




Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney\* 

## Thematic Volume Introduction: Shakespeare and Ideology on Page and Stage

The majority of articles presented in this volume are the fruit of the seminar “Shakespeare and Ideology on Page and Stage,” which took place under the auspices of the 20<sup>th</sup> World Shakespeare Congress “Shakespeare Circuits” in Singapore, 18-24 July 2021. Such Congresses have been organized every five years since 1976 when the idea appeared; each of them in a different location and with a different theme: “Shakespeare, Man of the Theatre” (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1981); “Images of Shakespeare” (Berlin, 1986); “Shakespeare and Cultural Traditions” (Tokyo, 1991); “Shakespeare and the Twentieth Century” (Los Angeles, 1996); “Shakespeare and the Mediterranean” (Valencia, 2001); “Shakespeare’s World/World Shakespeares” (Brisbane, 2006); “Renaissance Shakespeare: Shakespeare Renaissances” (Prague, 2011); and “Creating and Recreating Shakespeare” (Stratford-upon-Avon/London, 2016).

The Congresses are organized to further the knowledge of Shakespeare at the international arena; and to educate the general/local public of Shakespeare’s works and their importance in culture worldwide. They also serve to promote, and sometimes to establish, national and regional Shakespeare associations, and to assist with in their organizations in a given place. The Congress’s programs are devoted to spreading the ideas of social, political, and cultural diversity and inclusion, always respecting the academic and artistic freedom of expression. They also encourage respect for world cultures, teaching their heritage, wisdom, and values of various civilizations.

In 2022, the Congress was hosted by the National University of Singapore, one of the leading universities not only in the Pacific region but also in the world. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Singapore Congress carried on, taking place online. It also included the Digital Asian Shakespeare Festival, featuring performance streaming of *Macbeth*, *Pericles*, *King Lear*, *The Tempest*,

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*Othello*, and *Henry IV*, along with meetings and discussions with such renowned researchers, artists, and performers as Dennis Kennedy (Ireland) Tang Shu-wing (Hong Kong), Annette Leday (France), Yang Jung Ung (South Korea), Natalie Hennedige (Singapore), among others.

Our seminar, “Shakespeare and Ideology on Page and Stage,” was one of 34 seminars and workshops. Its aim was to stimulate a discussion on the appeal of Shakespeare’s works to people in disparate circumstances, mediating differences of time and place, race and gender, and even religious and moral convictions and values in the contexts of shifting paradigms of ideology and practice in research and theatre. The participants came from India, South Africa, Japan, Poland, the United States, Czech Republic, Holland, and Romania. Their papers tried to present to what extent such critical movements as new historicism, feminism, queer studies, cultural materialism, presentism, post-colonialism, and trauma studies transcended—or undermined—traditional norms of praxis and local values. They also explored how engagements of the global and the local are mediated through Shakespeare studies: to what end? with what benefit? at what cost? Does Shakespeare find this articulation because the plays transcend their local production, evoking a universal sense of human value, or because they are universally subject to local production, taking on the ability to mediate values and beauty? like the dyer’s hand?

As one of the organizers and leaders of the seminar, I would like to thank everybody for their participation in this significant academic meeting. Since not all the event participants submitted papers for *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation, and Performance*, I have decided to include a few articles proposed for publication in this journal by Shakespeare scholars who for various reasons did not take part in the Congress. All works went through a strenuous process of blind peer review.