Introduction

It's 4 p.m. on a hot, humid Saturday afternoon in August 2018 and I'm sitting with other guests at a table in the air-conditioned ballroom of the Bayview George Town Hotel in Penang, Malaysia. The room is decorated for a wedding reception, which it presumably hosts with some regularity on Saturday afternoons, and this event has all the trappings of one. But it is in fact a production at the International George Town Theatre Festival by an intercultural collective of sixty women from Malaysia, Indonesia, and Australia, featuring twenty-six women-identified performers of various races, ethnicities, religious affiliations, sexualities, ages, abilities, and national identities. The women parade into the room among the assembled guests in a grand entry to open the show. Many are dressed as bridesmaids – except that one lovely dress sports a dozen or so outsized cockroaches, another woman wears rubber gloves, curlers under her fascinator, and an apron, and another is in military camouflage gear. After the parade a woman crawls from her wheelchair onto one of four platform stages on each side of the hall and sings, beautifully, a song about love and marriage before telling her story: her father had beaten her mother when she was pregnant with her, and she was born legless. Others have various autism spectrum and developmental disorders. One 'proud Muslim woman' wearing a hijab and both signing for and performing in the show, is, she tells us, Deaf.

Say No More (Figure 1a), a devised show, addressed the women's personal experiences of gendered violence, marriage ('family is important; marriage is not'), sex ('they say we shouldn't talk about sex but fuck it! I'm going to talk about sex'), body shaming, and domestic labour. Most of the performers were amateur and the show was unrelentingly testimonial, but that was its point. It was also multilingual: almost everything was delivered in English and one other language. Multilingual, transcultural, transnational, trans-ability, feminist, and normalizing the act of women visibly helping women. And despite how harrowing much of the subject matter was, the tone, overwhelmingly, was mutually celebratory.

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Figure 1 *Say No More* (1a) exceeded the national promotion mandate represented by the photography exhibit, *Stripes and Strokes,* by Mooreyameen Mohamad (1b), in which Malaysians of various genders, races, ethnicities, and ages were variously draped in 'the flag that unites them'. Photograph of *Say No More* by Sam Oster, courtesy of Tutti Arts; photograph of images from Mooreyameen Mohamad's *Stripes and Strokes* exhibition by Ric Knowles

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Say No More, presented by Tutti Arts, Australia, in collaboration with Perspektif, Indonesia, and ACS Stepping Stone, Malaysia[1] – billed as '26 Women, 3 Countries, One Wedding' – was not typical fare for the George Town or any other International Theatre Festival, but it did make apparent the kinds of opportunities for intercultural collaboration, solidarity, negotiation, and exchange that such festivals can enable in spite of sometimes overwhelming pressures to the contrary. The month-long George Town Festival was founded in 2010 explicitly to celebrate George Town's position (population ca 800,000) as a UNESCO designated World Heritage Zone. Its ideological role within an English-speaking former British colony with a mixed population of Malay (mostly Muslim), ethnic Chinese (mostly Buddhist), ethnic Indian (mostly Hindu), and Indigenous peoples is to promote an overarching governing vision of 'one Malaysia', a country with an elected monarchy operating under a British parliamentary system in which there are fraught racial, ethnic, and religious tensions, press censorship is broadly exercised, homosexuality is prohibited by law, and a married woman's legal rights to 'maintenance' are conditional on her obedience to her husband.

The festival's intended purpose is to bring this fractured postcolonial nation-state together, literally, under one flag as a single 'imagined community' (B. Anderson). The festival's featured opening show in 2018, *Kelantan: A Living Heritage*, was framed by a lobby display, part of the festival's exhibition series, entitled *Stripes and Strokes* (Figure 1b), a series of photographs by Mooreyameen Mohamad of Malaysians of various genders, races, ethnicities, and ages variously draped in 'the flag that unites them' (George Town 64). The opening show itself celebrated the northeastern state of peninsular Malaysia as 'an ancient and traditional stronghold of Malay culture' (George Town 16) and featured a cornucopia of 'authentic' symbols of Malaysian nationhood: giant traditional drums (*rebana ubi*), dance (*Aysik*), dance-drama (*mak yong*), group trance song and movement (*dikir barat*), shadow puppetry (*wayang kulit*), and shimmering handwoven *songket* fabrics. Another exhibition at the festival, *Grit and Grace: The Grandeur of Monochrome Malaysia*, by S.C. Shekar, featured huge, high-resolution, and loving black-and-white photographs celebrating the beauty of Malaysian landscapes and peoples. As the programme indicated, *Grit and Grace* was 'a reminder that Malaysia has much to offer, be it her rich natural resources, environment, or the diversity of its people' (George Town 65). Nevertheless, by virtue of it's *being* international and a festival, George Town, like many other festivals, has often inadvertently exceeded the mandates and intentions of its sponsors and hosts; *Say No More* was, perhaps, one of those occasions.[2]

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Festivals, the New Interculturalism, and the Definitional Field

From the 1990s to 2020 there has been an exponential increase in the number and type of festivals taking place around the world. Events that used merely to be events have become 'festivalized': structured, marketed, and promoted in ways that stress brand identities, urban centres as tourist destinations, and the corporate attractiveness of 'creative cities', all participating in the so-called 'eventification' of culture. These corporate, municipal, and state practices and the critical literature surrounding them have paid little attention to the actual content and impact of international festivals that draw from and represent multiple cultures, and what roles they play in one of the most urgent processes of the times: intercultural communication and exchange. This is the goal, and challenge, of this book: how, and how well, have international theatre, performance, live and combined arts festivals contributed to and shaped intercultural conversation, representation, and negotiation in the first two decades of the twenty-first century? Are there models of festivalization that might do these things more effectively? And how, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that shut down festivals and other gatherings in early 2020, revealing and intensifying systemic inequalities and injustices based on racial and cultural differences globally, can such festivals learn from and build upon their record to date when they resume operations in however modified a form?

Once before, in the mid twentieth century, festivals resurfaced in the Global West and North in the wake of disaster after the Second World War as repositories of European high culture. They subsequently developed as what I here call 'élite' or 'destination' festivals in the second half of the century as the seemingly natural homes of the work of the great European directors, exemplifying what those festivals and their mandates have promoted as 'excellence'. Many of those directors – Peter Brook, Ariane Mnouchkine, Robert Wilson, and others – were also key theatrical players in the 'intercultural turn' in theatrical practice in the 1980s and 1990s, in which charismatic westerners, lamenting the moribund state of Euro-American theatre, raided the performance forms of other cultures, usually in the Global South and East,[3] appropriating and decontextualizing them in search of a vibrant, 'primitive' universalism that was thought to precede and transcend cultural difference. This work has been rightly criticized as colonialist, but many destination festivals have proceeded apace with what I think of as a global trafficking in cultures.

It is the purpose of this book, however, not simply to critique the cultural colonialism of festivals past and present, but to try to find other paradigms, exploring ways in which festivals can and have begun to engage more closely and critically with multiple cultures in context and in conversation with one another. Are there twenty-first-century festival models that eschew universalist aspirations in favour of what I have elsewhere called

> a new kind of rhizomatic (multiple, non-hierarchical, horizontal) intercultural performance-from-below that is emerging globally, that no longer retains a west and the rest binary, that is no longer dominated by charismatic white men or performed before audiences assumed to be monochromatic, that no longer involves the urban centres (in the west or elsewhere) raiding traditional forms seen to be preserved in more primitive or 'authentic' rural settings, and that no longer focuses on the individual performances or projects of a single artist or group[?] The new interculturalism . . . involves collaborations and solidarities across real and respected material differences within local, urban, national, and global intercultural performance ecologies. (Knowles, *Theatre & Interculturalism* 59)

This new interculturalism is no longer necessarily tied to cooperation (or diplomatic relations) between nation-states but is 'increasingly drawn from intercultural creativity and located in multicultural milieux' such as global, festival cities (Um 1). And it is increasingly intersectionalist, considering the inter-imbrication of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and ability as well as globalized, immigration, and diasporic considerations. The 'new interculturalism', according to Charlotte McIvor, 'is directed almost entirely towards investigating culture's individual and collective multiplicities, as mediated through performance in both local and global contexts' (2). This book's project is to contribute to the emerging sub-field of scholarship on the new interculturalism by examining the role of international theatre, performance, and live-arts festivals as key sites where that mediation can occur.[4]

But first, what is an international theatre festival? At a moment in history when everything from aardvarks to zorillas has been 'festivalized',[5] when the discipline of performance studies has taught us to treat everything as performance, and when there have been increasing attempts to sever 'nation' from 'nation-state', it is necessary to provide some parameters.

This book concerns itself with international theatre festivals understood as 'meta-event[s]' (Schoenmakers 28) in which a larger, multifaceted cultural performance has embedded within it other instances and genres

of performance that might otherwise have been free-standing; in which the individual performances it incorporates are set apart from everyday life as theatre, dance, live art, or aesthetic performance broadly understood; and in which performances derive from or represent more than one nation (with 'nation' understood to mean a more-or-less stable community based on shared culture). Briefly, to unpack the terms of my title, 'theatre', for my purposes, refers to public artistic events in which a separate performance space/time is demarcated, along with a distinction of some sort between performers and audiences, both local and visiting. 'Festival' refers to an event that is durational – though its duration can be measured in days, weeks, or very occasionally months – and takes place in an identifiable festival space, be it a venue, city, or geographical region.[6] 'International' is more complex. I use it in my title as a kind of catch-all around which festivals that cross various types of border come together in common parlance or in their own names and promotional discourses. Elsewhere, however, I use it in a more precise way in reference to traffic and diplomatic relations between post-nineteenth-century nation-states that are naturalized as autonomous. 'International', then, is distinct from terms such as 'global' and 'transnational' in tending to respect and reify the borders between states that are understood to be sovereign. 'Global' invokes globalization and refers to a late twentieth-century neoliberal development associated with economic measures and bodies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, bodies that have eroded national sovereignties and supported the unrestrained circulation of global capital in a world understood to be postnational. 'Transnational', however, I use to refer to cultural forces that transcend rather than reify national borders in ways that are resistant to globalization *and* to the suturing of culture, legislation, and geography effected by the concept of the nation-state that underlies nationalisms of various kinds.[7] 'Interculturalism', my key term, exists in the contested, often unequal spaces between cultures that are variously understood as differently homogeneous communities – sometimes nations, sometimes not – within, between, or transcending nation-states.

These thumbnail definitions are practical, and roughly workable, but it is necessary to acknowledge that they do not apply equally to everything I consider in this volume: in the case of some festivals, for example, that present only in the evenings over a period of several weeks in venues spread across major metropolitain areas targeting primarily local audiences, the durational experience for festivalgoers, and especially performers, is weakened. Some festivals present live arts that can can only loosely be called

theatre even in my capacious defnintion, and which often blur the distinction between actors and audiences. Some of the events staged by festivals, particularly curated live-arts festivals, now happen or have an impact outside of 'festival time'. Some events are organized across other than national borders, rendering the understanding of festivals as international events dubious. Indeed, each type of meta-event that is discussed here under the heading of 'festival' constitutes the terms 'international', 'intercultural', 'theatre', and 'festival' somewhat differently, and one of the main goals of this volume is to explicate the mutually constitutive nature of the forces that play themselves out around the assemblage of live events that my book systematically classifies for the first time, and that coalesce around the contestable, if practical phrase, 'international theatre festival'.

Liminality, Transformation, and Critical Cosmopolitanism

Scholars differ on the key characteristics of festivals, and their arguments circulate most relevantly, for the purposes of this book, on their potential transformational qualities at both the individual and social levels, and on the degree and kind of their cosmopolitanism.

Theatre scholar Erika Fischer-Lichte identifies 'four dimensions that are characteristic of festivals' (*Routledge* 174). The first two interdependent dimensions are the *liminal*, which she characterizes as 'the unique temporality that constitutes a festival as an in-between time' (174), and the *transformative*, in which 'new identities can be tried out or adopted or an existing identity can be strengthened'. This, in turn, produces 'a strengthening of the feeling of *communitas* and sense of belonging among participants' (175). I am most interested, not in festivals' transformational functions at the level of individual or even individual community identities, but in the potential for such events to contribute to the formation and transformation of newly intercultural communities across acknowledged and celebrated differences. And significantly, Fischer-Lichte notes that 'a liminal and transformative dimension might be particularly strong in international theatre festivals, when during the course of the performance a community between the spectators and actors from another culture may come into being' (*Tragedy's* 355). The liminality of festivals, however, is more variable across different types, sizes, and configurations of festivals, and the degree to which they can constitute liminal space has a direct bearing on their potential to be transformative: the liminal, the destabilizing, the unsettling, create the conditions in which transformation is possible. That possibility depends, in turn, on such things as the

relationship between a festival's duration and its immersive experience (how long the festival lasts and how intensely festivalgoers are removed from their quotidian routines), and the degree to which the individual performances cohere or clash in constituting the festival as meta-event.

Some festivals require travel for most visitors to unfamiliar locations; some involve intensive immersive experiences that have the potential to challenge taken-for-granted ways of thinking and being, and to unsettle even settler societies. Some, on the other hand, offering evening and weekend performances dispersed throughout a large city over the space of a month or more, are unlikely to be experienced in any material way, especially by that city's residents, as moving them into a liminal zone very far outside of their regular routines, and are less likely to be experienced in any immersive or durational way by visitors or to place artists from different cultural locations and theatrical cultures into productive conversation. Still more important, for my purposes, is the degree to which the festival experience is liminal insofar as it shifts the normative ground under audiences' feet and moves them outside of their comfort zone. This is less a question of scheduling than of programming, and particularly the programming of difference. This book will be concerned with how and to what degree festival organizational structures, planning, procedures, and programming enable festivals to function as generatively unsettling meta-events, but also with how specific works within those festivals help to constitute them as genuinely transformative spaces. Most festival scholarship deals effectively with festivalization, festivalscapes, and festivals as meta-events at the expense of the cumulative, show-by-show experience that actually constitutes the event for most festivalgoers, and at the expense of detailed attention to the cultural work performed by individual performances within that larger context. It is, I propose, the push, pull, and tension between individual shows and between each show and the festival 'as a whole' that constitutes the experience of most theatre and live-arts festivals for most audience members, and most importantly for my purposes constitutes that experience's interculturalism.

For Fischer-Lichte the third and fourth dimensions of a festival are also interdependent, consisting of a *conventional* dimension in which the festival's regulatory system is imposed and, in a *cathartic* dimension, disrupted. The temporality of festivals consists, in part, of rigid scheduling, in which audience members prepare by poring over sometimes extensive and complex festival programmes, timing the space between events, and curating their personal festival timetables, while, particularly at the world's busy fringe festivals, theatre companies adhere to rigid set-up, run, and

strike times to accommodate other shows in shared venues. On the other hand, festivals, in their cathartic, festive dimension, especially when they involve an intense, immersive durational experience, can consist of a temporal break from daily routines, a carnivalesque release from habits and hierarchies that generally regulate lives. Whether this release is ultimately culturally transgressive or reproductive, dangerously discharging chaotic energies or providing safe outlets for such energies within strict temporal and spatial boundaries prior to a return to regulatory norms, has been a matter of debate for decades. Fischer-Lichte herself sees these functions as sequential, 'first destabilizing and then reaffirming collective identity' (*Tragedy's* 108). Michelle Duffy, however, argues that 'th[e] capacity to transform arises out of affective relations facilitated by the festival between people and place' (229) in ways that exceed the festival's temporal and physical boundaries 'through memories, emotion, and personal relations. In this way', she argues, 'belonging is mobile – it moves from place to place, it moves in time – and at the same time is immobile, as it is attached to particular bodies, to our actions, feelings, and our experiences' (245). In other words, a festival's 'time-out-of-time'-ness (Falassi), rooted in the local, can potentially create transformations that endure, transcending both place and time. The different festivals and types of festival explored in this volume have different festival temporalities, some effectively setting themselves temporarily apart from daily life (often through opening and closing ceremonies), and ultimately invoking a kind of closure, while some stage events outside of festival time and/or aim to have long-term, year-round social impact. In any case, while it endures 'the festival', as Fischer-Lichte says, 'seeks to prevent the intrusion of the mundane' (*Routledge* 174).

Among the features of festivals that resist 'the intrusion of the mundane' are what Motti Regev, discussing the capacity for festival audiences as 'cosmopolitan omnivores' to 'engage in practices of cultural consumption that transgress the conventional boundaries of their own ethnic or national cultures' (111), calls their 'isomorphic rites' (118). These include, following Alessandro Falassi (4–5), rites of purification, rites of passage, of reversal, of conspicuous display and consumption, ritual dramas, rites of exchange, and rites of competition. Regev focuses in particular on rites of conspicuous display (the sheer number and range of events available, 118–19), rites of conspicuous consumption (the number of events each spectator attends, 119), ritual dramas ('special events just for the festival', 119–20), rites of exchange and reversal (the juxtapositioning and revaluating of 'masterpieces' and their challengers, 120–1), and rites of competition (the awarding of prizes, 121–2). Regev is less expansive about rites of

passage, which strike me as having a greater capacity for transformation than the more consumerist rites of conspicuous consumption and competition, neither of which is inherently cosmopolitan and both of which adhere to the most conventional and culturally reproductive models of festival. Regev, however, does find in the intensity of programming at international festivals the potential for an aesthetic, border-crossing cosmopolitanism that doesn't exist in the 'occasional, unfocused pattern of cultural consumption or production' that obtains in the 'unorchestrated' day-to-day world of most national cultures (113), and it is perhaps this purposeful border-crossing that constitutes the rites of passage to which he refers. Many of the most generatively intercultural festivals examined in this volume have at their roots a distrust of the boundaries, borders, and barriers between disciplines, cultures, and epistemologies by which society routinely regulates itself. And it is this type of mistrustful, border-crossing, critical cosmopolitanism that the most interesting festivals in the twenty-first century seem to be moving towards.[8]

Gerard Delanty, writing in 2011 about 'the cultural significance of arts festivals' (190), perceptively identified a shift 'from internationalism to cosmopolitanism in the cultural logic of the festival' (196) that I would suggest began around the turn of the twenty-first century. Delanty argued that 'internationalism is increasingly being reworked as a cosmopolitan condition in which the national context is of diminished importance, and in place of being an organic experience the festival is rather a sphere in which a multiplicity of voices seek to be heard' (190). I would question how 'organic' the national context might be but the experience and recognition of 'a multiplicity of voices' – both intra- and internationally – can certainly denaturalize the nation-state as a stable 'organic' or imagined community in potentially generative ways. There is little doubt that the shift from internationalism, which has historically reified the status of the nation-state as a unit coercively suturing the cultural, legislative, and geographical, towards a new, critical cosmopolitanism at events that continue to be called 'international theatre festivals' can only be enabling of a more fluid, multiplicitous, and equitable interculturalism. In any case, it is true that many festivals during the past two decades, as intercultural collaborations and partnerships have increased, have tended to eschew what had previously been common practice in their programmes and publicity, the identification of shows by nation as well as by discipline, and have thereby opened up the potential for a more critically cosmopolitan consciousness while helping to undermine the role of the festival as a site of mutually reificatory diplomacy between sovereign nation-states.

Finally, in 2014 Jasper Chalcraft, Gerard Delanty, and Monica Sassatelli usefully identified four generative 'cosmopolitan relationships' that can occur at festivals and potentially bring about social change: 'the relativization of one's own identity', 'the positive recognition of the Other', 'the mutual evaluation of cultures and identities', and 'a shared normative culture in which self-Other relations are mediated through an orientation toward world consciousness' (110–11). These cosmopolitan relationships, particularly the first two, are central to any inquiry about the potential of international festivals to generate intercultural encounter, conciliation, and, ideally, understanding and exchange. I do, however, question Chalcraft, Delanty, and Sassatelli's focus on evaluation, and in particular their promotion of 'a shared normative culture' and movement 'toward world consciousness'. On the contrary, I hope to explore the ways in which festivals can move away from the kinds of evaluative context that have been traced to their supposed origins in ancient Greece and that sometimes manifest as competition, sometimes for prizes, and at other times as the futile and culturally exclusionist search for universalist 'excellence'. What I am in search of at international festivals is not a single normative culture, unified world consciousness, or pan-cultural standard of excellence; rather I wish to find and advance a festival culture and paradigm in which difference is relativized, valued, and actively promoted.

This is so in part because, for better and, especially, for worse, festivals can also, as James F. English argues, have a 'consecratory function'. 'Festivals', he argues, 'help to constitute publics by organizing their struggles over cultural values and canons of taste by means of which publics come to know themselves' (63).

> Festivals contribute importantly to the structuring of public reception and debate, producing consensus regarding 'the masters' and 'masterpieces' of a given cultural field, as well as the equally vital forms of dissent – scandal, outrage, controversy – over new, heterodox works or styles. (63)

Again, this consecratory function, on the one hand, can highlight or help to shape a supposed international consensus over values, canons, and heterodoxies that may, in fact, represent the coercive globalization of culture from the perspective of an artistic, cultural, or economic élite (see Waterman); or, alternatively, it can stage generative struggles over values, foreground inequities, and focus on contested histories and decolonial or (counter)cultural disruptions.

Eventification, Festivalization, and Creative City Discourse

Whether in the interests of coercive globalization or countercultural disruption, festivals can serve as sites where works and debates become 'eventified', 'where the everyday *life event* (performing a play, a concerto, a dance . . .) is turned into a significant *Cultural Event* . . . which in turn *eventifies* elements and issues of the particular society in which it is taking place' (Hauptfleisch, 'Festivals' 39, emphasis in original).[9] And if particular elements, issues, and performances of culture, on the one hand, become eventified through the work of festivals, the cultures hosting festivals themselves become 'festivalized'. According to Maurice Roche, '"festivalization" can be taken to refer to the role and influence of festivals on the societies that host and stage them – both direct and indirect, and in both the shorter and the longer term' (127). It is one of the purposes of this book to consider the extent to which the eventification and festivalization of culture, depending on the scale, ambition, sponsorship, mandate, location, and sheer *cost* of a festival – to organizers, sponsors, and audiences – has been productive in providing focus on exchange between nation-states (international), within cultural communities (intranational), or between and among relativized cultures (intercultural), or has privileged high, mass, or global tourist culture over either intercultural negotiation or 'elements and issues of the particular society in which it is taking place'.

At its best, as Jasper Chalcraft and Paolo Magaudda have argued, '"festivalizing" . . . represents a shift away from the élite/popular cultural axis towards an idealized, but nonetheless not entirely imaginary, new democratic space where the performance of culture requires the interaction of artists, audience and locality' (175). Following Arjun Appadurai, they coined the term 'festivalscapes' to characterize festivals as 'the terrain on which . . . a variety of "-scapes" (ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes and ideoscapes) are constantly at play' (174):

> Festivalscapes are a set of cultural, material and social flows, at both the local and global levels, both concrete and imagined, both deliberate and unintended, which emerge and are established during a specific festival. In this sense, festivals can be seen and analysed as terrains where different cultural, aesthetic, and political patterns and values temporarily converge and clash, constantly creating, stabilizing, and redefining the setting of festival interaction, and in doing so stressing the problems raised by the multiple articulations of global cultural flows, life and spatiality. (174)

Indeed, *as* festivalscapes, festivals can function as what Michel Foucault calls 'heterotopias', defined by Kevin Hetherington as 'places of alternate ordering' (9) – 'spaces where ideas and practices that represent the good life

can come into being, from nowhere, even if they never actually achieve what they set out to achieve' (ix). Festivals, then, can potentially serve as sites for the 'renegotiation of communities' (Bradby and Delgado 3).

If festivalscapes are unpredictable and potentially productive sites of the convergence and clashing of different 'patterns and values', however, the forces that are brought to bear on them – political, economic, corporate, and cultural – are rarely equal, and the power differentials among community, municipal, national, and international stakeholders enmeshed in the vastly asymmetric flows and processes of globalization are vast. The pressures on festival organizers and sponsors that threaten to contain and limit possibilities for generative intercultural encounter and heterotopic new ordering within something resembling a level playing field are many and varied, ranging from differential access to international travel, visas, and other documentation for participating artists to differences in labour laws, safety standards, ticket prices, and audience amenities. But many are a result of efforts to instrumentalize festivals as players in a globalized economy. Festivals have long promoted themselves as 'bringing the world to our doorstep', while 'showcasing ourselves to the world'. But these aspirations, if not always this rhetoric, have shifted in the first two decades of the twenty-first century to something closer to 'bringing tourists and the corporate world to boost our economy', while 'branding ourselves as festival cities'.

In 2014 Nikolay Zherdev published an online working paper that examined how festivalization, working with 'creative city' policies and practices, had become a major part of development and urban planning strategies in contemporary cities. The phrase 'creative city' derives from two books by urban studies theorist Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) and *Cities and the Creative Class* (2005), in which Florida promoted the revitalization of cities, not through traditional methods such as 'hard' infrastructure provision in the form of municipal services, tax breaks, transportation, and so on that would attract corporations, but through cultural strategies designed to attract their twenty-first-century workforce, a 'creative class' of young urban professionals – the 'soft' 'human capital or talent' that business increasingly requires (*Cities* 88). Prominent among these strategies, in Zherdev's view, was festivalization, which he defines as 'a specific way of organization and formation of urban space and social activities based on festivals' (6).

Florida identified the creative class by means of its diversity, which he measured by 'the Gay Index' (absurdly privileging 'coupled' gay men as an index of diversity) and by their attraction to 'cultural and nightlife

amenities', which he equally absurdly measured by 'the Coolness Index' (*Cities* 88), privileging 'the experience economy'[10] and a vague and indeterminate sense of what is 'cool'. This is all, of course, highly problematic and more than a little silly. It has been rightly critiqued on the grounds of gender and race (McLean, 'Hos'; Parker), the production of urban inequality through the displacement and gentrification of culturally coherent neighborhoods (McLean, 'Cracks'), and 'the serial reproduction of an increasingly clichéd repertoire of favored policy interventions' globally (Peck 767; see also Finkel 20). But it has also been extremely influential: cities all over the world in the first two decades of the millennium rushed to implement creative city policies and engage in city branding intended to place them on the global 'cultural map' (Zherdev 8). Prominent among these were major 'festival cities' such as Edinburgh, Scotland, Adelaide, Australia, and Toronto, Canada, all of which prominently deployed creative city theories in their municipal and festival planning documents (see Thomasson, 'Producing' 168–9; M. Anderson 5, 33, and *passim*). Some of them, such as Toronto, where Florida is based, have hosted multiple festivals of one kind or another virtually every week of the year.

An example of how Florida's 'creative class' has invested in festival culture comes from Ontario, Canada's Kitchener-Waterloo region (KW), the so-called 'Silicon Valley of the North'. KW is home to one of North America's most culturally diverse small cities, and to the MT Space Theatre Company and its biennial IMPACT festival, one of the most adventuresome and highly respected small intercultural theatre festivals in the world. Rather than the familiar acts on the international touring circuit, in the ten years after its founding in 2009 IMPACT has biennially featured outstanding work, almost exclusively by Indigenous people and people of colour, from places such as Tunisia, Iran, Ecuador, Mexico, Aotearoa, Beirut, Bogotá, Chile, China, and Indigenous and immigrant communities across Turtle Island (North America). Nevertheless, Michael Litt, CEO of Vidyard, one of the area's countless tech companies, felt compelled, in an op-ed in Canada's national newspaper, *The Globe and Mail*, to call for KW to 'up level' its arts and culture scene to 'world class' in order to serve the tech workers of the innovation economy (Litt). In May 2018 Litt participated in the inaugural 'True North Festival', sponsored by Communitech and featuring a large corporate conference supplemented by a dominant-culture slate of performers, none of them local. 'Waterloo Region is about building cool things together', according to the festival's website (Communitech), scoring high on Florida's Coolness Index, but ignoring both local and transnational intercultures and, of

course, not considering cultural difference among its measures of diversity.[11] Florida's creative city, it seems, succeeded for many in promoting a globalized and saccharine brand of creative city 'diversity' without appreciable difference.

In spite of the apparent ubiquity of festivalization, creative city discourses, city branding, the cultivation of 'place myths' (Thomasson, 'Producing' 111, citing Shields 60), 'festival tourism' (Quinn, 933), and other homogenizing and globalizing forces, the festivalscape in the early twenty-first century has not been entirely without disruptive fissures. Indeed, as Jorge Perez Falconi says, 'a Festivalscape is the constellation of contrasting trajectories and flows impelled by local, national, and transnational practices and discourses at a festival' (13), and as my opening example of the George Town festival suggests, it can rarely serve any unified agenda. Zherdev acknowledges that the 'top-down' dimension of urban planning within the context of festivalization is dependent on the 'bottom-up' participation of sometimes unruly artists (and others) who actually constitute the festivals. Designs for any festival as a meta-event, as at George Town, are often complicated or disrupted by the multiplicity of discrete events that make it up, and this tension is one of the things I will focus on throughout this volume. The experience economy, Zherdev notes, 'brings to life new actors, public-private partnerships, networks and interdependencies that result in new powerplay patterns fostering the production and consumption of experiences' (14). And chief among the 'new actors' he identifies are artists, local and otherwise. Other scholars have also focused on tensions between 'the instrumentalization of expressive culture' within 'a transnational festival geography' (Ronström 73–4), on the one hand, and 'localizing and diversifying forces' (76), on the other. For my purposes, 'diversifying forces' include those brought about by cultural difference, broadly understood, both within local host communities and among visitors, both artists and others. It is one of the unanticipated consequences of the shift to a neoliberal economy and its reliance (or insistence) upon individual entrepreneurialism that unruly artists, for whom that economy has created a new and frightening precarity, have also been led to enter into partnerships and transnational networks that compensate for decreased government support of artists and festivals alike. It has also, in some instances, placed artists in leadership positions as curators, co-curators, or guest curators, and while it has inappropriately downloaded administrative work and responsibility to them it has also better positioned them to create and constitute disruptive fissures in what was once a more uniformly top-down festival economy.

Festivals have not always been good at difference, partly because the festival context, through decontextualization, has often reduced work that is socially and politically powerful within its own communities to exoticism or pure formalism within the deterritorialized space of the festival.[12] In economic and environmental terms this can be compared to 'extractivism' in industries such as mining, forestry, and fossil fuel. As defined by Indigenous Michi Saagig Nishnaabeg artist and scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, 'extractivism is a cornerstone of capitalism, colonialism, and settler colonialism. It's stealing. It's taking something, whether it is a process, an object, a gift, or a person, out of the relationships that give it meaning, and placing it in a nonrelational context for the purposes of accumulation' (*As We Have* 201–2). Timothy D. Taylor has similarly argued that one of the colonizing tasks that has been accomplished by festivals is 'domesticating the Other, keeping it at a safe distance and placing it in a capitalist framework of the consumption of commodities' (116, qtd in Ronström 78). Indeed, Julie Holledge and Joanne Tompkins, noting the 'lucrative drawcard' that 'exotic' intercultural theatre has been for international festivals (153), argue that 'onstage, culture as difference quickly becomes a commodity', while 'a culturally identified commodity product in performance sometimes comes to be recognized as a metonym for a culture' (157). 'Most arts festivals', they suggest, 'set out to present intercultural performance as a showcase of how cultures might intersect and interact, but the underlying financially driven structure of any festival and the resulting commodification of its art forms generally compromise the best intentions to promote interculturalism' (158–9). Such festivals – and Holledge and Tompkins are referring specifically to destination festivals in Australia – have historically been promoted and funded by local and national governments as economic engines, touring artists have often worn 'the ambassadorial and tourism mandates of their home country' (156), most festivals have relied on corporate funders who anticipate material returns, and all of this has tended to promote a 'checkmark', or 'sound-bite' approach to the cultures represented that can rapidly descend to meaninglessness (157–78). But not all festivals are the same, and in the early decades of the twenty-first century many festivals are adjusting to new realities and new types of festivals are emerging that address evolving social and economic conditions in potentially productive ways, and that, as I have suggested, also complicate the definitional field around the terms 'international', 'theatre', and 'festival'. It is this turning point in the life of festivals – the first two decades of the twenty-first century – that this book sets out to examine.

Partly because of a constant search for novelty, festivals have always tended to stress formal diversities – 'mixing, bricolage, eclecticism, cross-over, blurring of genres and categories' (Ronström 80) – that can prove to be generatively disruptive in social as well as aesthetic ways. And according to sociologist Sharon Zukin, cities – including, presumably, festival cities – had begun by the end of the twentieth century to view the multi-ethnicity of their populations as a source of both cultural vitality and economic renewal (836). Festivals can be understood, then, as 'fields of tension' (Ronström 76), at once sites of the cultural reproduction of global capitalism *and* vehicles for communicative negotiation, diversification, resistance, and in the case of colonized cultures, decoloniality and resurgence.[13] And as management scholar Marjana Johansson has pointed out, 'apart from shaping cultural preferences festivals also shape patterns of inclusion and exclusion and can be mobilized to protect established boundaries as well as to transgress them. This organizing capacity of festivals means that they are political.' Festivals are evolving in the twenty-first century – or have the potential to evolve – in ways that could make their politics – including the politics of cultural inclusion, exclusion, and representation – visible and contestable.

Scope, Methods, and Theories

This book's goal is to interrogate the politics and practices of festivals in the first two decades of the twenty-first century as they related to the global traffic in cultures: the ways and degrees to which international theatre and multi-arts festivals stage, represent, exchange, market, and negotiate cultural difference, broadly understood to include ethnic, national, Indigenous, queer, disability, and other cultures. Festivals do function, perhaps first and foremost, as marketplaces, but as I have argued elsewhere following Peter Stallybrass and Allon White (Knowles, *Reading* 190), marketplaces are complex sites, both intensely local and 'only ever an *intersection* ... a conjunction of distribution entirely dependent upon remote processes of production and consumption, networks of communication, lines of economic force' (Stallybrass and White 27, emphasis in original). They are also places where different communities, categories, and cultures, both high and low, mix and mingle in unpredictable ways. Like, or as, marketplaces, festivals therefore become contested sites, spaces, as James Clifford says of museums, for negotiating 'the opportunities and constraints created by powerful and overlapping cultural, economic, political and historical forces and shifting political alignments', where 'the work

of culture remains always political and relational, marking and mediating insides and outsides, imperfectly negotiating social factions' (qtd in Papastergiatis and Martin 53). Festivals, then, are the meeting points of multiple, distinct, and, crucially, unequal cultural forces that can be brought to bear upon each other and be experienced by artists and audiences in multiple and unanticipated ways. It is part of the purpose of this book to elucidate and evaluate the different ways in which different, and different kinds of international festivals in the early twenty-first century have enabled, enhanced, restricted, or resisted their potential to broker cultural exchange. This involves 'eschewing assumptions about the flat geo-political terrain of global multiculturalism', to borrow a phrase from Margaret Werry, and considering the relative merits of the different politics, and the different temporal, spatial, curatorial, financial, and organizational strategies of festivals as they play themselves out in different municipal, regional, and national settings.

Festivals are not the same the whole world over. François Campana has argued that western definitions of festivals that centre around 'a concentrated series of artistic and cultural offerings (grouped by theme or by art), with the participation of a wide audience' do not apply very well to festivals in Africa (50). They are equally inappropriate, I suggest, for festivals in the Caribbean, the Pacific, and across the trans-Indigenous world, where the events and the word that names them are constituted differently than at the cities that host the world's destination, fringe, and curated live-arts festivals. For this reason, in my discussion of festivals in these locations the definitional field I outline here will be applied with considerable elasticity, considering events that are certainly performative, but might otherwise be understood to be art markets, showcases, or cultural festivals, or to have elements of Carnival or ceremony that can challenge the very epistemology of festivals. There are also many events that refer to themselves as festivals but are beyond the remit of this book, and others that do fit my definitions but that I exclude for reasons of space. I do not consider the proliferation of Shakespeare festivals worldwide, for example, or the Shaw Festival in Ontario, Canada, events that call themselves festivals but in fact consist of extended repertory seasons; and I do not consider 'mega-events' such as the European City of Culture, Cultural Olympiads, or World Fairs except insofar as they relate to Chapter 1's discussion of Indigeneity and festivals. I also exclude from consideration series such as the Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), the Festival d'Automne à Paris, or the Berliner Festspiele that are called festivals but extend over many months and do not involve artists from different places being in the same

location for a set-apart period, or audiences escaping in any durational way from their daily routines. Nor do I give extensive consideration in these pages to the many festivals devoted to specific performance forms such as puppetry, clown, circus, mime, physical theatre, solo performance, or street theatre where the focus is primarily on the form, and I do not look at amateur, university, educational, or online festivals, or the many festivals for young audiences that have flourished throughout the period. Finally, while I attempt to extend my discussion of festivals beyond the Euro-American festival circuits familiar to many in the Global North and West, my coverage is limited by the resources it takes to attend international festivals, and by my own linguistic limitations. I attended at least three of each type of festival considered in each of the following chapters, including festivals on six continents (albeit in very unequal proportions), but with the exception of the BeSeTo festival discussed in Chapter 5 I have only attempted to write about festivals whose primary languages of operation are English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, or Arabic (again, in unequal proportions), and I am grateful to those who have translated for me.[14]

It is said in much western theatre history that 'once upon a time, theatre and festivals were born simultaneously' – in Athens in the fifth century BCE (Maurin 8); that both were reborn in the medieval period; that they were revived, after the Greek model, by Wagner and his compatriots at Bayreuth in the 1870s and sustained by the likes of Peter Behrens and Georg Fuchs in Germany in 1901; and that they were reinvented at Edinburgh, Avignon, and elsewhere in the wake of the Second World War to shore up a bruised and battered European civilization. In most western scholarship this has been presented as a genealogy of the formation, reinvention, or reinvigoration of communities, usually understood as nation-states (see, e.g., Giorgi and Sassatelli; Fischer-Lichte, *Tragedy's* 82). It is still frequently argued that 'the close relation between festival and theatre in European history is striking. Festivals are almost inconceivable without theatre performances' (Fischer-Lichte, *Routledge* 175). But festivals long precede what the western academy understands to be theatre, and in the twenty-first century many festivals have evolved, other types of festival have emerged, and still others participate in a different genealogy entirely, one that, I suggest, demands a new festival historiography and makes possible a new festival cosmogony.

The approach of *International Theatre Festivals and 21st-Century Interculturalism* is not primarily historical, and although it is written by a white settler Canadian artist-scholar trained in the western academy, its

focus is not exclusively on European festivals. Its primary critical and theoretical challenges are: (1) relationally to consider international theatre, performance, live arts, and combined arts festivals in the first two decades of the twenty-first century as sites of tension between the local and global and sites of unequal negotiation between cultures and cultural forms; (2) to analyse the impact of globalization, urban promotional discourses such as 'creative city' theory, and city branding on the ways in which intercultural negotiations are framed and practised at festivals; (3) to investigate ways in which festivals can be reconfigured to better enable cross-cultural understanding and a 'new interculturalism' 'from below' rather than through state intervention; and (4) to consider festival models, paradigms, and origin stories that offer generative alternatives to the élite, destination-festival model that has dominated the international circuit since the mid twentieth century. A final challenge is to acknowledge that, as Christine Nygren argues, festivals in different cultures require different theoretical and methodological approaches. This has led me, in addition to traditional research involving archival, print, and digital sources, to adapt an overarching methodology that George E. Marcus calls 'multisited ethnography' (79): I have had different access to different festivals globally, participating as a board member, organizer, reviewer, or artist at some, attending others frequently and at length without formal participation, attending others only briefly with or without the aid of translators or cultural consultants, and visiting still others only virtually, through traditional forms of humanities research, or not at all. Insofar as it is ethnographic my approach is based on my own participant-observation experience, and my research has been conducted, as Marcus articulates it, 'with a keen awareness of being within the landscape, and as the landscape changes across sites, the identity of the ethnographer requires renegotiation' (97).

The book is structured neither by chronology nor geography, but by a loose classification of festival type, each requiring different theoretical lenses. Festivals worldwide have existed in the twenty-first century for a variety of purposes and taken a variety of forms that have not in any systematic way been acknowledged in scholarship, and although classifications and taxonomies are always in danger of reifying existing modes of understanding and, especially, valuation, when applied loosely and with a degree of self-consciousness they can also be useful. This book is therefore organized into chapters that provide a loose grouping of the different types of festival and genres of festivalization that, I suggest, have come to populate the global festivalscape in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Although they share certain features and qualities, there is

certainly overlap among the categories, and many shows have appeared at two or more different types of festival, I suggest that most festivals in this period can be categorized as one of the following: large, élite, or destination festivals programmed by organizers from an international menu of shows taking place in locations branded as 'festival cities' and marketed as tourist destinations; smaller, artist-run interdisciplinary live-arts festivals curated to put particular artists and live art forms into conversation with one another and with the urban geographies and populations that host them; anarchic, open-access fringe festivals that may or may not coincide with destination or artist-run festivals; socially activist festivals that exist to explore and promote political and/or aesthetic alternatives to dominant social and cultural formations; and what I call 'intracultural transnational' festivals bringing together work from a single cultural, regional, or language community that nevertheless transcend, transgress, or disregard national borders.

Although this volume aims to wear its theorization lightly, making itself available and accessible to festival organizers, funders, and general audiences as well as students and scholars, the overall theoretical frames that it employs are cultural materialism and the new interculturalism studies. The latter I have outlined above; the former pays attention primarily to the ways in which the mutually constitutive material conditions for production, reception, and 'performance text' (in this case, the individual shows *and* the festival as meta-event) determine in large part the cultural work performed by the festivals. This approach involves attentiveness to the ways in which the histories, politics, public discourses, reputations, mandates, organizational structures, publicity, ticketing, architecture, geographies, and neighborhoods that house the festivals, all ideologically coded, shape their meaning and impact (see Knowles, *Reading* 1–101). Within those frames I take cognate, but pragmatically different theoretical approaches to each festival and type of festival that I consider. These include:

- critical diaspora studies, which examines the relationships between diaspora and nation; transnationalism, localization, and globalization; territorialization and deterritorialization; and complex identity formations related to the migration and intermixing of cultures;
- critical cosmopolitanism, which attemps to circumvent the traps of universalism and state multiculturalism while imagining an attitudinal openness to cultural difference and a practice of navigating across cultural boundaries while redressing historical and extant power differentials among cultures;

- decolonial studies, which eschews the tendency of decolonization and postcolonial nationalisms to reify colonial binaries while undertaking the epistemological reconsideration of modernist and neocolonial structures, hierarchies, and practices in order to validate non-western cultural formations and the epistemic regimes that undergird them;
- and Indigenous resurgence studies, which focuses on cultural survivance and resurgence rather than merely resistance, building on Indigenous Nation-specific 'grounded normativity', the 'place-based foundation of Indigenous decolonial thought and practice' (Coulthard 13).

Beyond these, my consideration of curated, live-arts festivals employs the discourses of scholars such as Jen Harvie and Angela McRobbie who have studied the complicity of contemporary radical art with neoliberal economics; my reading of the open-access world of fringe festivals similarly invites analysis through the lens of neoliberal individualism and entrepreneurialism; while my discussion of what I have called 'intracultural transnational' festivals is illuminated by studies of global transnationalism.

Taxonomies, Paradigms, and Creation Stories

Although it focuses on the opening decades of the twenty-first century, *International Theatre Festivals and 21st-Century Interculturalism* opens by acknowledging a transnational, or rather trans-Indigenous tradition of what might be called festivals that predates western history. Chapter 1, 'Indigeneity, Festivals, and Indigenous Festivals', asks what it might mean to our understanding of festivals, and particularly of festivals as sites of intercultural negotiation, if we considered them to have originated, not with the Festival of Dionysus in Athens in the fifth century BCE – which was itself heavily influenced by similar festivals in societies Indigenous to Africa (see Zarrilli 59) – but with occasions of performative intercultural contact and negotiation among the world's First Peoples. What if we did not understand 'festival' to be, by definition, a western concept? What if our understandings of festival performance and performativity began with a different creation story?[15] Following from those questions and a brief account of events that might be understood to be Indigenous 'ur-festivals' that predate the Festival of Dionysus, the chapter traces a brief history of the relationship between Indigenous peoples, fairs, festivals, and mega-events in the west before turning to consider Indigenous-run festivals in the contemporary world that have brought together First Nations in ways

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that echo and revive ancient routes of trade, exchange, and the ceremonial practice of trans-Indigenous negotiation. I place this chapter first in an attempt to problematize traditional festival epistemologies, frame subsequent chapters within different ways of thinking about the form and function of festivalization, and disrupt Eurocentric festival (his)stories. In this chapter my theoretical frame is drawn from decolonial and Indigenous Studies, wherever possible citing Indigenous sources and identifying scholars and theorists by their Indigenous nations as specifically as possible in an attempt to respect Nation-specific Indigenous epistemologies.

Chapter 2, 'Destination Festivals and the International Festival Circuit', begins with what has often been considered the revival of international festivals in the west in the wake of the Second World War, when Edinburgh and Avignon were founded in 1947 to help salvage European high culture. These festivals and their international 'hallmark arts festival' descendants (Varney et al. 208) incorporated into their original purpose national identity reification, international cultural diplomacy, and in some cases peacekeeping, and then shifted to the more globalized economic functions of festivalization, eventification, and city branding early in the twenty-first century. They remain, problematically, I suggest, the dominant festival model globally, though some of them are adapting to changing realities and other types of festivals have emerged to challenge their preeminence. This chapter considers how festival programmers, for the most part selecting shows from a menu of touring productions and thereby constituting an international festival circuit, have formed a globalized marketplace that has threatened to erase cultural difference through decontextualization and commodification. Destination festivals throughout their histories have tended to participate in discourses of universalism, excellence, and the (post)modernist avant garde, and to constitute their audiences socially as élite arbiters of taste. They are seen by their municipal and national hosts, who are seeking to attract tourist dollars and corporate headquarters, as the gold standard to which all festivals should aspire. This chapter tries to find models and practices that might allow these destination festivals and their host cities to enable and celebrate rather than fetishize difference and to stage meaningful cross-cultural encounters despite global pressures to the contrary.

Many of the élite, destination festivals that were founded in the mid twentieth century, which have traced their origins to ancient Greece, having adapted to a changing sociopolitical landscape, nevertheless retain deeply embedded traces of their moment of birth; they remain, as Keren Zaiontz has argued, 'indivisible from the statecraft of Nations'

('From Post-War' 15). By the early years of the twenty-first century, however, the world was no longer populated by autonomous nation-states constituting national communities that were 'imagined', in Benedict Anderson's coinage, to be culturally homogeneous. Nor, after the decolonization movements of the mid twentieth century[16] and the late twentieth-century development of globalized capitalism, was it still dominated by the European imperial powers who had once colonized most of the Americas, Africa, and Asia. The élite, destination festival circuit that was founded in Edinburgh and Avignon, at Paris's Théâtre des Nations, and elsewhere not long after the founding of the United Nations in 1945, initially served internationalist purposes not dissimilar, in the cultural realm, to the diplomatic and peacekeeping ones for which that august body was established. Festivals founded since, many of them in reaction to the destination festivals I discuss in Chapter 2, have taken a different form.

The origins of the festivals considered in Chapter 3, 'The Curated Live-Arts Festival', are more recent. Beginning in the 1980s with LiFT (London International Festival of Theatre) and other festivals mainly based in continental Europe, and expanding in the 2000s to include North America, a new form of curated, interdisciplinary, artist-run festival responded both for better and for worse to neoliberal shifts in the globalized economy, challenged the cafeteria-style programming of 'the circuit', and began designing programmes with specific artistic and aesthetic goals that purposefully brought like-minded artists together in generative juxtapositions or collaborations rather than as signal representatives of their respective nations. Downloading managerial responsibilities and financial risks to artists-as-entrepreneurs, this festival model has nevertheless also transformed festival programming into a creative rather than merely administrative activity, while also often imagining new roles for festivalgoers as participants. While these curated, live-arts festivals often tend towards formalist experimentation and develop their own networks, they also often enable social as well as artistic experimentation to cross political and cultural as well as disciplinary boundaries, and they find ways of exploring, however problematically, the inter-imbrication of the work of international guests and the life of the host city both within and outside of traditional theatrical spaces. They tend to address local rather than tourist audiences, to engage directly with local issues and neighborhoods, and they often exceed traditional festival temporalities.

If festivals, including mushroom festivals,[17] sprang up like mushrooms all over the world in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, nowhere is this more true than on the international fringe circuit, which,

together with other kinds of festival alternatives, is the focus of Chapter 4. 'Open-access' fringe festivals, beginning in 1947 with the now mammoth Edinburgh Fringe as a genuine aesthetic and political alternative to the exclusions and élitisms of the Edinburgh International Festival, evolved by the twenty-first century into exemplary models of the neoliberal free market with all the inequities, precarities, and exclusions such markets inevitably encompass, constituting their artists as entrepreneurs and their audiences as experience collectors. Many fringes emerged, moreover, with no relationship to a centre: with no mainstage to be alternative to, such festivals – the only shows in town – have taken on broad representational mandates that have led to modifications and adjustments to their open-access principles and allow them to privilege certain types of difference. In addition to the official fringe circuit organized and promoted through various international networks, this chapter also looks at fringes of fringes, counterfestivals, 'alternativos', and 'manifestivals' that have emerged in the twenty-first century with more explicitly political, intersectional, identity-politic, and social-action mandates, and these have often staged or promoted generative dialogues, contestations, and confrontations across various kinds of difference. These politically alternative festivals at their best shift away from the dominant model of understanding their shows as spectacles and their audiences as consumers and move closer to the Indigenous festival model in which artists and audiences are understood to be participants or witnesses.

Chapter 5, which focuses on 'The Intracultural Transnational', concerns itself with a different type of festival that brings together an identifiable cultural, regional, or linguistic community across continental, hemispheric, or international borders. These festivals, I suggest, represent an emerging new decolonial paradigm that has much in common with the one I have identified as developing from an Indigenous tradition, with festivals often serving as sites at which generative debates internal to their specific communities can cross latter-day or enforced borders and forge transnational solidarities while acknowledging, celebrating, or mediating intracultural and historical differences. Indeed, these festivals of intracultural encounter, however vexed, might serve as alternative models of the kinds of negotiation and exchange that this book sets out to track down. They work to bring audiences together across their differences, most often to address historical divisions brought about by colonialisms and neocolonialisms of various kinds, to constitute trans- rather than international communities, and to ally with the Indigenous festival paradigm in compatible ways.

Taken together, these chapters, and this book, constitute a new and hopefully useful classification of twenty-first century festivals for future researchers, while also, crucially, assembling and analysing a documentation of effective practices and policies for festival organizers, funders, artists, audiences, and other stakeholders globally who wish to make future international theatre, multi-arts, and live-art festivals more than globalized sites of neoliberal capitalist circulation, and more conducive to real and open negotiation and exchange across acknowledged and celebrated cultural and other difference. The book (in)tends, that is, to displace the destination festival as the gold standard, and the fringe as the only alternative, proposing new festival genealogies and epistemologies that privilege trans- and intranational exchange over consumption, and the intercultural over the international. The Conclusion makes recommendations for 'Festival Futures'. It consists, in part, of a summary and compendium of 'wise practices'[18] in hopes that it might ease the way at festivals to come for the kinds of transnational, intercultural, multilingual, and intersectional work performed by the production of *Say No More* at Malaysia's George Town Festival with which this introduction began. The book itself also ends where it began, reiterating its proposal of an alternative creation story for international theatre festivals in the communal, performative, inter-nation gatherings that predate the Festival of Dionysus and model a different kind of festival experience.