises travelling productions, tends to turn them into marketable products, so that, according to Ric Knowles, they can function either as a reflection on theatre, or as 'the promotional public construction of national cultures and identities'.<sup>70</sup> Touring shows are thus often read as representative of their nations and nation-states rather than as highly localised works. Such was, for instance, the reception of the Tunisian Macbeth in the UK in 2012. Critics and scholars described the production as

<sup>68</sup> The title of John Russell Brown's book *New Sites for Shakespeare: Theatre, the Audience and Asia* (New York: Routledge, 1999) is very telling in this context.

<sup>69</sup> Alexa Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); *Shakespeare Global / Local: The Hong Kong Imaginary in Transcultural Production*, ed by Kwok-kan Tam, Andrew Parkin, and Terry Siu-han Yip (*Anglo -Amerikanische Studien. Band 17*) (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002); *Shakespeare in Asia: Contemporary Performance*, ed. by Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>70</sup> Ric Knowles, *Reading the Material Theatre*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 188.

**Comment [MD1]:** THIS STILL READS PROBLEMATICALLY. LOOK AT KNOWLES ON CULTURAL REPRESENTATION AND BE MORE SPECIFIC. IS IT ABOUT CURRENTS OF CIRCULATION ENSURING WORK THAT DIDN'T HAVE INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY NOW DOES. THIS NEEDS REFINING

MD it was more about Reading the Material theatre which looks at how nations are represented by particular productions and how they function to represent the nation-state. So cut your current footnote 70 and add appropriate detail from Knowles's Reading the Material Theatre

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broadly Arab in its aesthetics and politics, while the particularities of Achour's directing approach and the nuances of the Tunisian context were not fully explored.

While new sites of power and new cultural circuits emerge in the twenty-first century, the way in which the decisions and deals are made also changes. Even if the former Western empires still hold strong and continue to influence the international politics, the power has moved from the imperial centres to global cities and from national governments to global financial institutions. The 2012 Global Cities Index report, issued by A.T. Kearney, a global management consulting firm, suggested 'that globalization represents a transfer of power from national states to a network of global cities'.<sup>71</sup> Saskia Sassen, who has famously coined the term 'global city',<sup>72</sup> wrote in her contribution to the report that 'the global economy [...] is increasingly not about state-to-state transactions, but rather about urban axes that bring together key cities'.<sup>73</sup>

This transition plays a crucial role in the global performance of Shakespeare. According to Holderness and Loughrey, 'In a globalised world where power has shifted from the old imperial centres to international capital and global bureaucracy, Shakespeare can be more 'foreign' on the Isle of Dogs than in Delhi or Cairo'.<sup>74</sup> It is, however, the financial power concentrated in the Canary Wharf on the Isle of Dogs that places London among the top three in the Global Cities Index and that secures its position as a leading cultural centre. London regularly imports and exports Shakespeare productions on a worldwide scale not only because of its historical significance as the playwright's working place, but because it can simply afford to do so. The examination of two recent theatrical imports and exports in this article, the WSF and the Globe's *Hamlet* tour, confirms the central position of London on the global theatre market. It also testifies to the persistence of the myth of universal Shakespeare as a representative of basic and common values that is used to justify such global enterprises.

<sup>71</sup> A. T. Kearney, '2012 Global Cities Index' <[https://www.atkearney.com/research-studies/global-cities-index/past-report/-/asset\\_publisher/Qw1S0TCvgqg/content/2012-global-cities-index/10192](https://www.atkearney.com/research-studies/global-cities-index/past-report/-/asset_publisher/Qw1S0TCvgqg/content/2012-global-cities-index/10192)> [accessed 22 February, 2016].

<sup>72</sup> Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*.

<sup>73</sup> Saskia Sassen, 'Beyond State-to-State Geopolitics: Urban Vectors Dominate', in A. T. Kearney, '2012 Global Cities Index' <[https://www.atkearney.com/research-studies/global-cities-index/past-report/-/asset\\_publisher/Qw1S0TCvgqg/content/2012-global-cities-index/10192](https://www.atkearney.com/research-studies/global-cities-index/past-report/-/asset_publisher/Qw1S0TCvgqg/content/2012-global-cities-index/10192)> [accessed 22 February 22, 2016].

<sup>74</sup> Holderness and Loughrey, 'Arabesque', p. 36.

The tenacity of the universality myth suggests that even if ‘the language of the “postcolonial” is replaced by the language of “globalisation”’,<sup>75</sup> the colonial perspective has not been fully eradicated. Orkin warns against the ‘triumphalism of the old (colonial) “universal Shakespeare”’.<sup>76</sup> He points out that the emphasis on shared values in the plays evokes the imperialist cultural policy. In a similar vein, though without referencing Shakespeare, Pierre Bourdieu denounces ‘the imperialism of the universal’,<sup>77</sup> Rebellato criticises the imposition of ‘universalism’ as ‘uniformity’,<sup>78</sup> whereas Mark Ravenhill observes that “[u]niversal” was too often used [as] a shorthand for imperial domination’.<sup>79</sup>

Since the end of the British Empire, which might be marked with the transfer of Hong Kong to China in 1997 (incidentally, also the year of opening the reconstructed Globe), the English-produced notions of universal Shakespeare may no longer be explicitly enacted through educational and cultural regulations imposed on the colonies. Nevertheless, the ideology of universality continues to be used – increasingly in the form of neoliberal commodification and cultural intervention. Shakespeare’s works might be staged not only as the director’s signature pieces that will sell to audiences across the globe, as in the case of Ostermeier’s and Ninagawa’s *Hamlets*, but also as vehicles for recuperation and reconciliation in global economic and political conflicts, as in the examples of the South Sudanese *Cymbeline* in London and Globe’s *Hamlet* in Calais. In the latter case, the rhetoric of universality serves to sustain the political importance of Great Britain and its positive image on the international arena as well as at home.

### **Coda: Global Stages and Global Cities**

There are irresistible and highly revealing contradictions between the meanings of the terms ‘globe’, ‘global’, and ‘globalization’. If we think about the adjective ‘global’ as derivative of the noun ‘globe’, what comes to mind are the images of a sphere and the earth, which symbolise completeness and interrelatedness between people and places.

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<sup>75</sup> Holderness and Loughrey, ‘Arabesque’, p. 30.

<sup>76</sup> Orkin, ‘Bi-fold authority’, p. 1.

<sup>77</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myths of our Time*, trans. by Richard Nice (New York: Polity Press and the New Press, 1998), p. 19.

<sup>78</sup> Dan Rebellato, *Theatre & Globalization* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 68.

<sup>79</sup> Mark Ravenhill, ‘Foreword’, in Dan Rebellato, *Theatre & Globalization* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. ix-xiv (p. x).

In contrast, when we link ‘global’ to the broader concept of ‘globalization’, the term introduces the orb and the globus as material and metaphorical instruments of power and colonisation. These two contradictory aspects of the ‘global’ – intercultural communication and transnational power structures – participate in shaping the Shakespearean performance in the twenty-first century. Ultimately, both may be found in the historical Globe theatre at London’s Southbank (1599-1613; 1614-1642), a polygonal building with the audience in the round, whose very name evoked to Shakespeare and his contemporaries the whole world, a *theatrum mundi*, ‘the great globe itself’ (*Tempest*, 4.1.153).<sup>80</sup>

Shakespeare’s Globe was not only an artistic project and a civic community, but also a material building and a successful financial enterprise. As such, it was embedded in the creative, political, and economic fabric of the early modern London, one of the leading centres of culture and commerce. In 1600 London became the headquarters of the global East India Company, which was also the owner of the Red Dragon ship that provided the first non-European stage for two Shakespeare plays. It is partly in the context of the first African performance of *Hamlet* in 1607, off the coast of the present-day Sierra Leone, that Anston Bosman notes, ‘[t]he globalization of Shakespeare began with performance’.<sup>81</sup> The process started in the early modern period, when London boasted cultural and commercial links with other parts of Europe and with the rest the world. The worldwide appeal of the playwright was created by the colonial influence of Britain and its capital. Today, as global Shakespeare performance continues to flow to and from London, it reveals the interdependence of globalization, postcolonialism, nationalism, and neoliberalism.

London’s leading role in sustaining global Shakespeare’s performance depends, however, not only the city’s financial power, but also on its intercultural character. This became clear during the G2G festival which celebrated Shakespeare’s worldwide status with the support of diasporic communities who eagerly attended performances in their languages. It was also evident during the Globe’s *Hamlet* tour which was undertaken by a diverse cast of actors. The connection between global London and global Shakespeare seems essential; perhaps it is even inscribed in the

<sup>80</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt et al., (New York, London: Norton, 2016), pp. 3205-3266 (p. 3255).

<sup>81</sup> Anston Bosman, ‘Shakespeare and Globalization’, in *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. by Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 285-302 (p. 287).



plays themselves. Holderness and Loughrey claim that Shakespeare's dramas are 'strikingly international', partly because they were originally performed in a cosmopolitan capital for audiences including foreign visitors.<sup>82</sup> Ian W. Archer estimates that 80% of adults in Shakespeare's London might have been born elsewhere.<sup>83</sup> Shakespeare himself was an outsider, having arrived from the countryside, and, according to Hansen, this experience has shaped representations of cities in his dramas.<sup>84</sup> The intercultural makeup of early modern London might have thus contributed to the global nature of Shakespeare's plays, and this in turn could to some extent explain their international appeal today. It will be important to see how London will participate in global Shakespeare networks post-Brexit and what theatrical constructions of Britishness it will engender.

### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Maria Delgado, Salvatore Florio, Martin Orkin, Kim Solga, and anonymous reviewers for their invaluable feedback and suggestions.

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<sup>82</sup> Holderness and Loughrey, 'Arabesque', pp. 28-29.

<sup>83</sup> Ian W. Archer, 'Shakespeare's London', in *A Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. by David Scott Kastan (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 43-56 (p. 44).

<sup>84</sup> Adam Hansen, 'Shakespeare and the City', *Literature Compass*, 4.3 (2007), pp. 820-850.