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"I am here as a tourist": on being a tourist-spectator

> "So, Miss Honeychurch, you are travelling? As a student of art?"
>
> "Oh, dear me, no—oh, no!"
>
> "Perhaps as a student of human nature," interposed Miss Lavish, "like myself?"
>
> "Oh, no. I am here as a tourist."
>
> "Oh, indeed," said Mr. Eager. "Are you indeed? If you will not think me rude, we residents sometimes pity you poor tourists not a little…"
>
> (Forster 1908: 81)

The speakers in this excerpt from E. M. Forster's novel *A Room with a View* are Lucy Honeychurch, a young English tourist on a trip to Florence, and her compatriots Mr. Eager and Miss Lavish. Both Mr. Eager and Miss Lavish are satirical portraits of a certain kind of anti-tourist sentiment. Miss Lavish, clearly a sort of tourist herself, thoroughly rejects the identity; she confiscates Lucy's Baedeker guidebook and refuses to consult it even when the two characters get hopelessly lost in the streets of Florence (1908: 38-9). Both she and Mr. Eager, an intellectual expatriate English clergyman, look upon the lower-middle-class tourists Mr. Emerson and his son with undisguised disdain and territorial defensiveness. "Oh, the Britisher abroad!" laments Miss Lavish: "They walk through my Italy like a pair of cows. It's very naughty of me, but I would like to set an examination paper at Dover, and turn back every tourist who couldn't pass it" (1908: 39). For both characters, superiority to the "tourist" is a fundamental aspect of their own claims to cultural and intellectual status, and it is a distinction that they are continually anxious to reassert.

I begin with this excursion into Forster's novel because it provides a loose parallel to the sort of queasiness about the figure of the tourist that haunts a great deal of Shakespearean theatre criticism. For Miss Lavish, "The narrowness and superficiality of the Anglo-Saxon tourist is nothing less than a menace" (1908: 81), and indeed narrowness and superficiality seem to be the qualities most associated with the tourist-as-spectator. The tourist audience, writes Susan Bennett, "is often the site for disparaging or despairing comments from the serious theatregoer and academic writer alike", being cast as "a singular and undiscriminating entity, marked only by its antithesis to a committed and cultured spectatorship" (2005b: 409). But as she goes on to observe, "it is ironic (if not irresponsible) to absent ourselves from this identity position of tourist, since theatre scholars in the academy are often avid cultural tourists" themselves (Bennett 2005b: 410). I want to go a step further than Bennett here, and suggest that the "identity position of tourist" is not only one that we all occupy at some point, but one that is intrinsic to theatre spectatorship. In this chapter, I survey some of the most influential ideas about tourist-spectators in Shakespearean theatre scholarship, resisting the implication that the subject position of tourist is one that ought to be avoided. I ask twin questions of theatre productions and their reviewers: who do they imagine is watching, and who do they imagine is reading?

The narrowness and superficiality of the tourist

A number of influential academic critics have invoked the troublesome figure of the tourist-spectator, generally with a sense of anxiety about the figure's limited capacity for meaningful and ethical engagement with the stage. In a 1995 essay on Canada's Stratford Festival, Ric Knowles concluded that the work of the festival had developed so as to encourage a form of spectatorship that might be called "intercultural tourism", in which

> the colonizing gaze of the audience… rested comfortably on comically appropriative anglo-saxon actors in "yellowface" (*The Mikado*); on an erotically exotic, archetypally "orientalist," and of course feminized Egypt (*Antony and Cleopatra*); on generic and vaguely African primitavist masks and straw headdresses (*The Bacchae*); and on appropriated and dehistoricized black American street culture treated as generic video-pop (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*). (1995: 41)

The tourist here is constructed as a privileged consumer of foreignness, reducing other cultures to stereotypes and effacing cultural specificity. Knowles has returned to this theme throughout his career, arguing in 2004, for example, that removing theatrical works from their cultural contexts and displacing them into new ones has a depoliticising tendency, engineering "a fuzzy universalism" that runs counter to theatremakers' fundamental obligation "to take responsibility for the work they present, and for its material consequences in its actual social and cultural context" (2004: 89).

It is the notion of the problematic "tourist gaze" that underpins the work of perhaps the highest-prolific critic of touristic Shakespearean spectatorship, Dennis Kennedy. In a landmark 1998 essay titled "Shakespeare and Cultural Tourism", Kennedy argues that watching theatre from the identity position of a tourist goes hand in hand with the objectification and commodification of the subject being looked at. For him, tourism is about "visiting the exotic, consuming the foreign, watching the great universal show" (1998: 175) – an ethically uncommitted form of passive spectatorship predicated on a primarily individualistic and potentially exploitative relationship with the "foreign". The second half of his essay focuses on a critique of what he sees as the tourist-centred practice of Shakespeare's Globe, which he describes as having "turned Shakespeare's distance and strangeness into one of the most familiar of touristic commodities, the easy delights of the heritage museum and historical theme park" (1998: 187). Central to his critique is the notion that another, less "easy" form of touristic spectatorship is possible: he contrasts the "user-friendly, consumerist package" of the Globe with the "legitimate knowledge" required to gaze upon "a historical and authentic site like Stonehenge": "Ancient sites are mediated through intellectual effort and imply that the visitor is obligated; theme parks build in whatever is needed and construct the visitor as already knowing" (1998: 185). Kennedy's essay sets up "the modernist ideal of the committed spectator", obliged to learn and understand more, against "the pomo uncommitted tourist" (1998: 188), passive and casually unreflective. These contrasting spectators are, for Kennedy, interpellated by the institutions in which their looking takes place. The Globe, he argues, occupies a uniquely ambiguous space on the spectrum between these forms of spectatorship, collapsing the distinction between the two: "It is both authentic and inauthentic: it is carefully built using reconstructed Tudor oak carpentry and hair-and-lime plaster; yet it is as counterfeit and synthetic as any theme park" (1998: 185).

In 2009, Kennedy reworked his 1998 article as part of his book *The Spectator and the Spectacle*, titling the chapter "The Spectator as Tourist". In this, as in the 1998 essay, he discusses the

"commodity experience" of the tourist-spectator as one that is sanitised, controlled and predictable. His analysis of practice at the Globe is largely the same as in his 1998 article, but reaches a different conclusion:

> At first I was convinced that despite its claim to the contrary, the enterprise collapsed difference by glossing over the unknown, converting Shakespeare into a heritage property that justifies a self-satisfied present. But I have changed my mind after watching the spectators for more than a decade. They attend the Globe specifically so that they can assist at the spectacle. … In the midst of a commodified experience, they refuse to be commodified. (2009: 114)

This recognition does not, however, alter the main thrust of Kennedy's argument. He maintains his definition of tourism as a passive and individualistic activity—"gazing at the exotic and unusual for the sake of refreshment" (2009: 103)—and though he retains his distinction between the types of gaze inspired by "ancient sites" and "theme parks" respectively, he replaces Stonehenge with Westminster Abbey as his example of the former (2009: 111). This amendment is worth remarking upon, since it suggests that Stonehenge no longer suited Kennedy's argument – perhaps because by 2009, plans were underway for Stonehenge's new visitor centre, which would finally open to the public in 2013 complete with museum, café and gift shop. One wonders whether Westminster Abbey is really so different, or indeed whether any touristic site can be seen to *obligate* "committed spectatorship" – a point to which we shall return shortly.[1]

W. B. Worthen builds directly on Kennedy's work when he addresses the Globe in his 2003 book *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance*. Citing Kennedy, Worthen argues that "[t]he Globe is a tourist destination" that "most resembles theme parks in what it sells: a mediated experience of the past in the present" (2003: 96). He uses the tourist metaphor most heavily, though, when he analyses the intercultural "Globe to Globe" shows that were performed at the theatre by international companies between 1997 and 2001. The shows included *Umabatha*, a Zulu-language adaptation of *Macbeth* by Welcome Msomi; *Otra Tempestad*, a mashup of various Shakespearean plays by Cuban company Teatro Buendía; *Kathakali King Lear*, a version of Shakespeare's play using the traditional Indian dance-drama form; and *Romeu e Julieta*, a circus-themed interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet* by Brazilian street theatre troupe Grupo Galpão. Surveying the critical reception of these shows, Worthen argues that the productions served to confirm European prejudices about foreign cultures, performed as they were "against the whitewashed background of tourist privilege, the privilege to decide others' meanings, the privilege of *owning* Shakespeare" (2003: 155). Each of the shows, he suggests, was

> transformed by the metonymic, Disneyfying rhetoric of the Globe: the exuberant black body = Africa; exotic flora and fauna and surreal magical realism = politically mysterious Cuba; colorful but inscrutable physical discipline = India (and Asia in general); lively but untutored street performance = Brazil (think Carnaval). (2003: 161)

Worthen identifies a "surprisingly uniform" reception of the Globe to Globe productions in the British press, in which "Shakespeare's global visitors are represented as energetic, technically

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[1] In fairness to Kennedy, he does not suggest that the visitor to Stonehenge/Westminster Abbey *is* obligated, merely that the sites *imply* they are.

accomplished, visually stunning yet intellectually and/or artistically stunted" (2003: 153), a characterisation of the "other" that serves to reify an Anglocentric perspective on both Shakespeare and the wider world. For Worthen, as for Knowles and Kennedy, the tourist gaze is one of unreflective privilege – a subject position to be avoided by the discerning critic, but one into which, presumably, other audience members are assumed to find themselves interpellated by the spectacle and by the institution.

The model spectator

It may be helpful to pause for a moment here to unpack the term "tourist gaze" a little further. "Tourist" itself is often an imprecise term, though numerous attempts have been made to define it. In his article "Who is a Tourist?: A Conceptual Clarification", sociologist Erik Cohen identifies what he sees as the six key characteristics of the tourist role before settling on the following definition: "A 'tourist' is a voluntary, temporary traveller, travelling in the expectation of pleasure from the novelty and change experienced on a relatively long and non-recurrent round-trip" (1974: 533). Cohen notes that there are many traveller roles overlapping with that of tourist, and that the category itself includes a number of different sub-categories. In some of his later work, he distinguishes between various different types of tourist, each of whom has a different relationship with the perceived authenticity of the foreign "Other" they encounter on their travels; these range from "existential" tourists, "the most 'purist' of tourists", through various other types (the "experimental", "experiential" and "diversionary"), to "recreational" tourists, "who seek in the Other mainly enjoyable restoration and recuperation, and hence tend to approach the cultural products encountered on their trip with a playful attitude of make-believe" (1988: 377). Each of these types of tourist will look at and interact with the "Other" they encounter in profoundly different ways. John Urry and Jonas Larsen, the authors of *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (a reworking of Urry's earlier *The Tourist Gaze*), thus note that there is "no single tourist gaze" and that "tourists look at 'difference' differently" (2011: 2-3). As the title of their book suggests, however, they see the "gaze" as central to the experience of the tourist. Their analysis certainly encompasses the kind of tourist gaze critiqued by Knowles, Kennedy and Worthen: their book explores the "*darker* sides of the tourist gaze" and examines the "power relations between gazer and gazee within tourism performances" (2011: 15). "Gazing", they explain, is more than simply "seeing": it "involves cognitive work of interpreting, evaluating, drawing comparisons and making mental connections between signs and their referents, and capturing signs photographically" (2011: 17). Tourists "are in a way semioticians, reading the landscape for signifiers of certain pre-established notions or signs derived from discourses of travel and tourism" (2011: 16). In this sense, the tourist gaze does not simply take in, but actively constructs and maintains "an ongoing and systematic set of social and physical relations" (2011: 17).

A recognition of the "tourist gaze" as a mode of looking that is produced by *discourse* leads to an important point about the work of the scholars cited in the first part of this article. The identity position they outline of the postmodern, uncommitted, unreflective tourist is simply that – a discursive construction, and not an identity into which spectators are *necessarily* interpellated by the touristic spectacle. Is the spectator at the Globe necessarily any different from the spectator at Stonehenge? Surely it is possible to engage meaningfully and ethically with both sites, just as it is possible to lapse into lazy and unthoughtful attitudes at either. We are talking, then, not about *real* spectators, but about discursively-constructed spectatorial positions. Knowles, and subsequently

Susan Bennett and Robert Ormsby too, have examined the way in which the Stratford Festival *constructs* an image of its audiences, analysing, for example, programme advertisements and introductions to season brochures (Knowles 1995; Bennett 2005a; Ormsby 2017a); Knowles suggests that the audience addressed by the paratextual material he studies is imagined as being composed of “white, male, and middle-aged corporate ‘patrons’” (1995: 41). Similarly, Worthen argues that “the Globe *addresses* an educated, well-to-do, international tourist public in the accents of ‘merrie olde’ democracy” (2003: 115, my emphasis), and when he writes of audience behaviour at the theatre, he talks of Globe “performativity”, borrowing the term from thinkers such as Judith Butler, for whom performativity is “that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names” (Osbourne and Segal 1994: 23). It is the *performativity* of intercultural performance that is stressed by Yong Li Lan in her essay “Shakespeare and the Fiction of the Intercultural”, which points out that not only spectators but also “cultures” themselves are performatively constructed in intercultural shows. “The performativity of the intercultural,” she argues, “comes into view if we think of what those who identify with one culture have at stake when performance texts and forms from elsewhere are adopted in their theatres; or when ‘theirs’ are adapted for use elsewhere” (2005: 533). Each intercultural performance consists not only of the inner drama of the play, she suggests, but a “metadrama” which tells a story about the intercultural exchange the performance represents, in which the spectators themselves are discursively-constructed characters.

In his book *The Semiotics of Performance*, Marco De Marinis adapts the notion of the “implied reader” from literary criticism to think about what he calls “The Model Spectator”. The Model Spectator is not a *real* spectator, but the imaginary figure to whom all the performance’s intended meanings are available, “a strategy of interpretive cooperation foreseen by, and variously inscribed in, the performance text” (1993: 166-7). Casting the creators of the performance as its “senders” and spectators as “receivers” (an assumption I will problematise shortly), De Marinis notes that “the Model Spectator is one who *recognizes* all the codes of the performance text in question, reconstructing the entire structure of the performance text in the way that is textually proposed by the sender” (1993: 167). There is a question here, central to discussions of touristic spectatorship, of *competence*: the Model Spectator is one who is fully competent in the codes of meaning employed by the performance. This brings us to the first of two crucial questions for this essay’s argument: who does the “touristic” production imagine its audience to be? There are many possible answers to this, but perhaps we can distinguish between two broad categories: those productions that imagine themselves to be addressing audiences who are *not* fully competent in the codes and conventions of the cultures being depicted, and those that, conversely, imagine themselves to be addressing an audience of experts. Kennedy’s critique of intercultural performance in his 2009 book is largely based on the former category: for him, “[i]ntercultural performance, almost by definition, draws upon material that is not fully within the cultural competence of the attending audience” (2009: 116). He analyses the “exoticism” of the work of Paris-based directors Peter Brook and Ariane Mnouchkine, “[b]ombarding the audience with alien signs” in order to speak “not of other times and places but of a brave new world of borderless culture” (2009: 122). Both directors, he argues,

> conveyed an underlying humanist and liberal message that the world can be one, all people are basically the same, we can understand each other despite racial, ethnic and cultural divides: the very message of global capitalism. (2009: 123)

While this critique is in a separate chapter from his analysis of "The Spectator as Tourist", Kennedy observes that the sort of work he describes is often aimed at tourist audiences and "set in a beautiful no place, as if in an airplane, indicative of the cultural indeterminacy of the performance" (2009: 116). In a similar vein, Ormsby examines Leon Rubin's "consciously intercultural" Shakespeare productions at the Stratford Festival in the early 2000s, noting a number of "exotic settings that appealed to tourist Shakespeare and a multinational casting that frequently 'mismatched' actors to foreign locales" (Ormsby 2017a: 569). The opening scene of the 2003 *Pericles*, he writes, "evoked clichéd sexualized fantasies about a primordially violent 'Arabia'" (2017a: 575), while Cerimon's revival of Thaisa was staged as a "version of the Balinese *sanghyang dedari* purification ritual", wrenched from the cultural context that gives it meaning and turned into exotic spectacle (2017a: 576). Spectators, he argues, were "treated like tourists who could be returned to a safe white home of universal Shakespeare, those adjectives 'white' and 'universal' oddly evoking the cliché of globalization's blank, homogeneous totality" (2017a: 580).

Many Shakespearean performances have borrowed from "foreign" cultures in such a way as to implicitly position their spectators as white, Western, wealthy, and likely beneficiaries of other sorts of social privilege too. As Brandi K. Adams has observed:

> More often than not, the lens through which we are asked to consider these plays is that of a white, cisgender, able-bodied, man who often vociferously insists that he embodies the universal interpretive mode for all conversations about Shakespeare. (2020)

I should pause again here to note here that like most of the critics I have cited so far in this chapter, I embody nearly all of these privileged subject positions. A spectator like me, then, is often the intended audience and "Model Spectator" for much of this supposedly intercultural work. I find myself thinking of Iqbal Khan's 2012 *Much Ado About Nothing* for the Royal Shakespeare Company, in which, despite its Delhi setting and a cast and production team made up almost entirely of British Asian theatre professionals, the production seemed to imagine that tourism was the only means by which its audience might approach contemporary Indian culture. When the production was performed in Stratford-upon-Avon, the foyer of the Courtyard Theatre was turned into a pastiche of modern Delhi, with barrels and bins filling the space, a rickshaw in the middle, bikes hanging from the ceiling, a soundtrack of blaring horns, and actors in character as tourists, policemen and local salespeople asking audience members if they would "like hotel. Very nice hotel" (Kirwan 2012). As I wrote at the time, the audience was invited into the world of the production "as outsiders, to observe its conflicts from an amused distance" (2015: 151). Similarly, Gregory Doran's *Julius Caesar* for the same season positioned its audience as outsiders to the production's unspecifically "African" setting, allowing spectators to stand (or rather sit) apart from its depiction of the easily-manipulated, superstitious and emotionally volatile crowd of the play itself – a construction of "us" and "them" that, I felt, reinforced some unfortunate stereotypes and constructed its (largely white) audience as implicitly cleverer, calmer and more rational than their onstage "African" counterparts.

Many of these productions are examples of appropriation, in which a dominant Western culture takes elements of a foreign culture and packages those elements for consumption by a privileged Western audience. If such productions are touristic, they are so only in a very loose sense of the word, as sort of simulated tourism in which a foreign culture is being faked – to use Cohen's taxonomy, they offer enough, perhaps, to satisfy the "recreational" tourist gaze, but certainly not

the "existential". Other productions, originating supposedly "authentically" from the cultures being depicted, might be said to "self-exoticise". Li Ruru notes that Wang Xiaoying's *Richard III* for the National Theatre of China was put together with its performance at the 2012 Globe to Globe festival in mind, incorporating "Chinese elements" with an eye on the British audience's likely expectations of a Chinese Shakespearean production (2017: 614). I remember observing how another production for that festival, Corinne Jaber's Afghan *Comedy of Errors*, established a subject position for its audience as tourists by aligning spectators with Arsalan and Bostan of Samarqand (Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse), the Westernized outsiders to the production's fictional version of Kabul (Ephesus). While the Kabul-based characters wore more traditional Afghan costumes, Arsalan and Bostan of Samarqand wore checked shirts and panama hats, and carried cameras; where their Kabul counterparts generally entered from the doors to the Globe's tiring house, these two tended to enter through the yard, interacting with spectators along the way. Called upon to disguise themselves as locals, both comically struggled to navigate an Afghan *shalwar*. As I have argued elsewhere, the production's scenes of physical flirtation, cross-dressing, drinking and embracing would have been taboo if they had been performed in Afghanistan itself (which they were not); the production, then, addressed a "Model Spectator" who was viewing Kabul and its characters from the perspective of an outsider (2013a). A version of Kabul was being constructed and offered up for the "tourist gaze" here in an attempt, as the British Council's director of Arts put it, to "open the eyes of the British audience … to the rich culture of Afghanistan" (British Council 2012).

The same was not true of all the shows at the festival. Comprising 37 different Shakespearean productions in 37 different languages,[2] the Globe to Globe festival, part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, was an extraordinary assemblage of both pre-existing and specially-commissioned productions from around the world. Many of these productions clearly imagined a "Model Spectator" who was fully competent in the language and conventions being employed, in some cases because the productions had originated as such in their home countries, and in others because they rightly anticipated that they would be playing to an audience in London that would include a large proportion of language-speaking expatriates and their descendants. I attended 12 of the shows, and at many of them I was struck by the dominant presence of spectators who understood the languages being spoken, a presence that was evident because of the often vigorous sense of conversation between stage and audience, manifested by laughter, applause and vocal interjections. Many spectators, of course, did *not* speak the languages concerned, and such spectators became reliant on the reactions of their more competent fellow audience members. As Ormsby has pointed out, "What these performances made of many of us was tourists, defined as those not in the know and as those purposefully seeking out those foreign others on stage and everywhere else" (2017b: 440). But I wonder if these examples complicate the idea that there is only one "Model Spectator" imagined by productions of this sort. These productions, particularly those comissioned especially for the festival, must have anticipated the sort of double audience they encountered in London, a mixture of langauge-speakers and non-speakers. As Yong points out, the "problem of non-understanding, or partial understanding" is in fact part of intercultural performance's most basic performativity: "When the performance does not fully communicate what is happening, what it is *about*, or allow us to grasp its meaning, it thereby also communicates something else" (2005: 533). In the case of Globe to Globe, the collaboration between more and less competent audience

[2] "Languages" were broadly conceived, perhaps most loosely when the Globe advertised the "language" of Q Brothers' *Othello* as being "hip-hop".

members was, in this sense, performing a wider metadrama about intercultural collaboration during the Olympic year, and part of a rewriting of dominant narratives about who and what constituted London itself in 2012. De Marinis's theory of the "Model Spectator", founded in semiotics, is predicated upon a sender/receiver model of communication, but what Globe to Globe showed was that spectators are not simply receivers of information but also senders in their own rights. Inescapably in a circular, shared light space like the Globe, but also implicitly at any theatre, meaning is not inherent in a performance but created by the conditions of its reception in a specific time and place.

The implied reader

I would like to consider these issues as they relate to a particular Globe to Globe show, *A Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira* (*Troilus and Cressida*) by the Māori company Ngākau Toa. The production was described on its official website as an opportunity "to showcase *Te Reo* Māori [Māori language] and *Te Ao* Māori [Māori culture] to an international audience" (Ngākau Toa Company 2012), and it featured a number of traditional Māori arts, including the *haka* ceremonial dance, traditional Māori costumes, *waiata* (song), *man rdkau* (Māori weapons), and *nga taonga puoro* (Māori musical instruments) (Silverstone 2013: 36; Diamond 2012). To borrow Yong's framework of analysis, while the play itself relocated the story of *Troilus and Cressida* to the setting of pre-colonisation Aotearoa (New Zealand), the production's metadrama was about a colonised culture triumphantly asserting its presence in the homeland of the colonising culture that had marginalised it to near-extinction. This metadrama was, of course, dependent on the production's positive reception in London. Director Rachel House had been keenly aware of the double audience her production would be addressing in its Globe performances, as she explained in an interview shortly beforehand:

> Firstly we have a really big community of Māori in London so we hope they will be there in full force. And although a majority of the audience will not be familiar with the language and culture we are convinced that our performers will win them over and that they will get caught up in the story. (Delilkan 2012)

House herself was not fluent in *te reo*, but stated that she found this to be an advantage as she directed the production, since it put her in a position of only partial competence equivalent to that of many of the London audience members:

> In many ways not being fluent was good for preparing for The Globe. Basically if I didn't understand what was going on, I would get the actors to do it over and over again until the subject and emotional [arc] became clear. (Delilkan 2012)

In some ways, the show was an artificially cultivated and constructed snapshot of Māori culture, aimed at a non-specialist audience – even members of the cast and creative team who were fluent in *te reo* were unfamiliar with the deliberately archaic version the production's script required them to speak, and the traditional tattoos which were remarked upon in many of the production's reviews were for the most part painted onto the actors' bodies specially for the performance (*Road to the Globe*). There was, perhaps, even an element of self-exoticising to the production, House being self-professedly "keen to show the sexiness of our culture"; she suspected that non-Māori spectators

would “freak out about the tattooed bums at first but I’m sure they will get used to it” (Delilkan 2012).[3]

As it happened, the production achieved something very much like House’s intentions. A number of London’s Māori community did attend, some of them performing a reciprocal *haka* in the yard at the end of one of the performances. Penelope Woods interviewed some spectators of Māori heritage immediately after one of the shows, who reported finding it “awesome… to see our culture represented” and noted approvingly that the rest of the audience seemed “really into it” (Woods 2012a). This certainly corresponds with my own impression of the production’s reception at the Globe, which struck me at the time as having been highly enthusiastic from Māori and non-Māori spectators alike. But there were clearly also some dangers to navigate here. Catherine Silverstone has pointed out that the show risked “being consumed as exotic, universal or an object of cultural tourism” (2013: 43),[4] and indeed two of Woods’ interviewees observed this with some amusement, one of them noting the audience’s “nervous giggles” at the *haka* (a moment of cultural collision which this interviewee found “quite exciting”) and another reporting having heard a “British lady” commenting, “There’s a lot of buttocks on display!” (Woods 2012b). Silverstone cites two examples from the production’s reception in the British press as examples of a colonialist gaze, the *Guardian*’s Andrew Dickson and the *Daily Telegraph*’s Dominic Cavendish having apparently “commented on the actors’ tattoos, exposed buttocks and performance of *haka*, almost as if they were objects of outmoded forms of anthropological enquiry” (2013: 40). There is certainly an element of truth to Silverstone’s characterisation here, but the case of Dickson’s review is, I think, a little more complicated, as evidenced by a debate that erupted in the below-the-line comments on the *Guardian* website. Dickson was taken to task by an online commenter for this sentence:

> The Globe has always been a space that rewards large performances, and few have been as outsize as this, which begins with a bulging-eyed, tongue-waggling, foot-stamping *haka*-style war dance and rarely loses its energy thereafter. (Dickson 2012)

Guardian user “mmmchorizo” commented:

> Did you dig that description out of the archives? A quote from Cook’s diary perhaps? To describe the act is not to critique it. Though more to the point, to suggest that its essential features are in fact its interesting and curious features is patronising and misguided.

Dickson responded that it was “simply a description of what I saw, and an attempt … to conjure it up for readers who weren’t there”. Other commenters were divided. “Carnegie1” observed that “Perhaps that which is essential to the Māori is interesting and curious to the European”, while “CakeTin” found Dickson’s description of the *haka* “to be couched in language that made it sound ridiculous – ‘look at these bizarre natives, Mary!’”. The latter, invoking the figure of the colonial tourist, thought Dickson’s review was “like something from a Victorian guide book”, and suggested that readers who were not familiar with the *haka* form should simply “look it up”. Other users, two of them identifying themselves as New Zealanders, leapt to Dickson’s defence and objected to the

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[3] It is worth observing that the production was not entirely “foreign” to the Globe – Ngākau Toa founder Rawiri Paratene conceived the production with a clear sense that Māori performers could adapt brilliantly to the Globe space having performed there himself (Silverstone 2013: 35).

[4] Silverstone’s list suggests that, like some of the other critics cited in this chapter, she sees “cultural tourism” as inherently tied up with a colonialist gaze.

idea that the *haka*'s basic features should not be described for audiences unfamiliar with the form. Dickson followed all this up with a gracious comment thanking his readers for the debate and acknowledging his own inexpert status in writing about Māori performance, concluding, "I look forward to having my critical vocabulary widened!" (Dickson 2012). The debate thus circled around the question of whether or not it was appropriate for Dickson, himself a novice when it came to Māori culture, to direct his review towards an "implied reader" who would find the *haka* foreign enough that they would need a description of it, thus potentially alienating or patronizing readers from New Zealand and the Māori diaspora.

Somewhat to my surprise, I found my own writing brought into this debate several years later. In a 2017 essay on "Global Shakespeare and Globalized Performance", Kennedy observed that it is "difficult to showcase something desperately foreign without making a fetish of it", citing my review of *A Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira* for *A Year of Shakespeare* as evidence that I had been "overcome by the exoticism" of the production (2017: 452). It was oddly dislocating to find myself cast in this way as a "tourist" spectator in opposition to Kennedy's more cautious cultural commentator, because I had been alert to the politics of writing about intercultural performance when covering the festival, and had done my best to avoid exoticism in both my responses and my writing. Here is the part of my review cited by Kennedy: "When the company burst onto the stage to perform a ferocious, trembling *haka*, the combined energy of cast and audience was overwhelming" (2013b: 210). Reflecting on this passage, I can see that it exposes my unfamiliarity with the *haka* art form (I have since learned, for example, that the trembling of the hands, or *wiri*, is an essential part of its performance); perhaps I also neglected to adequately contextualise the *haka* in terms of what it represents and the function it serves in its home culture. But my experience was certainly not the fetishised encounter with the "desperately foreign" that Kennedy seems to imagine. The *haka*'s foreignness may have accounted for *part* of its effect on me and some of my fellow spectators, but it would be reductive (not to mention dismissive of the craft of the performers and creative team) to assume that it achieved the effect it did *only* because it was foreign. How *do* we write about something foreign to us without exoticising it, then? Even Kennedy's piece is unable to escape this difficulty, since when he does describe the *haka*, his rhetoric is almost indistinguishable from Dickson's:

> There is no question that the war dance is filled with energy and power: it is exciting to watch, colourful, outlandish, dangerous, and, for most audiences, deeply foreign. All those tongues hanging out, eyes rolling, teeth and gums bared. (2017: 452)

Silverstone provides a possible answer to the conundrum, observing that where *A Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira*'s British reviewers presented the production's display of Māori traditions as "exotic curiosities", critics in New Zealand commented on the same characteristics "as shared cultural reference points" (2013: 46). This is undeniable: one of the reviews she cites, for example, constructs an "implied reader" who is familiar with Māori arts, referring to "the traditional means of expression we know from *kapa haka* (*wiri*, *pukana*, *whetero*, etc)" (Smythe 2012). But what happens when, as in the case of the critics from British newspapers, reviewers cannot assume that such features will be "shared cultural reference points" for the majority of their readers? Is there a mode of writing that can avoid presenting them as "exotic curiosities", and if so, what might this look like?

It is striking that Kennedy's own writing on Globe to Globe is marked by a palpable discomfort with his own enmeshment in the festival, and I wonder if it is this difficulty that lies behind it. He feels compelled to "admit" his own "complicity" with the festival, his choice of words implying mixed feelings about his willingness to advise on the selection of companies, organise accompanying academic events, and provide tie-in lectures and workshops (2017: 454). The way he describes the festival, one can see why: he asserts that Globe to Globe was "overwhelmingly a festival of foreignness", even that for the Globe itself it was reducible to "nothing more" than foreignness, and that ultimately it was "more important for having been done than for what was done in it" (2017: 453). But there is a sort of circular logic to Kennedy's dismissal of the importance of the productions themselves here, since his writing is curiously empty of accounts of his own spectatorship of them: "I for one would be thoroughly lost at *King John* in Armenian" he writes at one point, the phrasing suggesting that he did not attend, and is hypothesising (2017: 453). Indeed, when he does write about the experience of Globe to Globe spectators, he does so speculatively. He notes that performances were frequently attended by spectators who shared the language or culture being depicted onstage, going so far as to observe that Globe audiences "had never been so international, ethnically diverse, or polyglot" (2017: 453), but does not allow this fact to alter his conclusions about the festival's overwhelming foreignness (foreign, one has to ask, to whom?). When he hypothesises about the effects of the performances on "spectators who were not speakers of the onstage language", he imagines that "the experience *might well have been* similar to attending a world exhibition in London or Paris at the end of the nineteenth century, viewing exotic native arts and crafts in national pavilions" (2017: 453, my emphasis). In making this assertion, he overlooks the empirical research that was done into this question by Rose Elfman, who surveyed such spectators about their experiences and found that

> [r]ather than simply consuming a performance's "exoticism" or rejecting it as un-Shakespearean, many spectators who could not understand the productions became more aware of how their cultural positioning shaped their responses. Questioning their own interpretive abilities, many looked to others for guidance. (2015: 167)

Elfman reaches almost the opposite conclusion to Kennedy, arguing that by "marginalizing normative spectators while privileging those who are often marginalized… the festival undermined the power imbalances that, as so many scholars have argued, face touring translations of Shakespeare at the Globe" (2015: 167). For many of Elfman's spectators, the encounter with the foreign was a productive and progressive one.

I wonder if Kennedy's uneasiness about the practice of looking at the foreign derives from the conception of tourism as a combination of passive observation, consumerism and exploitation that underlies his work. For him, as for several of the critics surveyed in the first half of this chapter, the intercultural spectacle interpellates the spectator as a tourist, as somebody who is "visiting the exotic, consuming the foreign" (1998: 175) – a subject position, presumably, that the ethical spectator must resist. To accept this identity position, the argument goes, is to become complicit; to adopt the tourist gaze is to willingly objectify the Other. But there are some assumptions here that are worth challenging. The first is that the "tourist gaze" is inherently unequal and exploitative. For many of us in arts criticism, perhaps because of the widespread influence of Laura Mulvey's concept of the "male gaze" in cinema (1975), the term "gaze" has become virtually synonymous with objectification. But as Urry and Larsen show, while this *can* be the case, the "tourist gaze" has many

different modes, and encountering the foreign does not necessitate objectifying it. A production may well invite us to look at what it constructs as foreign from the standpoint of an objectifying gaze, but, equally – as we have seen – it might not. Looking, after all, is not an inherently passive activity. Jacques Rancière has critiqued the tendency in twentieth-century theatre criticism to think of looking as "the opposite of knowing" and "the opposite of acting", and of theatre, therefore, as "the stage of illusion and passivity" (2007: 272). Conversely, for him,

> [s]pectatorship is not a passivity that must be turned into activity. It is our normal situation. We learn and teach, we act and know, as spectators who link what they have seen and told, done and dreamed. (2007: 279)

Encountering strangeness is what we do when we watch theatre. It is the normal state of affairs, not an exception. Intercultural work brings these issues to the fore – Kennedy defines it as performance that "deliberately draws upon material that is not fully within the cultural competence of the attending audience" (2017: 442) – but as Yong points out, a "productive lack of understanding" is not exclusive to theatre of this sort (2005: 533). This chapter has been wrestling with the question of how we write about intercultural work that falls outside our own spheres of cultural competence, but perhaps this question obscures a more fundamental one: why should we perceive any performances as being *fully within* our competence? Most reviewers write from a position of expertise in some area, but there will inevitably be aspects of a performance about which they know very little. When we take a production to be fully within our cultural competence, we are assuming a position of social privilege. The production may, of course, be implicitly encouraging us to take such a position, as we have seen in some of the examples discussed above. But although a production may be aimed at a "Model Spectator" who is more or less *like* me, that spectator is never *me*. A performance, any performance, will always exceed our ability to understand and articulate it. We are always tourists when we watch theatre.[5]

I wonder if perhaps we appreciate this fact better when we encounter intercultural work in which this is self-evidently true. Rustom Bharucha opens his study of *The Politics of Cultural Practice* with an articulation of "the possible benefits of being excluded" (2000: 3). For privileged social groups in particular, he argues,

> there are some unprecedented insights that can be gained from being silent, decentred, marginalized to the corners of a room, excluded from the intimacy of certain bondings. There are lessons in humility to be learned from being "left out", and perhaps they need to be extended beyond the practice of theatre into the actual vulnerabilities of engaging with the Other not as a tokenistic presence or as a nice foreigner, but as a person with whom one can dialogically redefine the world. (2000: 3)

Elfman's research suggests that something like this process was in play at Globe to Globe, with numerous accounts of normally privileged spectators ceding authority to their more knowledgeable fellow playgoers as they attempted to make meaning from the productions. In doing so, as Ormsby

[5] Indeed, it is only in the duration (and sometimes distance) of the trip that typical theatre spectatorship falls out of the scope of Cohen's definition of tourism. Cohen argues that "a person becomes a fully-fledged tourist only if [their] trip extends for more than one full day" – they are otherwise an "excursionist" or "pleasure tripper" (1974: 535). With caveats, he also suggests that a trip needs to be to a destination further than five miles from home in order to qualify as tourism.

has pointed out, they "rearranged established hierarchies of reception" (2017b: 440); as I have suggested, they also participated in a metadrama that was rethinking the cultural identity of London itself. Embracing our identity as "tourists" when we watch performance, any performance, might open us up to similarly productive dislocations.

There are implications here, of course, for those of us who write about performance. If the first of this essay's central questions was "who does the production imagine its audience to be?", the second is "who does the reviewer imagine their reader to be?" What, in each case, does the sender imagine the recipient may find "foreign"? What do they assume they will know? We cannot duck the necessity of making such assumptions, either in making theatre or in writing about it. But perhaps we can, and should, be more upfront about those assumptions. Do they match reality? Even if they do, do they perpetuate systems of exclusion and hierarchies of privilege? The crucial thing to avoid is what Worthen describes as "tourist privilege", "the privilege to decide others' meanings" (2003: 155). I have heard academic colleagues decide against writing about a show because they did not feel that they had the right, as "outsiders" to the culture(s) being depicted, to tell others what to think about it. The sentiment is admirable, but I think it misunderstands what a review can (ought to?) be. Reviewers should not, I think, be in the business of telling others what to think, or attempting to determine meanings once and for all; rather, they offer a perspective, a snapshot of what the production meant for that person in that place at that time. Obviously the most important part of the answer is that criticism, both academic and journalistic, needs to become more diverse, offering a range of perspectives on a show from different areas of cultural competence (a review of one of the Globe performances of *A Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira* by a London-based Māori writer, for example, would certainly have helped me better understand its intercultural dynamics). But this is only part of the answer. We should not hive off forms of performance that address someone other than the wealthy, white, male, cisgender, able-bodied, Anglophone, Western "Model Spectator" as the exclusive province of specialist critics from the minority communities we imagine the productions to be aimed towards, because such a policy would leave productions that decentre the privileged spectator safely on the margins of dominant discourse (and, moreover, frustrate what are often the productions' own attempts to reach a wider audience). Those of us who are privileged need to bear witness to these moments of decentring, especially when they happen to *us*. It is when we attempt to disavow our identities as tourists in favour of the supposed objectivity of the detached overview that we begin to assume a dubious authority, "the privilege to decide others' meanings", much as Miss Lavish and Mr. Eager do in *A Room With A View*. As writers about performance, we need to accept our identities as perpetual tourists: to acknowledge the positions from which we are looking, to recognise the gaps in our knowledge and the deficiencies in our cultural competence, and to write with openness and honesty about what we think we see.

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