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“A Feast of Languages”: The Role of Language in the Globe to Globe Festival

Abstract: In 2012, Shakespeare’s Globe hosted the Globe to Globe Festival, which featured performances from thirty-seven international companies in their native tongues as part of the Cultural Olympiad in the lead up to the London Olympic Games. This paper explores the role that language played in the Globe to Globe Festival, and the way in which language mediated direction and translation of various plays, specifically in the rehearsal room in anticipation of the performance itself. Translating Shakespeare into thirty-seven different languages allowed the companies to think about the potential benefits of performing their play in a specific dialect or style for both audiences at the Globe and their own language and culture as well. This paper considers the impact of language barriers that existed even within individual companies, and shows that the specific choices around language informed the ways audience members understood and interpreted the narratives of the plays during the festival.

Keywords: Globe to Globe Festival, Shakespeare, translation, language, performance.

Discussing an emotional reunion in *The Winter’s Tale*, a gentleman states that “there was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture” (5.2.14). His words also best describe the experience of the Globe to Globe productions hosted by Shakespeare’s Globe as part of the Cultural Olympiad in the lead up to the Olympic Games in London 2012. The audience was only given synoptic surtitles for each scene, with no other translations available during each performance. The thirty-seven international companies that performed during the festival relied heavily on movement, gesture and facial expressions to convey their characters’ lines in thirty-seven different languages to a primarily English-speaking audience.

However, the role of language in the Globe to Globe productions, both on stage and in rehearsal, was an undeniable and fundamental element of the performance choices and reception of these productions. Even though the audience was unaware of many of the linguistic choices that were made before

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the performance, they were especially significant to the companies performing. The translation of Shakespeare into thirty-seven different languages allowed the companies performing during the festival to think about the ways in which translating their play into a specific dialect or style might benefit not just the audiences at the Globe to Globe Festival, but their own language and culture as well. Several of the companies performing at the Globe to Globe Festival felt that the translation of Shakespeare into their native language offered insights into character, theme or style.

Similarly, audiences watching performances in a language other than their own allowed for more focus on performance and emotion, rather than the spoken word. The Globe to Globe Festival provided a mutual benefit for actors and audiences through the translation, transfiguration, and mutation of language in performing Shakespeare. This article will explore the role that language played in the festival and the way in which language mediated direction and translation of various plays, specifically in the rehearsal room in anticipation for the performance itself. I will investigate the process of translating certain texts for the festival, considering the impact of the language barriers that existed even within individual companies, and shows that the specific choices around language certainly informed the ways audience members understood and interpreted the foreign languages and the narratives of the plays during the festival.

My personal role at the Globe to Globe Festival involved interviewing the companies about their performance choices and style on the Globe stage. The interviews sought to create a digital archive of the actor's experience in the Globe space as part of a larger archival project of capturing responses from actors and directors after each season ends at the Globe. I, along with the research team at Shakespeare's Globe, interviewed each of the 37 companies that performed at the Globe across the six-week festival. We were able to interview two to three people from each company, sometimes including the director or designer, other times with three actors, depending on the availability of the company during their short time in London.

The questions we asked the companies were pulled from a combination of questions about the Globe as a reconstructed theatre space with unique elements such as shared lighting, audience interaction and a distinct lack of artificial sound and lighting, as well as inquiries about cultural issues such as reception and popularity of Shakespeare in the home country of each company. During the interviews, I found that almost all companies could relate Shakespeare's plays to their own culture on a thematic and narrative level, but perhaps what was most surprising about the interviews, was that they revealed an experiment with language beyond that of the Globe to Globe performance schedule. Indeed, the companies involved in this project provided insight into the way their members considered and toyed with the idea of translation from

English into their own native tongue. Those interviews have provided much of the basis for this article, particularly in thinking about how language was understood and mediated in the rehearsal space by several of the companies who performed in the festival.

“London Language” and “Shakespeare Language”

Producing such a wide-ranging festival on such a large scale in just six weeks was certainly ambitious and chaotic for Shakespeare’s Globe to undertake, but the choices behind the texts and languages selected for the Globe to Globe Festival were anything but haphazard. One of the aims of the Globe producing the festival was to “engage the different linguistic and cultural communities of London [...and] tell these stories using their own performance culture and style” (Bird 2012). Language was at the heart of commissioning the festival, but not in a linguistic sense, as the program directors were not interested in the phonetics or basic components of any given language. It is my contention that the semantics and pragmatics of language were not the intended highlight of the festival, but rather that the focus was on extending our own understanding of Shakespeare through the lens of different languages.

While a diverse range of languages was included in the festival, it was not focused on perpetuating any specific political agenda. According to Tom Bird, Festival Director, he and Dominic Dromgoole, Artistic Director specifically chose companies based on what Bird called either a “London language” or a “Shakespeare language” (Bird, *Shakespeare Beyond English*, 14). The first consisted of the languages most readily heard and used by what was likely to comprise the audience base attending the bulk of the performances: Londoners. It was important that “a large proportion of the productions we chose should be in languages that are widely spoken in London” so more people could partake in the experience. This, of course, was partially a commercial concern, as without audience members, performances at Shakespeare’s Globe fall flat and lose so much of the vitality that theatre goers have come to expect (Bird, 2012). Yet, it also expresses the way in which the World Shakespeare Festival and even the Cultural Olympiad of which it was a part, were intended to engage and showcase London on the world stage. At the heart of the festival might have been the work of Shakespeare, but the way in which the Bard was understood, interpreted and expressed, was featured as well. In this way, the festival became more about a sense of unifying cultures and breaking down barriers between them, than it did about celebrating an early modern playwright. In fact, the languages became representative of London itself; a patchwork of the cultures and peoples that London encompassed were embodied on the Globe stage.

The second criteria that Tom Bird and Dominic Dromgoole used for commissioning plays was this so-called “Shakespeare language” encompassing any “languages in which there is a long history of Shakespeare’s plays being performed” (Bird *Shakespeare Beyond English*, 14). When planning the festival, Bird and Dromgoole took pains to make sure it was reflective of a larger body of Shakespearean performance, hoping to feature countries and dialects that have a history with performing the Bard’s works. It was important for the festival to be simultaneously broadcasting London (and its languages) and Shakespeare, while celebrating the cultural history of the nation. It is fascinating that the Cultural Olympiad was designed to feature the best of British culture on the world stage; when in actuality, the Globe to Globe Festival fixated on highlighting the multifaceted nationalism present in London and Shakespearean performance. The Globe’s central position within London provided a culturally and racially diverse population to draw audiences from as well, acting more as a national state rather than an individual theatre; the embodiment of multiculturalism, not a hegemonic audience base. London acted as a microcosm for the festival, allowing Bird and Dromgoole to draw on the city’s diversity as a basis for the companies invited to represent their own Shakespearean productions.

The way the festival was arranged signaled the emphasis on languages that not only lend themselves to Shakespeare, but also to a particular city at a certain time. Setting the festival up in this way suggests it was not about the larger Shakespeare Festival that was being produced across the UK; nor was it specifically about the upcoming Olympic Games it preceded in London. Instead it was about embracing London and the rest of the world as transmitters and translators of Shakespeare in language and performance. The companies invited were certainly representative of the expected audience base for the festival, but they also demonstrated the variety of performance styles more globally. More specifically, we might think about the Globe to Globe Festival in terms of translation not just in language, but in cultural and performance practices as well. Incidentally, the World Shakespeare Festival touted itself as “a celebration of Shakespeare as the world’s playwright,” yet much of the larger festival outside of Shakespeare’s Globe made little of this mantra (World Shakespeare Festival website). By focusing on the languages used to express Shakespeare, the Globe to Globe Festival encouraged the ownership and appropriation of Shakespeare to be experimented with, not placed merely in the hands of the English-speaking world, but promoted inclusivity by permitting any language to express the themes, characters and concepts behind England’s most famous playwright. Indeed, the festival became more about the languages and the people surrounding Shakespeare’s Globe, and the languages in which Shakespeare is explored elsewhere across the globe, than it did about endorsing Shakespeare as an English commodity.

For Bird and Dromgoole both the ‘London’ and ‘Shakespearean’ languages, as they termed it, presented their own pitfalls and difficulties in their own ways. For the London languages, they needed to find companies willing and able to perform in a language that would attract an audience. The companies were asked to mediate the performance space at Shakespeare’s Globe in a very short period of time in order to connect with the audience and present the text in a way that was suitable for their language and culture. When commissioning companies to perform the canon, Tom Bird instructed the companies to use “no English” but “that was a rule that was constantly broken” because for some companies, that was “a more natural form of expression, slipping into English” while using their local dialect (Bird 2012). The rationale behind this was seemingly to encourage the companies to perform as though they were at home, using their own native tongue. This allowed for a more natural form of expression but also gave the audience a taste of a performance in Hindi, Portuguese, Italian or whichever language, as though they were in the country of origin.

Yet, the fact that so many companies incorporated English into their productions suggests a need for some moments in the play to be expressed in a familiar tongue, without the barrier of translation. Shakespeare’s Globe chose to offer surtitles to the audience to aide in their understanding of the plots being played out before them, however, these were only synoptic, not line by line, so as not to be distracting. This was in part to avoid a sense of elitism in assuming everyone was familiar with the plot of all of Shakespeare’s plays, but also in part to eliminate the audience’s heads from constantly volleying back and forth from the surtitle screens to the stage, stealing focus from the performance. For example, in *Macbeth*, before the couple’s famous scene together in Act One, scene seven, the surtitle read: “Lady Macbeth persuades him to kill the king.” With only this limited information to go on, the audience was invited to interpret the activity on stage and determine the larger meaning and themes presented in specific scenes.

It is perhaps understandable, then, that some companies wished to translate their text further from time to time, and not rely on their own language or the pre-written surtitles to convey meaning. Perhaps it would be easy to consider this introduction of English as indicative of the limits of their own language to express meaning, but it is my contention that it did no such thing. The larger psychology behind or audience response to a character was often developed through the use of English phrases or words. Even when companies did use English, it was beautifully assimilated among the rest of their own language – one word or phrase here and there – peppered amongst the dialogue in their tongue. In the Hindi production of *Twelfth Night*, actors slipped in and out of English for comic effect. Desperately trying to allure the audience to his character, Orsino used English instead of Hindi, before switching back into fluid

Hindi for his lines from Shakespeare. At one moment, Orsino commented in English, “Shakespeare didn’t give me rhymes,” to riotous laughter from the audience. His comment punctuated the performance for many audience members in its critique of the playwright and piece he was in, narrating his experience as an actor who finds himself in a comedy with an unappealing (or humorless) role. The blending of languages was performed with ease as it allowed the audience a window into the experience of the company, without the barrier of language as in the rest of the performance. The use of English seamlessly mixed in with the rest of the production provided a metaphor for the festival itself, where many languages were woven together to create meaning. The exploration of Shakespeare in a variety of languages was clearly at the heart of the festival, both for the audience members negotiating between the various foreign and familiar languages presented across the festival, and for the companies, who tackled the issue of language in very diverse ways.

Shakespearean language can be difficult to understand and interpret when performed exclusively in English, but these companies needed to translate the text into 1) their own language, 2) the performative language for an audience unfamiliar with their language and 3) the spatial language of Shakespeare’s Globe. I will now turn to thinking about the ways the companies dealt with each of these moments of translation. Some companies experienced all three as unique stages, while others worked with the text in a conflated method. In all cases, the translation of the text – into their language, as well as a language that could be expressed and understood by a non-fluent audience – was an important decision in how the company would produce and comprehend their performance during the festival, and how it would be received by their audience.

Surprisingly, many companies “avoided Shakespeare’s text” as much as possible when rehearsing for the play in a deliberate attempt to interact with and perform the play without the burden of language, and instead focus on how to deal with the technical, physical and vocal demands of the Globe space (Milivojević and Bennett 2012). Here, we see a deliberate attempt at stripping the text of its barriers while retaining its meaning. For example, Nikita Milivojević and Amalia Bennett, the director and choreographer of *Henry VI, Part 1*, explained that first they told the story through movement in rehearsal, ignoring the text completely. Since Shakespeare’s language often comes with a stigma of being difficult to understand and perform, the director was interested in looking at the play as a narrative first, considering the important themes and ideas presented in the story, without tackling the text itself. This allowed the actors room to consider and work with the story, without getting caught up in the specifics of one phrase or pun. While the National Theatre of Belgrade worked on configurations of power that are expressed in the play, they ignored the language as a tool to discover deeper meaning in the text, and they were not the only company to create a working environment that sprung out of the stigma

of Shakespearean language. Some companies expressed the Shakespearean language as difficult to navigate for certain company members, while others purely wanted a fresh, vibrant grasp of the play without the obstacle of Shakespeare’s puns and multiple meanings.

Reclaiming the Mother Tongue

Several companies counter-acted this barrier by commissioning translations specifically for the festival to create a more contemporary, classical or performance-based language of the play. This act alone suggests the importance of the vitality of the translation for the festival performance, as an old, overwrought script would be difficult to perform. For several companies, there was a need for an initial translation for the festival in order to produce a new, contemporary text with which to work, specifically one that would provide an ephemerality of translation for the actors. For example, many companies worked with a translator to make sure that the translation they used for the festival was fresh, vibrant, and contemporary, allowing the actors to make the most of the modern dialogue in their specific translation.

Of the thirty-eight productions presented during the Globe to Globe Festival, only nine existed before the festival, meaning that most of the companies worked on creating a production specifically for the Globe theatre space for the festival. It was not merely enough that a text existed in the language; it needed to offer potential for the performance in this specific space and time. One company that felt the significance of a new translation was Ngakau Toa’s *Troilus and Cressida*. Rawiri Paratene, who played Panatara (Pandarus) in the Maori production, noted that the company “chose it as an opportunity to bring back some old phrases and terms. So the people in our cast who are the strongest in our language, they had difficulty understanding the text” (Paratene 2012). Ngakau Toa felt that the classical allusions present in the play were more germane to a poetic, archaic verse style of Maori, rather than the colloquial form that the actors already knew.

While many people in the audience were non-Maori speakers, the company felt it was necessary to express the sentiment and antiquity of the plot. The fact that many in the audience were completely unaware of this message is significant because it was almost as though the company was interested in the language just for themselves. Even the act of speaking and hearing this form of Maori for the actor enhanced his/her emotions and performance of the text. This archaic form of Maori was revived to allow the company members to use an older, more traditional form of their native tongue and highlighted the notion that this festival was as much about language as it was about Shakespeare and performance. The fact that this company reintroduced a particular classical style

to its members demonstrates that the production was used as a vehicle for the linguistic sustainability of the Maori language, and not merely a performance of Shakespeare. In this sense, the performance provided a unique opportunity in terms of language for English speakers, but also for Maori speakers. *Troilus and Cressida* paradoxically offered a fresh yet classical translation that was unfamiliar to audience members in some respect, regardless of nationality. The company was able to make the performance about much more than the Festival itself. In this way, the company controlled or mediated Shakespeare and the interpretation of Shakespeare through their own language while re-introducing Maori lexicon. In this way, the company was reclaiming their mother tongue through the performance, allowing the actors to learn something about their own language through the translation of Shakespeare.

Conversely, the Ashtar Theatre Company commissioned a contemporary version of *Richard II* in Palestinian Arabic so they could enhance their company's understanding of the play. Bayan Shbib-Queen, the translator and editor of script (along with Iman Aoun) stated that the pre-existing translation of the play "is very little. It empties the metaphor. It empties the images, because these images were made in a British context" (Shbib-Queen 2012). He collaborated with the actors to find equivalent metaphors and significance in their own language and culture, enhancing the play's relevance for them. The company brainstormed to find a precise word or analogy to acquire a meaning that pervaded their culture and comprehension of the play. This practice allowed the company more agency when choosing their language, as they all contributed to specific symbols and phrases in the text to accentuate its clarity and purpose on stage. This company adapted the poetic language that felt distant to them, and developed their own sets of poetic images that resonated with their language and culture. The collaborative and permeable translation practice that the company engaged in provided a more meaningful and rich experience for the actors. Just like the Maori company reintroducing classical diction, the Ashtar Theater Company translated Shakespeare as a way of appropriating the text for themselves, swapping out Shakespeare's poetry and style for their own lines and images.

Performative Language

While Ashtar Theater Company worked as an ensemble to translate *Richard II*, Company Theatre decided to hire a single translator to create a more performance-based Hindi version of *Twelfth Night*. Atul Kumar, Artistic Director, commented, "the company seemed to be interrogating the translation process and Shakespeare's writing as much as they were thinking about translating the play into their culture and language" (Kumar 2012). Although

they had originally commissioned a professional translator for the play, Amitosh Nagpal, who played Sebastian in the production, began translating Act 5 as a pastime for himself. His translation was entirely in rhyme and when the company read it, they found it much more exciting than the previously commissioned translation because they felt it contained a performative, dynamic language. Kumar pointed out the company’s fascination with translation because it was something they had considered a great deal in rehearsal. One translation was formal and expertly crafted; the other, rhyming in a style befitting of the stage. The actor’s perspective on the text was much more expressive and vibrant because he wrote the translation with the stage in mind.

In particular, the play responded to the way the play suddenly speeds up events to all seamlessly reach a happy conclusion in Act Five, keeping in line with the comic nature of the play and the company’s refusal to investigate the darker, more problematic themes in their production. Since this was the first scene translated, the actor turned translator set the rhythm and pace for the remainder of the play through this scene, highlighting the carnivalesque nature of the plot. It also solidifies the joke made by Orsino in English, discussed earlier, about the rhyming nature of the production. Since the other characters were given rhyming lines, Orsino’s lack of rhymes underscores the way he stands out among the remaining characters. More important to this discussion of translation, however, is the fact that the pace, tone and rhythm of the new translation were all a part of transforming *Twelfth Night* into a Hindi and performative version of the play. This process emphasises the way in which translation is mediated by a number of factors, not least of which, the translator. Even though both translations were completed at the same time, with the same purpose, one resonated with the company more than the other because of their specific goal of performing Shakespeare at the Globe to Globe Festival. While it might seem obvious that the translator contributes a great deal of interpretation and meaning to any given translation, it is important to consider the deeper message and style behind the words for the actors. This company was invested in the translation process because it contributed to their own understanding of the text.

As with the Ngakau Toa, the way that this company chose a particular style and structure for their language in producing the play for the festival demonstrates the importance of the details of language to the companies. Yet the specificity of which type of language was spoken – stylised, contemporary or classical – was something that only resonated with the members of the audience who spoke that language, and with the company themselves. Not knowing the audience demographics in preparing for the festival, several of the companies decided to use a specific type of language to amplify their understanding of the story they wanted to tell through the play. This practice meant that the language became a point of intersection between Shakespeare and their culture, and the

vehicle for expressing current or established linguistic styles. The company's needs in terms of translation changed over the course of the production. It became more about a performative language than a translation of Hindi or English.

Language as Barrier and Barometer

One of the most surprising elements of the way that language functioned in the festival was that various companies produced plays in a language foreign to their own members. Since the entire festival was about sharing, performing, and expressing Shakespeare in a variety of languages, it was fitting that many companies asked their members to learn and perform in a language foreign to them. In performing *Venus and Adonis*, Isango Ensemble assigned different South African languages to specific passages of text based on the sound of the language, and therefore, many of their company members had to learn their lines in Zulu, Xhosa, Sesotho, Setswana or Afrikaans without formerly speaking that language. The company comprised thirty-two actors from diverse backgrounds; in order to perform the verse accurately, the company members would learn their lines and then perform them in front of a native speaker for precision in tone and emphasis. Noluthando Boqwana who played one of the Venuses in the production described the process of being a native Zulu speaker but performing in Xhosa, reflected that, "the sections were chosen before the language. [...] so you had to learn Xhosa, even if you were not Xhosa" (Boqwana 2012).

Even though there was a level of translation or interpretation for every company, Isango Ensemble increased this level of understanding by including their actors in the process. Unlike other companies introducing words or styles with the performance, this company introduced complete languages to its actors. Instead of the audience members merely needing the translation for what was happening on stage, for this performance, the actors did as well. On actor offering a translation of the text based on the rhythm and movement of performance offered a type of inter-translation within the company, a translation of a specific embodiment of the text, not just of language. By using the actor's translation, the company demonstrated an interest in the words and phrases that offered more than just the words of Shakespeare's text; but presented a language of dance, movement, song, and carnival that the company was after. It is as though the actors almost did not need Shakespeare's words to perform, but instead a mutation of them that showcased something about their cultural identity as well. It was more about experiencing the text and producing images and meaning, rather than words being chopped up and changed around. The mingling of languages within the company here is representative of a larger cultural diversity in South Africa, but the fact that actors did not know the text in

which they were performing is more suggestive of the necessity (or lack thereof) for language in performance for the actors.

When asked how they paired sections of the narrative with a particular language, Lungelo Ngamlana, the Associate Director and Choreographer of the production said

there's quite a lot of romance within the play, and sort of like erotic as well, so we were actually trying to get a language that would suit a particular, a particular play within the play itself, so it can actually sound exactly like, so when you listen to that language, you can actually get a sense of, okay, they are talking about this. So the texture of the language that's being used. So we are not just choosing the language for the sake of choosing, but we are trying to find, like, okay this is a very sort of sexy line that she is saying there, so ritual would mean that's Tswana. Tswana is sort of like very nice sounds within the language itself, so we chose the language around those sort of like elements of it. (Boqwana and Ngamlana 2012)

In listening to the individual components that make up the language – the sounds and the meanings they create – the company highlighted the significance of individual words in their translation. Even though the words the actors were delivering on stage were certainly important to their performance, this interview demonstrates that the sounds and rhythm of language was just as, if not more, integral to their understanding of what they were trying to represent on stage. The idea that the very building blocks of language can transmit emotions and themes highlights this company's use of translation when pairing the text with a particular language. Here, language is not the vehicle for speeches and characters to deliver meaning, but it is the meaning itself.

The company's consideration and use of language demonstrates that they wanted the audience to understand when they were switching between different dialects, even if all of those languages were unfamiliar to them. The fluidity with which the company did this showed that language was being harnessed as a series of universal sounds, understood by all, with the assumption being that audience members mentally linked an aggressive sound with a particular moment of combat in the poem. Isango Ensemble communicated not only through visual codes such as facial expression, gesture and physicality, but also through the medium of language itself. The fact that the auditory features of a language correlated to certain themes and emotions that the actors were trying to convey employed the most basic unit of language in a powerful and emotive way throughout the narrative. Language was not merely the vehicle for performance in this production; it was the performance itself. Somehow the audience was encouraged to translate while hearing a series of familiar sounds and emotions. This company proved that there is something universal about the aural word, even if that something had to be interpreted by the audience instead of the actors.

In this way, audience members at one of the performances of *Venus and Adonis* were given the opportunity to experience theater much in the same way as Shakespeare's original audiences who most likely went to hear rather than see a play. It is interesting to note that Isango Ensemble allowed the audience to rely on their auditory skills as much as (if not more than) their visual faculties. This practice is more closely aligned with the original meaning of audience, drawing from the Latin word *audire*, to hear (Oxford English Dictionary). Much has been made of Andrew Gurr's assertion that "Elizabethan and early Stuart playgoers were raised to listen rather than watch" in the original Globe where Shakespeare worked (Gurr 197). The performance conditions that Isango Ensemble simulated this early playgoing experience by asking audience members to hear their emotions, rather than be explicitly told about them. This practice highlights the rich aural atmosphere that Isango Ensemble replicated when performing *Venus and Adonis*.

Surprisingly, Isango Ensemble was not alone in including a foreign language speaker in their company. The National Theatre of Belgrade's Serbian production of *Henry VI, Part I* used a choreographer, Amalia Bennett, who did not speak Serbian, as a way of trying to anticipate the audience's understanding and reaction to specific moments in the play. Amalia Bennett expressed her role in the production: "It was like playing the audience here. I had to understand from other information, even though knowing the story very well. So it was a good balance, we were like checking. Nikita [Milivojević, the director] was checking in terms of language and I was checking in terms of this other kind of unspoken language that you can feel in a performance" (Milivojević and Bennett 2012). The emphasis on movement and energy to convey meaning gave this production (of a lesser known history play) a vibrant, communicative element because the company had embraced the foreign language audience by asking their choreographer to act in their place. Amalia Bennet was vicariously acting as an audience to gauge what was unintelligible to a non-Serbian speaking audience at the Globe.

Similarly, the director of *Henry VI, Part III* did not speak Macedonian but aimed his production specifically at an international audience when working with National Theatre of Bitola. When asked how he communicated with the actors in the company, John Boydell replied, "very quickly you have to develop some sort of common language. And the common language that I have chosen to work with is really the language of actors and space in the play" (Boydell 2012). Boydell's struggle to communicate properly with members of the company when working on the play allowed for an added dimension of interpretation to be present in performance. The National Theatre of Bitola were not only attempting to communicate with the English speaking audience at the Globe, but the English speaking director in the rehearsal room leading up to their performance. The fact that this language barrier was built into the show meant that every

decision and direction was fraught with interpretation, as Boydell was required to speak outside of the realms of a national language and instead invent a common dialect that everyone understood. In turn, the production employed a musical and visual sensibility that was derivative of Boydell’s relationship to the play as the director who did not understand the language.

Instead of viewing this as a disadvantage, Boydell and his company used this to their advantage; considering how a non-Macedonian speaking audience would view and interpret the production. Boydell acted as a barometer for the audience, in making sure the audience could understand what was unfolding on stage without knowing the language, but he also built the production out of his knowledge of the play as a non-Macedonian speaker. The way that Boydell developed a sense of language with his actors was not using Macedonian or English, but through Shakespeare, discussing issues and themes in the play and considering the architecture of the staging, rather than working through the lines of the scenes. In discussing his working relationship with his company, Boydell asserted that “talking to actors is talking to actors,” regardless of the language (Boydell 2012). While his casual response to the language barrier most likely camouflages the difficulties behind working in such a bilingual way, it also reveals a sense of commonality between actors and directors that transcends language. His approach to the text, above all, might demonstrate the way we understand Bird’s discussion of a type of “Shakespeare language” that can be expressed in the way we perceive and perform the Bard’s work. Developing a way of thinking about the play in spatial and temporal terms, instead of linguistic ones, was crucial to the company’s working relationship and production, and our understanding of it as well.

Conclusions

It is fascinating that this company chose to employ a foreigner to their language. Their choice suggests that their language, by which I mean the words they spoke, was not important to their performance whatsoever. The company developed another language entirely; one of theatrical movement and Shakespearean meaning. These productions embodied the heart of the festival in bringing a truly international mix of actors and directors to the Globe, but also utilised language in very particular ways that were often foreign even to themselves. If we consider Bird’s aims for the festival, to present a discourse between the languages and cultures in London through the use of Shakespeare, it is clear that this production epitomes the heart and soul of the festival. These companies did not merely present Shakespeare in another language at Shakespeare’s Globe; they used Shakespeare to transcend a series of internal language barriers suggesting that the specific language one is speaking is immaterial when

Shakespeare is presented because his works are a language into themselves. The use and employment of language in these productions raises significant questions about the nature of language in the Globe to Globe Festival as a whole, as the multilingualism of the productions was in some ways the most defining element of the festival overall.

This article has considered the way that language was translated and interpreted by the companies performing at the festival, yet it raises many questions about how language operated for the spectators as well. Was the way that language functioned in the productions different for audience and actors when both did not understand the language? How did the foreign nature of the language contribute to the audience's understanding of the production and the play? More work must be done to answer these questions about the function and role of language in the festival, but it is clear that the Globe to Globe Festival fostered a relationship between the language of the play and the language of the actors' culture that was unique, vibrant and energetic. The companies that incorporated various foreign languages in their performance provided a true intercultural exchange in their productions, and became the embodiment of the ethos of the festival about sharing languages and cultures through Shakespeare.

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