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Introduction

Shakespeare and/in Europe: Connecting Voices¹

Abstract: Recent Shakespearean productions, just like current European crises, have highlighted the exclusionary nature of European identity. In defining the scope of this special issue, the aim of this introduction is to shift the study of Shakespeare and/in Europe away from the ideological field of “unity within diversity” and its attendant politics of negotiation and mediation. Instead, it investigates whether re-situating Shakespearean analysis within regimes of exclusionary politics and group conflict attitudes helps to generate dynamic cultural and social understandings. To what effect is Shakespeare’s work invoked in relation with the tensions inherent in European societies? Can such invocations encourage reflections on Europe as a social, political and/or cultural entity? Is it possible to conceptualize Shakespearean drama as offering an effective instrument that connects—or not—the voices of the people of Europe?

Keywords: Group conflict; Exclusion; Europe; Politics; History; Religion; Social change; Reception.

A number of recent Shakespearean productions have given special, controversial prominence to the transformations affecting the European Union in the twenty-first century. These includes Polish director Jan Klata’s 2012 *Titus Andronicus*² which explored the impact of past traumas and contemporary tensions to highlight the current crisis of Europe. In 2012 and 2014, Russian-born actor and choreographer Mitia Fedotenko performed the acclaimed *Sonata Hamlet* at the Avignon Festival in collaboration with French director Christian Tanguy. The production, which was partly based on Heiner Muller’s adaptation of *Hamlet*, proposed a reflection on the integration of Eastern European states into the Union in May 2011. Fedotenko’s intense choreography focused on the impact of political and ideological borders restricting the movements and freedoms of citizens and critiqued the Soviet occupation in Eastern Europe as well as

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² In a coproduction by Wrocław’s Teatr Polski and the Staatsschauspiel in Dresden.

Vladimir Putin's regime. In 2016, the small UK company Talawa set out to challenge "stereotypes about who Shakespeare is for and what his work is about" by setting *King Lear* in a historic Britain re-imagined as led by a black king. Talawa's artistic director Michael Buffong started from the premise that, although their presence was unrecorded, black people lived in ancient Britain and were powerful. By alluding to a forgotten history of black Britain at the time of the Windrush scandal, Buffong (Talawa) asked very powerful questions: what has happened to this presence? What audiences is Shakespeare's theatre performed to and why? Importantly, all three productions spoke to fundamental historic and contemporary divisions within "Europe" rather than to the idea of "unity within diversity" that typifies the discourse of European institutions. This underscoring is significant when recent European crises have highlighted the exclusionary nature of European identity.

In light of this, the overall aim of this special issue is to shift the study of Shakespeare and/in Europe away from the ideological field of "unity within diversity" and its attendant politics of negotiation and mediation and, instead, re-situate it within regimes of exclusionary politics and group conflict attitudes. It seeks to interrogate the capacity of conflict and dissonance in the spaces where Shakespeare's name and drama are invoked (such as in performance, theatre practice, political discourse, translation and criticism) for generating dynamic cultural and social understandings. It investigates whether such practices are able to focus viewers' and readers' attention on the roles played by the tensions defining Europe. To what effect is Shakespeare's work invoked in relation with the inherent tensions inherent in European societies? Can we know whether such invocations aim to encourage reflections on Europe as a social, political and/or cultural entity? Is it possible to conceptualize Shakespearean drama as offering an effective instrument that connects—or not—the voices of the people of Europe?³

Current divisions at the heart of the Union came to the fore as the financial crisis brought about by the 2008 Wall Street crash was compounded by the migrant crisis of 2014-15 that caused millions of refugees from the Middle-East to seek asylum in the "continent of Human Rights" (Commissioner for Human Rights). This sudden influx of migrants exacerbated divisions between northern and southern member states and deepened existing racial tensions within national boundaries. Whilst the numerous conflicts coming to light during this period almost certainly influenced the result of the UK's 2016 referendum, Britain's likely departure from Europe has sparked calls from populist and Eurosceptic parties in other member countries also to leave the Union. Timothy Less refers in *The New Statesman* to a new ideological and geographical divide.

³ The project "Shakespeare and/in Europe: Connecting Voices" was launched in 2016 and has to date resulted in two conference workshops (2016 ISSEI conference in Lodz, Poland and 2017 ESRA Conference in Gdansk) as well as this special issue.

On the one hand, the founding members of the EU in Northern and Western Europe see themselves as embodying the “true” Europe of the Enlightenment whose values of democracy, liberty and rights have led to an unprecedented period of peace and growth since the Second World War. On the opposite end of the spectrum—predominantly in the South and East—stand the supporters of a Europe perceived as a historically coherent aggregate of discrete national entities, united by a common Christian heritage and family structure. Through its promotion of diversity and its control of nation states, the more liberal interpretation of Europe threatens the foundation of this worldview. Less dates this division back to the start of the 2010s, with the election of Viktor Orbán in Hungary and the introduction of a populist and nationalist conservatism. Following the migrant crisis, this nationalist spirit has now spread to most of Eastern Europe, as well as Sweden, Austria and Italy. The aspiration for a European worldview or a European public sphere transcending the specificities of the national identities of each member state thus appears to have been seriously put into doubt, increasingly leading the press to refer to deep rifts across the European Union.

The conflicting nature of these worldviews exposes what has been central to the aim, through the European institutional infrastructure, of constructing the sense of a shared European citizenship (Bruter 6). Political identification with a specific (comm)unity is not predicated on the mere fact of living in the same place: it requires the sharing of a common and meaningful identity (such as political rights). The building of social cohesion therefore entails the construction of exclusionary identities: “the practice of ensuring the ‘belonging’ and ‘unity’ of the nation’s members simultaneously and inevitably signals the existence of a sharp divide between insiders and outsiders to the nation” (Bosniak 98). Bruter’s (170) analysis of focus group data in *Citizens of Europe* shows that “the very fact that interviewees described who, according to them, should be ‘in’ and ‘out’ of the group confirmed the overall idea that the respondents ‘identify’ themselves with the European cultural and political community”. This process of inclusions and exclusions from the “imagined community” (Anderson) is normalized by political systems through the invocation of symbols or myths to convey specific values and meanings about that community, with which citizens are meant to identify. The role of these myths is to generate a sense of homogeneity and universality by denying the existence of tensions (see Fayard in this volume). For instance, myths of Europe include: the belief in a shared European cultural identity based on mutual experiences—such as the role of the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian myths in demarcating Europe’s boundaries and cultural heritage, the myths of the Enlightenment and Romanticism and their production of emblematic scientific or cultural icons (e.g. Shakespeare, Descartes, Liszt), as well as the belief in Europe’s superior civilizing and colonizing mission. Whilst “myths in Europe”

(Pfister 21) circulate within European cultures and across their borders, they also act as powerful markers of differences between Europe and its Others. A recurrent example of this is the invocation of Christianity as a shared European value to turn down the application of other potential member states and reject refugees. This myth is also built on the erasure of other beliefs and histories competing for dominance, such as Islam as early as the eighth century. Another example is the denial of the existence of an African heritage in Europe—despite available evidence of trade and pilgrimage routes from African Christian states such as Nubia and Ethiopia to Europe in the Middle Ages (Simmons). Roger Liddle (xxii) also draws attention to the permanence of “historic myths and identity crises” about Europe which are emblematic of the political anxieties surrounding the formal European integration project since its beginnings in the 1950s. These include firstly the tensions between the requirement to hand over some control to the supranational entity vs. the protection of national sovereignty, even though many of the matters regulated by EU legislation would need to be covered by similar national rules. Secondly, European integration within a context of globalization has led to increasing conflicts between regulatory capitalism (Jordana and Levi-Faur; Levi-Faur and Jordana) as well as growing demands for greater democratic participation. A third anxiety derives from a romantic nationalism that still imagines the individual nation as a global power in its own right—which is yet another myth in today’s interconnected world.⁴

Thus, whilst tensions are generally perceived as undermining the current and future nature of European politics and relations (Martill and Staiger; Dinan, Desmond and Paterson), they are in fact constitutive of identity formation. And there is a strong case to be made that thinking about “Europe” in terms of conflict can be both productive and positive rather than a threat to the Union. Current scholarship on Europe suggests that existing paradigms and myths of shared identities limit socio-political responses to diversity to focusing solely on integration strategies—rather than, in fact, *living with* multiculturalism. To transcend these inadequate models, recognizing the reality of “Europe” as originally a conglomerate of plural, fluid and multicultural identities born of

⁴ In the UK for instance, by rejecting the myth of a shared European identity, a significant number of UK citizens entertained the illusion of a stand-alone, harmonious British nation-state that never existed, such as MP and Brexit advocate Jacob Rees-Mogg’s view that Brexit “is Magna Carta, it’s the Burgesses coming at Parliament, it’s the Great Reform Bill, it’s the Bill of Rights, it’s Waterloo, it’s Agincourt, it’s Crecy. We win all of these things” (Feldman). Rees-Mogg’s attempts to create a new myth of national collective memory are based on historical references which either predate Britain’s unification or refer to defeating the French in battle. Ironically, these are remote historical events which are unlikely to figure highly in today’s collective consciousness.

conflict—rather than harmony in diversity—leads to a better appreciation of its transnational nature (Kraus and Sciortino; Kivisto; Ruiz-Vieyetz). It also provides learning opportunities (Ruiz-Vieyetz), allowing for an understanding that contemporary tensions are unremarkable. By virtue of its connection to group relationships and social identity, conflict is understood here as social conflict, defined as “the clashing of goals and aspirations” or attempts by one party to “bloc[k] or imped[e] another party’s goal striving” in a competition for real or symbolic resources (De Dreu, Aaldering and Saygi). According to group conflict theorists, the rejection of outgroups principally arises from the collective belief that they are competing for privileges enjoyed by the ingroup. Intergroup competition might centre around scarce material resources (such as jobs or social housing) as well as power and influence (Schneider, Semyonov, Raijman and Gorodzeisky, “The Rise”; “Foreigners’ Impact”). Group attitudes are determined by economic conditions, the size of the outgroup and media coverage.⁵ Thus, there is close correspondence between this model and the intensified hostile attitudes to ethnic minority refugees in 2014-15 when Europe was already struggling with the effect of the global recession.

Group conflict theory provides useful concepts to contextualize the tensions highlighted above within a historical field of continuities and change. Within its multidimensional conceptualizations, “Europe” has been shaped by human conflict over resources. Much of Europe’s history has been characterized by migrations, invasions and land-grabbing resulting in numerous ethnic melanges (Davies xviii), making “Europe” into an “imagined” territory and community as exemplified by the frequent redrawing of borders and shifting of allegiances. The myth of Europe as a single, politically-united state is far from new, having been pursued from the Romans and Charlemagne to Napoleon and Hitler (Kerr 10). The creation of geographically-defined European nation states and centralized power are relatively modern phenomena which date back to the development of a prosperous merchant class in the Renaissance and the aspiration to open up trade routes. This entailed Europe expanding its boundaries into most parts of the globe during its Imperialist period, fuelling narratives of national and European identities relying on oppositional shared mythologies. The belief in Europe’s shared history has therefore been built on the exclusions resulting from intra-group competitions rather than their inclusions. This is made all the more evident by the Western, Eurocentric bias characterizing definitions of Europe.

Perhaps no “migrant” illustrates the need for such recognition better than Shakespeare. His drama is embraced enthusiastically mostly as a foreign

⁵ Blalock; Scheepers, Gijsberts and Coenders; Semyonov, Raijman and Gorodzeisky, “The Rise”. Olzak; also Coenders and Scheepers, “Support for Ethnic Discrimination”; “Changes in Resistance”; Quillian; Bruter.

author throughout Europe, where his plays are for the most part read and performed in translation, necessitating a complex process of decoding, encoding and rewriting to be transferred and absorbed into the target cultures of individual member states. But his work is also a resource—a product imbued with cultural, economic and symbolic capital and therefore denoting variously competing forms of belonging in specific European ingroups. The perceived adaptability of his work to most forms of national identity has led to the playwright becoming an international icon, but also specifically claimed as a symbol of European identity. In a survey of 70,000 Europeans conducted by the Franco-German TV channel Arte in 2008, Shakespeare was elected as the greatest “European” playwright (Arte). The results of the survey are notable for their elitism and exclusions, containing classical dramatists and excluding women, ethnic minorities and twenty-first century authors.⁶ In a 2009 speech at the Centre for Financial Studies in Frankfurt, the President of the European Central Bank Jean-Claude Trichet defined “European-ness” as:

being unable to understand fully my national literature and poetry—Chateaubriand, Mallarmé, Julien Gracq, St John Perse, Senghor—without understanding Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Goethe and Heine. European-ness means that I share with all other Europeans the same basic cultural sources, despite the fact that they come from vastly differing backgrounds.

And whilst European newspapers acknowledged the result of the 2016 British referendum on leaving Europe as a very British affair by quoting Shakespeare in their headlines, by so doing they also put Shakespeare centre stage as a symbol of shared European heritage and awareness. As shown above, the celebration of European icons is all the more necessary when it needs to sustain the belief, as explained by Graham Holderness (xiii), in “unity, integration and harmony in the cultural superstructures of a divided and fractured society”.

Abundant scholarship has attested that Shakespeare’s plays were already travelling across Europe in his lifetime, first as English players toured the continent during the Plague, and as they began to look towards the East for safer places to perform during the thirty-year war (see for instance Drábek and Katritzky; Holland; Kennedy; Stribny). Entering the continent via the Netherlands or Denmark, Shakespeare’s plays were performed in Germany and Poland in the early seventeenth century (Drábek), beginning an always-growing trend that shows no sign of abating. Notably, interaction and conflict with Europe are themes that also dominate Shakespeare’s theatre. Shakespeare

⁶ The results of the survey were as follows: First place: Shakespeare; 2. Schiller; 3. Molière; 4. Brecht; 5. Goethe; 6. Beckett; 7. Sophocles; 8. Sartre; 9. Chekhov; 10. Ibsen.

located a significant number of his plays in Europe, lending them carefully constructed national identities. These include *As you Like it*, *All's Well That ends Well* (Roussillon, France), *Love's Labour's Lost* (a province historically annexed to the Crown of Castile in 1515 but remaining ambiguously separate until 1610), *Romeo and Juliet* (Verona), *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Verona), *The Taming of the Shrew* (Padua), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Messina in Sicily, ruled by Aragon at the time the play was set), *The Merchant of Venice* (Venice), *Othello* (Venice and Cyprus), *The Comedy of Errors* (Ephesus), *The Winter's Tale* (Sicilia and Bohemia), *The Tempest* (an island in the Mediterranean), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (Athens), *Twelfth Night* (Illyria, in the Balkans), *Measure for Measure* (Vienna). This is also especially the case of the tragedies (Howard 305) which, in contrast with the Histories and with the exception of *King Lear*, are all located abroad.⁷ Information about the shape of the world would have been readily available to Shakespeare from increasing interest in detailed cartography from which explorers, cartographers, geographers and historians all contributed.⁸ At the same time, Storey (162-80) reminds us that cartography always presents a subjective perspective on cultures. It speaks of social and political relations implicated in performances of knowledge and power. Storey (169) refers to the political and social silences resulting from map-making as:

conquering states impose a silence on minority or subject populations through their manipulation of place-names. Whole strata of ethnic identity are swept from the map in what amounts to acts of cultural genocide. While such manipulations are, at one level, the result of deliberate censorship or policies of acculturation, at another—the epistemological—level, they also can be seen as representing the unconscious rejection of these “other” people by those belonging to the politically more powerful groups.

Map-making in early modern Europe was an essential instrument whereby states could strategically control the ingroup and keep out outgroups for ideological, economic and military reasons. Shakespeare would also have had access to news about European politics and cultures that were available at the time from merchants travelling to and from the continent, pamphlets and letters, as well as published accounts of journeys to Europe. This is shown from the resonances from travel writing in his plays (Shapiro; Hadfield, “Shakespeare, John Derricke

⁷ Howard (“Shakespeare, Geography” 305) remarks that although a significant proportion of the comedies are located in European countries, their settings are very English in depiction. By contrast, *Macbeth's* Scotland (unified in 1603) is given a primitive—dangerous—and foreign setting.

⁸ See for instance Gerardus Mercator's *Historia Mundi or Atlas* (1595).

and Ireland”).⁹ Nevertheless, Michael Brennan (53) points out that Shakespeare was not interested in accurately reproducing the geographical or cultural knowledge about other European countries available in the scientific literature of the time. Laroque (196) likewise refers to the “imaginary geography” enabling the poet to oppose real spaces with landscapes of exile, nostalgia or resistance. Instead of evoking picturesque scenic backdrops, European locations are used as dramatic devices reflecting the social and political anxieties of the time (Hadfield, “Shakespeare and Renaissance Europe” 3).¹⁰ Whilst, unlike his contemporaries, Shakespeare did not write directly about European politics, his plays display his awareness of existing debates in Europe. For instance, *The Comedy of Errors* (3.2.118-41) makes significant references to the disputed French succession. The reference to Wittenberg in *Hamlet* is also unlikely to be a coincidence: Martin Luther was believed to have nailed his *Ninety-Five Theses* to the door of Wittenberg’s cathedral in 1517. The publication of Luther’s *Theses* transformed Europe in the same way as Hamlet’s rebellion radically affects the succession of the kingdom of Denmark. Brennan (67-69) demonstrates Shakespeare’s awareness of the interactions between the continent and England generated by political exile during European religious war but also under Queen Mary’s reign, as illustrated in the histories as well as in *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Coriolanus*, *Cymbeline*, *As You Like It* or *Two Gentlemen*. For Laroque (207), Shakespeare’s geographical associations and oppositions, therefore, caused cultures both to connect and collide.

Religious war is a good example of intergroup competition, and it is especially important not to underestimate religious divisions in Reformation Europe. As humanism failed to bring about Church reform, religious revolt changed Europe indefinitely through violence and wars financed by monarchs, which involved most of the European powers, bankrupting many (Kerr 81). By the beginning of the seventeenth century, Europe’s territory was physically and ideologically divided according to Catholic, Lutheran or Calvinist affiliations (Kerr 81). With France becoming the dominant force in Europe, the new boundaries set the ground rules for the modern nation state. The creation of

⁹ Hadfield (“Shakespeare and Renaissance Europe” 2-3) cites Abraham Ortelius’s *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570) and Gerardus Mercator’s *Atlas* (1595). Shakespeare would probably also have read travel literature such as Thomas Nashe’s *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594). Nashe moved amongst the circle of authors and playwrights living in London in the late 1500s.

¹⁰ The ill-defined geographical location of Prospero’s island has led to speculation about what it represents, with scholarship variously claiming that it symbolizes the colonization of the Americas (Vaughan and Vaughan 118) or of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland (Wymer 3, 5). The play makes unrelated references to Bermuda, the Argentinian god Setebos and exotic foods, and thus more than likely denotes—like Illyria—a fantasy world.

geographically-defined nation states radically changed the relationships between ruler and subjects in countries now bound solely by the laws of their own national government. The power of the papacy was considerably eroded, paving the way to formal criticism of political and religious repression, as well as the advocacy of personal liberty.¹¹ Within this context, wars of religion, regicides and disputed successions for foreign crowns dominated Europe. Accounts of European political affairs in Shakespeare's lifetime acted as a warning of things to come in England should Elizabeth's reign be disturbed (Doran 51). This leads Doran (52) to find significant connections between European current affairs and Shakespeare's Roman and history plays, and she claims that the many allusions to regicide, tyranny and the consequences of civil war would have been very familiar to Shakespeare's audiences.

Othello is especially revealing of Shakespeare's use of location to symbolize the divisions tearing both Europe and England apart.¹² English and European Renaissance representations of the world established clear-cut distinctions between the civilized and the savage. In his Essay "Of Cannibals" (1580) French philosopher Michel de Montaigne argued that the cultural practices of tribes that European societies regarded as uncivilized are no less barbaric than the violence committed in the name of political and religious intolerance. His satire was intended as criticism of the Saint-Bartholomew Day massacre in France where an estimated 10,000 Protestants were murdered. Likewise, *Othello* opposes a well-ordered Venice to an insubstantial Cyprus threatened by the Turkish fleet. Whilst Venice wants to be seen as the centre of European identity and wealth and is enlightened enough to welcome foreigners in its midst, it is also at risk from the expansion of the formidable Ottoman Empire into Eastern Europe. In spite of its superficial civility, *Othello*'s Venice is also the locus of duplicity and racist abuse against foreigners. Iago's and Roderigo's Spanish names might also have acted as markers of religious difference for any audience sensitive to England's contemporaneous Catholic enemy (Everett). *Othello* thus emphasizes the real threat of "enemies within the realm" (Hadfield, "Shakespeare and Renaissance Europe" 4). For Hadfield ("Shakespeare and Renaissance Europe" 4), these hidden divisions might also have been designed to symbolize significant religious tensions within Europe, with a mostly Roman Catholic power significantly influencing European politics until Rome and Catholic Spain became England's adversaries. In England, these anxieties ushered in a fear of foreign rule which, it might be argued, continues to resonate today for some with Brexit. The portrayal of religious tensions in plays

¹¹ Both positions were central tenets of the philosophy and political theory of the Enlightenment, as exemplified by Voltaire and Spinoza.

¹² Other significant plays include *Measure for Measure* and *Macbeth*, in which the porter scene refers to contemporaneous prejudices against the Jesuits.

set in feudal Europe (such as *King John*, *Henry V*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Macbeth*), at a time when the power of kings depended on their loyalty to the Church, were also bound to evoke political divisions within Modern Europe.

Shakespeare's geographic settings—especially the invention of Illyria and the exotic fantasy backdrop to the *Tempest*—also reflect the creation of the modern state characteristic of the Renaissance. The explorers of the Age of Discovery transformed the geopolitical world, promoting the expansion of European powers beyond their borders and the colonization of foreign lands. These changes mirrored the ways in which leaders, authors and philosophers developed a sense of national identity in terms of conflict, rather than collaboration with other groups. By the time of James I's accession to the throne in 1603 England had experienced significant territorial growth. The Crown had incorporated Scotland, Ireland and Wales, and established the first English colony in America in 1585 ("How the Tudor"). By the early seventeenth century European imperialist powers had begun to divide up the world between them, and England was establishing itself as a colonial power against Spain, France and Portugal. Colonies brought about significant income and were an important symbol of power against rival states. After 1603, James I significantly transformed perceptions of national identity by calling himself "King of Great Britain".¹³ The introduction of the myth of British nationalism is reflected in Shakespeare's plays in which "Britain" begins to replace "England" after 1603 (Wymer). In *Richard II* John of Gaunt's "this sceptered isle... This precious stone set in the silver sea, | Which serves it in the office of a wall ... England, bound in with the triumphant sea... "[2.1.40-46, 47-61]) is unlikely to refer to England but to Britain and its imperialist ambitions (Schwyzer 4). Shakespeare's focus on Britain's self-determination underlines the process whereby this "imagined community" was changing in an increasingly accessible world. It also describes its dual position as an active colonizer and a nation that does not stand for being colonized by its (European) neighbours. Illustrating these concerns, *The Tempest* has long been read as exploring colonialism and the issues it raises such as social and cultural othering and economic exploitation (Willis; Frey). Shakespeare's introduction of the sophisticated figure of the colonial Other through Caliban, dispels simplistic discourses opposing the civilized against the uncivilized (see above). *The Tempest* thus appears to reflect on uneasy questions regarding the legitimacy of power, especially by leaving Caliban's situation unresolved at the end of the play.

Shakespeare's plays therefore reflect a keen awareness of group conflict and divisions in Europe, including the power struggles between Europeans and

¹³ Religious anxieties in the 1530s and 1540s spurred interest in British antiquity. Protestant Reformers referred to the pre-Saxon British Church as the pure origin of faith to which the English Church should aspire to return.

the other nations they feared and tried to subjugate. The shifting boundaries of Britain, Europe and its neighbours also threw into relief the emergence of a new world and the decline of the old one. Shakespeare's tragedies embody these transformations in the satire of the rising new entrepreneurial merchant class (such as Edmund in *King Lear*) against the fall of feudal power and the decline of the ruling class (Howard 314). Here, again, Shakespeare displaces this specific period of crisis in the ruling order to the historically and geographically distant landscapes of the past, or of Europe. Howard (322) explains that, far from being random, these locations are "distant and close, strange and familiar" enough to examine the fall of a system. By combining the figures of the king and tyrant in distant locations, one function of Shakespeare's tragedies is thus to "desacralize kingship and evacuate dominant ideologies of their power" (Howard 322). In other words, to highlight the motivations behind group conflict.

Home and especially London in Shakespeare's drama, belong in the present and future and are usually inhabited by prosperous men. This contrast brings contemporary social tensions to the fore. It also parallels the new conceptualization of the state and nation in early modern England in terms of corporate, market exchange values (Antony Black qtd in Archer 7). Archer (7) underlines in *Citizen Shakespeare* the presence in Shakespeare's London of artisan companies, descended from medieval guilds and dominating urban civic life through their ability to award their members "the freedom of the City".¹⁴ Their role was to control who could become a member according to economic criteria. As an ingroup, they therefore had the ability to assign urban identities as well as control over economic rights. As Archer (6) puts it, they had the power to create forms of subjectivation and exclusion. Outsiders perceived as bringing potential unwelcome competition were seen as threats to keep out. Women, adult craftsmen from the countryside ("foreigners") and "aliens" from abroad, such as French Huguenots and refugees from the Netherlands, were therefore denied citizenship. As a source of political identity, legitimacy and resources, citizenship—then like today—is a prized and well-defended privilege. Archer (7) points out that Shakespeare was himself a "foreigner" living in a borough where communities of refugees resided as a consequence of religious persecution in Europe. Such "aliens" were protected and sponsored by the Crown and became "new urban subjects of the English monarch, vying with

¹⁴ The Freedom of the City of London is believed to date back to 1237. It refers to the right of town dwellers who enjoyed the protection of the charter of their town to trade. A "Freeman" was someone who was not the property of a feudal lord and was granted the rights to paid work, to own land, and to sell one's own products. Only members of Livery Companies had the right to trade in London until 1835, from which date anyone living or working in London was entitled to the Freedom (see "City Freedoms").

citizens for royal attention just as the citizens had feared” (Archer 166). Accordingly, the motif of group competition surfaces in the language of Shakespeare’s drama, such as Dromio’s comic description of Nell in *The Comedy of Errors* (3.2.110-44), which includes all at once: familiar stereotypes about Europeans commonly circulating in travel writing and pamphlets; references to religious civil wars in France (France is described as “armed and reverted, making war against her heir”); references to English imperialism in Ireland, Scotland and Wales; and allusions to Spanish imperialism in the Americas and the Low Countries (“O, Sir, I did not look so low” 3.2.118-144). Recurrent allusions are made in the play to European refugees appropriating London’s urban space (Archer 28), such as the necessity to erect walls and police borders against the threat of alien invasion.

Returning to the initial premise in this introduction, the tropes of group conflict running through Shakespeare’s plays situate Europe and Britain within their long histories of interactions, communication and migration around the globe, recognized nowadays as globalization. Just as contemporary Europe continues today to be shaped by its citizens in relational and geographical terms, constructions of a European identity in Shakespeare’s lifetime were also based on inclusions and exclusions from the “imagined community”. Scholarship on Shakespeare and Europe over the past two decades has valuably demonstrated the multiple ways in which the Shakespearean canon became firmly localized within national cultures in the continent as part of a growing European literary, and theatrical heritage across both time and space from the seventeenth century. Authors have usefully drawn attention to the construction of cross- and intercultural Shakespearean or European identities by investigating national cultures of Shakespearean performance.¹⁵ In so doing, this body of work demonstrates the role performed by the invocation of Shakespeare’s theatre in (re)defining national identities in Europe—all represented in this collection in articles by Nicole Fayard, Jami Rogers, Robert Gillett, Keith Gregor, Magdalena Cieślak and Stephen O’Neill. They also uncover the breadth of Shakespeare’s influence over European culture (see Keith Gregor’s essay on festivals, Robert Gillett and Stephen O’Neill on ideological uses of Shakespeare’s drama).¹⁶ And whilst Shakespeare’s works and appropriations are skilfully envisioned within cultures of renegotiation in *Shakespeare and Conflict* (Dente and Sonconi), conflict is mostly situated from perspectives of war and trauma. Dente and Sonconi (10)

¹⁵ See Cavecchi and Tempera; Cinpoş and Valls-Russell; Muñoz-Valdivieso; Schneider, Florian; Höfele; Lupton, Nathans; Wells, Pujante and Hoenselaars; Nicolaescu; Lambert and Engler; Bradshaw et al.; Orkin; Stokes; Stribrný; Vos.

¹⁶ Cianci and Patey; David; Delabatista and D’Hulst, Lindfors; Martineau; Delabatista and D’hulst; Delisle and Woodsworth; Delabastita, de Vos and Franssen; Dente and Sonconi; Gregor; Guntner; Homem; Joughin; Kostihová; Orlich; Sheen and Karremann; Shevtsova; Shurbanov and Sokolova; Thomas; Gibińska and Romanowska; Mancewicz.

also consider Shakespeare to be a cultural mediator. But by subscribing to the symbolic capital of Shakespeare's theatre, name and image, this role does not fully allow his cultural currency to be questioned. This is not surprising, as the nature of this work is in line with the collaborative, cross-European research over the past twenty years encouraged both by Higher Education funding reforms, and funding and exchange opportunities sponsored by the EU (e.g. Erasmus and the European Shakespeare Research Association), all contributing to the bolstering the European idea of "unity through diversity".

Of necessity, this special issue initially also relied on nation-focused approaches in its identification of germane research questions. However, it is not concerned with identifying pan-European trends and commonalities in the production of Shakespearean meanings, or with providing evidence of their coincidence with the European model of integration. Instead, it focuses on the meanings that are produced when the alliance of Shakespeare's drama and the concept of Europe takes place in situations where intergroup conflict about worldviews or competition for resources occurs. What ideological narratives do they uncover? Do they allow for any constructive understandings of "Shakespeare" and/or "Europe"? What meanings are produced by the alliance of both concepts? The themes of inclusion, exclusion and group conflict converge in these questions and are explored by the contributors to the volume from varying theoretical and empirical perspectives. Contributors examine relationships between and within cultures, cultural politics, the cultural, political and economic consequences of the invocation of Shakespeare's cultural capital. The authors explore some of the geographical, cultural, ideological and social spaces within which Shakespeare speaks to Europe and Europeans, including political discourse, theatre performance, direction and casting practices, literary and educational rhetoric, as well as the commemoration of iconic figures in times of turmoil. Contributors all display a common interest in group relationships in their various manifestations. For most of them, this includes discussing Brexit or the ways in which Shakespeare's drama has found itself entangled with European crises at the time of writing. Contributors bring to this volume a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds from both academic and professional contexts, including drama, performance, history, literary criticism, directing and acting.

The first four articles in this special issue explore the ways in which identity construction is supported by the exclusion of outgroups, and demonstrate how Shakespeare's cultural currency is used for hegemonic purposes. Nicole Fayard in "Je suis Shakespeare: The Making of Shared Identities in France and Europe in Crisis" considers the portrayal of contemporary conflicts such as the Paris terrorist attacks in 2015 and the wider European crises of 2015-2016 in French Shakespearean productions and their reception. Her reading of *The Tempest* and *Romeo and Juliet* directed by Jérôme

Hankins and Eric Ruf respectively suggests that the productions reflected contemporary tensions between core cultural hegemonies and multiculturalism. Fayard draws on contemporary debates in philosophy, sociology, critical theory and post-colonial studies—especially the work of Homi Bhabha’s analysis of cultural identity, Foucault’s “heterotopias”, Roland Barthes’ “mythologies” and Emile Durkheim’s cultural logic of collective representations. With these, she examines the creation of sites of interpretative and scenic distortion in the productions to ask whether they offer alternative representations of cultural politics. Fayard also considers these distortions from the perspective of recent scholarship, highlighting the ability of art and performance to underscore injustices and marginalization, or even promote social and political change. Analysis of audience reception suggests that appropriating Shakespeare’s cultural authority might be productive, by encouraging some degree of public debate on national and pan-European events. Thus, whilst acknowledging that the function of Shakespeare’s drama remains strongly connected to its symbolic value, Fayard’s analysis complicates assumptions that the invocation of Shakespeare in theatre performance serves purely to strengthen dominant ideologies of power and national identity.

The tension between social change and perceived intergroup competition for resources through Shakespearean production is likewise central to Jami Rogers’ essay on “Cross-Cultural Casting in Britain: The Path to Inclusion, 1972-2012”. Rogers discusses the basic inequality that continues to divide ethnic-minority performers from their white counterparts in British Shakespearean production in the twenty-first century. Framing her analysis around the concept of “cross-cultural casting”—shifting a play’s temporal and/or geographical setting to a different location so as to enhance diversity on stage—, Rogers explores Peter Coe’s 1972 *The Black Macbeth*, Temba’s 1988 *Romeo and Juliet* and Gregory Doran’s *Julius Caesar* in 2012 to chart the progress of the integration of performers of African and Afro-Caribbean descent in professional British Shakespearean theatre. In a fascinating response to Fayard’s essay, Rogers’ analysis of the reception of these productions demonstrates the strong political impact of Shakespearean performance when it attempts to challenge binary narratives of race and ethnicity. Crucially, it brings to light behavioural tendencies from ingroups motivated by the desire to subordinate the outgroup (by rehearsing colonialist narratives) and to protect the ingroup (by ascribing specific meanings to Shakespeare) when the *status quo* is challenged. Rogers underlines the role of language in highlighting patterns of inclusion/ exclusion: positive critical reception of Doran’s *Julius Caesar* performed in 2012 by the RSC, an index of ingroup recognition, was marked by reference to the production as “British-African”. However, she draws attention to the persisting marginalization of black and Asian actors in stereotypical classical roles in twenty-first century Britain.

Shakespeare has long been used by political leaders and commentators to describe their position—including James Callaghan’s unfortunate “Winter of Discontent” and US film-maker Errol Morris observing that our times smack of “bad Shakespeare”—and also acts as a useful cultural “ingroup” reference. The themes of (non) belonging, stereotyping and cultural legitimacy discussed in Rogers’ essay are central to Brexit, but they were also fundamental to the adoption of Shakespeare as a national poet in nineteenth-century Germany. Robert Gillett’s essay “King John in the Vormärz: Worrying Politics and Pathos” calls attention to critics’ propensity to look to Shakespeare for insights into contemporary politics. Picking up on the associations between Brexit and *King John* to celebrate British nationalism and independence from Europe following the result of the British referendum, Gillett shows how equivalent issues were reflected in the accounts of *King John* given by three leading German critics of the “Vormärz”—the period of German history between 1815 and 1848. Following the defeat of Napoleon and the revolutions of 1848 that spread from France across Europe, this time also marked the deleterious rise of German nationalism. Gillett’s meticulous and astute analysis of critical scholarship highlights the tactical, ideological motivations behind Shakespeare’s adoption as a national poet in Germany during this period. *King John* in particular was seen as providing instruction on contemporaneous political issues such as: the transgressions of the powerful, and the national and international impact of their crimes; national sovereignty and the need to eliminate resistance to orthodoxy; the dilemma of choice, and the poisoned chalice of democratic freedom. For Gillett, these representations and the parallels they establish between Shakespeare, the “Vormärz” and the rise of nationalism in our own society are uncannily close and disturbing.

Keith Gregor also takes up the theme of the fetishization of cultural memory by political elites and institutions to stimulate belief in myths of national purity in “Transversal Connections: The Cervantes Quatercentenary in Spain and its Comparison with ‘Shakespeare Lives’”. The focal point of the essay is the “transversal connections” between the 2016 quatercentenaries of the deaths of both Shakespeare and Cervantes, as celebrated in Spain and the UK. Gregor considers the hegemonic motivations behind commemoration such as the erasure of the spatial and temporal distance from the sites of memory, encouraging the illusion that the object of commemoration is being kept alive. This need for proximity to the dead brings into light the materiality of commemoration, including its political and commercial meaning. Gregor demonstrates that the intense need for commemoration of Shakespeare and Cervantes in 2016 coincided with intense moments of crisis when British and Spanish identities were both being redefined. In such contexts, commemoration of national icons sustains the myth of a cohesive and united collective identity by keeping group conflict out of sight. As guardians of the

(supra)nation's cultural heritage, the state, schools and heritage industry are central to (re)definitions of national identity and its mechanisms of exclusion.

The next three contributions shift the focus of the volume from group conflict over belonging to the exposure of schisms and boundaries (physical and symbolic). The sense of continuities with the past, together with the desire to expose and communicate tensions with the present, is the subject of Magdalena Cieślak's essay on Jan Klata's 2014 production of *King Lear*. "I fear I am not in my perfect mind.' Jan Klata's *King Lear* and the Crisis of Europe" explores the representation of Europe through Shakespeare as a place of shared conflicts within its diversity. Jan Klata's Shakespearean productions are typically celebrated for addressing contemporary geopolitical tensions such as the clash of identities, the cultural legacy of Europe and its nations, historical traumas and current crises. Whilst touches of multilingualism in *King Lear* function as reminders of global and European realities, they are also suggestive of past and present ideological conflicts. Cieślak considers the multifaceted ways in which the performance reflects these tensions and is concerned with fantasies of Europe's disintegrating identity. She gives particular attention to the setting of the production within the trappings of the Catholic Church—the displacement of *Lear* into the adversarial territory of Catholic Eastern Europe—, and the context of its production during the rise of nationalism in Poland and Europe. Reading the portrayal of Lear's weak and disintegrating mind and body as the embodiment of a nation—a "united" Europe—falling apart and the death of absolutism, she draws out the strong political implications of the production for Polish audiences. Like Fayard and Rogers, Cieślak's analysis also proposes that Shakespearean productions have the potential to help audiences understand their current-day reality.

In the years preceding the UK's planned departure from the European Union, attention has also refocused on physical borders, including the "colonialist' partition of Ireland" (Carroll) symbolized in the problematic "backstop", which renewed fears of a resurgence of Irish Republican violence. This divisive question of the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and the mapping of divisions in Shakespeare's plays is the subject of Stephen O'Neill's analysis in "Finding Refuge in *King Lear*: Shakespeare's European Values". By focusing on the motif of the map in Shakespeare's play as performed in Jonathan Munby's performance (2018), O'Neill explores topographies of belonging through inclusion and exclusions in *Lear* to discuss Shakespeare's Europeanness. In a markedly apt response to Fayard, Gillett and Gregor, he offers evidence of some of the ways in which present-day perspectives are introduced in order to appropriate Shakespeare's cultural authority in efforts to either support and disrupt narratives about Brexit. The motifs of disintegration and division of Lear's kingdom via mapping and remapping also resonate with current discourses about who and indeed what is in

and of Europe in the context of migration and asylum. O'Neill traces recent uses of Lear in digital cultures, including YouTube and Twitter, to suggest the capacity of disruptive voices to invoke Shakespeare as a mobilizing entity, a site of connections rather than singularity and exclusionary sovereignty.

Fayard's exchange with director Declan Donnellan, co-founder and artistic director of the company Cheek by Jowl, brings this collection to a close with "Making Things Look Disconcertingly Different": In Conversation With Declan Donnellan". Cheek by Jowl specialize in producing Shakespearean and European drama in English, French and Russian in the UK as well as abroad. Drawing on his experience of performing Shakespeare in Europe, Donnellan discusses the themes of cultural difference, language and translation and the tensions generated by staging plays in foreign cultures. The company's commitment to engaging with multicultural and multilingual audiences globally is directly connected, for Donnellan, with the ability of Shakespeare's theatre to encourage the sharing of our common humanity in a world where "there is only conflict". His dramaturgical analysis of Shakespeare's plays and language further draws out their potential social and political impact. Donnellan believes that by allowing voices to be heard—this entails linguistic misunderstandings and cultural rifts—the theatre facilitates a flesh-and-blood carnal interchange between the actors and the audience which directly affects individuals. And if Shakespeare's theatre provides us all with a voice, Donnellan sees it as a powerful instrument for gaining insight into a world of exclusion.

Each of the essays in this collection illustrates the centrality of group conflict attitudes and tensions in the multifaceted ways in which Shakespeare's name and drama continue to be invoked to debate twenty-first century Europe. The authors have shown that, far from posing a threat to our understanding of the formation of Europe or our conceptualization of Shakespeare and/in Europe, these conflicts productively reflect the reality of Europe as an incoherent collective influenced by global and internal group struggles for power and resources. Equally importantly, audience analysis indicates that it is possible to expose some of the systems of group conflict and exclusion at work within political discourse and theatrical performance, when these are structured around two mythical figures as compelling as "Shakespeare" and "Europe". This work of exposure matters since political discourse and theatrical performance are both constructed for captive, (self-)selecting audiences, and are therefore also governed by exclusionary group dynamics. It thus seems possible to submit that, in some circumstances, Shakespearean drama can offer effective instruments to connect the voices of the people of Europe about their own realities in meaningful ways. This is not to say that Shakespeare mediates this process: as an ideological tool, "Shakespeare" is never neutral, and the role of his drama is to support intergroup bias. As the essays in this volume suggest, however, it is possible to bring such motivations to light with creative or subversive effects, providing resource to effect social change.

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