

Renaissance and Reformation

Renaissance et Réforme



Shakespeare and Asia

Song Ming

Volume 42, numéro 3, été 2019

Situating Conciliarism in Early Modern Spanish Thought
Situier conciliarisme dans la pensée espagnole de la première
modernité

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1066385ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1066385ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)

2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Ming, S. (2019). Compte rendu de [Shakespeare and Asia]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 42(3), 229–231.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1066385ar>

Hart, Jonathan Locke.
Shakespeare and Asia.

Routledge Studies in Shakespeare. New York: Routledge, 2019. Pp. xii, 241. ISBN 978-0-4290-2280-7 (hardcover) US\$140.

Shakespeare—now a cultural sign worldwide—has inspired humanists and artists in Asian countries; indeed, the tradition of Shakespeare studies in Asian countries is an integral part of world literature and Renaissance studies. Jonathan Locke Hart's edited collection, *Shakespeare and Asia*, makes an important contribution to these fields.

The book is composed of two parts. Essays in the first part concern Shakespeare's works or literary ideas having affinity with the literature of Asia. The second part, "Shakespeare, the Novel, Opera, Adaptations and Film," includes six essays on literary works that Shakespeare influences.

In the first part, Wang Ning examines the historicity of Shakespeare's works and the verisimilitude of literature, and how Shakespeare has inspired Chinese writers, appealing to many examples of tradition, rewriting, and staging in modern Chinese cultural history. Simon C. Estok explores Shakespeare's food from the perspective of ecocriticism in relation to the Korean cultural context, advocating a green Shakespeare. Francis K. H. So discusses Shakespeare in Taiwan, through several characters in *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *As You Like It*. In a comparative analysis that includes Chinese elements such as Confucianism, So discovers the affinity between Western culture and Chinese culture in terms of daughters, patrimony, and human nature. Applying a theory from China, Wei Xiaofei tries to solve the question of *Hamlet* from the stance of ethical literary criticism, establishing the liaison between East and West. Examining metadrama, I-Chun Wang studies two Taiwanese playwrights who adapt Shakespeare and looks at the relationship between dramatic performance and society, contending that "the playwright becomes the person who displays a semiotic domain to decode and to be decoded through self-reflexivity, which refers to the ability to reflect on and assess the relationship between the self and the society" (74). Hart explores the state and otherness through Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, forming a geographical conception of the West in relation to Asia, and then discusses Shakespeare's representations of Asian countries in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *The Tempest*.

Most of the contributors of part 1 focus on Asia and Shakespeare's influence on it as well as the exploration of, and travel to, Asia.

In the second part, the essays are mainly about the adaptation of Shakespeare's plays by artists in China, Pakistan, Japan, Russia, and India. Hao Liu, for example, shows how *Hamlet* is a source for Sichuan opera, Peking opera, and Yue opera, adaptations that are part of world culture. In analyzing Feng Xiaogang's *The Banquet* and Sherwood Hu's *Prince of the Himalayas*, Walter S. H. Lim discusses how the ghost scene in *Hamlet* is appropriated in Chinese films. The frequent adaptation of *Hamlet* in these films suggests how Shakespeare inspires Asian art. King-kok Cheung compares Grigori Kozintsev's and Akira Kurosawa's film adaptations of *King Lear* and Feng Xiaogang's adaptation of *Hamlet*, maintaining that Shakespeare is not translatable across cultures but encourages new productions in different cultures. Samina Akhtar focuses on how Shakespeare travels to Pakistan and asks whether Shakespeare adaptations in Pakistan are different from those in other cultures. Akhtar asserts that Shakespeare "has great impact on the Pakistani public and his plays hold a significant role in addressing contemporary Pakistani problems" (199). Discussing the background and the function of the film *Shakespeare Wallah*, Jane Wong Yeang Chui assumes that The Shakespeareana as a troupe performs as English propaganda and transmits the spirit of Shakespeare in India. Similarly, Asma Sayed, in "Adaptation as Translation: The Bard in Bombay," examines the adaptations in Bollywood in terms of Linda Hutcheon's theory. Part 2 thus includes a focus on appropriation as well as adaptation.

Shakespeare and Asia is a significant book. First, it explores, through different issues, how Shakespeare has fared in Asia and inspired Asian literary and artistic creation in different genres in modern and contemporary times. Asians have accepted Shakespeare's art and ideas; these have become part of Asian culture. Second, it provides a guide for further research. For instance, if we wish to study how Shakespeare's works relate to fiction, we can learn from Kuo-Jung Chen's analysis of Shakespeare and Dickens. Zhao Hua's discussion of *Twelfth Night* in terms of festival, carnival, the displacement of Malvolio, and festive comedy, and Yun-fang Dai's exploration of *Much Ado about Nothing* in regard to private and public space make important contributions to scholarship. Third, it will prompt more research in world and comparative literature.

Shakespeare contributes to a renaissance in modern and contemporary Asian art. *Shakespeare and Asia* is a timely collection—bridging Western literature and Asian artistic creation.

SONG MING

Shanghai University of Finance and Economics

Hsia, Ronnie Po-Chia, ed.

A Companion to Early Modern Catholic Global Missions.

Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 80. Leiden: Brill, 2018. Pp. x, 488. ISBN 978-90-0434994-0 (hardcover) €190.

As a result of European expansion overseas, Christianity developed into a truly global religion in the early modern period. Missionaries established the Catholic Church around the world with the help of local aids and informants, thus becoming religious representatives of an international institution and political agents of their respective kingdoms. *A Companion to Early Modern Catholic Global Missions* provides a comparative framework for understanding this complex relationship between Catholic missions and European empires. Edited by R. Po-chia Hsia, this volume of fourteen essays brings together diverse and often isolated mission historiographies on the Americas, Asia, Africa, and the Islamic world. By studying the spread of Catholicism across distinct geographic regions, the *Companion* demonstrates that there were “different histories in globalization” (5) for both missionaries and missionized alike.

In a brief introductory essay, Hsia suggests that two general forms of evangelization emerged among Catholic missionaries. “American” and “Asian” models shaped local strategies and methods, reflecting a clear difference in how European empires were established in the eastern and western hemispheres. In the Americas, Christianization took place in the wake of conquest and colonial subjugation, especially in Spanish and Portuguese possessions. By way of contrast, the spread of the Catholic Church in Africa and Asia was often restricted to small coastal strips of land where missionaries depended on the support of local rulers for survival. Hsia also notes that the interests of European empires created “exclusive missionary territories” (6) and that Catholicism had greater success when it interacted with non-monotheistic religions. While these