

From the Editor

In an attempt to bring to our readers the most interesting approaches to Shakespeare's plays, *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance* finds itself publishing essays that vary in methodology and focus. Many works in recent issue have been devoted to theater studies, presenting Shakespeare in performance; others have concentrated on the interpretations of his plays on page. All interpretive strategies are informed of theoretical and critical developments, making use for example of new historicist, ecological, cognitive, formalist, performance and feminist tactics. It is important to underline that each of the essays presents his/her work within a fresh and exciting approach to Shakespeare, theatrical presentation of Shakespeare's and Shakespeare's language. In other words the essays collected in *Multicultural Shakespeare* open up lines of inquiry between a kaleidoscope of stimulating and inspiring ways to act and to view Shakespeare in variegated contexts—Japanese, Jewish, Chinese, Turkish, South African, Arabic, and Polish cultures.

Emi Hamana's work demonstrates the popularity of *Sleep No More*, and adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the play was staged by Punchdrunk theatre company, recognized as one of the most famous international immersive theatre companies. The presentation of the play in American—New York, and Chinese—Shanghai cultures, allows the author to deploy a cognitive approach to the text and to demonstrate the development of this approach to theater studies. Though Reut Barzilai's essay also deals with theater studies, the author's approach is quite different. Showing the complicated history of Hamlet's presence in Israeli culture, we have here elements of political conditioning. Some space is devoted to the aesthetics of theater and its evolution in Israeli's culture, lighting its conflicting relations with both the local and European theater traditions.

In "When *Macbeth* Meets Chinese Opera: A Crossroad of Humanity" Li Xingxing concentrates on the complicated story of *Macbeth* in China. Shakespeare's play has been appropriated by the local folklore traditions, modern drama and operatic renditions presented by Taiwanese and Beijing operas. All these adaptations reflect political and social aspects of Chinese culture as well as they draw upon experimental theatrical approaches to the play. In addition, the essay demonstrates complicated affinities between Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and its Chinese critical and performative interpretations.

In “The Shifting Appreciation of *Hamlet* in its Japanese Novelization: Hideo Kobayashi’s Ophelia and Its Revisions” Mori Nakatani studies the history of the tragedy in Japanese culture. Attempts of the play’s novelizations serve here as a survey of Japanese novel writing, especially its language, style and aesthetics. Almost all these appropriations foreground the complex psychological presentations of the characters. Criticism of Ophelia’s character plays a significant role in this essay.

Eco criticism constitutes methodological vista of the work “Arboreal Tradition and Subversion: An Ecological Reading of Shakespeare’s Portrayal of Trees, Woods and Forests.” Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II*, *The Tempest* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* are the main texts referred to by the essay’s authors: Andoni Cossio and Martin Simonson. Close reading of these plays allows for discovering complex symbolic connotations evoked by reading both the stage directions and the plays’ texts. The next two essays deal with various aspects of translation. “Dostoevsky in English and Shakespearean Universality: A Cautionary Tale” by Chris Thurman addresses the relationship between Dostoevsky’s novella *Notes from the Underground* and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Translations of these two texts play a significant part in the essay’s discussion of their universality, stressing that the allusions and citations underdetermine the readers’ response to both Shakespeare and Dostoevsky or, better said, to Shakespeare-in-Dostoevsky. According to the author, the reception of Shakespeare in the nineteenth century Europe, which stresses his universality, requires a new evaluation in the context of the translation nuances.

In “Leaving Readers and Writers in Peace. Translation of Religious Terms of Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus* into Arabic considering Venuti’s Invisibility” Rabab Ahmad Mizher examines the play’s translation by Muhammad al-Sbai and by its translation by Jabra Ibrahim Jabra. Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) constitute theoretical framework of the translations in question. The translation by Muhammad al-Sbai is treated as an example of the “domestication” of Shakespeare’s text where stress is put on the translator’s invisibility. The latter translation, by Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, is classified as the text’s foreignization, with emphasis on the translator’s visibility. The intertextual relationship between Marian Nowinski’s poster for the presentation of staging of Desdemona in the Polish staging of *Othello* and the text of Shakespeare’s play is the subject of Sabina Laskowska-Hinz work entitled “Designing Goddess: Shakespeare’s *Othello* and Marian Nowinski’s *Othello Desdemona*. Significant elements of the plot are discussed, especially those important for the reception of Desdemona’s character in visual art, which fashions her into Venus Caelestis and Venus Naturalis. Referances are made to the painting by Titian, Giorgione and Fuselli which influence Nowinski’s poster and his understanding of Desdemona as a goddess.

“To *Hamlet* or Not to *Hamlet*: Notes on the Arts Secondary School Students’s *Hamlet*”, presented by Estella Ciobanu and Dana Trifan Enache examines the 2018th staging of *Hamlet* by Romanian teenage arts students. The authors form a tightly linked partnership. One of them was the staging’s director, while the other informed the staging with her academic knowledge and expertise which include the political aspects of the body’s representation, in for example religious drama, as well as medieval and feminist values. A detailed problems connected with the play’s theatrical rendition constitute an important aspect of this essay.

I conclude with thanks to our contributors, whose works, we hope, make the current issue of *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance*, interesting to its readers. My special gratitude goes to the external reviewers. Their careful readings of the many submissions we received shaped the present volume and have helped continue appropriate academic standard of our publication.

Krystyna Kujawinska Courtney