Multicultural Shakespeare:

Translation, Appropriation and Performance

Editors: Yoshiko Kawachi
Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney

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Thematic Volume:
Shakespeare and Ideology on Page and Stage

Editor: Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney

Werner Habicht (29 January 1930 – 5 November 2022)

The world of Shakespeare scholarship will be saddened to hear of the death of Werner Habicht, at the age of 92. Not only the doyen of Shakespeare studies in his native Germany, he was internationally known and respected in the widest circles of English studies. We salute his memory as a colleague and dear friend.

Werner was Professor emeritus of English, University of Würzburg, Germany. He obtained his degrees at the University of Munich and held previous positions at the Universities of Heidelberg and Bonn as well as visiting professorships at the Universities of Texas (Austin), of Colorado (Boulder), Ohio State (Columbus) and of Cyprus (Nicosia). He was President of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft (West) (1976-1987). Werner was author of studies on medieval poetry and on Renaissance and modern drama, including Shakespeare's reception in 19th and 20th-century Germany. He was former editor of *Shakespeare Jahrbuch (West)* (1980-1995); co-editor of several volumes of criticism and of a literary encyclopedia (*Literatur Brockhaus*, 2nd edn. 1995).

He was responsible for processing and writing the introduction to the large and important F.A. Leo (1820-1898) collection of letters at the Folger Shakespeare Library, many pertaining to the early nineteenth-century history of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft and founding of the *Jahrbuch* (https://findingaids.folger.edu/dfoleo2002.xml) He also transcribed, translated

and edited a selection of letters and other documents at the Folger Shakespeare Library from 68 authors, written almost exclusively in German and mostly pertaining to the works of Shakespeare. The items date from 1777-1912 (https://findingaids.folger.edu/dfogerman2002.xml#overview).

In cooperation with other libraries and archives, Werner and members of the Academy of Sciences and Literature Mainz presented, on the occasion of Shakespeare's (1564-1616) 450th birthday, an impressively produced photo album with 109 portraits and autograph signatures of personalities meritorious for having communicated and maintained the interest for Shakespeare in Germany (https://www.shakespearealbum.de/en/about.html).

Werner was a full member of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences and Literature, Mainz, as well as honorary Vice-President of the International Shakespeare Association and honorary member of the Australian and New Zealand Shakespeare Association (ANZSA).

Werner Habicht was a dedicated scholar; always engaging, friendly and committed. He will be greatly missed, and as Hamlet said, we 'shall not see his like again'.

Christa Jansohn (University of Bamberg)
Christa.jansohn@uni-bamberg.de

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Ayman Abu-Shomar, PhD, is Associate Professor of English Literature and Cultural Studies in The University of Jordan, Aqaba. Previous to this, he taught in Warwick University (UK) and extensively in Saudi Arabia. His principal research interests are English literature, cultural studies, contemporary literary theories, post-colonialism, diaspora, dialogism and cross-cultural studies. https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0916-6819.

Boram Choi is a lecturer in the Theatre Studies, School of Drama at Korea National University of Arts. Her research interests include Shakespeare adaptations in contemporary Korean and Japanese theatres. She has been involved in the multicultural project Asian Shakespeare Intercultural Archive (A|S|I|A) as a translator and core-editor.

Nora Galland (PhD) teaches English literature and translation as a teaching and research fellow at the University Côte d'Azur of Nice in France. She is also part of the Transdisciplinary Centre for the Epistemology of Literature and the Living Arts (CTEL UPR 6307) of University Côte d'Azur. She is currently working on premodern critical race studies and exploring the construction of identity and otherness through verbal violence, in particular insults and slurs. Her research interests also include contemporary performances and adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. She has published in *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, *Cahiers Shakespeare en Devenir*, *Arrêt sur scène/Scene Focus*, and *L'Œil du Spectateur*. https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7367-5728.

Xenia Georgopoulou is Assistant Professor at the Department of Theatre Studies of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. She teaches Shakespeare and European drama. Her publications include the books *Issues of Gender in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* (Ζητήματα φύλου στο θέατρο του Σαίξπηρ και της Αναγέννησης, Athens: Papazissis, 2010; revised edn 2020), *The Body as Text in Shakespeare's Plays. The Fashioning of the Sexes* (Lewiston: Mellen, 2011), *Shakespeare Horizontally and Vertically* (Ο Σαίξπηρ οριζοντίως και καθέτως, Athens: Aigokeros, 2019). Her work deals with Shakespearean and Renaissance drama, and her particular interests include issues of gender and otherness, as well as Shakespearean adaptations and references in modern popular culture.

Marinela Golemi is Assistant Teaching Professor of English at Northern Arizona University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses focused on Shakespeare and English Literature. She specializes in Early Modern English drama and literature, with particular investments in local and global Shakespeare, translation, performance, and adaptation. Other research interests include race, gender, and environmental studies. Her publications appear in Multicultural Shakespeare and Philosophy and Literature. Her forthcoming work focuses on Shakespearean adaptations in Albania.

Miki Iwata is a professor of English literature at Rikkyo University, Japan. She received her PhD from Tohoku University in 2001, for her study of W.B. Yeats's drama and Irish cultural nationalism. Her research interests cover a wide range of modern British and Irish plays, from Shakespeare to Oscar Wilde and Yeats, focusing particularly on the politics of family representations. Her recent publications include *Rival Brothers in British and Irish Drama* (Shohakusha Publishing, 2017, written in Japanese), "Brothers Lost, Sisters Found: The Verbal Construction of Sisterhood in Twelfth Night" (2019), "Tony Lumpkin in and out of Sweet Auburn: The Literary Topography of Oliver Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer" (2020), and "Johnson and Garrick on Hamlet" (2020).

Mythili Kaul is a retired Professor of English from the University of Delhi, Delhi, India. Her doctoral work at Yale was on Shakespeare's Romances. She edited *Othello: New Essays By Black Writers* (Howard UP, 1997), and her work on Shakespeare has appeared in *Shakespeare the Man: New Decipherings* (ed. R.W. Desai, Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2014), and in several journals including *Notes & Queries, American Notes & Queries, Hamlet Studies, Shakespeare Yearbook, The Upstart Crow, The Critical Endeavour, Shakespeare Jahrbuch, The Forum for Modern Language Studies, English Studies.* https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6589-2466.

Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney is Fulbright alumna (Northwestern University), Professor of International Culture Studies and Shakespeare Studies, University of Lodz. She is member of "Apella" an international Greek society of academic experts, the International Association of University Professors of English, Shakespeare American Association, European Society of Shakespeare Research, and International Society for the Study of European Ideas. Her research interests include: English Literature (especially early modern), theater, postcolonial literatures in English, literary theory, with particular emphasis on the theory of culture. She has published numerous articles and monographs published locally and internationally in the areas listed above. She was the Kosciuszko Foundation Scholar at Columbia University, New York, and the Kosciuszko Scholar at the University of Texas at Austin and the British Council scholar at the University of Birmingham and Cambridge University. She has been invited to give lectures—among other—at German, Swedish, Belgian, Greek, USA, Indian and Japanese Universities. She is editor-in-chief of *International Studies: Interdisciplinary Political and Cultural Journal* and co-editor-in-chief of *Multicultural Shakespeare*. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9751-6630.

David Livingstone is an American citizen living and working in the Czech Republic for the last thirty years. He teaches Shakespeare, modernism, Czech culture, children's literature and American folk music at Palacký University, Olomouc. His doctoral dissertation, entitled *Subversive Characters and Techniques in Shakespeare's History Plays*, attempted feminist and cultural materialist readings of the first Henriad in particular. He recently published a book, *In Our Own Image: Fictional Representations*

of William Shakespeare, which looks at the wealth of novels, plays, short stories, films, television series and even comics focused on Shakespeare as a character. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3973-0620.

Monica Matei-Chesnoiu, PhD, DLitt, is Professor Emerita of Ovidius University of Constanta (Romania). She is the author of *Geoparsing Early Modern English Drama* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), *Re-imagining Western European Geography in English Renaissance Drama* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), *Early Modern Drama and the Eastern European Elsewhere: Representations of Liminal Locality in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009), and *Shakespeare in the Romanian Cultural Memory* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006). She is a Fulbright Fellow (1998-1999), Humboldt Fellow (2009-2010), and SCIEX Fellow (2013-2014). She is editor of five volumes of essays about Shakespeare in Romania (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2016) and director of the project Shakespeare in the Romanian Cultural Memory (2005-2008). Her main interests incorporate geocriticism and spatial literary studies, including representations of space, place, and geography in Shakespeare and his contemporaries. She is member of the International Committee of Correspondents for the *World Shakespeare Bibliography*. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9192-5513.

Hikaru Minami is a student in the Doctoral Program in English and American Literature at Sophia University, Tokyo. Her master's dissertations focused on the unstable sense of self in plays such as Macbeth and Richard III. She is currently working on her PhD thesis that will further explore the problem of identity in Shakespeare.

Mitashree Tripathy, PhD, works as an Assistant Professor at Birla Global University, India. She teaches General English and Legal Language, Business Communication and Soft Skills Development and trains management students for Corporate Readiness. She has published widely on subjects under Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Management. Her research interest includes Soft Skills, Communication Skills, Spiritual Leadership, Mindfulness, Shakespearean and Renaissance drama, and American Literature. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1181-6369.

Laurence Wright is an Extraordinary Professor at North-West University. He was formerly H.A. Molteno Professor of English and Director of the Institute for the Study of English in Africa at Rhodes University. He is a Fellow of the English Academy of Southern Africa, a member of the South African Academy of Science, and Honorary Life-President of the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa. He has published widely on Shakespeare and Shakespeare in South Africa. Currently he is studying Conrad, Somerset Maugham and V.S. Naipaul and investigating Sol Plaatje's prose style. https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2988-3399.

Stan Reiner van Zon is a PhD candidate at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. His research interest lies in discourse theory, presentism, global Shakespeare, and Japanese Shakespeare. His doctoral project focuses on the reception of global Shakespeares in Anglophonic scholarly discourse.

Yanhua Xia is a professor of English literature at China West Normal University, China. He received his PhD from the University of Science and Technology Beijing in 2016, for his study of British dramatist Edward Bond. His research interests lie mainly in modern British drama and Irish poetry. His recent publications include *Two Phases of Humanness Depiction in Edward Bond's Left-Wing Theatre* (Science Press, 2017, written in Chinese), "Reading Edward Bond's Parody of the Victorian History in Early Morning" (*Foreign Languages Research*, No. 4, 2021, written in Chinese).

Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney* (iD)

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 20th 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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* University of Lodz, Poland. krystyna.kujawinska52@gmail.com

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.

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Laurence Wright* ⓘD

Taming the Glitter Ball: A Diagnosis of Shakespeare 'for all time'—Sketched from South Africa

Abstract: Shakespeare travels the globe more variously and unpredictably than any other dramatist. In performance his texts have shown themselves hospitable to vastly different ideological interpretations. By making these two points, I do not mean that Shakespeare pops up around the globe, sometimes in quite extraordinary guises, without rhyme or reason. Far from it. Where Shakespeare makes his appearance this is an act of deliberate choice, by a producer, a production company, an arts foundation, a school or university, a national arts authority, or even simply an ad hoc group of Shakespeare enthusiasts. His advent is always intentional, and often contextually explicit, whatever the rationale. But the sheer variety of guises in which his work appears, the disparate cultural and ideological vogues that attach to his work, the geographical spread of art pieces, performances and installations based on Shakespeare, not to mention the diverse artistic disciplines which seize on him as an inspiration, calls for explanation. No other artist in any medium exhibits comparable artistic fertility across time and space. To claim the limelight for more than 400 years without any sign of diminution is remarkable. This article seeks to understand why this ubiquity is possible. Specifically, is there a definable textual mechanism underlying his historical and international success? At the outset it should be indicated that this paper focuses on a technical diagnosis of textual prerequisites for Shakespeare's international success. It is not about what his plays say or mean, and only incidentally about the values they exemplify. While the paper sets out to describe textual features which make possible some of his manifold theatrical enchantments, there is no intention to describe, evoke, or celebrate those enchantments.

Keywords: paratextual semiology, 'universal' Shakespeare, performativity, aspectuality, thematic centrality, formal plasticity, diachronic relevance.

* North-West University, South Africa. l.wright@ru.ac.za

Shakespeare, Ben Jonson told us, was "not of an age, but for all time" (3352).[1] This famous encomium today evokes reactions akin to fingernails scraping on a chalk board. The postmodern bogie of 'universal Shakespeare' stirs, impugning by implication rival creative achievements from other cultures, ages, and climes, and evoking a host of awkward political and philosophical issues. For good reason, the slack invocation of Shakespearean 'universality' has been decisively rejected by contemporary scholarship. A comment by David Schalkwyk goes to the heart of the matter:

> The reason we want to flinch at the notion of the universal is not because it claims too much but rather because it is vacuous. It offers neither a conceptual nor rhetorical hold on the issues that concern us.
>
> (Schalkwyk, Foreword xix)

To put Schalkwyk's point another way: all human activity exhibits universal human nature by definition. Averring that Shakespeare's output does so is banal, utterly unremarkable, and offers not an iota of illumination. If Shakespeare is indeed "for all time", as Ben Jonson avers, this cannot be established merely by proclaiming his universality, or by suggesting some ideal coincidence between human nature and the specifics of what happens in a particular Shakespeare production or reading. As Schalkwyk suggests, any such claim requires conceptual and rhetorical justification. Granting this to be so, the assertion that Shakespeare is "for all time" still offers a resounding challenge. Instead of standing abashed, perhaps we should take steps to understand whether the assertion might in some sense be true, and if so, how and why?

It goes without saying that Shakespeare is historically embedded, as are Lyly, Kyd, Marlowe, and Beaumont, the contemporaries Jonson names as being outshone by Shakespeare. So are "tart Aristophanes", "Neat Terence", "witty Plautus" and the other more remote authors listed by Jonson as garnering English Renaissance attention. All writers are caught in the lineaments of their time. Nevertheless, as the world's first global artist it is impossible not to acknowledge that Shakespeare has somehow managed to evade historical confinement, as others have not. He is most definitely of his age, redolent of a specific historical conjuncture—but then why is he still prancing across the world's stages? In other words, what makes him "for all time"?

If a merely rhetorical explanation for the phenomenon suffices, it must be accepted that the first part of Jonson's claim is relatively unproblematic. With Shakespeare ubiquitous on the internet, in television and in mainstream cinema,[2]

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[1] See Jonson's preface to the First Folio (1623).

[2] Without his ever seeing a film, Shakespeare is the most credited movie and television writer ever, with over 1600 writing credits, exceeding *the next ten screenwriters combined – Internet Movie Database*, IMDb.

and with stage productions flooding performance spaces round the world (COVID-19 permitting), it would be difficult to argue that he was purely "of an age". The contrary is sober fact, not silly eulogy. Some performances register internationally, some regionally or locally; others sink without trace, barely making it out of the school hall. The list is endless: productions, adaptations, translations, re-writings; on stages and in the street, on paper and film, in graphics, painting, sculpture, music, ballet, contemporary dance, puppetry, poetry, mime; from many different countries and cultures, with different artistic and political affinities, reflecting different aesthetics, different histories. This is what I call the Shakespearean glitter ball. Its reflective facets gleam locally, nationally, and internationally, circulating across the world in sparkling mimicry of the turning globe.

When I talk of 'taming' the Shakespearean glitter ball, it is well to be clear about the kind of answer sought. There is no desire or intent to curb or thwart Shakespeare's international plenitude. Audience enthusiasm and cultural preference are themselves an adequate regulatory force in that regard if one were required. Instead, I want to understand underlying reasons for Shakespeare's success, to move the answers to Jonson's assertion from the sphere of rhetoric to that of conceptual insight. To this end, a Shakespearean *catalogue raisonné*, modelled on the practice of art historians, would be unsatisfactory. A mere descriptive listing of disparate Shakespearean phenomena from round the world, however vast, however categorized, organized, and arranged, would not fit the bill. Nor could the systematic analysis of such a catalogue, were it to be created, meet the requirement. This would merely be a close-up description of the glitter ball. Both these approaches, the *catalogue raisonné* and its studied analysis, would leave the matter in the realm of rhetoric. The question I want to answer would be this: 'What in the Shakespeare text makes this extraordinary catalogue possible?'; 'Why Shakespeare and not some other artist or dramatist?' This question is very different from detailing the cultural forces that today shape the dynamics of the worldwide Shakespeare industry. Pointing to mechanisms of international artistic interchange and globalising education and distribution, or to the character of electronic/industrial culture and entrenched dramatic practice in different parts of the world would not be adequate. These would be effects not causes. What I want to get at is an explanation of what it is *in the character of the Shakespeare text*, that has enabled the Shakespeare industry to gather this extraordinary momentum.

Quest for a Formal Cause

In place of an endless enumeration of productions and performances, which is obviously an activity both interesting and worthwhile in itself, can we, as a supplement to such activity, describe what it is about the Shakespeare text that

makes the story of Shakespeare's international success conceptually explicable? This challenge suggests a quest for a particular kind of causal explanation, one which Aristotle long ago denominated a 'formal' cause. Referring to ancient Greek metaphysics may seem strange, but I hope it clarifies the nature of the argument which follows. We recall that Aristotle denominated four categories of cause: 'material', 'formal', 'efficient' and 'final' (see *Physics* II 3 and *Metaphysics* V 2). We are not examining the Shakespeare text for a 'final' cause: that would be to probe the fully achieved surface character of his text (or texts), the *ipsissima verba*. Nor are we looking for 'efficient' causes: that would be to investigate the interpreters (directors, actors, designers, and producers) and the complex processes that turn text into production and performance. Nor are we exploring the stuff out of which the Shakespeare text is made, Aristotle's 'material cause', which would be language in general or Shakespeare's language (his idiolect) in particular. Instead, we are investigating the 'formal' cause of the Shakespearean glitter ball; what it is in the character of the Shakespeare text that enables the prodigious fecundity and variousness manifested synchronically and diachronically in the record of Shakespearean production, reception, and appreciation. In other words, what drives the glitter ball?

During a recent international seminar on 'Lockdown Shakespeare' one of the participants, Buhle Ngaba, remarked of Shakespearean performance that "it can be anywhere" and that such performance aims at "capturing what's behind the language". This seems a good way to broach the vexed question of Shakespeare "for all time".[3]

Ngaba's comment that Shakespearean performance involves "capturing what's behind the language" is an important clue, suggesting that there may be something in the structure of Shakespeare's texts, the way they work on the stage and in the minds of his audiences, that enables their portability. The remark implies that Shakespeare's language, the *ipsissima verba*, beautiful though it is, may not be intrinsic to his transhistorical and transcultural success, may not be either necessary or sufficient. On the face of it this is an extraordinary claim. The seductive experience of Shakespeare on stage and in the study seems inextricably bound up with the sound of his words, the rhythm of his lines, and ultimately the language-embedded sequence of his thoughts— his power of verbalisation. He has a characteristic way of 'languaging', a rhythm of meditation, a way of perceiving, responding to and imagining the world, which is unmistakeably and distinctively Shakespearean. Millions have fallen in love with this language—there is no more modest way of expressing the addiction—including large numbers of people whose home language is not English, but who nevertheless respond to what is for them the arcane foreign

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[3] A recording of the event is available. See Lockdown Shakespeare: Transnational Explorations.

vitality of Shakespeare's language. This is true, but it is not the whole story. There are many instances of people falling for Shakespeare without reference to his original language.

Buhle Ngaba herself was entranced by Sol Plaatje's Setswana translation of *Julius Caesar*, *Dintshontsho tsa bo-Juliuse Kesara* (1937), before ever meeting Shakespeare in English. A Setswana first language speaker, it was the quality and zest of Plaatje's Setswana translation that led her later to want to read Shakespeare's own language. Before that encounter, without the magic of his unique English but with the help of a master translator, Shakespeare spoke directly to Ngaba in her own language and culture, *about* her own language and culture. Her enthusiastic response to Shakespeare in translation is not unusual. Speaking of *Diposho-posho* (1930), Plaatje's translation of *The Comedy of Errors*, his long-time friend and collaborator David Ramoshoana wrote at the time that Shakespeare "has inspired Mr Plaatje to bring into bold relief the etymological beauties of his mother tongue", asserting that he "rendered the entire story in a language which to a Mochuana is as entertaining and amusing as the original is to an Englishman" (qtd. in Willan 309). Something of Shakespeare evidently survives translation, even if in the process he loses much that those who cherish his English might value. The vitality which survives does so in sufficiently robust a fashion as to flourish in other languages and cultures.

Of course, it may well be that the splendour of Shakespeare's fully imagined linguisphere spurs skilled translators to attain heights in their target language that lesser writers could not inspire. The South African actor John Kani recalls that he first met Shakespeare at school in the 1950s, in B.B. Mdledle's Xhosa translation of *Julius Caesar* ([1957?]). When later he encountered Shakespeare's English text, he found it disappointing: "I felt that Shakespeare had failed to capture the beauty of Mdledle's writing!" ("A brief history . . ."). Similarly, the Shakespearean scholar David Schalkwyk has long argued that Uys Krige's Afrikaans translation of *Twelfth Night* is in some ways superior to Shakespeare's original (Schalkwyk, "Shakespeare's Untranslatability"). Another South African scholar, Frederik van Gelder, currently seized with the problem of freshly translating the work of Theodore Adorno into English, comments that Adorno's *Hamlet* in German "just blows you away" (Van Gelder). Such examples could be multiplied. They do not detract from the miracle of Shakespeare's language, nor should they occasion profitless debate over the virtues of specific translations, unless translation itself is the issue under consideration. Translations are most usefully and accurately assessed as autochthonous works of art. But the power and influence of great translations underscores the question of what drives the glitter ball if the force is *not* (or not merely) Shakespeare's captivating, mesmeric language. What is there that is distinctive about the Shakespeare text that survives the 'bracketing', circumvention, translation, or evisceration of his English?

We are looking for analytical features of the Shakespeare text which take us 'behind' his language, allowing us to "pluck out the heart of [his] mystery" (*Hamlet* 3.2.336), and to explain in some measure his extraordinary cross-cultural and linguistic portability. Canvassing the standard categories of dramaturgical description; examining plot, character, action, dramatic structure, scenic rhythm, underlying mythography, historical fabulation, ideological import, digressive humour, tragic intensity, or sheer whimsicality is unlikely to yield apposite data. Such a strategy, diagnosing and delineating Shakespeare's many discrete theatrical excellences in productions which reflect radically different aesthetic ideals and ideologies, and then striving to deduce from this what it is that has made him a global artist, strikes me as a recipe for inexhaustible recapitulation – a descriptive feast without end, unlikely to reach cogent conclusions. This might be a valuable contribution to reception studies or theatre history but would be utterly opaque concerning the reasons for Shakespeare's spectacular cultural portability. Distinctive textual attributes could hardly be separated from their realisation in performance, a recognition which leads us back to the international smorgasbord of Shakespearean production from which we started, keeping us in thrall to the Shakespearean glitter ball. A different approach is required, one which I term 'paratextual semiology'.

Towards a Descriptive Rubric

We need to pay closer attention to what lies *behind the language*, in Buhle Ngaba's formulation. I sketch in what follows a rubric of five substantive discourse features characteristic of the Shakespeare text, and which are distinguishable from the 'accidentals' of specific productions, performances or readings. These features are *performativity*, *aspectuality*, *thematic centrality*, *formal plasticity*, and *diachronic relevance*. These five aspects characterise the Shakespeare text, generically, with more specificity than could any formal dramaturgical description deduced from singular productions or readings. They are designed to illuminate the textual basis influencing audience response and the possibilities of realising Shakespeare's portability.

Although they are rooted in the text, the discourse features identified belong to performance, to theatre-in-motion. While based in text, if they register anywhere they register in the minds of audience members as the play proceeds. They are not arbitrary because they are responses to the text-in-action. Their domain is the fleeting paratextual structures which interpose themselves between performance and receptive sensibilities as Shakespeare's texts are being experienced and interpreted by audiences. Rooted in the text, as interpreted on stage or in the mind of the reader, they are mental hypotheses entertained, considered and evaluated in the course of a performance or reading.

Developing William Empson's insights in *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1931), Jonathan Bate makes a significant start when he extends the domain of Empsonian semantic ambiguity to two characteristics which confront audiences wherever and whenever his texts are experienced: 'performativity' and 'aspectuality' (Bate 323-34).[4] The paratextual structures to which I refer are those temporary perceptions or insights which populate the receptive sensibilities of audience members (or readers) as they struggle with semiotic multivalence, striving a) to make sense of what is being experienced, and b) to integrate this response with their habitual outlook—their ingrained sense of things. The paratextual hypotheses, springing from 'performativity' and 'aspectuality', and indefinite in number, are provoked by Shakespeare's language—or a translation of it—but lightly emancipated from it. Entertained tentatively and disparately by audience members during a performance or reading, they jostle and compete, eventually settling into what the individual spectator or reader takes to be 'the meaning' of the episode or passage.

Provoked by his texts, the richness and inevitability of this interpretive activity separates Shakespeare from his competition, his forbears and contemporaries. To a large extent, these rivals typically create fictive structures based on recognisable character types and predicaments, with strong elements of allegoresis. The plays may be well structured, entertaining and beautifully produced, but they leave audiences in little doubt as to their intended meaning. However nuanced the staging and direction, the narrative or dramatic lines remain monological and the resolutions on offer present summative conclusions for audiences' consideration, rather than debatable possibilities.

Performativity

Examples to justify this assertion could be supplied from a wide range of pre-Shakespearean drama as well as from his near-contemporaries. I will supply here only one. Consider, for instance, a comparison between the metaphysical 'tricksiness' and profound illuminations presented in Shakespeare's so-called 'Last Plays', and the merely contrived theatricality on offer in those of some of his rivals. A small example of the latter occurs in Massinger's Suetonian piece *The Roman Actor* (1626), where Aretinus remarks to Paris the Tragedian:

> Are you on the Stage,
> You talke so boldly?

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[4] Although precipitated by his insights, Bate is not accountable for the argument which follows!

Paris responds:

> The whole world being one
> This place is not exempted. (I.3.49-51)

A situation which might have given rise to an exhilarating theatrical and poetic exploration of metaphysical differences between stage and world, or acting and 'acting', subsides flatly in a comparison which goes nowhere. There is seemingly no interest in the idea of theatre as a metaphor for life, no interpretive work for the audience to do, and therefore no performativity.

Compare this with the statue scene which draws *The Winter's Tale* (1609-1611) to its conclusion. The poverty of imaginative opportunity Massinger presents to his audience becomes blindingly apparent. In Act 5 scene 3, when the 'statue' of Hermione 'comes to life', perception by perception, Leontes follows the metamorphosis with mesmerised longing and attention, and the audience at one remove finds itself watching the revival of Leontes' inner being as he attends to this supposed 'resurrection'. "It is required," Paulina tells us all, "You do awake your faith" (5.3.94-95). Audience members face a stark choice: either respond to the scene deeply and emotionally, as Leontes does, with profound aesthetic, spiritual and critical attention, or dismiss the statue scene as a fraud, a trick unworthy of any playwright. After all, on every fictional presumption, Hermione is dead: fancy using a live actress to enact a strange form of physical resurrection, a restoration to life! From this latter perspective, the ploy seems hardly more enticing than Massinger's. But once the fact of Hermione's preservation has been revealed, it dawns on the audience that *they* are the ones suffering a failure of imagination. Hermione is in fact alive, Leontes' entranced longing has been rewarded, their own scepticism is chastened, and they are left privately pondering the mysterious powers of religion, of magic, of art, of the theatre, or some idiosyncratic mix of all of these. Given the complex performativity latent in the scene, and the potential for very diverse and equally valid responses, who knows where individual interpretations will settle? This is a tribute to the powers, freedoms and inescapable demands of Shakespearean performativity.

Note that this is not merely a comparison between Shakespearean drama and works of lesser quality. It is part of a formal explanation for his continuing transnational popularity grounded in general aspects of his texts. The argument is that Shakespeare's texts make audience members work harder, providing intriguing interpretive possibilities which they are called on to resolve *in propria persona*. Where his contemporaries tend to leave their audiences in little doubt as to what they are supposed to think or feel, Shakespeare's stories, their characters and plots, are subjectively underdetermined, until realised in the interspace between happenings on stage and diverse audience interiorities (for

spectators) or between text and mind (for readers). In both live theatre and 'theatre of the mind', the Shakespearean text offers multiple provocations, challenging and complicating the spectator's or reader's progressive realisation. Possible paratextual meanings must be intuited, tested and formatively revised by the audience as the performance proceeds.

Aspectuality

No Shakespeare text offers one stable perspective. The dialectic between Shakespeare's characters and his plotlines is radically multivalent. As the plays progress though their constituent episodes, disparate paratextual meanings suggest disparate and competing resolutions. Things look very different viewed from the perspective of different characters, when audiences take full account of what Harold Bloom calls the "peopling" of Shakespeare's world (Bloom 280). This is what Bate means by 'aspectuality'. Audiences must work hard not only to interpret the development of Shakespeare's characters within 'their' plots, but to place them in relation to other characters, their doings, and the audience's own world view. Some trivial examples: Is Petruchio a calculating bully and Katherine an abused woman? Or is she a wily seductress who has her man just where she wants him?[5] Is Hamlet a weak and vacillating Prince or a determined but over-scrupulous strategist; a huge loss to statecraft or a weaselling ne're-do-well? Is Prospero a wise and benevolent ruler subduing an uncouth and subversive indigene (Caliban)? Or a harsh colonial tyrant abusing an already oppressed victim? I have articulated these questions as paired oppositions. Considering that the plays are populated with a multiplicity of characters beyond these central pairings, the opportunity for aspectual comparison and resultant tension is greatly enhanced. Ongoing dialectic between plot and character generates a plurality of distinct possibilities to be adjudicated by audience members, presupposing differing values, emotional textures and preferred outcomes. Fleeting answers to such questions proliferate as the play moves forward. They are not merely a function of directorial inflection or actors' interpretations. The disparate potentials are inherent in the text as it is performed, ready to be matched against the diverse repertoire of the real people audience members have known or read about in their own lives. Any conclusions reached must at least in part be the result of this internalised audience reception and debate, potentially different for each reader or spectator,

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[5] See for example Danie Stander's illuminating discussion of *Die vasvat van 'n feeks*, a subtle feminist revision of *The Taming of the Shrew* in Afrikaans by Nerina Ferreira (translator) and David Egan (director), staged in 1983 by the Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal (2021).

a running mental conversation steeped in ideological presupposition and informed by a circumambient culture together with the legacies of earlier theatrical experience. Internal debate arising from the textual richness of Shakespearean plot and characterisation, embodied in specific productions, spills into the public sphere, and is never-ending. All this helps to energise the Shakespearean glitter ball.

It is clear that Shakespearean plots invite readers or spectators to follow the action from multiple perspectives, focusing on different characters' reactions, perceptions, and judgments as they move through the play's action, and without the guidance of a unifying authorial standpoint. Shakespearean theatre and poetry enacted the 'death of the author' long before Barthes coined the phrase (Barthes). Narrative and moral authority is dispersed among the different characters, groups of characters and points of view, challenging the spectator/reader to respond and adjudicate. No-one can transcend this radical aspectuality without supplementing the Shakespearean text with large doses of opinion and argument. Unless they simply ignore issues, audiences must engage. This further animates the glitter ball. No matter where personal preferences and convictions might lie, counter positions are there to be sustained and argued for. Shakespeare's texts offer rough closure but never an inescapable resolution. Conclusions must be argued for and, while provoked by it, they lie beyond the text, in the worlds of his audiences.

Thematic Centrality

This paratextual richness is also a function of Shakespeare's materials, his subject matter, the nature of which provides evidence not only of the distinctiveness of Shakespeare's art, but further reason for the Shakespeare text manifesting its global portability and ready cultural adaptability. At risk of stating the obvious, I would characterise this quality of the Shakespeare text as 'centrality'. Within the material embodiments of plot and story, manifesting obvious historical and cultural embeddedness, Shakespeare broaches abstract issues inescapable in any society. He writes of war and politics, power and authority, of legitimacy and illegitimacy (in all senses), of heroism and treachery, of love and lust, of fantasy and realism in human psychology, of cynicism and idealism, of innocence and guilt, of reverence and scorn, of presumption and insubordination, of hierarchy and egalitarianism in tension, of military and civic virtue—I could continue listing provocative dipoles forever, the point being that these abstract terms actively pertain in every society. And elements of each dipole can mesh and interact with elements of others, creating rich complexity. Even when translated into local cultural idioms in specific

productions, the centrality of Shakespeare's concerns ensures that diverse audiences around the world find the issues he treats compelling.

Centrality is important if an author's work, written at a particular time and place, is to resonate elsewhere and at other periods in the labyrinth of history. Take Jane Austen, for example, who operates on a well-defined, parochial canvas (despite efforts to refocus her work through the lens of the international slave trade) yet has become Shakespeare's only rival on today's film and television screens for the sheer number and variety of productions and adaptations.[6] She achieves centrality but on a smaller scale. Her characters not only refer to and discuss Shakespeare, but their interaction is noticeably modelled on Shakespearean prototypes. To cite one example, the fraught courtship of Elizabeth and Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* echoes that of Beatrice and Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*—which is the founding model for so many feisty matings to come elsewhere, on the written page and in film. Of course, Shakespeare's big themes—kingship, governance, national fealty, and so forth, are missing or much curbed in Austen's reduced canvas, but her treatment of courtship, the economics of society, and the nature of human integrity imitates the Shakespearean recipe on a smaller scale. She manages character and story development by manipulating aspectuality and performativity to keep her readers engaged, intrigued, and working hard both to appreciate and resolve the emotional and ethical tangles she sets up. So 'centrality' is not merely a matter of great scope and scale, but the enduring treatment of central human issues.

All modern cultures exhibit instances of significant local art which fails to achieve resonant international purchase through lack of commanding centrality. In southern Africa the works of, say, Dambudzo Marechera or Roy Campbell, both powerful authors in different ways, are interesting because of their vivid insights and scarifying satire, but would scarcely be regarded as 'central' to readers outside southern Africa. They are of an age and a place, to which their art contributes valuably, while missing the international significance indicated by 'centrality'. In Britain, Evelyn Waugh might be an example, or Martin Amis—writers working in their own idiosyncratic habitus, which not everyone finds accessible or congenial. They are brilliant in their own select domain. Even Virginia Woolf, for all her theoretical interest and historical importance as a woman writer and an avatar of modernism, can be a marginal taste. This kind of thing happens in literary and artistic markets worldwide.

But apparently not to Shakespeare. In the 1970s, when the British Council was still in the habit of sending touring productions of Shakespeare to Africa as a means of exerting 'soft power', someone in the "little regarded" Arts Division (Donaldson 211) decided there was more to British Drama than

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[6] Jane Austen to date notches up 88 film and television credits, starting in 1938 with a TV movie of *Pride and Prejudice – Internet Movie Database,* IMDb.

Shakespeare and that some of these riches should be shared with Africa. A tour was sent to East Africa playing Ayckbourne and Pinter, both major British dramatists with a substantial international following. Some months later a report arrived from a distressed field officer, saying in effect, "Please send Shakespeare —the only people who can understand Ayckbourne and Pinter are expatriates in the social clubs" (Wright 44).

The centrality of Shakespeare's concerns ensures his portability. Negotiating 'performativity' and 'aspectuality' in dramatic predicaments which stir and activate 'central' issues in the Shakespeare text, gives his worldwide audiences a theatrical charge which they evidently find engaging, thrilling, and permanently relevant. They remain willing and often feel compelled to respond to theatrical tropes, gestures, or assertions which pique, challenge or reinforce their own central belief structures. They must 'perform' the play *in themselves* to reach resolution—their own resolution. This paratextual dynamism of the Shakespeare text not only provides ample opportunity for actors, directors and production designers to mould and interpret his plays in ways which speak to specific cultural, political and production conjunctures round the globe, but this same dynamism accounts in large measure for Shakespeare's perennial popularity with audiences. What he dramatizes remains perennially exciting and cogent.

Formal Plasticity

Then there is a more technical and privileged aspect of Shakespeare's art, accessible mainly to those with some literary and theatrical background: the amazing 'formal plasticity' of the Shakespeare text. Shakespeare hardly ever just 'uses' or replicates received forms. He always plays with them, transforms them. Think what Shakespeare's sonnets do with the formal conventions of Petrarchan sonneteering. The Petrarchan conventions are at once sedately referenced, undermined and utterly transfigured. Each poem is itself, but formally in contention with others by Shakespeare and by earlier sonnet writers. Tensions between staid tradition and Shakespeare's own creative interventions create a paratextual complexity which tantalises readers. The poems shimmer and stay in the mind as an ambivalent multidimensional experience (Dubrow, Vendler). Or, turning once more to the plays, consider *Titus Andronicus* (1588?). The savage 'Rome' on display here reflects more than a proleptic imaginative distance from later representations of the city as seen in *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*, the Roman plays written after Shakespeare had made the acquaintance of North's translation of *Plutarch* (1579). What was once considered uncouth 'prentice work is now acknowledged as a triumph of formal experiment. The play messes with conventions of heroism and villainy, pitting 'legitimate' revenge against sheer butchery, religious sacrifice against

unsanctified murder, stoic competence and piety against state-authorised nationalist brutality. The text revels in excess of all kinds, starting and ending with burials, refusing not only comforting thematic resolution but any emollient formal closure. The entire theatrical structure simultaneously acknowledges and denies traditional ideological anchorage, enlivening and reshaping the presuppositions of those equipped to recognise this deliberate 'rape' of inherited formal convention (see, for example, Greg, Guy, Innes, Leggatt). The malleability of this formal theatrical contention animates the power of the Shakespearean text, offering his audiences a multifoliate puzzle to engross and challenge their all-too-human desire for adequate resolution.

The way Shakespeare tinkers with, adapts and improves upon his sources for theatrical effect creates this further sense of multi-dimensionality in the Shakespeare text, a resonance which intrigues and tantalises those in his audience who can hear the originals and rivals echoing beneath the dramatic surface. This may be an arcane feature, available mainly to scholars, but it contributes to the international fascination with Shakespeare. To cite a hackneyed pedagogical instance, teachers routinely compare passages from North's *Plutarch* with what Shakespeare makes of them in *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606-07) (notably Enobarbus's famous speech evoking Cleopatra's arrival at Cydnus: "The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne/Burned on the water . . ." etc. (2.2.197-224) and its source in North's *Life of Antony*). The exercise illuminates not only this portion of the play, but some of the foundations of Shakespeare's verse-writing. An additional legacy from probing source material in this way is possibly, even probably, an enhanced response to literary-historical depth in the Shakespeare text, its hidden palimpsestic dimensions.

Diachronic Relevance

'Formal plasticity' in the Shakespeare text is by no means confined to literary or dramatic conventions or sources. Shakespeare creates textual forms so capacious and pliant they become capable of registering glacial change in society, inscribing long-term cultural modulations so massively slow that their general direction still resonates significantly in many regions of today's world. This creates a 'diachronic relevance' extraordinarily useful in accommodating the demands of 'director's theatre' in different parts of the world, hospitable to different ideologies in different ages. Take *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-98), though several other texts would do as well. The textual features we have been adumbrating appear here in full strength to work their magic on audiences. The first two, 'performativity' and 'aspectuality', manifest themselves at every turn, providing rich impetus for audience engagement.

To start with, the contrasting courtships of Portia and Jessica invite tantalising paratextual hypotheses that provoke disparate audience responses. Take the so-called 'casket' test. How does Portia feel about the strange competition set up by her father to secure an appropriate suitor for his daughter? How would I feel in her shoes? Is this contest supernaturally ordained, or is it rigged? By Portia's father? By the Venetian patriarchy? By a suitor? By the invisible means of fairy-tale logic whereby the third choice, or the most counter-intuitive choice, or the most 'romantic' choice, is always the correct one? Then, which suitor do I find most sympathetic? Which of the suitors am I myself most like? Such questions linger even when the outcome has been decided, and they carry different resonances for different cultures at different periods. This varied aspectuality and performativity plays into the text's temporal and geographical portability. To this must be added the broader question of how Portia's formally managed engagement measures up alongside Jessica's wild elopement with Bassanio's friend, Lorenzo? Could I rob my widowed father and steal a ring belonging to his late wife, my mother? Which 'courtship' would I prefer; how would I react in either predicament? Would I submit obediently or rebel? How does this choice register in my culture? Different audience responses to such hypotheses supply dramatic energy in abundance as the different possibilities meld, morph and clash during and after the performance. Obviously there are many more speculative reactions that could be explored in just this one strand of the plot.

With audience sympathies and empathies responding trenchantly to such typically Shakespearean 'aspectuality' and 'performativity' playing itself out on stage, few could deny that the play engages central human issues of courting, mating and marriage, universal concerns in all societies and with people of all ages. The centrality of its romantic aspects in some measure guarantees the play's geographical and historical portability and enables it to find receptive audiences in different societies.

The play's thematic centrality is not confined to romance. *The Merchant of Venice* broaches large issues of culture, religion, and economics, and this is where the 'formal plasticity' and 'diachronic relevance' characteristic of the Shakespearean text come into play. Shylock's famous speech in Act 3, "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions" etc. (3.1.49ff.), is often received gratefully as a ringing celebration of common humanity, presciently affirming the equivalence of human cultures, a view congruent with the emollient cultural relativism of twentieth century anthropology. We indeed feel pity for Shylock, especially when his daughter elopes with someone outside his 'clan', without his permission or blessing, and moreover when she steals from him not only his ducats, but her mother's (his late wife's) precious ring. She has, for the sake of love and freedom, broken with all the religious and societal traditions Shylock holds dear. In orthodox Jewish circles, the apostasy of a child is marked by mourning rites, as though he/she were dead to the family, which is why Shylock says:

> "I would my daughter were dead at my foot and the jewels in her ear! Would she were hears'd at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin . . ." (3.1.74-76)

But it is also open to audiences to notice that the very speech which lauds Shylock's ineffable humanity at the same time inscribes the unthinking, mechanical responses of an automaton: "If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us shall we not revenge?" (3.1.54-56). Shylock is implacably programmed for revenge. Here is someone prepared to see the life of a compatriot taken in the most savage manner on the basis of mere legalism. How could this be? What animates Shylock's vindictiveness? Consider this speech: "I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following, but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you" (1.3.29-32). So much for 'common humanity'! Shylock reduces external society to the abstract transactional relations required of a moneylender. Nothing more. His allegiance is to his religious traditions. He hates everything outside his own narrow view of the world, his own restricted community. He can be at home only in small-scale society.

Audience sympathy for Shylock shifts and modulates in response to these changing paratextual intimations. Ethical judgment swings between deep empathy and utter revulsion. Where exactly it settles must be dependent on the individual. It would be utterly inadequate to suggest that the contest is simply that between Old and New Testament ethics because the fictive persons involved are not allegorical figures. 'People' are involved, persons whose on-stage presence cannot be reduced to an abstract doctrine. The audience's ethical sympathies become exercised in complex ways, responding to the formal plasticity of the situation Shakespeare has presented for their contemplation.

Shylock is relentless. The immediate cause of his vindictiveness becomes intelligible if the drama's religious dimensions are appreciated in some of their formal (in this case theological) plasticity. Antonio, the 'Merchant of Venice', is a Jewish convert to Christianity, known as a marrano (the word comes from old Spanish meaning 'swine'—hence the play on pigs and pork throughout the play). Marranos often converted to Christianity not out of belief but to enable them to participate in mercantile trade without being persecuted for violating Jewish edict and tradition (Finn 1989). This is the explanation for Antonio's overwhelming sadness as the play opens: "In sooth, I know not why I am so sad…" (1.1.1). He has forsaken his ethnic Jewishness, voluntarily or involuntarily, but is not fully accepted by Christian society which suspects his conversion to be more a matter of convenience than conviction. Neither one thing nor the other, he is pulled in both directions, a "tainted wether of the flock" as he calls himself (4.1.113). His is the play's central predicament, hence the play's title. He is stranded emotionally between a beckoning cosmopolitan future and a stable past he has not quite relinquished. This is also the reason Shylock

insists Antonio's heart should be cut out. It is not mere gratuitous savagery (though it is that, too). The heart was considered the seat of religious identity. Shylock wants to reclaim Antonio's heart to return him to the orthodox Jewish faith he has left behind. He wants to 'save' an apostate, to hold him in the bond of ancient Jewry.

In this play, Shakespeare is not writing merely about the wrongs done to particular people, but about deep social strains occasioned by the slow transition from closed or traditional societies to the more unpredictable, cross-cultural openness of the international, mercantilist civilization of Venice, as bravely contemplated by Jessica and Lorenzo from Belmont at the end of the play. The play's lyrical coda bids a forlorn aubade to Shylock as one who betrays humanity precisely because he is true to his own culture:

> The man that hath no music in himself,
> Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
> Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.
> The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
> And his affections dark as Erebus.
> Let no such man be trusted: Mark the music.
>
> (5.1.82-87)

Jessica and Lorenzo are sitting together under the open heavens, responding to the music of the spheres, he 'mansplaining' the workings of the cosmos, she admiring him and enjoying their fresh intimacy which, notably, includes a cross-cultural togetherness and freedom as yet untested by the crude societal prejudices and constraints from which the two have, at least temporarily, escaped. Shylock is rooted in the unchanging codes of small-scale society, confinements still prevalent in many parts of the world, a stranded remnant of tribal conservatism. Venice itself, steeped in mercantilist ethics, is a "refracted projection of London" (Salingar 182), a foretaste of the globalising society to come. Shakespeare is not writing about whether Christians are better than Jews (nobody in the play behaves very creditably), nor about whether Judaism is superior to Christianity, but about the large-scale shift in human outlook occasioned by the gradual, relentless change from closed to open societies. Small wonder this massive diachronic plasticity enables the Shakespeare text to speak cogently to different societies round the world.[7]

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[7] See Laurence Wright, "'Thinking with Shakespeare': The Merchant of Venice – Shylock, Caliban and the dynamics of social scale" (2017). Significantly, when Julius Nyerere came to render *The Merchant of Venice* into Swahili the title he came up with was *Mabapari wa Venise*, which translates roughly as "The Capitalists" or "The Bourgeoisie" of Venice – ably exploiting the text's diachronic plasticity (Nyerere, trans. 1969).

Conclusion

This, to date, is as far as my search for a 'formal cause' helping to explain Shakespeare's burgeoning global presence has taken me. The features described create the necessary (but not sufficient) conditions underpinning the extraordinary adaptability and 'shape-shifting' capacities of the Shakespeare text. The rest is up to the usual suspects: actors, directors, designers, producers—the creative team. But their work rests on the extraordinary textual structures Shakespeare has presciently put in place.

To bolster the thesis presented I would have to describe its implications for interpreting and understanding non-Shakespearean drama and literature in more detail than is appropriate here, but I hope I have said enough to suggest that the world-wide prevalence of Shakespeare is more than an effect of travelling theatrical imperialism, globalising electronic-industrial culture, or entrenched artistic taste—though it is obviously affected by these sociological phenomena. Such forces are equally available to act on the work of Shakespeare's forbears and contemporaries. The fact that this happens only rarely is testament to the fact that, for all their varied excellences, these texts lack the performative potential so richly evident in Shakespeare. At base, the international Shakespearean 'glitter ball' is driven and enabled by a robust textual mechanism comprising ascertainable features which subsist 'behind the language' and help to explain why Shakespeare 'can be anywhere'. Without this textual mechanism his work would simply have stayed at home instead of coruscating round the globe.

My hope is that sensitive use of this rubric may contribute to richer accounts of what makes Shakespeare's plays and poems appeal to such markedly diverse audiences around the world, in the way they so often do. It may well be that investigating worldwide Shakespearean phenomena in their attention to *performativity, aspectuality, thematic centrality, formal plasticity,* and *diachronic relevance* in context, will not only enhance the material specificity of performance descriptions, but increase our understanding of why it is that Shakespeare continues to thrive and outperform internationally not only his precursors and contemporaries, but countless other notable artists and writers who have subsequently come to prominence.

Adumbrating a neutral descriptive rubric to pin down elements in the Shakespeare text which enable its geographical and historical portability and traction, as I have done here, is not an effort to explain or eulogise Shakespeare's ageless contemporaneity and relevance on lines pioneered by writers such as Jan Kott (1967) or, more recently, Marjorie Garber (2004). (In any case, this would be redundant given his current popularity.) Nor is it antithetical to research which attempts to 'medievalise' our understanding of Shakespearean drama or to reaffirm the value of archival or paleographical

approaches to Shakespeare studies (Cooper 2010; Erne 2021). Although it emphasises the play of paratextual hypotheses provoked by the text which enable varied audience interpretations to take place, it is also distinct from the 'Audience Frames' approach developed by Susan Bennett (1997). The model strives to stand outside the semiology of empirical audience response in order to map those paratextual features characteristic of the Shakespeare text which enable it perennially to be "acted over,/In states unborn and accents yet unknown!" (*Julius Caesar* 3.2.112-14).

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David Livingstone* iD

Naked Villany: The Fatal Attraction of Richard III and Donald Trump

Abstract: Although no longer American President, Donald Trump still manages to upstage the current administration. An explanation for his "sinister aesthetics", to use Joel Elliot Slotkin's concept, can be seemingly found in developing a comparison with the eponymous king of Shakespeare's Richard III, who masterfully employs soliloquies and asides to draw the audience and reader into his evil plots and dealings. Donald Trump also managed something similar by means of Twitter, constantly tweeting out vicious comments and insults, which kept both his followers and opponents engaged. This theatrical skill is also compared to the 'heat' generated by villains in professional wrestling, whose popularity is marked by how much hatred they can produce.

Keywords: William Shakespeare, Richard III, Donald Trump, Soliloquies, Asides, Twitter.

Introduction

I am undoubtedly not the only one who secretly experiences nostalgia at times for the days when I could look up with perverse glee the news concerning Trump's latest tweets and speeches and the consequent reactions from late night comedians. Trump-related memes flourished and, despite the avouched disdain for the man and his family, the Trump-product was the best-selling item around in the media. We, or at least I, found pleasure in his absurd bombasticity, cheekiness and bravado. How could he openly utter statements such as "I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody, okay, and I wouldn't lose any voters, okay?" (Vitali) and get away with it? Now, with "that bottled spider" (*Richard III*, 1:3:238)[1] finally silenced, why is it so hard to let him go? Why is there still this continued unhealthy interest in his person? I would like to

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* Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic. livingstone@seznam.cz
[1] References to Shakespeare's works are from *The Norton Shakespeare*.

argue that this vicarious pleasure shares affinities with the theatrical experience of listening to the asides and soliloquies by Shakespeare's villains. Although parallels are apparent with characters in almost all of the history plays and beyond, the most obvious example is *Richard III*.

There are Trumpian parallels in many places in Shakespeare. We have Trump as a clown, garbling his words like Lancelot in *The Merchant of Venice* or Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Trump reminds us of ridiculous buffoons like Malvolio in his cross-gartered yellow stockings in *Twelfth Night*, failing to recognize his own absurdity. He shares affinities with Macbeth holed up in Dunsinane, while everything crumbles all around him. The renowned theatre critic Michael Billington, writing for *the Guardian*, has discussed a recent Trumpian version of *Julius Caesar* and argues forcibly for a closer parallel with the slimy, unscrupulous Parolles in *All's Well That Ends Well* (Billington).

The history plays, specifically, provide even more suitable material. Like Trump's Ivana, Richard II's first wife, Anne of Bohemia, was also from the Czech Lands and the "caterpillars of the commonwealth," (*Richard II*, 2:3:165), who encourage the folly and greed, which leads to his eventual downfall, sound very much topical. Trump's ill-fated encouragement of the attack by his mob on the Capitol find parallels in the often absurd character of the rebel leader Jack Cade in *2 Henry VI*, voicing contradictory promises (mixing rhetoric reminiscent of Communism with royalist rhetoric) within one sentence, which are swallowed whole of course by his gullible followers: "all the realm shall be in common, and in Cheapside shall my palfrey go to grass; and when I am king, as king I will be,--" (*2 Henry IV*, 4:2:63-65). Trump's retreat to the White House, on the same occasion, while his followers did the dirty work, also recalls the craven "crafty-sick" (*2 Henry IV*, Induction: 37) behaviour of Northumberland in the *Henry IV* plays, allowing his son and brother to face the troops of the King and the Prince while he keeps his feet warm, awaiting the outcome. Finally, Henry IV's deathbed scolding of his son Hal, the future Henry V, seems very much pertinent to the reign of Trump.

> Harry the Fifth is crown'd: up, vanity!
> Down, royal state! all you sage counsellors, hence!
> And to the English court assemble now,
> From every region, apes of idleness! (*2 Henry IV*, 4:3:249-252)

When it comes to connections, however, between Trump and Shakespeare's Richard III character, the parallels are remarkable if not spooky. The arguably most interesting parallel is their ability to charm and detest (occasionally both at once) both their friends and enemies, often through the use of asides and soliloquies by Richard's case or by means of tweets and bombastic speeches in

the case of Trump. There is something truly fascinating about their chutzpah, bravado and complete lack of shame. Richard has a number of lines when you wonder how the actor can keep a straight face. After having been instrumental in the imprisonment of his brother Clarence, he feigns ignorance and innocently declares "I am too childish-foolish for this world." (*Richard III*, 1.3:142). In a very Trumpian self-congratulatory manner, he utters the classic line "I thank my God for my humility" (*Richard III*, 2.1.70), right before, of course, revealing the death of Clarence to the members of the court. This has affinities with Trump's own assessment of himself as "a very stable genius" (January 6, 2018)[2] or his countless, obviously outlandish, self-aggrandizing statements such as "Nobody has done more for the black community" (October 17, 2020).

Trump and Richard also share a tendency to turn on their allies and former ministers. Buckingham's privileged position and the promises of wealth and bounty he has received from Richard all go up in smoke, of course, when he expresses reluctance to execute the princes in the tower. This turnaround culminates with an outburst on the part of the freshly crowned King Richard, "...like a Jack thou keep'st the stroke / Betwixt they begging and my meditation. / I am not in the giving vein today." (*Richard III*, 4:2:114-116). Buckingham ends up on the executioner's block soon after. Richard's paranoia, mistrust and betrayal of his friends is once again parallel with Trump's constant turning on his former advisers, his veiled threats to Vice-President Pence on the final days of his presidency, and the numerous references to other 'traitors'. Trump's tweets frequently denounce former cabinet members who have disappointed him for various reasons. His first Secretary of State, for example, did not remain in his good favours long: "Rex Tillerson, didn't have the mental capacity needed. He was dumb as a rock and I couldn't get rid of him fast enough. He was lazy as hell." (Dec. 7, 2018). Trump's fourth National Security Advisor fared no better: Perhaps, this should be a block quote. These two examples are only, of course, the tip of the iceberg.

On a related note, both politicians have a fondness for uttering pithy statements or 'catch phrases' demonstrating their decisiveness in relation to their enemies or victims. Richard is, of course, notorious for various variations on chop or off with someone's head, most famously in relation to Lord Hastings in 2:4 who is reluctant to support Richard's claim to the throne and who is entrapped into 'treason' and condemned to the scaffold. Trump is, in contrast, renowned for his "you're fired" statement, made popular on his reality show *The Apprentice* which ran on television from 2004 to 20017 when he assumed

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[2] All of the tweets cited here come from the official Trump archive available online spanning 2009 up to January 2021 when he was finally silenced, https://www.thetrumparchive.com/

the presidency. Both utterances share a gleeful sadism wherein the person in power publicly humiliates and eliminates the victim. The audience (either in the theatre or on the television set) is also encouraged to join in the fun and relish in the destruction of yet another 'loser' who does not meet the approval or the standards of the bully in power.

Richard's "rudely stamped" (*Richard III*, 1:1:16) deformity and attempts to show his figure to the best advantage after his successful seduction of Lady Anne, "I'll be at charges for a looking-glass, / And entertain some score or two of tailors, / To study fashions to adorn my body." (*Richard III*, 1:2:241-243) also ring true of Trump, with his ill-fitting clothes vainly trying to disguise his obesity, along with his legendary hair and surreal orange make-up. Both Richard and Trump seem to be driven by insecurity, in the former case understandably due to his physical handicaps while in the latter's case in relation to his supposed small hands, "'Look at those hands, are they small hands?' Trump asked on the debate stage. And [Rubio] referred to my hands: 'If they're small, something else must be small.' I guarantee you there's no problem. I guarantee." (Moye).

Despite their physical challenges, both politicians seem to have an inexplicable sex appeal. As referenced earlier, Richard succeeds in breaking down Anne's understandable antipathy to him in the second scene of the play, only to confide to the audience in a gleeful aside that "I'll have her, but I will not keep her long." (*Richard III*, 1:2:216). Trump's image has been wrapped up, from the very beginning, with his supposed sexual appeal, manifested in his three wives, sexual conquests and his involvement in the beauty pageant business. Just as the audience wonders how Richard can win over Anne and later seemingly Queen Elizabeth when pursuing her daughter in marriage, there has been an ongoing fascination with the way Melania would swat away Trump's hand in public, to say nothing of his creepy incestuous behavior with his daughter Ivana embodied best in his statement "I've said if Ivanka weren't my daughter, perhaps I'd be dating her." (Withnall).

Richard, like Trump, despises women on the whole, while at the same time needing them for social status. They are also, however, very much intimidated by strong women who, in contrast to the young Anne, stand up to them. Ian Fredrick Moulton argues forcibly that, "Indeed, one of Richard's greatest errors is to assume that all women conform to gender stereotypes to the same extent as Anne." (Moulton 267-268). The most obvious example of this during Trump's presidency was his painfully obvious discomfort with influential women like Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Hillary Clinton or Elizabeth Warren. A study of his tweets reveals that he made reference to "Crooked Hillary" 366 times, "crazy Nancy Pelosi" 54 times and Elizabeth "Pocahontas" Warren 40 times. Richard's nasty comment on Elizabeth after seemingly convincing her to allow him to marry her daughter is very much in a similar

Trumpian vein, "Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman!" (*Richard III*, 4:4:347). Richard is ironically guilty of the very same 'weakness' several lines later when changing his orders to Ratcliff: "My mind is changed, sir, my mind is changed." (*Richard III*, 4:4:269).

Both figures also feign religious devotion in order to gain political support. Buckingham, Richard's closest henchman for most of the play, choreographs the scene to impress the Mayor of London and his colleagues: "And look you get a prayer-book in your hand, / And stand betwixt two churchmen, good my lord" (*Richard III*, 3:7:41-42). This is eerily similar to Trump's awkward posed picture with a Bible outside of St. John's Church in Washington [3] or the equally disturbing photo-op with various Evangelical preachers placing their hands on him in blessing in 2017. Richard's classic, revealing soliloquy, after stirring up turmoil and animosity amongst his rival nobles, could very much apply to Trump.

> But then I sigh; and, with a piece of scripture,
> Tell them that God bids us do good for evil:
> And thus I clothe my naked villany
> With old odd ends stolen out of holy writ;
> And seem a saint, when most I play the devil. (*Richard III*, 1:3:330-334)

Adding to the parallel, Trump (unlike his predecessors in the office of American President, who at least went through the motions of embracing Christianity) actually makes little effort to conceal his brazen cynicism in relation to the so-called 'religious right' and the Church in general. Despite this lack of respect or reverence on his part, he is still embraced wholeheartedly by the majority of his conservative evangelical supporters and this despite being from New York City, having been involved in the gambling business in Atlantic City and having been married three times and divorced twice, to say nothing of his other philandering on the side and incidents such as his celebrated "Grab them by the pussy" statement.

Finally, both Richard and Trump share certain family dynamics and a possible variation of fratricide. Mary L. Trump's best-selling book on her uncle *Too Much and Never Enough* relates of, amongst many other things, the strange dynamic the future President had with his older brother Fred. Jr., the initial heir apparent to the Trump business. Younger Donald, at least according to Mary, contributed to his brother's fall from grace, culminating in Fred Jr.'s death at the age of 43 and clearing the way for Donald to ascend the family throne. Fred Jr.'s children were eventually, according to Mary, even cut out of

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[3] This took place during the Black Lives Matters protests on June 1, 2020.

Fred Sr.'s will, with the future President pulling the strings (Trump, Mary. L.). This is clearly anticipated by Richard's plotting, culminating in death, of the arrest of the middle brother Clarence and his machinations to remove other family members standing in his way. Richard seems to view fraternal love and support as a weakness:

> I have no brother, I am like no brother;
> And this word 'love', which graybeards call divine,
> Be resident in men like one another
> And not in me: I am myself alone." (3 *Henry VI*, 5:6:80-83)

Although there have been a number of attempts to define Richard's peculiar grip on the audience and the reader, I found Joel Elliot Slotkin's concept of "sinister aesthetics" (Slotkin 5) particularly useful in understanding the seemingly illogical charm of both Richard and Trump. He argues that "the play encourages audiences to appreciate Richard because of his evil, not in spite of it" (Slotkin 5). He further eloquently demonstrates how the characters in the play also 'succumb' to the dark charms of Richard, thereby contributing to their own eventual downfall. Richard is defeated and killed in the end, but "the sinister itself proves the dominant aesthetic in the world of the play." (Slotkin 26). Slotkin's argument could, at least in my mind, be easily applied to the Trump phenomenon wherein so many of his followers have fallen into the trap of his cult of personality and lived to regret it. It also serves to help explain Trump's ongoing power over the American and world imagination.

Another variation on the appeal of the sinister, in relation to Trump and Richard, can be seen in the attributes of the so-called 'heel' in professional wrestling, someone people love to hate and who generates 'heat'. The villain or heel usually feeds off the boos and insults of the crowd and brazenly breaks the rules. This 'heat' could be perceived as another version of what Richard and Trump cultivate through their taunting of the 'good guys' or liberals in Trump's case. Mike Edison has actually written on this wrestling topic in an attempt to understand Trump's remarkable resiliency.

> I couldn't understand why even his most ardent supporters didn't leave him in droves. Surely, that was 'bad heat'—the kind even heels don't want because it means the marks legitimately do not like the person playing the role. Even as an ardent connoisseur of cartoon villainy, I was appalled. But I kept clicking and clicking. And, admit it: you did, too. Then suddenly, the fog of kayfabe was lifted, and somehow Trump was the last man standing. He was going to star in the main event. (Edison)

Trump has, of course, flirted with wrestling not only as a promoter, but as a direct participant in a highly publicized 'feud' with the WWW wrestling

magnate and kindred spirit Vince McMahon.[4] The wrestling connection goes deeper, however, specifically in the way both Richard and Trump actually attract their audience by refusing to hide their depravity.

Yet another kindred reading of their twisted appeal is provided by Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rankin in their influential feminist text on the history plays *Engendering a Nation*:

> Each scene is punctuated by soliloquies in which Richard addresses the audience, predicting the action to come, responding to the action just past, flaunting his witty wickedness, gloating at the other characters' weakness and ignorance, and seducing the fascinated auditors into complicity with his diabolical schemes. (Howard and Rankin 110)

This description could very much be referring to a sadistic wrestling heel taunting the audience and his inept opponent in the ring.

There are, of course, a number of vivid differences between the two personages. Unlike Trump, there is no doubt about Richard's bravery and aptness for war as depicted both in the last two *Henry VI* plays and at the Battle of Bosworth. Richard is eloquent and a master manipulator who uses language to disguise his true intentions. Trump's vocabulary, in contrast, is limited as a glimpse at his Twitter history makes more than apparent.[5] This apparent weakness, however, seems to have actually amounted to a strength, increasing his appeal with his followers and supporters. Most significantly, Trump is still very much alive, along with his children and followers, unlike Richard whose only son died as a child and whose illegitimate children faded into oblivion.

Conclusion

Richard III ends with the triumph of Richmond, the future Henry VII, and the death of the universally despised Richard. Trump also experienced a death of sorts with the closing down of his Twitter and Facebook accounts at the beginning of 2021, preventing him from communicating both to his friends and enemies. Their sinister shadows loom large, however. One could argue that both sides of the political spectrum have been impacted: Trump's followers obviously, but also we 'good' liberals who could not take our eyes or ears off him. Christopher Beha, editor of *Harper's Magazine* puts it very well in the

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[4] This feud was entitled "The Battle of the Billionaires" and culminated with Trump shaving McMahon's head in the ring at WrestleMania 23 in 2007.

[5] His twitter history includes, for example, 158 uses of the word loser, 83 of dummy, 39 of dope and 110 of lightweight.

conclusion to a series of articles on *Life After Trump*. His contribution is called simply, "Trump after Trump".

> And if we're being completely honest, our Trump watching—even among those who hate him the most—has always contained an element of glee. We were delighted when he declared himself a 'very stable genius,' when he bragged about 'acing' a test of basic cognitive functioning, when his ridiculous hair blew up to reveal the contours of his slathered-on tan. … But all the while we were giving Trump exactly what he wanted. For it is an ironclad rule of publicity that it doesn't matter *why* people watch. A hate follow is as good as any other. (Beha)

As mentioned earlier in this paper, I am admittedly 'guilty' of just this kind of complicity and I am far from being alone.

Perhaps it is only those who are disengaged from the whole process, who can see things the most clearly, along the lines of the child in Hans Christian Anderson's "The Emperor's New Clothes" who is the only one to comment on the nakedness of the Emperor. In *Richard III*, the young princes in their seeming innocence are arguably the only ones who see their uncle for what he really is (although it does not do them much good in the end). Prior to their imprisonment and murder, the two princes meet with their uncle and have the following prickly exchange.

> Richard: What would you have my weapon, little lord?
> York: I would, that I might thank you as you call me.
> Richard: How?
> York: Little. (*Richard III*, 3.1:122-125)

York's childish innocence, both here and elsewhere, actually packs a punch, something which Richard is very much aware of and which contributes to his decision to rid himself of his nephews. A short throw-away scene or episode,[6] involving a nameless scrivener who has dutifully copied the charges proclaimed against Hastings, also cuts to the quick of the matter: "Here's a good world the while! Why who's so gross, / That seeth not this palpable device? / Yet who's so blind, but says he sees it not?" (*Richard III*, 3.6:10-12). This anonymous character, merely doing his job, states the obvious and seems able to maintain a certain objectivity.

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[6] I have discussed elsewhere the importance of throw-away scenes (my own formulation) in the history plays, specifically how they enable alternative readings of the plays, see David Livingstone, "Subversive Characters and Techniques in Shakespeare's History Plays," PhD diss., (Palacký University, 2011).

Objectivity, of course, is something sorely lacking in these days of 'fake news', misinformation and social media. Both Trump and Richard are very much aware of this, in their own fashion, and are highly capable of taking advantage of this. Their fatal attraction lives on, for better or for worse, for many of the rest of us.

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Stan Reiner van Zon*

Re-reading the Archive: A 21st Century Re-appraisal of Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* as a Modern *Hamlet*

Abstract: Among Japanese film director Kurosawa Akira's three Shakespeare films, *Throne of Blood* (1957), *Ran* (1985), and *The Bad Sleep Well* (1960), the latter has been relatively ignored in Anglophone Shakespeare criticism. This article investigates the Anglophone reception of *The Bad Sleep Well* and argues in favor of its re-appraisal as a *Hamlet*. On reception, it examines three explanations for the neglect: its modern setting, its deconstructive adaptation, and its cinematic quality. Considering the latter unconvincing, the article posits that the first two were only detrimental to the film's reception because they respectively did not conform to Western expectations of essentially pre-modern 'Oriental' Japan and of 'straight' canonical Shakespeare. Considering changed attitudes in Shakespeare studies, neither of these should still be held against the film. On re-appraisal, *The Bad Sleep Well* may be reread in the 21st century as part of our continuing memory of our global Shakespeare discourse. Centering on the film's innovative presentation of Claudius and *The Mousetrap*, the article argues for the porous border between 'straight' production and 'crooked' adaptation, and the value to the tradition of oblique approaches to familiar scenes and characters. By arguing for *The Bad Sleep Well* as a *Hamlet* worthy of study, the article furthers discussion on archival silences and new rhizomatic models of global Shakespeare that seek to move past the more reductive qualities of the 'national Shakespeares' mode of discourse that dominated in the 1990s and 2000s.

Keywords: Shakespeare reception, adaptation, Shakespeare in Japan, *Hamlet*, Kurosawa, *The Bad Sleep Well*, Shakespeare in film.

Introduction

Kurosawa Akira's 1957 *Throne of Blood* is a global Shakespeare icon. Well before seminal productions such as Ninagawa Yukio's *Macbeth* and scholarly works such as Dennis Kennedy's *Foreign Shakespeare* heralded the

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* Utrecht University, the Netherlands. s.r.vanzon@gmail.co

phenomenon of 'global Shakespeare' as we know it today, Kurosawa's cinematic *Macbeth* challenged the hegemony of European and American Shakespeare interpretation and performance. The film influenced Peter Brook's work in the 1970s (Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare* 279) and is the only production outside of Europe and America meaningfully engaged with in the seminal 1985 scholarly volume *Political Shakespeare* (Holderness, "Radical potentiality" 215-216). As early as 1965, J. Blumenthal praised it as not only "a masterpiece in its own right" but the first proper Shakespeare film produced to date (190) and by 1988 Anthony Davies could counter arguments against its fidelity to Shakespeare by simply noting that "the film has become, for those who have seen it, a part of our thinking about Shakespeare's *Macbeth*" (154).

More complicated is the Anglophonic reception history of Kurosawa's other two Shakespeare films, 1960's *The Bad Sleep Well* and 1985's *Ran*. To quantify the divergence, I have tabulated entries in the online *World Shakespeare Bibliography* for each three films.[1] Below is a cumulative graph of the results:
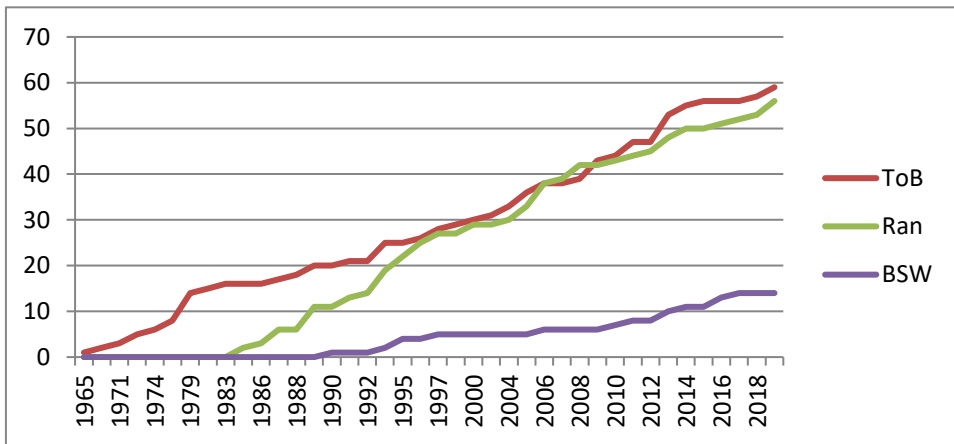
Correlating to its iconic status, *Throne of Blood* shows a straight line of scholarly productivity starting with its first entry within a decade of the film's release. In spite of being released almost three decades later, *Ran* quickly catches up to its elder sibling. However, though *The Bad Sleep Well* was released just three years after *Throne of Blood* and twenty-five years before *Ran*

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[1] Search queries for the film titles in English and Japanese filtered for English language entries only. Search executed manually to remove duplicates and false positives. I also manually excised film studies works without apparent Shakespearean focus as well as dissertations (the latter because I could not verify they were representative of their genre).

this middle child of Kurosawa's Shakespeare films lags behind its cinematic siblings at a ratio of 1:4.

A qualitative reading of Anglophonic Shakespeare scholarship substantiates this result: works predating the 1990s which discuss both *Throne of Blood* and *Ran* at length are marked by a deafening silence on *The Bad Sleep Well* (Davies; Collicks). Since then, awareness of *The Bad Sleep Well* as a *Hamlet* film has become commonplace but it is still not uncommon to see works list all three of Kurosawa's Shakespeare films before proceeding to all but ignore *The Bad Sleep Well* in favor of *Throne of Blood* and *Ran* (Dawson; Joubin). Countering this trend, Mark Thornton Burnett has argued that *The Bad Sleep Well* "is long overdue a more sustained critical treatment" (Burnett, "Re-reading Kurosawa" 404) and in *Great Shakespeareans Volume XVII* Burnett gives ample and equal time to all three films. However, at the present rate the gap in critical attention shows little sign of abating.

Explaining the Neglect

Kishi Tetsuo and Graham Bradshaw have suggested this neglect occurred "because Westerners thought of Kurosawa's Shakespeare, or Japanese Shakespeare in general, as a kind of 'samurai Shakespeare'" (136). (Unlike the 'samurai' period pieces of *Throne of Blood* and *Ran*, *The Bad Sleep Well* is set in the corporate world of contemporary 1950s Japan.) In this context, it is telling that the first *World Shakespeare Bibliography* entry on *The Bad Sleep Well* frames the film as "Samurai in Business Dress" (Perret 6). Certainly, much Anglophonic scholarship in this period exhibits a curious befuddlement at how to interpret *The Bad Sleep Well*'s contemporary setting as compared to its (over-)confidence in interpreting 'traditional' Japan. For example, Robert Hapgood's chapter on all three films in *Shakespeare and the Moving Image* covers extensively the "*Sengoku Jidai* [...] (1392-1568)" but offers no such introduction to 1950s corporate Japan (235-237). Anthony Dawson's chapter for *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare on Screen* skips *The Bad Sleep Well* entirely because "set in 1960 corporate Japan, [it] raises different questions" than *Throne of Blood* and *Ran* (158). As harsh critiques by, amongst others, Kishi Tetsuo and Ashizu Kaori have illustrated, Anglophone criticism's seeming preference for 'samurai' Shakespeare has not necessarily reflected an ability to understand classical Japanese culture any better than modern Japanese culture (Ashizu, "Kurosawa's *Hamlet*?"; Kishi, "Japanese Shakespeare and the English reviewers"). As Japanese Shakespeare director Deguchi Norio has phrased it, to foreigners it can be the images of "an agricultural society [...] of Old Japan, the 'so-called Japan'" (Takahasi et al. 190) which are most recognizable and intelligible as Japan, at the expense of works (such as Deguchi's own

Shakespeare productions) which eschew such images as part of a deliberate artistic strategy to speak to contemporary Japanese audiences (Eglinton 64-65).

Another explanation for *The Bad Sleep Well*'s relative neglect could be that any reading of *The Bad Sleep Well* as *Hamlet* must account for numerous of cuts, splits, and merges of themes, scenes, and characters. In this context, Ashizu as well as Kishi and Bradshaw argue that the film's identification with *Hamlet* distorts Shakespeareans' reception of its narrative (Ashizu, "Kurosawa's *Hamlet*?" 75; Kishi and Bradshaw 139). The spectator who, they suggest, watches *The Bad Sleep Well* looking for familiar characters and scenes from *Hamlet* overlooks Kurosawa's film. A similar logic leads *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film* to include *The Bad Sleep Well* only as a 'cinematic offshoot' (Howard 309). Yet all three films could be considered 'offshoots' by some standard. None make any attempt to translate the received text into Japanese (unlike e.g. Ninagawa Yukio's stage productions). Similarly, all three seem 'straight' Shakespeare if compared to the kind of deconstructive Shakespeare theatre produced by Suzuki Tadashi, Ong Keng Sen, or the Wooster Group. It is not self-evident that the splitting and merging of scenes and characters – its complex relation of both adherence to and deviation from the *Hamlet* tradition both in Japan and globally – should by itself make *The Bad Sleep Well* less interesting to Shakespearean scholars than *Throne of Blood* or *Ran*.

A third explanation could be that perhaps *The Bad Sleep Well* is just not as great a film as *Throne of Blood* and *Ran*. In the comparison to *Throne of Blood*, this argument has merit. In contrast to *Throne of Blood*'s early recognition as a masterpiece, film critic Donald Richie considered *The Bad Sleep Well* a "failure" and notes that Kurosawa too found that *The Bad Sleep Well* "does not live up to its beginnings" (143). However, *Ran* has faced similar criticism since its release. Davies argued that compared to *Throne of Blood* the more recent *Ran* has "more spectacle but [...] less psychological subtlety" (153) and Kishi and Bradshaw considered *Ran* a distant third compared to Kurosawa's first two Shakespearean outings (141-144). While an individual scholar may prefer *Ran* over *The Bad Sleep Well*, the lack of a consensus among those who do treat all three films equally makes it a weak argument for *The Bad Sleep Well*'s neglect on aggregate.

Ripe for Re-appraisal

In stark contrast to the lack of interest in *The Bad Sleep Well* sits the broad movement within Shakespeare studies since at least the 1990s to expand the field's definition of Shakespeare far beyond traditional notions of 'fidelity' and embrace a 'post-modern' or 'rhizomatic' conception of Shakespeare and the

production of Shakespearean meaning.[2] Christy Desmet, Natalie Loper, and Jim Casey have argued that the 'Shakespearean' quality of (for example) a film can be "a matter of perception rather than authorial intention (audiences may detect Shakespeare where the author disclaims him or may have difficulty finding him where he is named) [or] be a product of intertextual and intermedial relations [...] apart from more overt processes of influence and reception" (Introduction 2-3). In relation to this, it is only the historically (and as shown above not easily defendable) lackluster reception of *The Bad Sleep Well* among Shakespeareans that deters its perception as a classic *Hamlet*. Those scholars who have tried have found that the film can be productively read as a *Hamlet*. These scholars include Ashizu and Kishi and Bradshaw, who in spite of their critique of overly *Hamlet*-centric readings still find that the film has much to say to and about *Hamlet* (Ashizu, "Kurosawa's *Hamlet*?" 93; Kishi and Bradshaw 140). It therefore seems to me Burnett is correct in arguing that *The Bad Sleep Well* is overdue for a re-appraisal and renewed attention (Burnett, "Re-reading Kurosawa" 404). However, it is crucial that any renewed scholarly attention (especially in Anglophonic scholarship) takes into account the problems of the past and current reception of Kurosawa's Shakespeare films.

One problematic mode of scholarship common in the 20ᵗʰ century and exemplified by Blumenthal's 1965 article on *Throne of Blood* can be summed up as follows: the scholar starts from the assumption that they essentially understand the Shakespeare play; they proceed to explain how the film does or does not reflect this notion of what the Shakespeare play essentially means; finally, they conclude by either praising or dismissing the film in so far as it has succeeded in cinematically capturing that Shakespearean essence. In this manner, Blumenthal lauds *Throne of Blood* for essentially being Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in cinematic form. Similarly, Davies criticizes *Throne of Blood* for the ways in which it essentially is not Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Both are representatives of what Kishi and Bradshaw have criticized as:

> [...] the perennial tendency of Anglo-centric critics to regard their view of Shakespeare (whatever that happens to be at the time) as the *real* Shakespeare, and foreign views as more or less exotic 'versions' of Shakespeare. [...] even though the later, admiring Western responses to *Throne of Blood* were more perceptive, they continued to assimilate their sense of what Kurosawa was doing to their changed but still Western sense of what Shakespeare was doing. (127-128)

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[2] E.g. but not limited to: Hawkes; Kennedy, *Foreign Shakespeare*; Worthen; Cartelli; Desmet and Sawyer; Burt and Boose; Orkin; Massai; Huang and Rivlin; Desmet, Loper and Casey, *Shakespeare / Not Shakespeare*.

At the same time, an over-correction of these 20th century problems can lead to a mode of scholarship which is problematic in the opposite direction. Rey Chow has critiqued how:

> [...] there remains in the West, against the current facade of welcoming non-Western others into putatively interdisciplinary and cross-cultural exchanges, a continual tendency to stigmatize and ghettoize non-Western cultures precisely by way of ethnic, national labels. (4)

In recent years, Joubin has taken up this argument in the context of Shakespeare studies, arguing that:

> National profiling is often allowed to overtake more nuanced appreciation of individual artistic talents and concerns. In other words, the journalistic obsession with, say, 'Japanese Shakespeare' as a general category may obscure Ninagawa's unique artistic achievements. (Huang 431)

The appreciation of non-Western national contexts has been an important development in global Shakespeare scholarship, but there is, as Joubin argues, a danger in any approach which "isolates performances in their perceived cultural origins" (Joubin 8). Such approaches may reveal much about a specific production or performance, but may also serve to unduly constraint its interpretative frame and simultaneously marginalize it in relation to the implicit 'standard' of Anglocentric performances. Such an approach would insist that Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* must be understood as a *Japanese* Shakespeare as opposed to, e.g., Olivier's or Almereyda's *Hamlet* films which are allowed to be 'just' Shakespeare.

       In this context, this article argues that 21st century re-appraising of *The Bad Sleep Well* should understand it not only as a Japanese *Hamlet* but also as just a *Hamlet*. Such analyses should not strive to find in *The Bad Sleep Well* the presence or absence of an essential Shakespearean *Hamlet*, but rather to explore how the film can be and has been productively read in relation to the global *Hamlet* tradition. Poonam Trivedi has argued that translation "expands, not narrows, the range of reference for Shakespeare" (15). Understood in this manner, reading *The Bad Sleep Well* as a modern *Hamlet* is not about restricting Kurosawa's film to a preconceived notion of what *Hamlet* is, but rather about allowing *The Bad Sleep Well* to stand alongside other modern performances so that it may enrich the global tradition of *Hamlet* performance in which we, as Shakespeareans and as a global society, continue to reproduce and reinvent what *Hamlet* is and means to us.

The Film is the Thing

A brief synopsis of the film is in order. *The Bad Sleep Well* starts with the wedding reception of Iwabuchi Yoshiko, the daughter of the vice-president of a public corporation. As the reception is crashed first by journalists and then by the police it becomes clear this public corporation is under investigation for corruption and *The Bad Sleep Well* is set in a world of kickbacks, graft, and embezzlement of public funds. As the story unfolds we discover that the groom, Nishi, is our Hamlet-figure. Five years prior, his father was induced to commit suicide to take the fall for another kickback scheme. Now, Nishi is trying to avenge his father by exposing the corruption of the people responsible so that they may be brought to justice in the dual courts of the law and public opinion. In the end, however, Nishi fails, is killed, and despite multiple murders to his name vice-president Iwabuchi remains alive and well and hoping to launch a political career.

Those scholars who have tried to map *The Bad Sleep Well*'s characters to those found in the *Hamlet* tradition have generally agreed that Nishi corresponds to Hamlet, his wife Yoshiko to Ophelia, her brother Tatsuo to Laertes, and Nishi's friend and confidant Itakura to Horatio. Less consensus is found regarding the three main antagonists to Nishi: Iwabuchi, Moriyama, and Shirai. Sometimes, Iwabuchi is taken to be the Claudius figure and Moriyama and Shirai to be Kurosawa's inventions (e.g. Burnett in *Great Shakespeareans*). However, Ashizu suggests that Moriyama is the "Polonius-like aide" (Ashizu, "Kurosawa's *Hamlet?*" 74) whereas Shirai can be compared to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (Ashizu, "Kurosawa's *Hamlet?*" 96). On another end of the interpretive spectrum, Tony Howard suggests that there is no Claudius at all in *The Bad Sleep Well* but that the film presents "the world according to Polonius" (Howard 301). The character of Wada, who at times functions as a (fake) ghost or Nishi's conscience, also lacks an unequivocal parallel.

The Bad Sleep Well was produced at a time when Japanese theatres were still dominated by a deferential mode of *Shingeki* production which has been criticized for its lack of "originality" (Gallimore and Ryuta 487) and failure to find a "culturally relevant idiom" beyond the imitation of Western models (Mulryne 4). However, since the early 20th century numerous Japanese novel writers had creatively engaged with *Hamlet* in ways that "disprove the stereotypical view that Japan has generally taken a highly respectful, imitative attitude to Western culture" (Ashizu, "*Hamlet* through your legs" 86) and in particular to *Hamlet*. These novel adaptations—in particular Shiga Naoya's *Claudius' Diary* (1912), Kobayashi Hideo's *Ophelia's Will* (1931), Dazai Osamu's *New Hamlet* (1941), Ōoka Shōhei's *Hamlet's Diary* (1955)—

have received extensive scholarly attention.[3] However, their connection to Kurosawa's film is rarely mentioned (an exception is, for example, Kishi and Bradshaw 141). Irrespective of whether Kurosawa read any of these novels, some of the parallels are striking. Izubuchi Hiroshi's argument that Dazai's Claudius is "so like Polonius that we have the impression of being confronted with two versions of the same person" (192) parallels the merging of the two characters in *The Bad Sleep Well* and scholar's resulting disagreement regarding the main Claudius or Polonius figure in the film. Similarly, if Izubuchi was correct in suggesting that Ōoka was breaking new ground by presenting "Hamlet as a deep schemer, a Machiavellian Hamlet" (196) then *The Bad Sleep Well*'s master schemer Nishi is clearly another instance of that type. Like the Japanese novelists which, as Ashizu argues, followed Natsume Sōseki's advice to 'look at *Hamlet* through their legs' (Ashizu, "*Hamlet* through your legs" 85-86), so Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* approaches *Hamlet* from oblique and broken angles.

For example, Ophelia and Laertes' relationship is one point of indeterminacy in the *Hamlet* tradition, in particular Laertes' deep concern for his sister's (potential) sexual activities. This is exemplified in performance by how the production frames the phrase "chaste treasures" (1:3:31) as uttered by Laertes in the received text. In Gielgud's 1964 production John Cullum says the line with a kind but unembarrassed sincerity, suggesting the topic is wholly appropriate for a brother and sister to discuss. In contrast, in the 2016 RSC production Marcus Griffiths adds an awkward pause between "chaste" and "treasure" and Ophelia groans in response, clearly establishing the topic to be embarrassing to both siblings. *The Bad Sleep Well* offers no equivalent to or translation of the line, but it does present a Laertes figure (Tatsuo) equally concerned about his sister's sex life, only for different reasons. As Nishi and Yoshiko are married right before the film's opening scene, this Laertes is not concerned that this Hamlet might be sleeping with his sister, but rather that this Hamlet might *not* be sleeping with his sister; i.e. that his brother-in-law might be neglecting his spousal duties. The relationship between Nishi, Yoshiko, and Laertes is no less central to *Bad Sleep Well* than any Hamlet, Ophelia, and Laertes, but familiar expectations are turned upside down, and familiar themes, characters, and relationships are approached from new or even opposite angles.

At the same time, *The Bad Sleep Well* echoes *Hamlet* beyond mere reflection or distortion. It is illustrative that in a discussion which completely ignores the film's relation to *Hamlet*, film critic Yoshimoto Mitsuhiro finds that "the film's real structural flaw lies in Nishi's weak motivation" (283). It hardly needs noting that the issue of Hamlet's 'weak motivation' has enthralled

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[3] E.g. but not limited to: Izubuchi; Kishi and Bradshaw 98-125; Kawachi; Nakatani; Ashizu, "*Hamlet* through your legs".

Shakespearean critics from Coleridge to Bradley. There are many ways to read *The Bad Sleep Well* as a modern *Hamlet*, but for the remainder of this essay I wish to focus on *The Bad Sleep Well*'s unique and complicated place within the *Hamlet* tradition's understanding of *The Mousetrap*.

To Catch the Conscience of the King?

Within the Anglophonic tradition, doubts regarding whether and how much guilt Claudius actually reveals during the play-within-a-play have existed since 1917 and W.W. Greg's article "Hamlet's Hallucination". Whereas a decade earlier A.C. Bradley had considered it self-evident that "Hamlet's device proves a triumph far more complete than he had dared to expect" (97) to Greg such "orthodox" (396-397) views did not hold. Greg emphasized that Claudius "gives not the smallest sign of disturbance during or after the all-important dumb-show" (401) and from this concluded that his "breaking up the court has nothing directly to do with either the plot or the words of the play" (400). Rather, Claudius is reacting to the increasingly frustrated Hamlet behaving "like a madman" (405). Based upon the failure of *The Mousetrap*, Greg further concluded that "Claudius did not murder his brother by pouring poison into his ears" (401) and that the ghost was Hamlet's hallucination. The prince rightly intuited that his uncle had murdered his father but in lieu of actual proof subconsciously fabricated it instead, imagining the murder to have transpired as in the fictional *Murder of Gonzago*, inverting the traditionally assumed direction of influence between the ghost's story and the play's murder (416).

Greg's argument was a radical departure from the then current orthodoxy in Anglophonic Shakespeare interpretation, but in Japan a remarkably similar interpretation had been articulated five years earlier by Shiga Naoya in his *Claudius's Diary*. Impetus for this work was Shiga's experience of the 1911 *Hamlet* directed by Tsubouchi Shōyō. Shiga was annoyed by this production's Hamlet but sympathetic towards its Claudius (Ashizu, "Naoya Shiga's *Claudius' Diary*" 165-166). Going a step beyond W.W. Greg, Shiga's Claudius is actually innocent, but he buckles under the force of Hamlet's continual insinuations and "is nearly hypnotized by Hamlet's spite into believing he is what Hamlet wants him to be" (Izubuchi 189).

Both Greg's and Shiga's works are landmarks in that they prefigured what Ashizu has termed "a broader desire to move beyond 'Hamlet-centric' or 'Hamlet-friendly' views of the play" ("Naoya Shiga's *Claudius' Diary*" 169). The first and perhaps greatest influence of Greg's article was to inspire John Dover Wilson to rebut it, leading to 1935's seminal *What Happens in Hamlet* (Wilson 1-24). However, at the time of its publication G. Wilson Knight had already challenged orthodoxy from a different angle. In 1930's no less seminal

The Wheel of Fire, Knight posits that "Hamlet's play before the King is provisionally successful" (355) but also argues that "Claudius is a good king" (48) whereas "Hamlet is living death in the midst of life" (45). Knight's argument in particular served as an inspiration to John Updike's novel prequel to the play, *Gertrude and Claudius* (213-214), published in 2000, which paints a nuanced but sympathetic portrait of its titular leads.

The influence of these interpretations is not confined to act 3 scene 2. As Terence Hawkes has argued:

> [Greg's interpretation's] effect is to 'promote' Claudius: to make him more intriguing, his actions and his motives more complex: [...] no simple mustache-twirling criminal, but Hamlet's 'mighty opposite'. (317)

Kishi and Bradshaw have noted that Claudius' reaction during this scene also reflects on the court and their complicity throughout the play (103). Charles Edelman has similarly argued that a public display of guilt on Claudius' part implies "a totality of corruption at the Danish court which strains credibility" (21).

Though Greg's argument that the ghost is Hamlet's hallucination and Shiga's argument that Claudius is wholly innocent remain fringe interpretations, rejection of Hamlet-centric readings and understanding of Claudius as more than a 'simple mustache-twirling criminal' and the state of Denmark as more nuanced than a 'totality of corruption' are now commonplace (Ashizu, "Naoya Shiga's *Claudius' Diary*" 169; Kishi and Bradshaw 99). This history illustrates the porous borders between supposedly 'straight' production and 'crooked' adaptation and translation. Interpretations first suggested in 'crooked' adaptation may end up becoming an accepted enrichment and expansion of 'straight' productions. The relationship is neither one of competition or parasitism, but of shared membership of a living tradition encompassing both forms and more in which all forms may potentially enrich and expand what *Hamlet* does and can mean.

Seen as part of the development of a global *Hamlet* tradition, the re-interpretation of what happens in act 3 scene 2 can best be described as having unfixed a seemingly determined aspect of the narrative and thus opened for the scene and the characters new interpretive possibilities. Schematized, it can be understood as offering three possibilities for the scene's performance: A) The traditional reading where Claudius is publicly caught and exposed. B) The counter-reading where the mousetrap fails entirely to reveal anything. C) A compromise reading where Claudius displays guilt but in some subtle manner only noticeable to those looking for it (e.g. Hamlet and/or Horatio). Examples of the first are Svend Gade and Heinz Schall's 1920 silent film *Hamlet: The Drama of Vengeance* or, archetypically, Laurence Olivier's film *Hamlet* (1948). The latter shows all eyes in the court turning to the sweating king before the scene descends into utter chaos. The second is perhaps best

exemplified by the 1980 *BBC Television Shakespeare* production of *Hamlet* directed by Rodney Bennett. Patrick Stewart's Claudius can be heard laughing during the dumb show, and calls for lights only so as to look Derek Jacobi's Hamlet sternly in the eyes (to which this Hamlet laughs nervously and covers his face with his hands). A clear example of the third is Ninagawa Yukio's 2015 stage *Hamlet*. Close-ups of Claudius and Hamlet (in the performance recording for DVD release) show an attentive Hamlet noticing Claudius being taken aback by the dumb show, but background laughter by courtiers suggests no one else notices anything amiss. When this Claudius does rise, the rest of the court likely presumes it a reaction to the outrageously phallic costume of the Lucianus figure more than any display of guilt. Naturally, the choice need not always be so clear, and productions may leave the events up to interpretation. The 2018 Shakespeare's Globe production directed by Federay Holmes and Elle While leaves it to the spectator to decide if James Garnon's Claudius stomping off the stage reflects a guilty conscience. Michelle Terry's Hamlet is convinced, but talks over an annoyed Catrin Aaron's Horatio who is thus unable offer her interpretation of events. Similarly, in Vishal Bhardwaj's 2014 *Haider* the intense stare between Shahid Kappor's Haider and Kay Kay Menon's Khurram after the film's equivalence of *The Mousetrap* is open to either interpretation.

The Mousetrap in Bad Sleep Well and Bad Sleep Well as The Mousetrap

Where in this schema is *The Bad Sleep Well* located? I argue Kurosawa's film does something unique: it has its wedding cake and eats it too. Instead of determining itself to reflect any one of the three possibilities, it presents all three by having not one but three Claudius figures: Iwabuchi, Moriyama, *and* Shirai. Not all commentators have sought to parallel *The Bad Sleep Well*'s characters to those of the *Hamlet* tradition, but the attempts to do so have tended to look for 1:1 equivalents as if trying to ascertain which 'actor' was cast into which 'role' from the received text. In the case of Claudius in particular, this has obfuscated one of the inventive and complex ways in which *The Bad Sleep Well* splits and merges familiar figures. The film itself repeatedly articulates Iwabuchi, Moriyama, and Shirai as a trio. During the wedding reception which opens the film, a member of the journalistic chorus calls them the "clean-up trio". Later when Nishi is trying to convince Wada to reject suicide and instead turn on his superiors, Nishi again speaks of "Iwabuchi, Moriyama, and Shirai" as if one entity. In a Kurosawa film, such details are never trivial. However, the equation of the 'clean-up trio' to Claudius is clearest and most masterful during the opening segment which audiences later come to understand as having been *The Bad Sleep Well*'s equivalent to act 3 scene 2.

Donald Richie has called *The Bad Sleep Well*'s opening sequence "twenty minutes of brilliance unparalleled even in Kurosawa" (141) and words cannot do it justice. We see what should be a perfectly orchestrated wedding reception in high society face one breach of protocol after another: journalists barge into the lobby, the bride stumbles and almost falls, and the police arrest the master of ceremonies. The sequence's climax occurs at the moment when the bride and groom are to cut the wedding cake. Without warning, a second wedding cake is rolled in. The second cake is shaped in the form of the building where (whom we later learn to be) Nishi's father committed suicide to cover-up Iwabuchi, Moriyama, and Shirai's crimes. A rose has been stuck in the exact window from which Nishi's father leapt to his death. This is *The Bad Sleep Well*'s equivalent of the dumb show, and the camera shows each of the trio's distinct reactions in turn. Shirai, representative of the first kind of Claudius, makes a spectacle by loudly dropping to the floor the wedding cake knife he was presenting to the newlyweds. A close-up of Moriyama's face shows distress, but without suggesting anyone else in the room has noticed. And as the cake is wielded into position right behind Iwabuchi, the vice-president's stone cold demeanor reveals nothing, even with all eyes on him. Rather than disambiguating the possible interpretations into a single performance, *The Bad Sleep Well* presents the indeterminacy of the Claudius figure by offering all three potential reactions to the mousetrap in order.

The parallels between these three and Claudius do not stop coming after the opening sequence ends. In a pivotal scene much later, Nishi forces Shirai to drink poison only to reveal it was a fake out and the poison was just alcohol. What at first seems to have tried to reenact act 5 scene 2 soon turns out to parallel act 3 scene 3: Nishi's hesitance and decision not to murder Shirai proves his undoing as the now mad Shirai is discovered and carted off to an asylum before the press can get wind of what has transpired.

After the wedding cake has been rolled in, the opening sequence ends with a revealing commentary by two of the spectating journalists. "Best one-act play [*hitomakumono*] I've ever seen" says one; to which another replies: "One-act? This is just the prelude." These lines are full of meaning, but one is most relevant here: if what we have just seen is *The Mousetrap*, the film suggests that in *The Bad Sleep Well* it is not cancelled after one act. In fact, reading the entirety of *The Bad Sleep Well* as one long parallel to *The Mousetrap* offers a productive perspective on more than one aspect of the film and its place within the *Hamlet* tradition.

For one, it would have prevented some critics and scholars from making an interpretative mistake noted by Ashizu: that unlike traditional Hamlets, Nishi's goal is "not to kill but to expose his enemies" (Ashizu, "Kurosawa's *Hamlet?*" 72). Moreover, it shines a spotlight on another aspect of Nishi's character. Ashizu and Kishi and Bradshaw have added much needed cultural

context to the discourse on *The Bad Sleep Well* when emphasizing the importance of the Japanese concepts of *giri* (social obligation) and *ninjô* (personal inclination) to culturally situating both the willingness of *The Bad Sleep Well*'s corporate lackeys to commit suicide on command and Nishi's style of Hamlet-like doubt and inner turmoil (Ashizu, "Kurosawa's *Hamlet?*" 91; Kishi and Bradshaw 141). However, they have also noted how *The Bad Sleep Well* complicates this dichotomy. As Ashizu has argued, a "modern attitude comes in, when [Nishi] talks about his motive for revenge" (Ashizu, "Kurosawa's *Hamlet?*" 92). Kishi and Bradshaw have drawn attention to a moment in the film when Nishi admits that:

> '[...] It wasn't just to avenge my father. I wanted to punish them all, all those who prey on the people who are unable to fight back.' [...] Shakespeare's Hamlet never worries about others in this way, and is never concerned about the situation of the helpless, anonymous Danes. (141)

At least one scholar, Shimizu Toyoko, would dissent from Kishi and Bradshaw's final point. Shimizu has argued that in his final lines Hamlet shows himself "still anxious for the well-being of the state after his death" and that in supporting the peaceful transfer of power to Fortinbras he has "accomplished not only his personal duty as an avenger but also the social duties" to the state (60-61). The distinction between "public [and] private revenge" (Shimizu 63), however latent in traditional *Hamlet* interpretation, are brought to the forefront of *The Bad Sleep Well* due to the particular position of its Machiavellian Hamlet figure. If Nishi's objective was a private revenge similar to that of Yuranosuke in the 18ᵗʰ century puppet play *Kanadehon Chūshingura*,[4] then the film could've ended long before it starts and the story should have centered on Nishi's wooing of Yoshiko to get close to Iwabuchi rather than his married life right under the vice-president's nose.

The film's juxtaposition of different kinds of duty, revenge, and justice is not contained only to Nishi's internal struggle. In an oft overlooked scene soon after the opening sequence, the arrested and imprisoned Wada is being interrogated by the police prosecutor. Wada maintains an impenetrable demeanor throughout, with one exception. This is the point when the prosecutor tells Wada: "You owe it to the public to reveal everything you know."[5] For

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4   This play has often been compared to *Hamlet*, perhaps most famously in the 1992 play *Kanadehon Hamlet* by Tsutsumi Harue (Bowers et al.; Holderness "*Hamlet* and the 47 Ronin").

5   The corresponding word in Japanese the prosecutor uses is not *giri* but *gimu*. The two have similar but subtly different connotations. E.g. *Kenkyusha's New Japanese- -English Dictionary* suggests both can translate as duty, but connotes *gimu ga aru* with working hard and paying taxes (708) as opposed to *giri ga aru* with debts or favors to friends (755).

just a moment, Wada reacts and seems poised to talk. The stenographer readies a pen, but Wada hesitates and returns to his previous posture and silence.

It is Nishi's desire to reconcile private revenge with public justice that necessitates his Machiavellian plot, a plot which ultimately fails and undoes him. As the public investigation flounders, the journalists and the police (who are the audience's initial entry point into the film's corporate world) steadily disappear from view. However, as the ultimate intended audience of Nishi's entire 'play', they remain a background presence throughout.

One of *The Bad Sleep Well*'s major deviations from the traditional *Hamlet* narrative is that it ends with Nishi's defeat and Iwabuchi's victory. As Yoshimoto has noted, *The Bad Sleep Well* was produced at a time when Japan was headed by a prime-minister who had been "imprisoned as a class A war criminal during the Occupation" (274) and there was considerable public anxiety that "postwar democracy might be killed by the return of authoritarian militarism" (247). Kurosawa had wanted to include a direct reference indicating that the government official whom Iwabuchi answers to in multiple phone calls is in fact the prime minister himself, but feared the "serious trouble" that would result from this and later lamented his lack of freedom and bravery (Richie 143; Ashizu "Kurosawa's *Hamlet*?" 80-81). Instead, the most direct reference to contemporary politics that did make it in was Itakura's lament near the film's end that "All Japan will be fooled again" (Yoshimoto 286). Yoshimoto has interpreted this as articulating a fear of a return to authoritarianism:

> The desolate landscape cannot but suggest that the first time all Japan was fooled was either during or after the war: the wartime Japanese government's propaganda that continued to hide the disastrous results of Japanese military campaigns in euphemistic language, or the Occupation's reversal of the initial democratization process as a result of the U.S. government's Cold War policy. (286)

The desolate landscape Yoshimoto refers to here are the ruins of a bombed out munitions factory in which Nishi and Itakura reside during the film's final act. Though on one level it parallels the famous graveyard of act 5 scene 1, by its invocation of the war it resonates on many more. As Yoshimoto has argued, there is an understated but unmistakable ironic revenge occurring when Nishi and Itakura, members of the generation who were drafted and starved during the war, imprison and starve Moriyama, a member of the generation who did the drafting (287). Moreover, if as Kishi and Bradshaw have argued the "peculiar bleakness" of *Throne of Blood* must be understood through "the Buddhist concept of *mu*, or nothingness, which is [...] a starting point" (128), then I suggest the desolate landscape at the end of that film can be seen as leading into the post-desolation of *The Bad Sleep Well*. Nishi and Itakura reminisce full

of nostalgia about their "bicycle cart with one tire left" which they used to sell scavenge from the ruined factory they had been drafted to work in. It is clear that to them the hellish bombings which destroyed the factory were also a starting point for a new life with new opportunities. Their retreat to the factory after Nishi's identity has been exposed to Iwabuchi can thus be understood as their return to that hope of new beginnings, which the justice Nishi seeks might bring about. At the same time, the same ruins illustrate the failure of said hope. As Burnett has noted, earlier in the film the undeveloped wasteland where Wada attempts to commit suicide ironically insinuates the corporation's "failure to execute its mandate productively" (Burnett, "Re-reading Kurosawa" 406). The public corporation at the center of the narrative is, after all, called the "Japan Unused Land Development Public Corporation" (Yoshimoto 276). In these scenes the factory's ruins stand as another example of the corrupt company's failure to execute its mandate.

On one level, then, Nishi's defeat in *The Bad Sleep Well* symbolically represents, as Yoshimoto has argued, the suppression of "the legacy of postwar democratization [...] by those who most profited from militarism" (287). In this, Kurosawa's Machiavellian Hamlet again echoes that of Ōoka. At the end of *Hamlet's Diary*, "Fortinbras succeeds to the throne and Denmark becomes a military state" (Izubuchi 194). Some of Ninagawa's early Hamlet productions (in 1988 and 1995) similarly portrayed Fortinbras as a military figure, ending the play with "the surviving Danish courtiers clambering up the steps towards Fortinbras, grovelling towards their new ruler" (Hanratty 107). In the Anglophonic tradition, Fortinbras was often cut (as in Olivier's 1948 film), but under the influence of amongst others Jan Kott's *Shakespeare, Our Contemporary* it has become common to both preserve Fortinbras and use the figure to question how ameliorative the play's ending truly is. As Kott argued:

> The silvery Fortinbras has triumphed. But will Denmark cease to be a prison? Hamlet's body has been carried out by soldiers. No one will question the sense of feudal history and the purpose of human life any more. Fortinbras does not ask himself such questions. (272)

Nishi's death too removes the one who would question the system of corruption *The Bad Sleep Well* presents. The lack of any Fortinbras figure who could at least suggest a new beginning strengthens the film's suggestion of the victory of the cycle of corruption and the crushing of postwar hopes. As a *Hamlet*, *The Bad Sleep Well* likely belongs to the most pessimistic of renditions. In the context of reading *The Bad Sleep Well* as *The Mousetrap*, the end is prefigured by the beginning. Out of the film's three Claudii, Iwabuchi figures as the Claudius who gives nothing away and shows no guilt. It is this Claudius, the true 'mighty opposite' and immaculate Machiavel, who proves too strong to overcome.

Conclusion

It bears repeating that none of the above is intended to reduce a complex and multifaceted film to just another iteration of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The extent to which *The Bad Sleep Well* is or is not a modern *Hamlet* must ultimately lie in the eye of the beholder. What I have endeavored to do in this article is allow the film its place in the global *Hamlet* tradition, letting it speak to and reflect upon other productions and adaptations both near and far to its original context. In this manner, I have sought to reveal how reading *The Bad Sleep Well* as a modern *Hamlet* does not reduce the film to a Shakespearean template but enriches the whole *Hamlet* tradition by offering new possibilities and new ways for *Hamlet* to mean in the 21st century.

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Mythili Kaul[*] [iD]

Hamlet, *Macbeth*, Anantanarayanan's *The Silver Pilgrimage* and A Touch of Occidentalism[1]

Abstract: The article focuses on an encounter with Shakespeare in an unusual place, a novel set in medieval India, where Shakespeare is viewed and assessed by an Indian audience, by Indian listeners, through principles of classical Indian art and thought. Such an encounter creates a sense of incongruity, an incongruity that is cultural, philosophical and aesthetic, but at the same time leads to startling perspectives and new and fresh insights. The novel does not privilege one culture over another but the listeners do and we have a brilliant piece of comic writing where the humour derives from the one-sidedness of their perceptions, their "occidentalism", their easy assumption of the superiority of their belief system over the "other". *The Silver Pilgrimage* thus provides not only a stimulating perspective on two Shakespearean tragedies from the point of view of Sanskrit poetics and Indian thought, but also a gentle expose of the limitations of this point of view, and the cultural chauvinism that lies behind it.

Keywords: occidentalism, incongruity—cultural, philosophical, aesthetic stimulating perspective, cultural chauvinism.

To start with a cliché, Shakespeare has transcended so many, if not all, geographical, social, political, cultural and linguistic barriers that it is no longer surprising to encounter him in what would at one time have seemed to be strange and unusual places, places like India, Nigeria, Iran, Iraq, Morocco, Egypt, China, Japan, to name just a few. Several of these are in the form of translations, several are reinventions which make the plays more contemporary or are clothed in the traditions and customs of the country or place where they are staged. But

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[*] University of Delhi, Delhi, India. mythilikaul@yahoo.co.in

[1] A shorter, much less detailed version of this article, concentrating on *Hamlet* and without a discussion of Occidentalism or the "play-within-the-play", was published in the "Notes" section of *Hamlet Studies*, vol. 24 (2002), under the title "*Hamlet* in Strange Places", 123-31.

while it is no longer strange to meet Shakespeare in strange places there are, nevertheless, two kinds of Shakespearean encounters, one that create a sense of incongruity and seem parodistic and a second that lead through this very incongruity to startling perspectives and provocative thought.

It is on the second kind that I am focussing in this article, an incongruity that occurs in a novel and is cultural, mainly philosophical and aesthetic, as Shakespeare is received and assessed through principles of classical Indian art and thought. The novel is M. Anantanarayanan's *The Silver Pilgrimage,* a wise, richly evocative and sensitively written work, which is remarkable for much more than the segment on Shakespeare and deserves to be better known.

Published in 1961, Harvey Breit in the Preface describes it as possessing "its own luminosity; it is magic" (7). It is the first novel, indeed the only novel, by M. Anantanarayanan (1907-1981), educated at Madras (as it was called then) and Cambridge, an Indian lawyer and civil servant who served as Chief Justice of Madras State from 1966-1969. The product of a lifetime of reading, reflection and experience, it can be called, to quote Harvey Breit again, "a novel, a tapestry, a pageant, a tour de force" (5). A unique blend of fable and fantasy (Paranjpe 51), Thomas Palakeel aptly describes it as a "modern picaresque tale", an "Indian Canterbury Tales" (883), which displays the same robust humour, tolerance and humanity that Chaucer does. It is replete with folklore and folktales, conversations and discussions, and like Chaucer, Anantanarayanan uses the pilgrimage motif and the picaresque to introduce a wide variety of characters and situations.

The book, in Breit's words, is "shamelessly Indian", and gives expression to all facets of Indian life—music, painting, sculpture, cooking, mythology, philosophy—and to a culture in which "religion" pervades "every activity of life" and tinges "every experience" (Breit 6). The narrative voice, however, is "thoroughly modern" (Paranjpe 51). There is a Prolegomena, a series of twenty epigrams, quotations from ancient Tamil and Greek writers, Shakespeare, Donne, Rilke, Rumi, Eliot and Tagore, for which "device of garnishing a plain tale with prefatory excerpts" whose "relevance" becomes clear after reading the story, the author expresses his indebtedness to Herman Melville (8).[2] The epigrams, Palakeel states, "complicate the interaction of history, plot, style, theme, and accept the conceit that narrator and reader are embarking upon a pilgrimage as observers of a seamless, postmodern present" (883).

The story takes place in "the old days, before this part of the world [India, Sri Lanka] was tainted with pale faces, motor cars and smoke-belching

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[2] All references to *The Silver Pilgrimage* are to the novel (New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann 1975). Preface by Harvey Breit. Page numbers follow the quoted passage in the text.

factories, before damp newsprint had corrupted the minds of men" (15). It is set in pre-modern, pre-colonial, medieval India and revolves around a Lankan prince, Jayasurya, handsome and skilled in every way—like Hamlet "The glass of fashion and the mould of form" (3.1.155)[3]—but singularly lacking in feeling and loving no one but himself. In desperation the King decides to consult the sage Agastya who diagnoses the prince's mental condition as "the dread infection that tyrants suffer from" (38), and prescribes that with his close friend Tilaka as his sole companion he be exposed to "perils and fatigues" (34), inclement weather, sickness, hunger, deprivation, and undertake the "Silver Pilgrimage" to Kashi (another name for Varanasi, a name that has been restored and is its present name).[4]

The Prince and the Horatio-like Tilaka set off, sail to India, and make their way by foot across Kerala and the Pandian territories facing snakes and insects and hostile natives. Early in the journey they are attacked and robbed by a brigand tribe, carried to their chief and incarcerated. The chieftain's daughter, Valli, falls in love with the prince, insists on marrying him, devises a plan of escape with the help of a Falstaff-like purohit (priest), and the travellers, accompanied by Valli and the priest, continue towards Kashi. Many adventures befall them, they come across all sorts and conditions of men and, in the most brilliant, comical and memorable encounter in the entire novel, meet "the strangest man of their experience" (86), a merchant, whose lust for adventure led him to remote and unknown lands.

In his most bizarre and fearful journey he was shipwrecked on a rocky, bleak, cold shore, which is obviously England. He lived in this land for three years and learned about "the people, their customs, language, religion and institutions" (87). And what follows is what can best be described as a kind of "Occidentalism", the "Other", in this case the West, seen from the perspective of an Orient or East that considers itself superior in every respect—in the physical appearance of its inhabitants, climatically, geographically, intellectually, historically, culturally and aesthetically.

The sun in "this terrible and marvelous country", he declares, is not "the glorious and compelling [. . .] lord of light of our Bharat Kanda" but "debilitated, weak and watery", and "shows his face only for some months in the year" (87-88); autumn and winter are long and chill, and, as an "Easterner", he suffered a great deal (88). Their "principal food" is meat of various kinds, "good, clean nourishment, but crude, insipid to an Eastern palate" (88). The

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[3] All references to *Hamlet* are to the Arden Shakespeare, ed. Harold Jenkins (London and New York: Methuen, 1982). Act, scene and line numbers follow the quoted passage in the text.

[4] There are three sorts of pilgrimages, an old Tamil treatise tells us, Gold, Silver and Lead. "The Silver Pilgrimage is to Kashi, on foot" (Prolegomena 8).

physical appearance of the people is such as to cause "amazement, irrepressible laughter and admiration, all at once" (88). Both men and women are tall and strong but abnormal, "of a deathly whiteness" with "crimson patches on cheeks" which are "greatly prized in women, as well as pale blue eyes [. . .] and fine hair, the color of honeycomb", "abnormalities", however, that are much esteemed and celebrated by their poets. His audience reacts as he had predicted with disgust and incredulity: "I cannot credit blue eyes and yellow hair," said Tilaka. "Nature, even in her crudest mood of jest, would not perpetrate such outrages upon women, the embodiments of divine shakti" (88-89).

While being physically overdeveloped, however, the people of this nation are intellectually underdeveloped—"Their thought is dwarfed like the rocks which they call hills"—an underdevelopment that is geographically determined: "thought does not flourish in that thick, cold air" (90). Hence "their science of medicine is a puling infant beside the giant stature of our Ayurveda", consisting "largely of sweating in hot tubs, and having blood let out by not overclean barbers", "harmless" but "ineffective" herbals and tinctures, and no knowledge of "the science of pulse" and very little of "the theory of humors and their minglings" (89).

The language of these "strange, incomprehensible people" has "an imperfect alphabet and a misshapen grammar" but the merchant studied and became proficient in it and was able "to make a close study of their literature and politics" (89). A "recent king" whom they praised as "hearty and masterful", "twisted their religion out of shape in order to marry a woman" whom he beheaded later, (the merchant spices up history and increases the number of beheaded wives to six), and "robbed the matams [religious houses, monasteries] of their endowments", which evokes the comment that "dharma" [righteousness] cannot rule in such a country (90).

Since the merchant considers the people immature, incapable of contemplation or deep thought, it is not surprising that he finds their literature "childlike beside the glories of Sanskrit. They have no epics, no *Ramayana* to con with loving reference. Nothing but stories in rhyme about a plowman or an old king, or [. . .] stories recounted by pilgrims to one of their shrines" (91-92). He focuses his attention on their dramatic literature which was "reputed vigorous", visited their theaters, and centres his discourse on one of their "popular dramatists", "also a good poet", who was "so fond of the *rasas* (essence of emotion), of *karuna* (sorrow) and *bhayankara* (horror) that he wrote several plays in which all the characters were finally carried away as corpses, or left on the stage as such". The unnamed dramatist is obviously Shakespeare. He saw two of these plays "and studied them with circumspection" (92). The two plays, easy to identify from the plot summaries, are *Hamlet* and *Macbeth.*

The first "concerns a prince whose uncle murders his father, usurps the throne, and seduces his mother to an incestuous marriage. The prince hates

the uncle and the unholy wedlock, but is ignorant of the murder till his father's spirit enlightens him and exhorts him solemnly to revenge. He takes a vow to do so" (92). The merchant's summary elicits questions and comments, and a lively exchange follows, an exchange in which the issues that have vexed scholars throughout the ages are debated vigorously beginning with the central issue of delay or Hamlet's procrastination:

> "He kills the uncle at once, I suppose?" said the prince. "And the theme of the tragic drama is the conflict between him and the widowed queen?"
> "Not so", said the merchant. "That would not accord with the peculiar sportiveness and the infant thought of these people. Once he draws his sword to kill, but the king, his uncle, is at prayer, and he does not want to slay the murderer in a moment which might cloak sins and earn grace for him in the judgment hall of Yama (Lord of Death)".
> "What a poor reason!" cried Tilaka.
> "And what belittlement of Yama's intelligence!" said the purohit.
> "I thought so too," said the merchant. "But it seems that this was not the reason, as the prince inwardly realized"'.
>
> (92)

Obviously, what we have here is the critique of one belief system by another. But what is equally obvious is the expose of the flimsiness of Hamlet's justification for the delay, flimsy no matter what the belief system of the audience. And it remains a dilemma because, as the merchant points out, Hamlet "inwardly realizes" the reasons he gives are not the real reasons, they are feeble and weak, and he is deceiving himself. And just as others have sought to offer credible explanations for Hamlet's procrastination, the merchant, too, puts forward an explanation: "The only reason I could detect was that he desired to make a number of speeches, some earnest, some sportive, while the tragic drama crawled like an ant on a wall" (93). Seemingly flippant and stressing the fact that the play did not hold his interest and was too long, the comment pinpoints Hamlet's main activity throughout the play, his expending energy on words rather than deeds, on *saying,* as he reveals inadvertently in the Hecuba speech, rather than doing.

Some of the speeches are too brief to convey any meaning, according to the merchant, others of medium length, but in all of them the "reflections are disordered" (96), and by way of illustration he gives a literal paraphrase of Hamlet's famous soliloquy. "Shall I kill myself, or shall I not? That is the question perplexing me. Is it a mark of nobility to suffer what fate decrees, or to oppose these miserable events by stabbing myself to death?" The speech, "treasured [. . .] as pregnant with force and wisdom" in the country of its origin, does not impress the prince and his companions. Nor are they sympathetic to the

dilemma Hamlet confronts. They see nothing "noble" in the contemplation of suicide which, to them as to a Christian audience, is a "grievous sin". They can make no sense of Hamlet's "philosophical discourse": "To die is a kind of sleep. But we may dream in that sleep. And the dreams may be highly unpleasant. It is this contingency which makes men afraid to end themselves". They ridicule the argument that human beings "put up with grievous ills" and "tolerate the oppression of the world" for fear of facing "unknown evils" and reject Hamlet's negative view of life:

> "Man is daunted by present evil, not anticipated. [. . .] It is not the dread of possible greater evil that restrains men from pursuing their ends beyond the pulsation of life. It is the ananda (bliss) of life itself, omnipresent even amidst the ravages of toothache, or unachieved passion".
>
> (97-98)

The statement is of a piece with what the sage Agastya had said earlier and reinforces the point he was making: "life is dear and supportable at all points, for wherever it is manifest, it is in tension" (36). And the upshot is that the speech is dismissed as "bad logic" and hence "bad poetry" (98).

As with the poetry and thought so also with the wit. The merchant finds Hamlet's "greatly praised" wit (98) "strange beyond concept [. . .] neither subtle nor simple, often coarse, often meaningless", and, to the merchant, it is acceptable only because "the playwright [has] as a sensible precaution, afflicted him with lunacy". Lunacy alone can account for the "incomprehensible joy" which fills Hamlet when, having killed "the father of the girl he loves", and being "taxed with the murder, [he] says that the nobleman is at supper, only that he does not sup, but worms have a feast of him [and] a beggar may eat of a fish that has fed on a king's maggots" (99).

From the problem of delay the merchant thus turns to the other critical problem in the play, viz., Hamlet's madness. Unlike the majority of commentators, the merchant has no difficulty in deciding whether the madness is real or feigned. Hamlet behaves "as if he was afflicted with *unmatha* (lunacy)", and since in the merchant's opinion he gains no "visible advantage" by *pretending* madness he believes that it must be real, part of the prince's natural constitution, "clearly an instance of a playful disposition" and not an aberration. It can be seen in the number of "sportive" speeches he makes and in his treatment of Ophelia in the "nunnery" scene, where, despite his love for her, his "humor" triumphs "over his passion" and he drives her "with tears from the stage laughing to himself like a madman" (93).

And then he comes to the ending of *Hamlet* which results, he observes, not from tragic inevitability, but a series of "accidents":

> "His mistress drowns herself, and the brother of the lady is killed by the prince in swordplay, and who in turn kills the prince. The prince, before he dies, at last stabs his uncle to death. The queen dies, drinking wine from a poisoned goblet. An enemy prince arrives in triumph and takes possession of the kingdom".
>
> (93)

And, as with so much else in *Hamlet*, the merchant is left with a feeling of dissatisfaction, a dissatisfaction with the excessive number of deaths, a point he makes through the sarcastic remark that the play has been "mutilated" and is "imperfect in construction" and could be improved by having the prince's friend (Horatio) kill himself "after killing the courtier [Osric] who invited the prince to the sword display, and as many attendants as convenient", and finally having the "enemy prince" [Fortinbras] drink "the dregs of the poisoned goblet" and drop "on the encumbered stage" (93).

From Shakespeare's longest play the merchant turns to his shortest play, *Macbeth,* which he saw twice and which "concerns an ambitious chief, welcoming his king to his castle, after a battle in which this chief has greatly distinguished himself". On his way home he encounters "three ragged female astrologers", at which point he is interrupted by an outburst from the horrified purohit who finds it difficult to accept women as astrologers, a "new concept in the mind of man" (94). They predict that the chief would receive honours and would become king although his children would not rule after him. On his return, when he finds that the first part of the prophecy has come true, he decides to kill the king, "aided by his wife, a woman of far greater energy than common sense". Prince Jayasurya asks, "How can the shedder of royal blood escape the workings of Karma?", and the merchant replies that this did not occur to either him or his wife, nor "that the murder would cry out from floor and well, that avoidance of suspicion would be impossible" since "the preparations" were such as "would have shamed a kitchen drudge". The sons of the murdered ruler flee and the new king proceeds to other murders to secure his throne and "loses sleep"; Tilaka is astounded to learn that that is his "major punishment and he complains with peevish frequency about this insomnia". His wife, on the other hand sleeps "to an unwholesome excess" which "causes her to perambulate in a stupor, suffering from reminiscences of the murder" (95). Commenting again on the underdeveloped state of medicine in the country he states that physicians are unable to cure her and she dies. So does the king, but he dies on the battlefield and is given a "glorious death, not the death of a regicide" (96).

Macbeth, thus, fares no better with the merchant than *Hamlet* and having dismissed the plot as faulty he turns to the style and finds nothing admirable in it either. Although, unlike the prince in the previous play, the chief-become-king is not mad "at any time" but only "ambitious and cruel", "the imbecility of

intellect" seen in *Hamlet* is evident here, too, and, by way of demonstration, he paraphrases one of the murderer-monarch's "notable" speeches as he had done Hamlet's:

> "Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow—So the days succeed in a most gradual procession—The past days have been like torches, lighting the unintelligent to their day of death. [. . .] Let us extinguish the truth. [. . .] Life is a *nata* (a player) who plays a strictly minor part, and disappears behind the curtains. [. . .] Alternatively, life is a story recounted by an imbecile or attempted to be so recounted. Sounds proceed from his mouth, but they are devoid of meaning".
>
> <div align="right">(96-97)</div>

Shakespeare's tragedies, in short, do not find approval or approbation with either the merchant or his listeners. The disapproval, the criticism, arises not just from a different world view but from the radically different principles of Sanskrit poetics, a criticism which the listeners amplify and to which they contribute. "It strains credence that none has realized, neither playwright nor audience", says Tilaka, "that cumulative death is farcical, and not tragic. Surely, death itself is irrelevant, and classic tragedy concludes with the aftermath of skies cleared, of storm" (94). As Tilaka's comments spell out, the perspective of the merchant and his listeners in *The Silver Pilgrimage* is determined by the philosophical and aesthetic principles on which they have been nurtured, a drama in which there is no tragedy, often no conflict, or, in plays like Bhasa's *Urubhanga* which comes close to the Western notion of tragedy, no death. To them, to repeat Tilaka's observation, "death is irrelevant, and classic tragedy concludes with the aftermath of skies cleared, of storm". And hence they regard with smug satisfaction the superiority of Kalidasa's *Abhignana Sakuntalam* and Bhavabhuti's *Uttararamacaritam* over these rudimentary dramatic productions of an inferior barbaric culture, plays where there is disruption and separation, sorrow and suffering, but where everything is resolved, there is reconciliation and a happy ending, harmony is established and a benign providence rules over all.

In fact, the Indian audience of Anantanarayanan's novel would have been comfortable with and appreciated Shakespeare's Romances which, like the Sanskrit plays mentioned, deal with the separation of families and their eventual reconciliation, where death, when it occurs, does not mar the happy ending, and which do, indeed, conclude with "the aftermath of skies cleared, of storm",[5] with good rewarded and evil punished and the restoration of justice and harmony.

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[5] See my article, "Bhavabhuti's *Uttararamacaritam* and Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*: Two Versions of Romance", *The Jadavpur Journal of Comparative Literature* 23 (1985): 40-48.

It must be pointed out that it is not just the literature to which the merchant responds negatively. He finds nothing in that culture worth admiring and disparages everything. He does not value or praise the discovery of printing which makes books "cheaply available" and available in large numbers, "multiplied by tens, even hundreds" and accessible to ordinary men and women. He can "discern no advantage therein", "the method" being "monstrous and evil", the "process [. . .] laborious, with far more disfiguring errors of text than in our palm-leaf books so daintily engraved with stylus". What is worse is that an "unskilled sot" has merely "to take the seals in a wooden press", "fools" are "initiated into reading, without the skill of digesting thought", and Kalidasa's *Meghadutam* (cloud messenger) can be bought for a trifle "and balladed by kitchen wenches" (98-99). Literature and literacy, he strongly believes, are not for the masses and should be provided, after they have laboured and toiled, only to the chosen few, the elite.

All this notwithstanding, it is necessary and important to dispel the impression that *The Silver Pilgrimage* seeks to privilege one culture over another or to subvert one culture by another. Not even incidentally. To that extent, it is not an example of Occidentalism. It is not an attempt, even comically, to counter the idea of "Orientalism", a patronizing representation of the Orient as "the Other", a "skewed colonial view" of the East (Jukka Jouhki and Henna-Riika Pennanen 2), positing that it was inferior in very way, geographically, socially, sociologically, culturally, to the West, and representing Orientals as irrational and at a lower level of progress and civilization compared to their Western counterparts. "Occidentalism" is the polar opposite and, as I mentioned before, sees the "Other", the West, and its inhabitants as inferior in every way to the East and its glories, inferior in its intellectual, cultural and aesthetic achievements, and in academic texts often takes the form of anti-Westernism.

The Silver Pilgrimage is not anti-Western in any way or by any stretch of the imagination. To begin with, there is no blanket "West" in the novel. There is this one country, England, where the merchant lands and he distinguishes it from Hispania and the way in which the people worship here from the way of worship of the Hispanic people. There is thus no question of stereotyping, part of the reason for this being that the novel is set in a period when there was no concept in India or Lanka of the West, there was no prior knowledge of the West and there had been no exposure to the West. The encounter was to come later, colonialism was to come later. Therefore, the whole exchange that takes place in *The Silver Pilgrimage* is not "a strategy devised by subordinate people for surviving in a hegemonic world" (Takeuchi, 26-27) but reactions to an extraordinary and unusual experience presented in a brilliant piece of comic writing, a wonderful take-off, which lays bare the limitations of the Indian listeners and their preconceptions. If the West is undercut it must be noted that the humour derives in no small measure from the one-sidedness of the

merchant's views, *his* "Occidentalism", *his* privileging of his and his listeners's culture over that of the "Other". That is *his* position, not the position of the novel and the narrator, and it is a position that is questioned and critiqued.

The merchant himself qualifies some of the statements he makes. For instance, when he says that the people of this unknown country are "strange" and "incomprehensible", he adds "to us"; that is, they are not strange and incomprehensible in any absolute terms, only to him and his fellows. He states that they are not "overclean" but observes at the same time that their health is excellent, their "spirits are nimble and light", and concedes that one reason why their science of medicine is not as well developed as Ayurveda is that it is not needed as it is in India where sickness is rife (89). The people may be "essentially immature" and incapable of "grave contemplation", but they are "lovable" and possessed of "a homely wisdom", they have no caste system as in India, and they do not tolerate injustice (90). As to the women, he admits that the "incessant adoration" accorded to them in the works of the poets and writers of the land "convinced" him, "as no philosopher could have done, of the relativity of the beautiful" (89).[6]

As I mentioned, the merchant's extreme opinions provoke rejoinders from the listeners and Tilaka questions the truth of his declarations: "I do not think that you are doing justice to these strange folk. Providence is subtle, and gifts and afflictions are cunningly mingled as the dowries of nations". He draws attention to the fact that in "our glorious *Bharat Kanda*, incomparable in its philosophy, literature, sculpture, and architecture [. . .] we are burned and baked by an all-potent sun to our debilitation", the same sun the merchant had described as the "glorious and compelling [. . .] lord of light"; "the soil is cruel flint except in the valleys of the great rivers, the Asiatic cholera is an unmitigated curse,[7] and so are our warring kings, tax-gatherers, and black crows" (93). Agastya's discourse at the beginning of the novel provides a detailed list of the terrible conditions in India—the bad roads, the dirty, exorbitant inns, "the danger of being stripped by official and unofficial robbers [. . .] the continuous danger of epidemics, the potent cholera of Asia, disfiguring smallpox, fevers of the jungle" (34)—which Tilaka briefly mentions here. And he insists that this alien land, disadvantaged in so many ways, "robbed" of beautiful women, must have some positive features by way of compensation: "It cannot be that brains were also stolen by goblins from the skullcaps of dramatists, and powdered clod substituted" (94).

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[6] The "relativity" of beauty is emphasized in the exchange between Tilaka and the Prince about Valli. The latter observes that Valli's "complexion ought to be fairer" and Tilaka turns on him with "You are a fool. Her beauty is like the night, dark, reserved and deep" (50).

[7] Valli dies of cholera on the return journey.

The Silver Pilgrimage, in other words, is not just a critique of another culture, it holds the mirror up to and is a critique of Indian culture as well. Consequently, it provides not only a fresh and stimulating perspective on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* from the point of view of Sanskrit poetics and Indian thought but, through the intensity and insistence of the merchant's assertions, a gentle and humorous expose of those very assumptions, of the limitations of that point of view, of the inability to see and comprehend any body of opinion except one's own, and of the cultural chauvinism which determines responses and is used to confute Western cultural hegemony.

Apart from the foregoing discussion, the whole Shakespearean interlude performs an interesting and important function. It serves as a play-within-the-play which comments not only on the issue of Western and Sanskrit poetics but, like all such, on the happenings and issues raised in the novel and promotes a kind of dialogue. In both the plays and the novel, the confrontation with death effects momentous changes in the protagonists. In *Hamlet,* Hamlet Senior's murder and his "commandment" to revenge it lives in Hamlet's brain to the exclusion of everything else (1.5.102) and transforms him. He is overwhelmed by the task which dominates his every thought and which he would seek to escape by suicide were it not for the "dread" (3.1.78) of what lies beyond. It is curious that Hamlet's lines on the "undiscover'd country, from whose bourn/No traveller returns" (3.1.79-80) and the "dreams" that may come in "the sleep of death" (3.5.66) occur *after* his meeting with his father's Ghost; for a "traveller", Hamlet Senior, has returned in the spirit and told him of the purgatorial fires to which he is confined. It is therefore somewhat surprising in the light of his own remarks that what the Ghost says does not impact Hamlet except when he uses his father's dying unsanctified as an excuse to spare Claudius which I have already discussed and which the listeners in *The Silver Pilgrimage* see as just that, an excuse. Hamlet is crushed and tormented by the burden laid on him in *this* life and achieves some sort of equilibrium only after his own brush with death and the generality of death in the graveyard scene, his realization that everything is not under his control and "readiness is all" (5.2.218). While the "Let be" following these words (5.2.220) probably indicates the interruption of his conversation with Horatio by the arrival of the courtiers it also suggests that Hamlet is prepared to let things take their course.

In *The Silver Pilgrimage* Valli's death precipitates an "internal crisis" in the unfeeling prince of the opening chapters. He is shaken by cataclysmic violence, becomes disordered and is "tortured" by the desire to "*know*". Hamlet is troubled by the "dread of something after death" (3.1.78), Prince Jayasurya about "the future of the personality after bodily dissolution" (151-152). Valli's spirit is summoned through the offices of a necromancer and speaks to the prince and his companions in a séance. Unlike Hamlet Senior, Valli paints a positive picture and waits to "drift" from the "shadow world" which she does not like to

heaven which is where everyone seemingly goes, "always to heaven, for we create by ourselves, and by the dreams of ages", a "shifting luminosity, indescribably beautiful" (154-155). Jayasurya, however, does not say he is reassured, he simply states he is "totally cured" by the séance and has "lost all interest in the afterlife, which, however gilded", has "ineradicable snags" (157). In both works, thus, though the belief systems are different, the protagonists put these supernatural encounters and the next world behind them and return to the here and now.

The saint of Kashi, in their meeting with him, asks the prince a question one might ask Hamlet, why he lives "in the past and future" and torments himself "with hopes, with fears", why he does not live "in that which is real, the present" (131). For "When the mind is intensely focused in the present, when it is not separate from event but is event itself, there is [. . .] both peace and happiness" (132). Macbeth in his lines in Act 5, scene 5, which the merchant paraphrases, speaks of "yesterdays" and "tomorrows" (5.5.19-23)[8] but not of todays, and his problems arise from his ambition to be king, an event that lies in the future, and his inability to rest content in his present successes in battle and the honours conferred on him. Hamlet, as we have seen, torments himself speculating on whether he should or should not act and what the consequences of his actions will be. The sage's answer is that the future is not important since "it does not exist apart from the present, which alone exists" (133).

Jayasurya grows and learns through his experiences of which his and his companions's exposure to Shakespeare's plays are a crucial part for, as I have pointed out, the questions raised by Hamlet and Macbeth are questions in *The Silver Pilgrimage* as well. It is significant that Anantanarayanan's novel should conclude with a repetition of the sage of Kashi's "There is no future" and Agastya's, "Life is dear and supportable at all points, however great the anguish or mean the situation, for everywhere it is in tension" (159). For these are the answers to Macbeth, Hamlet, as well as Jayasurya and Tilaka.

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Boram Choi*

The Poetics of Body: Representing Cultural Imaginations in Yang Jung-Ung's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Abstract: This article explores the psychology that motivates Yang Jung-Ung and his actors in the process of translating Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* into a Korean style. By focusing on the ways of showing the theme of the play in modern styles fused with traditional modes of theatrical practice, the director attempts to develop his own ways of expression to communicate with the modern Korean audience. In this process, Yang reconstructs the dialogues between the characters rather than rely heavily on Shakespeare's text and language. For this reason, his production has often been criticised for missing Shakespeare's poetry. However, the beauty of poetry is not only in Shakespeare's language itself, but rather it is in the mental process of how the artist and audiences understand and translate its meaning in their cultural contexts. Shakespeare's language includes a great deal of imagery that provides the artists with concrete information for constructing the stage *mise-en-scène*. In Yang's production, Shakespeare's poetry is expressed through the visual images created by the performer's physical bodies, which reflects the director's interpretation of the play in his cultural context. By analysing the performers' physical movements, this article studies how Yang perceives the theme of Shakespeare's *Dream* in relation to a Korean cultural context and presents his unique vision on the play.

Keywords: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Korean Shakespeare, poetics, Yang Jung-Ung, Yohangza Theatre Company.

Introduction

When performing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one of the main points of adaptation might be how the directors visualise the fairies in the forest during a midsummer night, which is traditionally "a time of magic" (Barber 123). In this play, the mystery of the supernatural beings such as the fairies, which are

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* School of Drama at Korea National University of Arts, South Korea. brchoi80@gmail.com

usually described with the aura of evanescent and ambiguous beings, represents unknown and invisible aspects in human life. His imagery provides specific information about actors' appearance as fairies, especially their bodily gestures and actions. The image of the fairies' appearance and actions provides a visual landscape that directs attention towards the invisible and liminal aspects of the world. There have been a number of modern directors who attempt to construct the invisible world based on their own interpretations and perspectives on Shakespeare's play. Through their performances, the spectators can see how the directors attempt to construct the unseen, invisible presences to be seen and embodied in theatrical reality. By examining the figures of fairies depicted in theatre, it is possible for the audience to learn what sort of belief held the attention of the people in Shakespeare's time and how it is interpreted and newly embodied in modern performance.

In this sense, studying the metaphorical features in Shakespeare's language to illustrate the fairy world raises a question of how modern directors from different backgrounds translate this metaphoric imagery into their own cultural style of expression. In Korean theatre, Shakespeare's *Dream* is not staged as it is but freely reimagined and readdressed by Korean artists who also explore the possibilities of the play to be read and embodied differently from culture to culture. Shakespeare's *Dream* "contains the elements of magic, fairy lore, and classical mythology, which inspire Korean directors to imagine the presence of the fairies and design their illusory world in an embodied form" based on the depictions in myth and folklore in the context of their indigenous culture (Choi 437). Since the 1970s, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was often translated and performed in traditional Korean theatre forms. By analysing and adapting the distinctive elements from their own theatre culture, or in other words, by using indigenous cultural sources and traditional theatrical form, Korean directors are able to deal with the subject of their cultural identity while developing their own views of a modern Korean aesthetic.[1]

In this case, the concept of translation is not limited to the work of translating Shakespeare's language into Korean, but it includes the process of *cultural* translation. Kim Hyon-Mi claims that cultural translation includes the

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[1] Korean directors such as Oh Tae-Suk and Lee Yun-Taek have tried to deal with the subject related to modern society by reusing or reinventing traditional theatre forms, which focus on actors' bodies as a central place connecting nature, human, and society. Notably, Oh Tae-Suk attempts to "deal with the current social issues and problems through Korean traditional theatre forms" and argues that the social responsibility of theatre is today more crucial than ever. Kim Bang-Ock points out that "Oh Tae-Suk and Lee Yun-Taek have attempted to emphasise the importance of traditional theatre which had been weakened by the influence of Western theatre forms and re-establish the effect of theatre as play, the relationship between performers and audiences."

act of "perceiving the internalised cultural meanings of other languages, behaviour patterns and cultural values, and remaking them according to the context of target culture" (48). She also insists that "[cultural translation] includes the work of decoding the meaning of words in the original text by analysing its context and re-coding new meanings, rather than being limited to the work of transcoding a word into another word" (53). Korean directors focus not only on the basic meaning of each word, but find other ways to convey the internal meaning behind the use of particular words and expressions. Since the subjective view of directors as translators is always involved in the work of cultural translation, their work cannot be neutral or indifferent from social ideology. Directors need to concern themselves with their position in the network of various cultural elements in order to work both roles as active readers and creators. They also need to have a critical view on how different cultural elements are working together in a broader context and participate in the dynamic work of cultural interactions to present their interpretation.

Among others, Yang Jung-Ung[2] modernises traditional Korean theatre forms by combining various elements of modern Korean theatre with foreign performance styles. This exploration of aesthetic hybridity in turn allows Yang to create an unusual and unique quality of expression.[3] Based on visual information from indigenous folktales and legends in Korea, Yang visualises the fairies' physical appearance and movements in a highly stylised design and manner. In this way, he tries to show how he perceives the differences between the cultural backgrounds of Shakespearean and Korean theatre cultures and how he merges these incongruent aspects through his theatrical techniques, revealing his artistic vision. For this reason, studying the performers' physical presences in Yang's productions provides an opportunity to get a new vision of constructing the fairies' world reflecting Shakespearean culture as well as a deeper understanding of Korean culture. By using various cultural sources and artistic forms from the past and modern theatres, Yang explores new ways of approaching the collective imagination toward the invisible and supernatural figures.

In his adaptation, Yang visualises his perception of the fairies in Shakespeare's *Dream* by exploring his own cultural sources to find well-suited

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[2] In writing Korean names, I followed Korean naming convention; the family name is written first, followed by a given name.

[3] Some elements of traditional Korean theatre forms such as *talchum* (traditional Korean mask dance) and *pansori* (traditional Korean musical storytelling) are often practised by Yang. *Talchum* originated in Korean villages as part of shamanic rituals during the Three Kingdoms Period (18 BCE-935 CE), and became a form of popular entertainment since Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392). *Pansori*, first performed in the late seventeenth century, has been preserved as an Intangible Cultural Property by the South Korean Government since 1964.

physical parallels to the symbolic and psychological implications of Shakespeare's fairy world. In particular, he attempts to develop a new aesthetic of physical expression distinguished from typical images of Korean fairies such as *dokkaebi* (a mythical spirit that appears in old Korean folk tales) with which the audience is already familiar.[4] This article explores the performers' bodies—focusing on their aesthetic and phenomenal qualities in relation to a cultural and social context—by examining Yang's adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* By investigating the relation between social ideology and the shape of the body, this article reveals how Yang translates Shakespeare's ideology of the body for modern actors and audiences into a modern vocabulary of physical movement and image, which signifies familiar cultural codes to a modern audience. Also, this article focuses on how the director reimagines traditional values and theatre forms as a creative power to deal with the phenomenon of modernisation in which a society pursues a standardised system and mentality.

(Re)Staging Shakespeare in Korea: Cultural Translation through the Body

Yang is one of the best-known directors to experiment with Shakespeare's plays in Korean traditional styles, which have been very popular and commercially successful in Korea and other countries. Previously, Yang worked as a play-wright and actor in Korea, then joined the Lasenkan International Theatre Company in Spain for two years (1994-1996) gaining an international approach to dance and theatre in a multi-cultural space. Through this experience, he has explored how a play can be interpreted from different perspectives and described in Korean culture. Yang has presented an experimental collision of past and present theatrical modes by exploring traditional Korean styles and forms infused with elements of modern Western and Korean theatre. In this way, he suggests a compelling and fresh mix of energetic dance, voice, and music interwoven with stories of not only Korean folklore and mythology, but also Western canonical playwrights such as Shakespeare, which are always combined with a characteristic of Korean theatrical *mise-en-scène*.

The director's choice of combining different cultural elements from the past and present is related to the history of Korean theatre, which has been greatly associated with the influence of modern Western social system and culture. According to Kim Mo-Ran, when Shakespeare's plays were first introduced to Korea through Japan during the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945), Korean

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[4] The term, *dokkaebi,* was first mentioned in *Samguk Yusa*, a collection of legends and folktales related to the Three Kingdoms of Korea by Ilyeon in the 1280s, and it was also featured in many folktales during Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897).

intellectuals utilised Shakespeare as a way of popularising their political principles, which were related to anti-colonial struggle against Japanese rule (201). Since the intellectuals considered the West as the "true master" (Kim "The Stages" 201) influencing the modernisation of Japan, they believed that learning from Western culture would be the most effective way to become independent from Japan. Under such historical and political circumstances, the authority of the West was reproduced and reinforced in Korea.

Although Shakespeare's plays could have been adapted at any time, Koreans did not think that they could freely adapt his texts which also embodied their local theatrical contexts. In early Shakespeare performances in Korea, presenting a faithful understanding of the original text was considered as most important. It was only after Korea's independence in 1945 when Shakespeare started to be staged in a lively manner by commercial companies for the public, and Korean dramatists began to be attracted to the idea of remaking Shakespeare in familiar forms (Kim "The Stages" 203). Along with the national movements to revive Korean culture and traditions around the 1970s and 1980s, directors became concerned with the status of traditions in relation to Korea's Westernised social life and cultural identity. According to Baek Hyun-Mi, "people tend to think that tradition is cultural heritages in the past before the Western social system and culture became a part of Korea through Japan" (120). Since the succession and preservation of traditions were interrupted during several historical periods such as the Japanese colonial period and the Korean War (1950-1953), rediscovering and reinventing the value of tradition have always been an important task for Koreans. When Japan was influenced by Western-style modernisation, the nation and the public officials attempted to preserve Japanese identity by inheriting the traditional forms, which were designed for the upper classes (Baek 113). However, since there was no government in Korea during the period of Japanese colonialism, people explored their own traditional forms in radical and creative ways. In this historical context, "tradition is not an objective or universal concept in Korea; its meaning and function can be changed and reconstructed depending on individual perception and the alternation of hegemony" (Baek 120). Thus, tradition has been involved in the process of modernisation as local and individual activities in Korea.

Through the self-examination of their own theatre culture in relation to the influence of Western-style modernisation, contemporary Korean directors are attempting to connect to the past in the form of nostalgia for an older Korea before its possibilities were foreclosed by Westernisation. Yang reveals that there are two main reasons to produce Shakespeare's plays:[5] the first is to

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[5] Yang has staged several Shakespeare plays: *Romeo and Juliet* (1998 & 2014), *King Lear* (1999), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2002 – present), *Macbeth* (2003), *Twelfth Night* (2008 & 2011), *Hamlet* (2009 & 2015), *Pericles* (2015), and recently *Coriolanus* (2021).

explore his own identity as a Korean artist; the second is to help modern audiences understand both Korean traditional culture and Shakespeare's works. Yang states that "Shakespeare offers great opportunities for performance; his plays always involve a relatively large cast and offer lots of dramatic scenes and complex ideas that make the stories more playful and dynamic to excite the modern audience" ("Shakespeare"). Although there are big differences between each culture, he believes there is a universality in human nature that makes it possible for an audience to understand other cultures. According to Yang,

> the essential theme of a play can be universal; it is not only a matter of Shakespearean or Western culture, but also a trendy issue that current Korean people are also experiencing. To explore this, I believe artists need to design a certain form for the modern audience to have critical views on the theme in present context. (Yang "Shakespeare")

The lack of specific and concrete information on Shakespeare's intentions in his plays allows Yang to explore the unanswerable questions by experimenting with various styles and forms. Jang Eun-Soo also points out that the main features of Yang's performances can be "the fusion of disparate elements from different cultures and genres through collaborative work with the designers and actors" (361). Yang's unique style of combining traditional Korean theatre form with modern Korean and Western theatrical style can be also observed in his Shakespeare productions. Among others, his *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has been the most popular and frequently performed since its premiere in 2001. Critics also stated that the production "opened a new paradigm of Shakespeare adaptation based on the aesthetic of Korean culture" (Jang 363). Although Yang borrows the title and the general plot from Shakespeare's play, he rewrites most parts of the dialogues and the ways of communication between the characters. He does not rely heavily on the original text, but focusing on how to represent the themes of the play in a modern style combined with traditional modes of theatre practice.

Above all, he has struggled to reuse the old practices and theatrical forms which have been forgotten or undervalued due to the dominant influence of Western-style modernisation in the late twentieth century. Yang's *Dream* shows his attitude towards Shakespeare, his ideas of using Korean traditions, and his anxiety as an Asian artist adapting a Western play from a very different cultural and theatrical context. As Maria Shevtsova points out, Korean directors including Yang commonly try to recover and explore the value of the traditional culture of Korea for the contemporary spectator, and Shakespeare becomes a "source of local self-consciousness, self-exploration and self-affirmation of the kind associated with motions of cultural identity" (167). In other words, the adaptation of Shakespeare sets the condition for "renewed cultural awareness

and renewed concern with cultural identification" (167). Through the performance, it is possible to discern how his cultural and social background has influenced the development of his directing style and the acting method of the company. Regarding traditional theatrical forms, Yang states:

> I think adopting Korean traditional forms into modern theatre forms does not mean just repeating the past work without change. More importantly, I am concerned about how these ancient forms can be changed and replaced with the images of performing bodies. In the process of collaborative works, the actors and I have transformed the images inside of our heads into a form of actual movement. […] This production [*A Midsummer Night's Dream*] could be created by this eclectic process of fusing Western and Eastern elements along with Korean styles. ("Creating")

Yang's adaptation contains a number of visual imageries parallel to poetic forms of symbolic expressions to present a concrete shape of the illusionary world. To emphasise the performers' physical expressions to depict the shape of fairies' bodies, Yang cuts the first and last acts; therefore, the number of characters is reduced to only eight, and the drama is set entirely in the forest outside Athens. He then adds some lines to the dialogue between the young lovers, explaining what happened to them before they arrived in the forest so that the audience understands the eliminated parts.

In addition, he tries to keep the rhythmic effect of Shakespeare's language with careful consideration for the musical quality of the meter and syllables of Korean expressions. In addition, he prefers using pure Korean words (without Chinese characters) to appeal to the beauty of *Hangeul* (the Korean alphabet) to the audience. For instance, Yang renames the four lovers based on the four directions of stars in Korean astrology: the name Beok (Hermia) signifies a northern star; the name Hang (Lysander) means an eastern star; the name Ik (Helena) is a southern star, and the name Rue (Demetrius) represents a western star. Each one must keep its own position in the celestial map, and therefore each character dresses in red, blue, yellow, and green to signify their location in the sky. In his production, Yang explores the idea that "the stars were believed to be intertwined with the mortal world and reflect or foretell events in the earthly realm" (Huang). When they enter the realm of the fairies, however, they all change into white-coloured costumes, reflecting how they are totally under the power of the spirit world. From this perspective, the troubles among the four lovers stand for a disorder as the stars deviate from their position in the constellation, and their reunion with a true lover symbolises the restoration of the order since the stars regain their original place. Thus, each character as a symbolic figure represents cultural beliefs and imaginations inherent in Korean society.

Interestingly, Yang makes the fairies play as *dokkaebi*.[6] Duduri, re-presenting Robin Goodfellow the puck, is played by two different male actors to emphasise the strong power of *dokgabi*'s magic – aiming at a dramatic effect. The actors also play with the audience and vigorously encourage them to respond to their actions or even participate in the dramatic situation. They wear white make-up on their faces and put a red rouge spot on their cheeks, originating from the marriage custom of Silla (57 BC-935 AD).[7] Their make-up seems to be inspired from the designs of *talchum* masks whose shape and colour designate the personality and nature of each character in the traditional drama. The presence of the *dokgabi* themselves becomes a dramatic metaphor for the dream world: they basically wear white on their faces which evokes the mood of the illusory spiritual world, and their mischievous and exaggerated bodily actions and facial expressions enhance the comical and humorous atmosphere. At the same time, their face make-up makes *dokgabi* look rather gentle and friendly, which is far from the frightening and scary face of *dokkaebi* in Korean traditional culture. Minor Latham insists that Shakespeare ignores the details of the traditional fairies of his time to reinvent the fanciful beings for his concept of the poetic and imaginary fairyland of the play (178-179). In the same way, Yang invents his own fairyland and recreates the fairies with a delicate and graceful fancy in which they seem to have a more pleasant nature in highly picturesque images.

In his production, Yang emphasises the visual images shaped by the actors' bodies; above all, he includes various physical expressions presenting the natural landscape and the animal world. The importance of visual imagery and physical embodiment implied in Shakespeare's *Dream* has been pointed out by many scholars.[8] Among others, Peter Hollindale focuses on the physical theatricality of the play. He claims that "[m]ost of Shakespeare's important groups and clusters of images have their physical parallels and analogues in the action" (110). In particular, he insists that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is "the most theatrically physical of all Shakespeare's plays", which shows "a similar correspondence between the dominant images and the visual and active elements of the play," and "all are directly linked to the drama's physical embodiment, those parts of its theatricality which no audience can miss" (111). In Yang's performance, the space functions as an open site, not a closed one; the

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[6] Yang uses both '*dokkaebi*' and '*dokgabi*': the standard term, *dokkaebi*, is used for the stage directions whereas *dokgabi* is used in the dialogues. The small distinction seems to be between the magical beings of common folklore (*dokkaebi*) and the individual version of them created in the world of this production (*dokgabi*).

[7] Silla (57 BC-935 AD) was a kingdom located in southern and central part of the Korean Peninsula. Along with Baekje (18 BC-660 AD) and Goguryeo (37 BCE-668CE), Silla was one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea.

[8] See Spurgeon (4-11, 43-45, 67, 259-263) and Hollindale (110-120).

empty space allows the actors to create various spatial configurations through different bodily forms. The core concept of his stage setting is a 'bare stage' in which an audience can interpret and create various meanings depending on their social and cultural circumstances. Yang states that "[t]he main stage in the centre is an empty space, which is very close to the work of *madang* in a Korean traditional performance, *madangguk*"[9] ("The Path"). In this space, the audience not only enjoys the representation of a play, but also realises that the fictional world is actually an allegory of the real world through the dynamic interaction with the actors.

The Actors' Bodies: Visualising Poetic Landscapes

In Yang's adaptation, the performers use the stage as both an actual and imaginative space in which the performers show particular physical images derived from a combination of Korean traditional dance and modern pantomime gestures. According to Yang, it is important that each actor is aware of his or her own body and its ability in movement. He states that "the actors have regularly practised various types of movement for several years, from traditional Korean dance such as *subak* (a specific or generic ancient Korean martial art in the fourteenth century), *taekkyeon* (a traditional Korean martial art in the eighteenth century), and *talchum* to modern styles like acrobatic dance and pantomime" (Yang "Shakespeare"). Through these practices, the actors come to concentrate on their bodies and control their energy. Their bodies have become familiar with different rhythms; consequently, this kind of training helps the actors make their bodies more flexible and suitable for any improvised actions to be created (Yang "*Twelfth*"). Aside from traditional Korean acting styles, Yang reveals that he has been "influenced by Western theories and practitioners such as Grotowski, Artaud, and many others" ("*Twelfth*"), so the images of the grotesque nature-mortal form might be the result of the combination of various styles of Korean traditional acting forms and Western styles like modern dance and mime.

These disparate elements seem well suited for the magical spirit world of the fairies. The clash of eclectic images is an effective strategy to accentuate the mysterious sense of the atmosphere. For example, as Hang and Beok are walking through the forest, a group of *dokgabi* playing as if they are trees and

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[9] *Madangguk* arose in the 1970s and was inspired by older Korean traditional performances such as *talchum*. '*Madang*' literally refers to the front yard in a traditional Korean house, which was used for housework and entertaining guests, whereas '*guk*' simply refers to a work of theatre. In *madangguk*, actors perform "a variety of entertainment ranging from puppetry to mask dance-dramas. Their performances not only provide diversion from the monotony of rural life, but also served to bring communities together." ("Madangguk")

branches interrupts the couple by blocking their way. They also keep changing their posture to make the characters confused to find a way out so that they finally decided to stay in the forest for the night.

> *The stage blacks out to music for a while. When it lights up, a group of Dokgabis enter acting as trees. They form a forest with quick and extraordinary movements. Hang and Beok attempt to move through the forest, but the Dokgabis tease them by continually forming a forest ahead of them.*
>
> Hang. I have forgotten our way. (*The forest changes*.) (Yang "*A Midsummer*" Scene 2)

Dokkaebi's acrobatic gestures present the stage landscape of forest, rocks, and wind, which look a bit grotesque with their detailed hand gestures visualising branches and air flow. Their physical movements are changing according to the psychological state of the characters whose actions are also influenced by the external conditions shaped by Dokkaebi. Regarding the landscape of the forest, Marjorie Garber states that the landscape of the forest forms a spatial pattern of natural and supernatural transformation, and points out its importance through a psychological perspective:

> We have touched upon the question of the landscape of the mind, the correlation between psychological and geographical description. This phenomenon might well be called "visionary landscape," because it is a projection of the subconscious state of mind upon the external state of terrain and climate… (70)

In Yang's *Dream*, according to the Dokkaebi's gestural images, the audience can see nature's various aspects: it shows a friendly and gentle attitude to the characters while it also has a dark side reflecting vicious, mischievous, and jealous characteristics. It seems that the performers' bodies as a visual code symbolise the emotional state of the characters. In this case, their bodily images signify that the dream is partly a nightmare, which can be noticed by the audience through the performers' bodily gestures changing their shapes from animals to insects. In addition, Yang rewrites many parts of Shakespeare's lines to emphasise the clarity of his text by using symbolic images familiar with Korean audiences. In the original text, when Lysander and Hermia have to stay one night in the forest, Lysander insists that he should lie beside Hermia so that they can make "one heart" in "a single troth." But Hermia turns down his suggestion by emphasising the importance of "courtesy" (2.2.62) and "human modesty" (2.2.63).

> LYSANDER. O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!
>   Love takes the meaning in love's conference—

> I mean that my heart unto yours is knit,
> So that but one heart we can make of it.
> Two bosoms interchained with an oath;
> So, then, two bosoms and a single troth. (2.2.51-56)

In Shakespeare's text, this part can be read as a sexual flirtation that shows how Lysander wants to sleep with Hermia. However, in Yang's adaptation, this scene is rewritten to emphasise the eternity of their love by changing Lysander's lines into a duet for Hang and Beok:

> HANG and BEOK. (*singing together*) You are my love, your star is my star.
>   You are my love, your star is my star.
>   In the dead of night, across the Milky Way
>   I lie here with you, you must be an angel in the sky.
>   What should I do if this turns out to be a dream.
>   Even in a dream, my love will never falter.
>   Our love will never alter till our sweet life ends.
>   (Yang "*A Midsummer*" Scene 2)

Here, Yang changes "one heart we can make of it; / Two bosoms interchained with an oath" into "You are my love, your star is my star" to stress their love pursuing a pure and spiritual condition rather than following sexual desire since their relationship represents a more serious meaning that symbolises the harmony between Hang and Beok as stars. In other words, the relation between the characters does not only represent the mortal world, but also the order of the constellation. To emphasise this idea, Yang uses very specific words like "star" and "Milky Way", which give the audience a clear concept of the images used on staged. While Hang and Beok are singing together, a group of Dokkaebi shows choreographed gestures behind the couple according to the lyrics of their song. By using their hand gestures, Dokkaebi create a shape of numerous twinkling stars in the sky. They also visualise a "Milky Way" by standing in a row hand in hand. As previously mentioned, Hang and Beok represents eastern and northern star, respectively, their musical ensemble has a particular meaning linked to the cultural context of astrology. As they are lying down on the ground, their sleeping places become the traces completing the "Milky Way." In this scene, Yang successfully visualises their love through the symbolic metaphors along with the harmonious duet which give strong impressions of poetic sense.

The effect of these images not only helps the audience understand the characters in Shakespeare's *Dream*. They can also physically experience the story through the performers' visual bodies that construct the spectacle on the stage. To create the stage landscape, Yang uses his own imagination inspired by "the stories such as Korean folktales, myth, and traditional fairy tales that he

first heard as a child" ("Shakespeare"). As it is often said that dreams can reveal the unconscious, Yang's *Dream* shows what parts of the old stories are left in his imagination and how he uses certain elements to replace some elements of Shakespeare's play with his own *Dream*. Garber argues that "the image of the poet's transforming power to make 'shapes' of the 'forms of things unknown' follows closely the processes of dream" (86). In this sense, Shakespeare's words become the raw material that provokes Yang to explore his (sub)conscious to complete his poetic drama in a concrete visual form. Regarding the use of imagery in Shakespeare's play, Caroline Spurgeon argues that images "naturally surge up into his mind" (5):

> The imagery he instinctively uses is thus a revelation, largely unconscious, given at a moment of heightened feeling, of the furniture of his mind, the channels of his thought, the qualities of things, the objects and incidents he observes and remembers, and perhaps most significant of all, those which he does not observe or remember. (4)

Likewise, Yang chooses a similar process of creating imagery in the space through "the channels of his thought" in his own cultural experiences. The imagery on the stage illustrates his unconscious in a form of analogy. Moreover, he states that "many parts of the scenes in this production are actually constructed by the cast members" rather than himself alone (Yun 36). Yang often emphasises that the production is the outcome of improvisational work with the group of actors and designers he works with.[10] In the creation of certain images, their abstract concepts are shared, discussed, and experimented with during rehearsal. In this sense, the images can be read as condensed and accumulated forms representing the history and psychology of the theatre community. Yang states that "I have explained the general concept of the performance—background, time, and personality of each character—to the actors and work together with them" and in this way "the actors think of not only their own character, but also the theme of the whole play that leads them to participate in the work in very creative ways" (qtd. Yun 36). The adapted work becomes a locus of the artists' intuition and instinct. Based on their own interpretation on the characters and the play itself, the performers can freely explore the ways of expressing their ideas and perspectives through their bodily movements.

In Shakespeare's *Dream*, there are a number of descriptions of natural creatures, which reflect a dynamic vision of the universe emphasising the

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[10] This is not only the case with Yang's productions. Since the 1990s, the ways of revising performance in Korea have changed a great deal; rather than one director managing the whole process, other members of a theatre company freely participate in the process as collaborators.

importance of harmonious relation between human and inhuman worlds. According to David Young, Shakespeare uses a great number of imageries that provide "geographic and aesthetic senses" (80) of nature to create "a fully realized world" (83). In Act 2 Scene 1, Oberon's lines particularly contain numerous visual imageries of nature as he describes the detailed information of the place where the magical flower is placed ("I know a bank where the wild thyme blows, / Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows, / Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine, / With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine" 1.2.249-252). Then, Oberon becomes excited with his own plan to punish Titania, who would not obey his command, by mentioning some "vile" things such as "ounce, or cat, or bear, / Pard, or boar with bristled hair" (1.2.29-30) beside her. Yang's adaptation faithfully configurates these visual images with the actors' physical images and gestures. For instance, Yang translates Shakespeare's lines in his own cultural context to help the audience understand how the magical herb affects the body of Gabi as well as what sort of "vile" things can be seen at first as soon as he opens his eyes:[11]

> DOT. Over the hill around the graves,
>   There are abundant lilies.
>   They are the cure for his infidelity.
>   Come, mortals or *dokgabi*.
>   With one sniff of them, their hearts swirl,
>   And their minds twirl.
>   They will dote on the first creature they see.
>   I will put it under his nose when he's asleep.
>   Upon waking, what will he see?
>   Be it a mortal, corpse, flea, spider, centipede, bat, or earthworm.
>   Be it something vile. (Yang "*A Midsummer*" Scene 2)

The poetic effect of these lines lies in a succinct representation of visual images, which produce a sense of fragmentary imageries. By imitating the appearance and movements of the animals and wild creatures in Dot's lines, Duduri comically describes the creatures' images as if they strike a pose for a snapshot. This scene clearly shows that Duduri keeps changing their appearance in different shapes of body, which reflects their unstable, variable, and incomplete features. As their bodily shapes are transformed into another

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[11] Yang believes that Korean society becomes a kind of matricentric society and, accordingly, he reverses the relation of Gabi and Dot by setting Gabi as a philandering husband who is tested by his wife ("The Path" 20). Thus, in Yang's *Dream*, the authority of the male-oriented sovereign is deconstructed; Dot (representing Titania) manipulates Gabi (representing Oberon) in the position of queen who is the representative of the fairy world as a ruler.

forms, their physical images create significant meanings that becoming animals, insects, and something else leads the audience to think about the potentials of their physical presences. In other words, the performers' bodies become the central place in which different forms of nature are fused into a single body that freely crosses over the limitation of the physical boundary.

These creatures are selected based on Yang's imagination that composes this somatic *Dream* in which the underlying meaning of the displacement is bound to his cultural unconscious.[12] In several respects, this process is analogous to the work of dreams that is often explained with words such as 'image' and 'symbol' as common analytic terms for the psychoanalytic interpretations. In other words, Yang's work might be the process of searching for "subconscious and associative meanings which have been transformed or translated into the finished artefact, poem or dream" (Garber 69). His production as a psychological metaphor represents the essential power of transformation from literal symbols into visual allegories reflecting his (sub)conscious. Therefore, the process of creating the production becomes the main structure that reflects the theme of *Dream* full of condensed forms of visual images and imagination from the experiences of real life.

Reconsidering Shakespeare's Poetry in Cultural Context

The performers' bodies become a key place where the harmony between themselves and the audience can be achieved through collective communication in theatre. In this case, Shakespeare's text is used to revive and reinvent traditional Korean culture and performance forms that can still lead the audience to feel and experience a sense of community spirit. For Yang, one of the important functions of theatre is to foster a dynamic communication with the audience to help them to discover pertinent meanings and values in the play and relate those ideas to their own lives. The audience members mainly focus on the effect of visual images because they appeal immediately to the audience's senses, which can be direct communication without the necessity of translating the language. As Yang insists, the images induce the audience to use their own imaginations and senses to understand the significance of the visual signs ("The Path" 21). In particular, they were fascinated by the aesthetic of Korean traditions such as dance and music that were presented in a harmonious way through the performers' physical expressions. Jang reviewed:

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[12] The term, "cultural unconscious", is used in the sense that the director as a cultural being carries not only personal associations and memories, but also a layer of collective experiences and conscious through which the audience can perceive the pattern of the culture.

> [Yang's theatre] company drastically reduced verbal lines and enriched the plays with Korean sentiment and aesthetic, but their scripts contained many poetic lines full of overtones. They showed a theatrical *mise-en-scene* of images, energetic dance, songs in chorus and percussion. […] Their performance combines music, mime, song and dance to create an exhilarating adaptation of Shakespeare's inventive and glittering comedy. (384)

Yang creates the condition in which everyone can share their cultural imagination rooted in their unconscious by borrowing some elements from the traditional and modern theatre forms. Yang states that he was "influenced by the media between 1970 and 2000 in which there were dynamic social and cultural changes in Korea" ("Shakespeare"). Yang agrees that the influence of popular culture during these periods was extremely powerful in his youth. In fact, modern life has changed the mode of perception from a written culture to a visual culture in which images are circulated as a mixed form in many different kinds of genre and media. Especially in the 1990s, access to the Internet became available and so popular that many people have been exposed to an enormous stream of commercial images and iconic signs. Yang was one of those who experienced this visually dominated culture. A contemporary audience might be familiar with such visual codes from a wide range of media rather than being experienced in interpreting a series of metaphors in the poetic language. Yang said that he "borrowed the ideas of gestural movements such as exaggerated body and facial expressions and unrealistic actions in slapstick comedies from visual media like films, cartoons, and various TV programmes" ("Shakespeare"). Therefore, such images in his production present not only his own ideas but also the social imagination of a specific popular culture that continuously prods the artist into composing the eclectic scenography based on the hybridity of a modern Korean culture.

Yang's *Dream* reintroduces Korean culture not only for a Korean audience but also for a foreign audience. In particular, the actors' physical expressions and their visual images are significant in terms of their 'translatability' to appeal to both Korean audiences and international audiences who are not familiar with Korean culture. For almost two decades, the production has been performed in many different countries, such as Japan, China, Poland, Colombia, and Ecuador; it was also staged at the London Barbican Centre in 2006 and the Globe Theatre in 2012. In this case, the actors' physical expressions are significant in terms of their 'translatability' appealing to international audiences who are not familiar with Korean culture. There were critics and audiences who also found the "poetic" effect of Yang's production from the images of the actors' physical expressions. Dione Joseph points out the values of the linguistic features in the production: "While retaining the

eloquence and rhetoric of Shakespeare, the translation offers a sample of the beauty of the Korean language with its rich intonations, cadences and rhythms" (Joseph). Adele Lee states that "the cast did a great job of overcoming the language barrier and forming an excellent rapport with the predominantly English speaking audience" (Lee). One member of the audience commented that "[o]bviously the finer details were hard to grasp if you had no knowledge of Korean, but still, the universality, if that is a word, was amazing, it was not hard to follow at all!" (Kiwi). Another audience member made a more detailed analysis:

> The purists will doubtless say that no translation of Shakespeare can ever possibly match the original, but this production played to a full house nonetheless. […] And in Korean, this play—perhaps all too familiar to me in English—seemed suddenly like an entirely new work. […] It was absolutely hilarious and although we were scared of not being able to understand the play, this Korean production is proof that Korean comedy surpasses all language and cultural barriers. (Liutkute)

Yet, some critics raised the question of the authenticity of Shakespeare's text since Yang cuts out many lines of Shakespeare's in his adaptation. Fiona Mountford in her review, '*Dream* lost in translation,' insisted that "[u]nfortunately, what Yang omitted to lift from the original is any real sense of magic, peril or poetry" (Mountford). Sam Marlowe, a critic from *The Times*, saw the production has "a jolly storybook aspect that, while it rarely ventures anywhere near the play's dark emotional underbelly, jogs along amiably enough. What's entirely missing is the poetry" (Marlowe). Like Mountford, Marlowe argued that Yang's adaptation does not "enhance our understanding of Shakespeare"; rather it "diminish[es] the play's metaphorical richness" (Marlowe). Consequently, Yang's "inelegant text" failed to "offer much lyricism or psychological complexity" (Marlowe). The critics were in agreement that Yang's performance does not successfully deal with the depth of Shakespeare's text and its aesthetic as poetry. From their responses to Korean production, it is possible to assume that they believe there must be something essentially 'Shakespearean' in Shakespeare, and it may disappear when his text is translated into a new language or performed in a radically unfamiliar performative mode in different cultures.

However, what they fail to take into account is the radical contingency of performance, which is unpredictable, often the result of the intersection of history, social context, and reception that promotes a wide range of varied readings contingent on cultural context. Surely, the cultural differences motivate the audience to see Shakespeare's texts from different perspectives, so there is a continuous interaction between the written text and the performance text.

When we understand Shakespearean productions staged in different countries, the main focus should be about how the director attempts to present his idea and insight into his own culture through Shakespeare's text, rather than whether the director was faithful to the original text or not. Yang's productions are not translated works of Shakespeare's texts. Rather than focusing on the meaning of Shakespeare's poetic language, he attempts to reposition Shakespeare's *Dream* in a Korean context by exploring traditional Korean theatre forms, which are again reused and reframed in accordance with the taste of contemporary audiences.

In this sense, Shakespeare's texts cannot be simply read or understood as literature, but rather should be considered as ongoing work that imagines a new version of cultural events in contemporary theatre. Roland Barthes insists that the text is not an object but the field of production which can be best approached through "the activity of associations, continuities, carrying-over" through "playing" (158) in the postmodern sense. Also, Jerome McGann points out that "a 'text' is not a 'material thing' but a material event or set of events, a point in time (or a moment in space) where certain communicative interchanges are being practiced" (21). He argues that performance is the work of the process of cultural negotiation through which the production can continue its existence rather than a derivative re-visioning of text as an authoritative reproduction. Likewise, in Korea, Shakespeare's texts have been involved in ongoing negotiations of the text's own identity continuously changing according to their indigenous cultural conditions. Shakespeare's work as a text for a performance prompts the modern Korean directors to understand and communicate heterogenous historical, social, and cultural situations. By reinterpreting and revising Shakespeare's texts in their own ways, the directors can reinvent the aesthetic of traditional theatre forms, which allows them to explore and express their own cultural imagination and vision in creative ways.

The purpose of Yang's *Dream* is not to perform Shakespeare's play *per se*, but to share how the director and performers have struggled to understand his work from their own cultural perspective and explored the process through their new production. Thus, the point is to question *how* the production is related to the original text and *where* the liveness of the work (both the text and production) comes from. What might be the ways of exploring the relevance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which was written around 1595 to modern Korean culture? Certainly, performing Shakespeare without considering the imagination of local artists or the audience's perspective cannot be a satisfactory answer. As Shevtsova argues, the appreciation of the performance form "must surely have shaped Yang's sense of the relative importance of words," as the production shows "his sense of their relativity for the *specific* performance that he devised with his company" (176, emphasis in original). Perhaps this is the part that the audience needs to seek out through the performance. The "poetry" is not only in

the text, when it comes to performance, it is also in the expressive qualities of cultural imagination displayed with lots of synesthetic effects of visual and aural signals. Yang's *Dream* is the ensemble of his memories, experiences, and interpretations all combined into a symbolic form of 'a poetic drama.' In this sense, the effect of the imagery in the production, although its styles and forms look different, makes a parallel with that of Shakespeare's poetry. Thus, the poetry of Shakespeare is not missing "entirely" in Yang's production. The performers' bodies certainly compose a poem that is constituted by verbal, visual, and emotional elements used to explore their own *Dream*.

Conclusion

Yang believes that the role of actors is to make a harmonious ensemble among different theatrical expressions such as the use of their own bodies, sounds, and stage landscape within the limited theatre space. Like poets, performers have to orchestrate the different imagery to be conveyed as a complete embodied form to the audience. Under this condition, which fosters a dynamic communication between the performers and the audience, audiences can achieve a complete theatrical experience as active participants of their performances rather than as passive spectators. Whether the experience happens to an individual or a group, the feeling becomes a co-experience and is maximised through the process of mutual communication between the performer and audience. By adapting various sources and artistic forms from past and modern theatres, modern Korean directors attempt to find new ways of exploring the collective imagination of Korean culture. In traditional Korean theatre, according to Lee Yun-Taek, performers are not different from poets who inspire the audience to explore their own imagination and memory toward the concrete images of the performers' bodies (99). In other words, actors express their ideas about a specific experience or event through their bodies as an embodied form of imagery that reflects the conditions of their inner world and vision for the outer world. In a similar vein, Yang emphasises the theatre space as a meeting place not only between performers and audience but also between their present experiences and imagination through the performers' physical presence. After all, the theatrical performance is always a creative process, referring to a shared imagination that bridges the distance between theatre and our life, dream and reality.

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Ayman Abu-Shomar* iD

The Enemy Other: Discourse of Evil in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

Abstract: Caliban, the 'enemy Other' of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, is a character that allows further investigations of the colonial ideology in its earliest forms; locating 'evil' forces outside the continent of Europe and the White race. Caliban, the only non-European character, is typified as the autocratic antagonist of the play whose evil intentions and actions cannot be redeemed. Against such representation, the essay argues that the villainous discourse attributed to Caliban is informed by Renaissance theological doctrines escorted by an emergent colonial ideology. It argues that, at a semantic level, the employment of the concept of 'evil' often serves as an intensifier to denounce wrongful actions. At a moral level, however the term is often contested on the basis that it involves unwarranted metaphysical commitments to dark spirits necessitating the presence of harmful supernatural creatures. To attribute the concept to human beings is therefore essentially problematic and dismissive since it lacks the explanatory power of why certain people commit villainous actions rather than others. Hence, the epistemological aporia of Caliban's 'evil' myth reveals an inevitable paradox, which concurrently requires locating Caliban both as a human and unhuman figure. Drawing on a deconstructionist approach, the essay puts the concept of 'evil' under erasure, hence, argues that Caliban's evilness is a mere production of rhetoric and discourse rather than a reality in itself. This review contributes to the intersecting areas of discourse, representations, and rhetoric of evil within the spectrum of postcolonial studies.

Keywords: discourse of evil, William Shakespeare, deconstruction, post-colonial criticism, European renaissance.

The concept of evil is problematic at epistemological, moral, and linguistic levels. In contemporary secular Western societies, as Brian Horne argues, "human intentions and action could be quite adequately explicated in the

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* The University of Jordan, Jordan. a.shomar@ju.edu.jo

language of ethics rather than theology: the opposite of good, consequently, is not evil, it is bad in the sense of being wrong morally, of willing and acting in ways that are in opposition to an accepted moral standard" (30). The difficulty of establishing universally accepted moral standards does not invalidate such a tendency. When the term is used, its semantic content is vague or reductive, in the sense that it acts as merely a kind of intensifier: "when one wants to express extreme outrage at an action of gross immorality, the word one reaches for is the word evil; but there would be no qualitative difference between a wrong action or intention and an evil action or intention" (30). Literary discourse is however replete with the term, and quite often associated with supernatural evil creatures and dark powers. The monsters of fictions including vampires, witches, and werewolves as well as many invented dark-forces or monstrous creatures are thought to be paradigms of evil as possessing powers and abilities that defy rational explanation (Todd Calder para. 5). More pertinently to the present argument, is the fact that "ranking something as evil immediately labels it as something to be avoided: wicked, immoral, malevolent, sin, vice, depravity, nefarious, malicious" (Lynn Fallwell and Keira Williams 13). This means that any possibility of encountering evil forces brings about triumphant fear and harm sourced from an outsider and unbeatable force, which makes the Other always threatening and dangerous. Of no less significance to understanding the discourse of evil stigmatizing Caliban in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is the fact that the term denotes deep-rooted and lasting villainous actions and intentions, which necessitates an evitable paradox when attributed to human beings.

Therefore, the presence, and maybe success, of discourse of evil in literature primarily depend on the writer's rhetorical ability to convey a sense of wonder and mystery detecting a concealed desire for this discourse in human consciousness and realised through imaginative constructions in the realm of the supernatural (Horne 32). Yet, for Horne, the association between evil and the supernatural is fundamentally unreasoned as supernatural powers do not exist in reality, and when the action is merely described as a mystery, it renders sensible explanations not possible. It is however agreed that the discourse of evil in its broad sense, whether in reality or in fiction, institutes a system of knowledge using affiliated discourse and notions to represent despicable actions, characters, and events subject to moral condemnation (Phillip Cole 106).

Caliban, the enemy Other of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, is a character that allows further investigations of the evolutionary discourse of evil in the Renaissance period in its theological, rhetoric, political and cultural spheres. It also reveals how early colonial discourse intersects with Elizabethan theological beliefs at an early stage of European colonialism. Long before the eighteenth-century, the time when European colonialism has reached its zenith, and writers and critics were not yet versed in post-colonial discourse, Shakespeare's Renaissance romance *The Tempest* has established the figure, or

one might say, a consensual canon of Caliban as a prototype of the mysterious and incomprehensible evil. In fact, such canon has evolved through subsequent centuries, contexts, and literary genres at times when the European colonial discourse has become an integral part of the Anglophone literary tradition especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

To further explore the intersection between theology and colonialism, this essay aims to problematise the discourse of evil in its capacity to reflect morally reliable accounts for Caliban's case. In doing so, it reviews the evolution of the discourse of evil, and explores the historical conditions involved in the construction of the discourse of evil in the Renaissance period. Methodologically, it draws on post-structural and postcolonial repertories to empirically examine and problematize the discourse of evil as exemplified by three main characters in the play: Prospero, Miranda, and Caliban himself. In what follows, the essay largely identifies its arguments and claims with the copious body of post-colonial critical repertories that locate the play within a geography other than Europe. Therefore, the depiction of Caliban is not an abstracted figure nor located in a "spatial ambiguity," (Peter Hulme, William Sherman and Howard Sherman 18) it is rather located in a well-defined geography, a non-European island in the Mediterranean.

The Tempest is, thus, a drama of intercultural encounter between the European 'Self' and the non-European Other. It is about magic, betrayal, love, and forgiveness, but it is also about the supernatural and dehumanised villainous dark forces. While all other characters, including the conspirators, are eventually redeemed, hence their morality is restored, Caliban alone stands out as the absolute dark side of the play. The exiled Prospero, who was once the Duke of Milan and his daughter, Miranda, live with two supernatural creatures, Ariel and Caliban in a Mediterranean island. As a powerful magician and lord of the island, Prospero manages to turn these two creatures as his subjects. Ariel, "who is labelled a 'mulatto' in this play, represents the mixed races more able to accept their limited oppression" (Bibhash Choudhury 136) hence becomes a loyal and virtuous servant while Caliban, the native inhabitant of the island and the outspoken colonial subject (Hulme, Sherman and H. Sherman 205) is the lazy, useless, ugly and traitorous. With the assistance of Ariel, Prospero creates a storm that wrecks a ship and captures the conspirators while sailing nearbay the island. The plotline then develops towards a sharp divide between wrong and good deeds and intentions including: a plot to murder the King of Naples, a conspiracy scheme to kill Prospero whose protagonist is Caliban and, finally, a romance between Miranda and the King's son, Ferdinand, which brings the narrative to its happy ending. Eventually, all those who commit wrong deeds are pardoned and set sail back home, Europe. Yet, Caliban, is not entitled such a status and left behind in the island.

Since it was created by Shakespeare, Caliban has become an intertextual character of the alien, savage, primitive, bestial and monstrous; a variety of notions that affiliate with the umbrella concept of evil (Simon Hay 16). This canon has been cherished and propagated in several literary texts, critical essays and artistic productions in subsequent centuries carrying with it a weighty corpus of politically informed axioms about the perceived notion of evil. In the Restoration period, John Dryden's and William Davenant's *The Tempest*: Or, *The Enchanted Island* (1667), Caliban became a deformed and savage slave. Victorian Age and early Romanticism also had their share through the works of Robert Browning's poem "Caliban upon Setebos," (1864) where Caliban is institutionalised as a human but primitive savage. At the break of the twentieth century, Jose Enrique Rodo's essay "Ariel" published in 1900 reintroduces Caliban as half daemon, half brute, but inferior to and, hence, logically slave to Prospero. Modernist writers returned to the idea of dehumanising Caliban as represented in W.H. Auden's poem *The Sea and the Mirror* (1945); and in modern times, Caliban claimed evilness is also restored in Tad Williams' *Caliban's Hour* (1994). This canon is also reworked in other artistic forms including critical accounts, paintings, theatre performances, cinema, and cartoons. Hay rightly observes that these works constitute a political and social history of the 'sign' of Caliban that carries a prefigured signification or, at least, a substantial amount of cultural baggage, in terms of expectations and preconceptions as to nature, focus, and form. What these works have in common is a representation of Caliban as either "savage" and "primitive," or "bestial" and "monstrous" (3). To some extent, this depiction reflects a history of Western thought that institutes an interplay between Caliban, evil and colonial discourse (David Spurr and Faris Kenny).

The fact that these recurrent constructions of Caliban as representing shadowing breeds of the discourse of evil throughout extended periods is a mere production of what Edward Said refers to as a "system of knowledge" (45). Caliban, thus, becomes "a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone's work . . ., or some bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all these" (177). Such "political vision of reality," as Said puts it, creates an enduring "framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment" linked to "insane" creatures whose identity is best described as lamentably alien (207). Caliban is, thus, located inside a history that marks the evolution of discourses and theories of the supernatural evil. A reviewer for *Dublin University Magazine* in November 1864 was aware of the history which the figure of Caliban carries. In the review of Browning's poem "Caliban upon Setebos", the writer claims that the poem presents us with the "theories of a primitive mind". These theories reflect our first acquaintance in

Shakespeare's 'Tempest'; how Caliban's brutal mind has developed, how he has begun to make his surroundings, his present and future (Hay 25).

The importance of this historical trope lies in understanding how the supernatural evil seeks to represent itself in the image of reason, of the enlightenment, when reason and enlightenment require the Other to assert their universal sovereignty. That Other has often been originated in the southern and eastern parts of our planet (Spurr 3). March Rod points out that these 'mysterious' geographies were always the feeding birthplace of the brute, savage, unformed, or any amorphous Other to Europe's rationality and refinement (para. 6). As such, no sooner Caliban is set inside the metanarrative of evil than it has become burlesque of an abstracted but mysterious figure, materialised sign of otherness. In *Characters of Shakespeare*, Hazlitt writes that Caliban is "one of the wildest and most abstracted of all Shakespeare's characters, whose deformity whether of body or mind is redeemed by the power and truth of the imagination displayed in it" (Hay 13).

While the above cited works share a common perception of Caliban as an alien disfigured Other, the focus of this essay is to investigate the Renaissance construction of the discourse of evil originated in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The importance of this exploration stems from the fact that the Renaissance is professed as a transitional period from theological and religious doctrines, laden with discourses of evil, to secular and moral account of knowledge that concerns itself with depicting human conditions with the language of ethics more than theology. A contextual analysis of Shakespeare's discourse of evil reveals this unique Renaissance position as a transitional period between late medieval and early modern discourses concerning the question of evil. This specific historical period, as Amos Edelheit argues: "presents us with some important shifts in the understanding of this notion in a period which is essential to the early modern era" (84).

For the moral philosophy of the Renaissance, the question of evil was subject to debate best understood not only within the ethical and theological spheres, but also through the socio-political context of the period. While philosophical debates marked a sizable space in the works of Renaissance thinkers, the new and fervent colonial competitions also had their significant input in the literary tradition of that period. The discovery of America, for example, which had begun much earlier than Shakespeare's time, opened up new frontiers to stimulate European imagination of the Other perceived as exotic, dangerous, and deviated from the 'norms' of White race. Such conceptions encourage the representation of this Other as potentially inimical needing to be put under control. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare adopts this tendency through Prospero who claims full control of Sycorax's (Caliban's mother) island, displaces her, treats her as a beast, and subjugates her son as his servant slave. This conduct of Prospero has prompted many critics to interpret

the play as working out the drama of colonisation. *The Tempest*, as such, is a fictional text where the Renaissance discourses of evil and colonisation constitute interplay between "culture-specific discursive practices" (Harold Veeser 34) and the institutionalisation of the moral philosophy of the age. As Greenblatt Stephen and Stephen Jay Greenblatt explain in their Introduction to *Representing the English Renaissance*, the Renaissance texts reflect historical contingencies in the ways they are "produced, reproduced, circulated, categorised and analysed" (19). Veeser contends that Renaissance texts were "reconstructed as historically determined and determining modes of cultural work; apparently autonomous aesthetic and academic issues are being reunderstood as inextricably though complexly linked to other discourses and practices – such linkage constituting the social networks within which individual subjectivities and collective structures are mutually and continuously shaped" (33).

While Renaissance thinkers (e.g., Nicolaus de Mirabilibus (d. 1495) and the Franciscan Salviati (c. 1448-1520)), concerned themselves revitalising classical philosophy including the question of evil, they incorporated within this philosophy the current theological and socio-political norms of the age. Having religious doctrines in the back of their minds, the question of evil was problematic to handle by those thinkers. Consequently, their extended debates reflected lack of consensus to earth down a rational and widely accepted perception of the concept of evil. This dispute, according to Edelheit, was originated in two competing discourses, theological and philosophical, but was also "connected to many other related issues such as divine-human relation, or will, reason, and rational impulses" as well as the socio-political conditions of the period (33). Neoplatonic thinkers, as Edelheit reports, perceived evil as a pure privation and nothingness subjected to human experience that is either linguistically or socially constructed; hence, evil is abstracted and separated from good. This thesis claims that "reason controls and directs the will; a successful rational assessment should always lead the will towards good aims or actions. Evil is possible only when error or ignorance interferes in the rational process, causing reason to direct the will towards wrong or evil aims and actions" (35). What is rejected in this account is the possibility of pure evil—that is, evil which leads to evil actions without any error or ignorance interfering with the rational process. It rather stems from those agents possessing evil intentions, and who are fully conscious of the evil results of their actions, which introduces the strong version of evil. Therefore, the notion of evil is weak since it "has no essence or existence of its own; in other words, evil can be only accidental, it does not have a substance" (36).

What interesting in these discussions is the fact that they are solely limited to the world of man rather than to that of the supernatural. Therefore, one can sense a move towards a more realistic understanding, which brings the notion of evil to be subjected to human experience. Moreover, the

contextualisation of Platonic notion of evil reflects the medieval psychology of human soul as being seduced by sensual desire or irascible passion. In short, Renaissance thinkers, although disputed God's relation to evil, had all ascribed evil to human being and to the features of human consciousness. This conclusion, as Petryk argues, reflects a dialectic perception of the world through the binary opposition of good-evil: "when we look at the term 'evil' (in moral sense) in Western culture, we usually face the traditional religious or theological ideas postulating the duality of existence of our existential frame" (151). In challenge to this religious dogma, Petryk contends that our perception of the basic principle of existence is distorted by this duality. He argues that our human conceptual image of the world is based on the oppositions and beliefs that phenomena are necessarily balanced by the existence of the contradicting forces such as light-dark, white-black and good-evil, etc. While believing that all good must be balanced by evil, then, we bind ourselves into a system of reality that is highly limiting. Through this system, paralleling structuralist assumptions, the duality of good and evil is highly distortive to our understanding of reality. Therefore, "there are no devils or demons except what people create out of their beliefs where evil effects become exclusively illusions created by fear" (152).

Fictional narrative structures considerably depend on such dualistic construction of reality where the notions of good and evil are always juxtaposed against each other. This polarising tendency is heavily embedded in structuralist visions of reality. Horne (2003) reasons:

> What one encounters in most of the stories is a narrative structure that depends heavily on a strongly dualistic interpretation of reality. The universe is presented in basically Manichaean terms: Darkness and Light; Good and Evil powers oppose one another in almost equal strength. Conflict between these forces is at the heart of these narratives, and the universe of these tales is one in which the conflict between good and evil is usually finely balanced and, often, never completely resolved. (34)

The Tempest affiliates with such a structure in its depictions of the forces representing good and bad intentions and actions. While Prospero and his daughter stand for the moral side of the play, the conspirators enact the bad or immoral side. Yet, Shakespeare goes beyond this dualistic structure by adding another set of evil forces, the supernatural evil, which operates through the aid of fictional discourse. In fact, such a dualistic and, to some extent, Hegelian structure is at the centre of structuralist conception of language, which perceive the relationship between language and the world not as representative, but as a set of binary oppositions determined by the internal structure of languages, whose parts are arranged as a set of oppositions which structures the worldview of those who use it. Therefore, "the concept [evil] is viewed as a unit of mental

lexicon coded in language" (Pertyk 151), hence, the ontologically defined evil is a "product of human consciousness, or within the power of human consciousness that shifts our reality from positive (lighted by the presence of good) to negative (darkened by evil)" (152). This epistemic process—contrasting good with evil—creates a binary system (or logic) to produce the intended meaning. Indeed, Shakespeare's treatment of evil in this particular drama requires breath-taking pace, which can only be sutured with a magical environment and supernatural elements that gathers the structure of the play together (Tuğlu Begüm 66).

In her preface, Laurie Skiba highlights the socio-political context of the play as reflecting the Renaissance conflicts between European nations over the newly discovered lands, which "shaped Shakespeare's view of the world" (21). One particular occasion, as Skiba comments, that inspired Shakespeare to write the play was the news of a ship believed to be lost and all its crew presumed dead while sailing to Jamestown. The confirmed news however revealed that the sailors did eventually arrive to Jamestown after having passed by the island of Bermuda. Pamphlets about the discovery of the island, the shipwrecks, sea-adventures and other explorations became a popular form of literature in England, which added fascinating imaginative stories about the natives as 'natural societies' compared to 'civilised' Europeans. Skiba claims that "Shakespeare used some of these pamphlets about Bermuda as sources when writing *the play*, which is set on a remote island that resembles both this island of the "New World" and a Mediterranean island" (14). Similarly, Stephen Greenblatt and Stephen Jay Greenblatt argue that the play reflects the colonialists' adventures reiterating European arguments regarding the legitimacy of their presence as civilising forces in the newly discovered lands. Since colonisation was not old enough for all its complexities and moral issues, the relationship between the play and colonial discourse is more likely to be prophetic rather than descriptive (Ravi Bhoraskar and Sudha Shastri 23). *The Tempest*, thus, "moves towards achieving reconciliation and regeneration, but many serious issues remain unresolved" (24).

The play commences its discourse by establishing an authoritative voice of Prospero as a God figure, the lord of the island; a 'man' of super powers that enable him to subjugate natives. More crucially to my purpose, Prospero stands as retaining an absolute authority on knowledge construction through which he interpellates other characters, including Caliban. This knowledge is however politically constructed and premised on the basic necessities of the Self/Other dialectical construction. As Étienne Poulard states, "the most powerful visual code of Prospero's ideology lies in his books. The book is the ideological instrument *par excellence* because it is the ultimate signifier of language" (3). In this sense, "the creation of Caliban is the perfect *medium* for ideology as his whole social perception relies on the king/subject relation" (4). At an early stage

and through a flashback narrative, Prospero informs his oblivious daughter about the "evil" action of the conspirators including his brother, Antonio. Revealing his identity as "Thy father was the Duke of Milan and/ Prince of power" (*The Tempest* 1.2.5). Prospero establishes his power over the whole discourse. He proceeds, "And Prospero the prime duke, being so reputed/ In dignity, and for the liberal arts/ Without a parallel" (1.2.6). Such demonstration of power is necessary for Prospero not only to restore his dukedom on a newly discovered space, but also to establish himself as a morally authoritative figure and as a "benevolent, God-like being" who is capable to control the island under his own desires (Bhoraskar and Shastri 15). Hence, "assigning himself to the role of God with his power as a "magician," Prospero subjects everyone in the play to his own commands, directing the storm on stage with an ambition that would steal the thunders of Zeus" (Begüm 63). Reflecting the Renaissance dichotomy of God and Devil, Prospero thus becomes the God of the island, who is capable of all good deeds, hence, for this role to be confirmed, it necessitates the presence of a devilish figure to be encountered. Away from the white community in the island including those of the conspirators, this figure turns out to be Caliban as the none-white and native inhabitant of the island.

Standing at the centre of the play and possessing the powers of God, Prospero directs the narrative according to two basic premises: relations of power and discourse. As "the Prime Duke," and "being so reputed in dignity and, for liberal arts, without a parallel" (1.2.6), Prospero safeguards his authority with his own sophisticated language and discourse. In his *Order and Discourse*, Michael Foucault reminds us that the interplay between authority and discourse is more than making discourse a mere manifestation of domination, but rather, discourse itself becomes the object of struggle and the power which one wishes to maintain (49). The trajectory of Prospero's discourse is therefore bidirectional: a benevolent reproach addressed to the conspirators, and a violent denunciation of the natives of the island, Caliban and his mother, Sycorax. While Prospero's discourse towards the conspirators, who usurped him as Duke of Milan, could reflect forces of good and evil, his sympathetic voice towards them and his pardoning attitude removes any possibility to locate them in the realm of absolute evil. When Miranda pronounces her concerns about the men (the conspirators) in the shipwreck: "O, the cry did knock/ Against my very heart. Poor souls, they perish'd" (1.2.3), Prospero responds: "Be collected:/ No more amazement. Tell your piteous heart/ There is no harm done" (1.2.4). The conspirators' safety is also assured through Ariel while reporting the event of the shipwreck: "Not a hair perish'd;/ But fresher than before; and as thou badst me,/ In troops I have dispers'd them 'bout the isle" (1.2.11).

The dualism of good and evil in this case is obscured by two conflicting voices of Prospero: resentment versus forgiveness. While referring to his former status as Duke of Milan with bitterness delineating the "perfidious" (1.2.68)

betrayal of his brother, Antonio, as "an enemy/ To me inveterate" (1.2.61-2), he admires the "charity" and "gentleness" of his "noble" friend Gonzalo who secures him a save passage to the island (1.2.62-3). Prospero's ambivalent attitude towards the conspirators contradicts his earlier description of them as agents of "evil." This divide between repulsion and reconciliation intensifies the ambiguity of his attitude since while he announces the conspirators' action as an outright evil and announces his brother's "evil nature" (1.2.7), he pardons the conspirators assuring them safe passage back home: "I'll deliver all,/ And promise you calm seas, auspicious gales,/ And sail so expeditious, that shall catch/ Your royal fleet far off" (5.1.82). Such romantic happy ending could project the narrative as an idealistic example of God's compassionate forgiveness for those of wrong deeds. Nonetheless, there remains another 'villain' who is denied such a privilege since it exhibits the absolute sources of evil resembling the case of Satan who is deprived of any possibility of repentance.

Caliban is not only situated in a sharp contrast with Ariel and those presumed of good nature and deeds, but his claimed evil nature is also contrasted against that of the conspirators. He becomes an utterly devilish figure which, according to the theology of the age, is denied deliverance and forgiveness. To this end, the very nature of Caliban reflects a stagnant creature characterising perilous actions including his attempt to rape Miranda, his part in the conspiracy to kill Prospero and his defiant attitude against Prospero. Consequently, being an object of colonial knowledge, Caliban essentially becomes stable, and even if liable to some changes, those changes are subservient to those who possess power (Said 83). In late medieval theological beliefs, reconciliation and forgiveness require the presence of God in those committing wrongdoings. For Shakespeare's pleas to meet the prospect of a faithful community, Caliban, the alien Other, is therefore essentially located outside the Christian community in the island. Once Ariel declares the safety of the conspirators, Prospero promptly shifts the focus of the narrative towards Caliban describing him as the slave "child" brought by a "blue-eyed hag" (1.2.13). As such, Caliban is constructed as an external evil force, which demands inclusive control that is coupled with hatred, but also with distress and fear.

Having this contextual analysis of the text, I turn to examine the construction of the discourse of evil attributed to Caliban at both linguistic and cultural levels. For this, I draw on structuralist semiotics as a representational tradition. I also use Derrida's deconstruction to unsettle this 'knowing activity'. Semiotics is concerned with our intuitive capacity to understand signs, which enables us to classify and 'know' the world (Sebeok 8). It "is the interplay between 'the book of nature' and its human decipherer that is at issue" (9). Therefore, "semiotics never reveals what the world is, but circumscribes what we can know about it" (26). Reality, as such, operates in the duality that exists

between two actants operating simultaneously: the observer and the observed. It is, thus, as Sebeok states, a consequence of mutual interaction between our private perceptual signs informed by our transformation of meaningful impulses —and the phenomenal world, which reveals itself solely through signs (45). Accordingly, any cultural phenomenon is not simply a composite of material objects, but rather objects with meanings loaded with cultural signs. Cultural phenomena therefore do not have an essence in themselves but are defined by a network of relations.

Briefly introduced as a dehumanised exotic child, the curiosity of the audience has already been established to know more about Caliban. To satisfy this curiosity, Prospero summons Caliban: "Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil/ himself/ Upon thy wicked dam, come forth!" (1.2.14). This opening establishes Caliban's identity with a constellation of dreadsome signifiers including "poisonous", "slave", "devil", "wicked" and "dam"—all conceived as variants of the notion of evil. The construction of Caliban identity as such is intended to meet the expectations of the Renaissance audience who are familiar (or one might say believers) of the existence of evil dark forces beyond Christian faith. This appropriation also involves a warning of such exotic dark force optimised as 'the enemy Other'. Caliban, thus is metamorphosed as inherently capable of supernatural menacing actions: "His mother was a witch, and one so strong/ That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs,/ And deal in her command without her power" (5.1.81). In result, the relationship between the signifiers and the signified is not an impartial one, but rather is forged with ideological constructions motivated by the power of Prospero, the sign-maker. All through the narrative, Caliban's brutish nature as lacking moral reason is essentialised via a system of signification based on the willpower of Prospero's articulacy and command of language.

Furthermore, Prospero's extravagant signifiers create a deterministic "symbolic system" that serves "a cultural function like a second order in language or text" (Marin Irvine 17). The influence of the Renaissance perception of evil is reflected in the discourse of the play in two seemingly coherent narratives, yet those narratives are based on two conflicting assumptions of how evil forces are perceived. On the one hand, within the view that holds evil as belonging to the world of supernatural and dark forces, the narrative is materialised by Prospero's excessive articulations of Caliban as a symbol of bestial and inhuman evil. On the other hand, conforming to the Renaissance ethos that associate evil with human consciousness, Caliban's identity is also sanctioned as a human being to become liable to accommodate the Renaissance assumptions. Towards the end of the play, Prospero declares: "This thing of darkness! / Acknowledge mine" (5.1.74). As Greenblatt argues, Renaissance literature is a self-conscious tradition deemed as a part of the system of signs that constitute the Renaissance culture. Greenblatt warns against oversimplifying

the conclusion that Renaissance texts alone can reconstruct the complete culture of the 16th century. Instead, a textual representation is the result of an interplay between the symbolic structures and those perceived in the larger social world. Such an intersection however presents itself as constituting a single process of self-fashioning.

The construction of Caliban's sinfulness is also introduced as if perpetuating and immune to restoration, which deepens his claimed villainous nature. In addition to introducing Caliban through exhaustive signs of evil, Prospero shifts to a pretentious process of rehabilitation coupled with menacing authority: "For this, be sure, tonight thou shalt have/ Cramps, / Side-stitches, that shall pen thy breath up; unrchins" (1.2.15). For the sign of Caliban's evilness to achieve the required degree of credibility, Shakespeare crafts an authoritative voice of Prospero not only to maintain power over his insubordinate slave, but also to construct an image of Caliban as an unquestionable alterity and foreignness whose intellectual and moral abilities cannot parallel those of the white community. Therefore, discipline and rehabilitation within such an intention are violent and maniacal and materialised through the severe pain Prospero inflicts on Caliban. The creation of such physical and symbolic violence is also intended to intensify the estranged nature of Caliban's alienness. The amalgam of the signifiers of "cramps", "side-stitches", "pinch'd", "as thick as honeycomb", "stinging" – are all intended as accentuating signs of the frenetic pain that Prospero can execute on Caliban. With a huge reserve of anger that he can unleash on Caliban, Prospero upholds: "What I command, I'll rack or dost three with old cramps, /Fill thy bones with aches, make thee roar/ That beasts shall tremble at thy din" (1.2.16). Such violence, although comprehensible when considering Prospero's colonial desire to control the Other, also reveals a hate of that Other sourced from racist ideologies. Racism, as Michael Rustin argues: "involves a state of preoperative identification, in which hated self-attributes of members of the group gripped by prejudice are phantasised to exist in members of the stigmatised race" (62). As a matter of fact, Caliban who is constantly defined as a villain never causes any real harm to any character in the play, yet he is alone to be subjected to Prospero's severe pain that is sanctioned in the name of claimed edification.

Further to this, resting on his ability to subdue Caliban through words, Prospero's speeches reflect two strands in colonial discourse: blatant otherness and ambivalence. On the one hand, 'blatant otherness' refers to the act of constructing and imagining the profiling Other to be essentially, irredeemably inferior and defective. Prospero not only produces knowledge about Caliban, but the very reality he appears to describe. As Said holds, the power of such discourse lies in its ability to produce a reality more than reality itself. Said describes this "political vision of reality" (46) as "a material investment of scholarship that colonial powers used as an instrument for maintaining 'content'

or the voluntary reproduction by the subjects of the social reality desired by the power" (10). Yet, to sustain Prospero's authority over Caliban, there should be an attempt of reformation, or "a civilising mission," whose object is "to construe the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction" (Homi Bhabha 70). For this aim, Prospero brings the idea of enlightenment as an attempt to consolidate his mission in this foreign land. Bhabha argues: "colonial power and discourse are possessed entirely by the coloniser" to legitimise its practice over the colonised (74).

On the other hand, Prospero's attempt to domesticate Caliban and abolish his radical otherness creates a split by simultaneously positioning him inside and outside his colonial knowledge. Bhabha perceives this as an ambivalent relation since while the coloniser, via discourse, desires to produce subordinate subjects who, in turn, reproduce his values, he ceases to create subjects that are too similar to him as this would be threatening. This ambivalence is unwelcomed to the coloniser as it problematises both his claimed authority on knowledge and his attempts to produce compliant subjects who can reproduce his assumptions, habits and values. That is why, Prospero's aim is never fully fulfilled since Caliban's mimicry, in using the same discourse, appears to outdo Prospero in their cursing competition: "You taught me language, and my profit on't/ Is, I know how to curse" (1.2.16). Being too similar to Prospero, Caliban becomes threatening to the authority of his master, and in a desperate attempt to illuminate this danger, Caliban is also determined as a fixed irreformable subject. Accordingly, as Bhabha argues, the coloniser appeals to the notion of 'fixity' as the last ideological construction of the Other who in turn becomes predictable but unchangeable. Fixity, as Bhabha holds, is an essential concept for the survival of the colonial subject in the coloniser's discourse as an Other who "is always in place, already known, and something that must anxiously be repeated" (66). Ultimately, Caliban's evil identity is perpetuated and repeated through Prospero's discursive strategy that vacillates between the discriminatory power of discourse and its ambivalent essence. This is exactly where the colonial and Renaissance theological discourses intersect: 'fixity' in the part of the colonised subject that hampers its rehabilitation parallels the axiomatic evilness sourced by the devil.

Nonetheless, the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised is more complicated than just relying on corecive power in the part of the coloniser. It also rests on a strategic control brought about by means of parelleing prudent diplomacy with discourse and violence. While Caliban is despised throughout the entire narrative as being ungifted, he is believed to possess native-slave assistance to his master. Addressing Ariel, the loyal native servant, Prospero reminds him of how Caliban can be useful in labour work: "But as 'tis,/ We cannot miss him. He does make our fire,/ Fetch in our wood,

and serves in offices/ That profit us" (1.2.14). In fact, the triangulated interaction between the natives Ariel and Caliban with Prospero discloses different yet similar conducts of the coloniser colonised relation. As a contrast to Caliban's rebellious behaviour, Ariel demonstrates eagerness to complicity and unquestionable obedience. Hence, Caliban, with human flesh and tangible disgust more realistically reflects resistance to the coloniser's authority. Ariel, on the other hand, constructed not as true flesh but as a spiritual figure, becomes the ideal subject to the coloniser. As Spurr and Kenny argue, "to a Shakespearean audience not versed in post-colonial theory, let alone established views on colonization, Ariel becomes an ideal servant and partner in cultural interactions, accepting the rhetorical power and economic status of Prospero in sharp contrast with Caliban" (para. 1). To borrow Bhabha's statement: "there is always ambivalence at the site of cultural contacts" (111), Caliban becomes a social reality that is at once an unfamiliar Other and yet is entirely knowable and visible. Prospero manipulative, but ambivalent discourse, thus, appropriates the unfamiliar Caliban into seemingly coherent terms consummating his power and control over knowledge production about this Other.

To deepen this argument, the claimed idetity of Caliban is reinstated with what Jean Baudrillard describes as "hyperreality" suggesting that the sign of Caliban's evilness needing punishment becomes more important than Caliban himself (18). Poulard argues that "the island becomes a pure ideological signifier to fix Prospero's fantasy: a hyperreality […] the ultimate simulacrum for power relations" (3). With such hyperreality, it is quite possible to understand how the discourse of the powerful creates a hierarchical system which not only defines the identity of the Other, but also creates lacks within the identity formation process. Through his omnipotent and forcefully controlling speeches, Prospero occupies a position of a totalitarian "prince of power" whose omniscient eye institutes the perception of the Other. This omniscient eye, according to Poulard, was born with the Enlightenment assumptions as a totalitarian regime of truth and was deepened during the late Renaissance era. The possibility of Shakespeare's endorsement of this Elizabethan idea is what allows Prospero to succeed in fashioning Caliban's reality as such. Accordingly, being constructed as the only dissident voice to Prospero's rhetoric authority, Caliban becomes a dangerous insider to the colonial discourse since assigning him part of this authority undermines the logic and infrastructures of this discourse.

Although lacking a similar authority to that of her father, Miranda's discourse serves as an extension to Prospero's colonialist attitude in the manner discussed above or, at least, her "speech certainly takes a leaf out of Prospero's book" (Deann Williams 9). Miranda's use of the signs of "slave", "savage", "Being capable of all ill", and "A thing most brutish"—are all associated with White cultural supremacist tendencies. Yet, Miranda's position creates an added tension to the colonial discourse since introducing her as an innocent child who

later on grows up as an educated young female figure contradicts the colonial role assigned to her. Consequently, Miranda, the sympathetic and pure female, is burdened with the mission of the male's colonialist and autocratic role. As such being complicit to her father's teachings against her presumed attributes of femininity, Miranda represents another aspect of ambivalence in the play's colonial discourse. As a result, Miranda becomes not just an occasional feminine figure and a source of some sympathetic simulacrum of the white community in the island, but the Caliban's primary educator. Whilst an educator role requires an understanding and compassionate responsibility towards learners, Miranda's 'education' to Caliban—like that of her father's—is both hypocrite and brutal. Additionally, the portrayal of Miranda involves two conflicting roles: while being subservient to the other male powers represented by Prospero and Ferdinand, she is simultaneously overmastering Caliban through actions stronger than expected from her. This conflictual image of Miranda invites some critics to claim that Miranda's conduct towards Caliban is "out of character for her" (Williams 10). This conduct, as Williams argues, "complicates Miranda's reputation for being obedient, demure, and a willing pawn in Prospero's marriage scheme and conveys, instead, the discourse and outlook of a hard-hearted coloniser: equating her own language and culture with civilised "goodness" and condemning Caliban as a "brutish" barbarian" (16). In such depiction, Shakespeare betrays his own ideology regarding women as being subordinate subjects despite the fact that such representation is temporarily interrupted through her behaviour towards Caliban. In this respect, Miranda is forced to compromise her demure nature that make the pinnacle of femininity in favour of adopting a white heterosexual middle-class male role in the colonial project.

Lastly, I turn to Caliban's perception of his own identity as the despised and inferior Other, and the role of the white community in constructing and shaping his identity. Caliban evokes: "I must obey. His art is of much pow'r,/ It would control my dam's god, Setebos" (1.2.16). Situated in Prospero's manipulative discourse, Caliban passes through a deconstructive process, simultaneously in-and-out a state of the self and otherness. It becomes a process of self-identification that is always fluctuating between differences, shifting beyond Manichean thought and as a product of two competing discourses (Said 132). Caliban internalises Prospero's discourse in a fundamental matter that shapes his perception of himself including his faith, which is constructed within the vocabulary of binarism between the 'centre' and the 'periphery'; (Prospero's god versus Caliban's Setebos). The outcome of this contrasting process is that his god becomes inferior to that of Prospero and the others who make a Christian community in the island. Although he lives in his own native land, Caliban suffers from a deep sense of loss and estrangement as he is being surrounded by a powerful Christian community that despises his otherness. In result, he

internalises his otherness as the evil Other. Being an object of intense oppression makes him pass through a mystic experience culminating in internalising the evil nature that is imputed to him.

Caliban's articulation of his consciousness reflects a state of devoid self-control therefore develops a submissive state to the authority of Prospero. Professing such a state, he reflects: "When thou cam'st first,/ Thou strok'st me and madest much of me, wouldst give/ me/ Water with berries isn't, and teach me how/ To name the bigger light" (1.2.15). As such, Caliban's perceived evil identity is inescapably intertwined with a state of fluctuation between sameness and difference (Bhabha 142). Although violently comprehended, he makes a perception of the world, including his own claimed evilness, through the eyes of his master. "Since Caliban learns English through Prospero, his expression on his own self is bound to remain within the strict lines of the superior Subject who controls him" (Tuğlu 62). As Jacques Derrida puts it, the self "in departing from itself, lets itself be put into the question by other" (94). Derrida insists that, in its encounter with otherness, the self indulges in "adventuring outside oneself towards the unforeseeably-other," and in so doing, it encounters "the impossibility of return to the same" (99).

Furthermore, the relationship between Caliban and Miranda is fraught with undercurrent tension reflecting the specifically English colonial desire for "peopling". While Shakespeare imputed to Caliban a motive for the attempt to rape Miranda, Caliban is rendered guilty of what were in reality English colonial ambitions (Hulme, Sherman and Howard 205). Shakespeare's projection of colonial ambitions onto Caliban, as Hulme argues, allowed "English audiences of the time to understand the character's motives, but to identify with their fellow coloniser's horror at the possibility of a colonial island peopled with Calibans. Since Caliban is the colonial subject, English audiences would not perceive him as having symmetrical rights with colonisers to 'people' the isle" (205). Yet, while Caliban articulated his desire to people the island with descendants like himself, he chooses Miranda as his means to reproduce himself. Rather than being a mixture of Caliban and Miranda, those descendants would be Caliban's, which touches on English folk beliefs in the determining character of the father. As such, Caliban's claimed attempt to rape Miranda implies gendered complexities of the coloniser and colonised respective claims to the island, for both men's rights turn out to operate through women.

To conclude, Caliban's presumed villainous nature is ambivalently constructed both linguistically and culturally. With an interplay between authority and discourse, the incomprehensibility of Caliban's otherness is simultaneously located inside and outside the White European cultural values. His 'evil' identity is configured through restless violence, insanity, and alienation, which allows an interpretation of these signs as being constructed through a triangulated interplay between discourse, power and ideology. Caliban

therefore has become an ideological social reality that lacks sensible justification. On the one hand, he is radically the unfamiliar Other, and, to meet the authority of European 'self' represented by Prospero, he is, on the other hand, entirely knowable and visible. Prospero's manipulative but ambivalent discourse appropriates the unfamiliar Caliban into seemingly coherent terms including savage, demon, brute and half brute, bestial, primitive, etc.—a combination of images, which make a colonial discourse irrespective of the signifying contradictions they involve. Prospero's discourse, therefore, as Horne asserts is "suspended between the world of mind and language where words enable [him] to lay hold on reality and a world of essences which, somehow, have no existence and no words by which they can be grasped" (41). This indicates how in "the discourses of colonialism, colonised subjects are split between contrary positions. They are domesticated, harmless, knowable; but also, at the same time wild, harmful and mysterious" (John McLeod 53). Ironically, in spite of lacking semantic authority, the image of Caliban, as a figure permeating the characteristics of evil, has been propagated in the subsequent centuries. As demonstrated above, several poets, writers and critics have incorporated this image of Caliban in their works.

With the emergence of new theoretical strands, e.g., postcolonialism and poststructuralism, the colonial discourse as presented in *The Tempest* has turned to be subject to security and criticism. The discourse of evil as discussed in this essay is also conceived problematic since it fails to provide sounding evidence of *why* Caliban is essentially evil beyond the ideologically informed claims. Although religion and literature have a long common history where the religious scripts have been a source of inspiration to writers and poets, this tendency has become unquestionably problematic nowadays. It might be observed that the majority of classical literatures is religious, in the sense that it was produced in a cultural milieu in which the Divine was taken for granted (Christina Phillips 64). This tradition, according to Phillips, has ceased to be the case in the modern periods since moral worldviews were taken away from God to the humans' value judgements. In *The Tempest*, the discourse of evil attributed to Caliban mounts up as a hyperreality evidenced through Prospero's theological accounts and actions, which might be justified within the Renaissance religious values. This discourse however has become questionable since Caliban's apparent villainous nature relies on a contingency of religious linguistic signs. When religious beliefs are forced into a work of a cross-cultural dimension, truth becomes doubtfully accepted on universal and secular levels.

Postmodernism has also been unfaithful to religious beliefs once included in literary works: "it [postmodernism] has not helped the cause of religious fiction and poetry by casting doubt on any narrative that asserts unproblematic truth" (Phillips 66). The ascribed evilness of Caliban instates a manic discourse that lacks justified semantic authority; it rather

metamorphosed as a gnostic textual doctrine that acclaims its authority from the interplay between language and power. The discourse of evil, thus, becomes a purposeful obscuring of power that hides beneath textuality and knowledge (Said 162). Accordingly, Caliban's otherness is established as an imaginative reality that is located against the mainstream culture. This political account of reality is also coupled with the Manichaeism of dualism rooted in Renaissance ideology regarding light and darkness, or the struggle between the spiritual world of light, and the material world of darkness. This ideology had also been flourished in an era when the earth-shattering discoveries of new lands and races, which aided the fancy of writers and poets to find the different Other as a fertile realm to circulate such assumptions. Last, since the overall aim of the paper was to address an area that is under researched, namely, the intersection between discourse of evil and politics of representation in the Renaissance period, it is recommended that future research would be necessary to examine the interplay in contemporary works.

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Hikaru Minami[*]

Writing and Rewriting Nationhood: *Henry V* and Political Appropriation of Shakespeare

Abstract: Shakespeare's *Henry V* is often regarded as a nationalistic play and has been appropriated for political spin and propaganda to enhance the sense of national unity. Shakespeare captures the emerging nationalistic feeling of the Tudor era in Henry's emphasis on national history and pride, but various parts of the text suggest a more diverse and complex figures of the king and his subjects than a war hero and the united nation. Such complexity, however, is often ignored in political appropriation. Laurence Olivier's film adaptation during WWII glamorizes the war and defines the English nation as a courageous "band of brothers" through its presentation of Shakespeare's play a shared story or history of national victory. Kenneth Branagh's film in 1989, on the other hand, captures the ugliness of war but it still romanticizes the sacrifice for the country. In 2016, Shakespeare was made part of the Brexit discourse of growing nationalism at the time of the EU referendum. Brexit was imagined as a victory that will bring back freedom and sovereignty the country once enjoyed, and Shakespeare was used to represent the greatness of Britain. Shakespeare's text, however, depicts the war against the continent in a more skeptical than glorifying tone. The war scenes are scattered with humorous dialogues and critical comments and the multi-national captains of Henry's army are constantly at odds with one another. Shakespeare thus provides us with a wider view of nationhood, resisting the simplifying force of politics.

Keywords: Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, *Henry IV*, *King Richard II*, *Cymbeline*, Brexit, national identity, populism, nationalism, adaptation and appropriation, Laurence Olivier, Kenneth Branagh.

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[*] Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan. hminami31@gmail.com

"Cry 'God for Harry! England and Saint George!'" (3.1.34)

Henry V is often regarded as patriotic.[1] Constance Hunt, for example, argues that the St Crispin's Day speech is effective in "inspiring his men to be willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of a greater purpose" (138), noting that "[h]uman beings rarely risk their lives for abstract ideals of justice, but rather for emotional attachments to brotherhood, family, love, and nation" (138). Henry's speeches are indeed patriotic and moving, but is there anything such as a unitary nation?

This paper will examine how nationhood is created within and without the play world of Henry V, and how Shakespeare has been appropriated for political spin and propaganda to heighten the sense of national unity even though the original texts are at least ambiguous or even argue against the ideology of national uniformity.

The first section will explore the creation of nationhood within and without Henry V, surveying nationalistic movements in Renaissance England, and both nationalistic and non-nationalistic aspects of the play to outline how the idea of nationhood was constructed. The second section will analyse film adaptations by Laurence Olivier and Kenneth Branagh to show how they present the English nation as a victorious people throughout history. The final section will focus on the representation of the country and people at the time of the EU referendum, and show how Shakespeare was implicated in Brexit discourse to uplift nationalism. Resisting the simplifying force of politics, Shakespeare provides us with a wider view of nationhood.

Nationhood Within and Without *Henry V*

This section examines nationalistic movements in Renaissance England as well as both nationalistic and non-nationalistic aspects of *Henry V* to outline how the idea of nationhood is created within and without the play. The first part will survey how the Tudor monarchs endeavoured to create a sense of unity through the production of atlases and composing of a history. The second part of this section will focus on how Henry defines his nation and manipulates discourses

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[1] Lily Campbell considers Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry V as that of a war-hero, and recognises "[a] mood of exultation" (255) that pervades the play; Greenblatt notes that Shakespeare "deftly registers every nuance of royal hypocrisy, ruthlessness, and bad faith" but still considers the play as "a collective panegyric" (56) to the king. On the other hand, William Hazlitt sees Henry V as a man of "brute force, glossed over with a little religious hypocrisy" (132) who does not deserve Shakespeare's effort "to apologise for the actions of the king" (132); and Thomas Healy considers the play critically as "a mouthpiece of a British national spirit" (176).

of nationalism, and the final part on other characters who cast doubt on the king's idea of the united nation.

As Richard Helgerson notes in *Forms of Nationhood*, maps were often intended "as an expression of power" of the ruling monarch (107). The Elizabethan government ordered the first detailed survey of England and Wales, which was published in 1579. The atlas displayed the royal arms on every page, the connotation of which was that "[n]ot only are these the queen's maps; this is the queen's land, her kingdom" (111). Visualising the land was a way of consolidating power over it.

When the land is delineated, people within the boundary are also defined. Citing William Camden's *Britania* (1586) and Richard Verstegan's *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1605) as examples of works that described the English as an Anglo-Saxon race, Ania Loomba notes that, in the early modern period "national boundaries were increasingly defined by identifying its people as a 'race', or as a group with a common heritage, bloodline, and religion" (24). The emphasis on shared identity thus serves to unify the inhabitants of the land as a nation.

The Elizabethan era was also a time for the production of national history. Works such as Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577), William Harrison's *Description of England* (1577), and John Stow's *The Chronicles of England* (1580) were published and reprinted throughout and beyond her reign. These works present history as stories that everyone who lives on the land shares, further contributing to the sense of national unity.

Unity is moreover achieved by means of othering and exclusion. Loomba points out that Europeans in Shakespeare's time began "to trade with outsiders, but also to expel those they considered 'foreign' from within their own nations" (4) and that "both nationalist feelings and hostility to outsiders increased" (15) throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The fact that the English population included "people from Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, who were neither fully outsiders nor insiders" made the situation more complicated for the monarchs, and King James I's attempts to "effect a union between England and Scotland met with resistance from the House of Commons" (Loomba 15). The relationship between different "races" was complex in spite, though also in service, of the efforts by the ruling class for national unity.

Within the world of *Henry V*, the king defines 'true' English men as being capable of manly valour, while labelling those who did not join the invasion as unmanly cowards. Whereas "he to-day that sheds his blood with me / Shall be my brother" (4.3.61-62), others shall "hold their manhoods cheap" (4.3.66). When he says in the St. Crispin's Day Speech, "We would not die in that man's company / That fears his fellowship to die with us" (4.3.38-39), Henry draws a clear line between his nation and the other, and threatens

his troops with being forgotten not only as soldiers, but also disregarded as his subjects.

Henry's speeches emphasise descent, kinship, and history to appeal to the emotions of the listener so that they develop pride in being a part of his England. For example, he emphasises bloodline, kinship, bonds in lines such as "On, on, you noble English, / Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof" (3.1.17-18) and "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers" (4.3.60). Henry also appeals to personal emotion, pride and a sense of honour in being English when he orders to his troops "Dishonour not your mothers" (3.1.22) and "good yeomen, / Whose limbs were made in England, show us here / The mettle of your pasture; let us swear / That you are worth your breeding" (3.1.25-28) while labelling the French as "men of grosser blood" (3.1.24) who need to be taught how to fight.

When he mentions that "Fathers that like so many Alexanders / Have in these parts from morn till even fought" (3.1.19-20), the king connects personal account to national history. In the final part of the speech, the king turns the listeners' mind again to history in lines such as "This story shall the good man teach his son, / And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by / From this day to the ending of the world / But we in it shall be remembered" (4.3.56-59). The significance of remembrance—both remembering and being remembered—serves to present the Battle of Agincourt as an epoch-making moment for the country as well as individuals.

As Howard and Rackin rightly observe, Henry's men "whether Irish or English, Scottish or Welsh, yeoman or earl—temporarily become a band of brothers, the many differences among them rhetorically and emotionally elided by the moving eloquence of the young king" in war (4). However, this scheme entails othering and exclusion. In the process of creating the image of brave English men, Henry, who as a prince knew his people from the top to bottom levels of society, eliminates those who do not fit into his ideal figure. As Prince Hal he kept company with the poorest of the nation, that is, Falstaff, Bardolph, Nym, and Ancient Pistol, who spend their days robbing travellers and spending money to drink in the tavern. Those who showed him a life that struggles to make ends meet in *Henry IV* are marginalised and eliminated in *Henry V*. They are either dead from illness or executed as a result of their poverty.

Interestingly, their deaths are not directly depicted but only reported in an often detached manner as if to further signify their distance from the king. Falstaff is reported to be in a critical condition in act 2 scene 1, and his death is grieved by his fellows later. This once eloquent character is not given any lines, but the consensus of his fellows is that "The king has killed his heart" (2.1.88) or "The King hath run bad humours on the knight" (2.1.121). Later in the middle of the battle of Agincourt, the pageboy recounts how Bardolph and Nym were hanged for stealing a lute-case and fire-shovel (4.5.71). Thus, Henry is shown to

abandon those most in need for the sake of his endeavour to present himself as the righteous king and to bring the country under unified rule.

Disquieting situations described in the text shows that Henry's nation is far from unified. For example, the king is betrayed by his close subjects, Richard Earl of Cambridge, Lord Scroop of Masham, and Sir Thomas Grey of Northumberland at the time of his departure to France. The scene that exposes their plot and their subsequent punishment in act 2 scene 2 not only reveals the discord within his court but also shines a light on the scheming side of Henry. Already aware of their plot, he once let them deny mercy to a minor offender who is to be executed before sentencing them to death.

The captains of his army are constantly quarrelling (act 3 scene 2, act 4 scene 7). The English captain Gower tries to assert his predominance by taking the initiative in their conversations through giving orders or questioning other captains over the state of war (3.2.54-55, 3.2.87-88), or taking the role of an arbitrator (3.2.136, 5.1.40). The Welsh Fluellen always tries to pick an argument over "the disciplines of the wars" (2.3.97) and is quick to seize on opportunities through his Welsh connection to the king (act 4 scene 7), while the Irish Macmorris flares up at whoever he suspects of looking down on him.

Not only the courtiers and the officers but also the poorest of the nation poses a threat to order. Nym and Bardolph are prowling around the battlefields to "steal anything, and call it purchase" (3.2.42) despite the king's command that "there be nothing compelled from the / villages, nothing taken but paid for, none of the / French upbraided or abused in disdainful language" (3.6.108-10). In this way, Shakespeare's text unveils the complex state of the nation behind Henry's emphasis on unity.

As shown above, outside the world of the play, the sense of nationhood was created through various means such as the clarification of national borders, compilation of history, and the creation and exclusion of the other. Shakespeare represents the diverse and complex state of the nation while also capturing the emerging nationalistic feeling that is reflected in compositions of history. Henry V follows the actual Tudor kings in his emphasis on national pride and history, and therefore the play appears to be nationalistic when focused on his speeches. If we follow subtexts, however, it offers a more diverse and complex figuration of the nation and the king himself.

Film Adaptations and Nationalism

Wartime especially is the time for Shakespeare as "the embodiment of Britain's cultural elitism" (Johnson 48), and during the WWII, when the film industry was stimulated by "propaganda imperative" (Street 155), literary and theatrical heritage was "an obvious source for scripts which communicated particular

notions of nationhood" (Street 155). Laurence Olivier's cinematic adaptation of *Henry V* (1944) is one of such films. In contrast, Kenneth Branagh's 1989 film adaptation is often regarded as a counter narrative to Olivier's war-time propaganda. Therefore, this section focuses on how these films present the English nation through the story of victory.

Olivier's Film

In Olivier's cinematic adaptation during WWII, Henry and the English nation are defined as a heroic leader and orderly subjects. The film first draws attention to the importance of the play as a shared cultural asset of Britain by showing "authentic" Shakespearean audience and inviting its modern viewers to identify with them. It opens with the view of London around Shakespeare's time and moves into the Globe Theatre. The camera angle that often looks up to the stage makes the viewer of the film feel as if they are among the audiences in the yard. In the end, the film again reminds the viewer that they have watched the play with those audiences in the sixteenth- or seventeenth century.

The Chorus in the Elizabethan costume serves as "the audience's first and most immediate link to England's glorious past" (Royal 106) creating "intimate continuity between Elizabethan theater and contemporary cinema, between the England of Agincourt (and Elizabeth) and the England of 1944" (Donaldson 62). In Shakespeare's text, Chorus' repeated appeal to the audience to "make imaginary puissance" (Prologue 25) and "sit and see, / Minding true things by what their mockeries be" (4.0.53) makes us conscious of self-deception which we are willing to employ (Royal 104). This highly theatrical gesture of the Chorus also makes us aware of the rhetorical pose of Henry, who "cloaks his personal ambitions in a language of ceremony and nationalism" (Royal 104).

Olivier's Chorus, however, does not only introduce the viewers to different scenes but also plays a part in raising the sense of national pride with the lines such as "Now all the youth of England are on fire. . . Following the mirror of all Christian kings, / With winged heels, as English Mercuries" (2.0.1, 6-7). Several cuts in his lines reinforces his role in the film as an advocate for the king and his victory. The most noticeable example is the lines which mention Henry VI and the loss of his territory in France (Epilogue 7-13). As a result, the Chorus that provides critical as well as praising view on Henry and his deeds in Shakespeare's text is reduced to "a mere lackey of seamless patriotism" (Royal 105).

The film encourages not only physical but also psychological assimilation of audiences. After the cheerful departure of Henry and his subjects to France, the scene changes to dying Falstaff. The close-up of the signboard of the Boar's Head Tavern with sorrowful music is followed by the flashback of

the moment in which Hal who became Henry V banished Falstaff in *2H4*. The scene on and around Falstaff's death amounts to almost ten minutes, and with Falstaff, the viewer is asked to remember the entire *Henry IV* and how prince Hal became the king casting away those who he regards "the base contagious clouds" (*1H4* 1.2.185). Olivier's film presupposes the viewers' knowledge of the previous plays and thus implies that Shakespeare's plays are widely shared culture of Britain.

In Shakespeare's text, the war scenes amount to 1500 lines, which is about half the entire text. Although both Harfleur and Agincourt scenes include patriotic speeches, however, the tone is more sceptical than glorifying with scenes scattered with the page's observing commentary on moral and manhood (3.2.28-53), humorous (mis)communication and quarrels among captains (3.2.54-142, 4.1.65-83, 4.7.11-53), Pistol ranting (3.6.20-58, 4.1.35-63, 4.4.1-65), common soldiers confronting the king (4.1.87-226) and the consequent confusion about the gloves they exchange (4.8.6-73). These sceptical comments or rather comical moments amount to more than 500 lines.

Critical comments towards war are found in various places in the text. For example, after Henry's speech that drives soldiers "Once more to the breach" (3.1.1), Nym holds Bardolph back from charging on to the breach saying that the fight is "too hot" and "I have not a case of lives" (3.2.3-4). At the camp a common soldier wishes that King Henry "were here alone; so should he be sure to be ransomed, and a many poor men's lives saved" (4.1.121-123), and when Henry insists that "his cause being just and his quarrel honourable" (4.1.126-27), the soldier says, "If his cause be wrong, our obedience to the King wipes the crime of it out of us" (131-32). In this way, war scenes in the text are filled with negative opinions.

In contrast, the war scenes which take up about forty percent of the running time of Olivier's film, are glamorised by two means. One of them is the deletion of lines that would detract from Henry's figure as a war hero. A large part of his prayer to God before the battle of Agincourt is cut, and only the first four lines are kept so that the prayer shows his resolution for war without a hint of his emotional turmoil: "O God of battles! steel my soldiers' hearts; / Possess them not with fear. Take from them now / The sense of reckoning, if the opposed numbers / Pluck their hearts from them" (4.1.286-89). The remainder of lines is cut, in which he confesses that he acknowledges "[his] father made in compassing the crown" (4.1.291) and "bestowed more contrite tears" (4.1.293). Henry's controversial order that "every soldier kill his prisoners" (4.6.37) is omitted, and the execution of Bardolph is not mentioned. In this way, the king's weakness and violence are kept out of sight.

The other means of glamorisation is an extension of and addition to the war scene, showing the English army of different classes and ranks from infantry to cavalry gallantly fighting together for the country. The most significant

addition is the duel between Henry and Dauphin (1:45:38-1:46:28). The fight is highly reminiscent of that of Prince Hal and Henry Hotspur in *1H4*, where the former defeats the latter to gain fame as a war hero. Henry V does not kill Dauphin, of course, but his victory over him concludes the battle as his triumph over Hotspur did in the previous play. Again, the film brings in the sense of continuation from *Henry IV* and touches upon the shared culture as it does in giving more attention to Falstaff than the text does.

Branagh's Film

Branagh's 1989 film adaptation is often regarded as a counter-narrative to Olivier's war-time propaganda (Deats 285; Shaughnessy 48; Watts 10). However, his sympathetic portrayal of the king and his subjects render the film defective as a counter-narrative as it ends up presenting nationalism in a positive light. While Olivier's Henry was portrayed as a charismatic leader, Branagh's Henry is recreated as a more sympathetic figure. A significant change from both Olivier's version and Shakespeare's text is that Branagh shows us Henry's anguish in the execution of Bardolph (1:01:09 – 1:03:30). Henry remembers his merry time with Bardolph at a pub in a flashback, in which Bardolph asks him, "Do not thou, when thou art king, hand a thief" (*1H4* 1.2.58-59), and as Henry replies, "No, thou shalt" (*1H4* 1.2.60), the scene returns to the present. When the execution is put into action, tears run down his face (1:02:42), and he declares, "We would have all offenders so cut off" (3.6.106) in a tearful voice.

As Royal points out, Henry in this added scene appears "more of victim than an instigator of the tragedy that surrounds him" (108), and the sense of victimhood is reinforced when he mutters in agony, "Upon the King! . . . We must bear all. O hard condition" (4.1.227-230). Such emphasis on his suffering renders Branagh's Henry more sympathetic than a national icon. However, this is precisely how Branagh fails to make this film fundamentally different from Olivier's glorification. The film endeavours to close the distance between Henry and the audience, and as a result, it leaves no room for them to become aware of the king's duplicity.

The war scenes emphasise Henry's relatability by another means, i.e. brotherhood between him and his subjects. Both in Harfleur and Agincourt, the king is closely surrounded by his soldiers when he gives speeches, he looks at them in the eye, and even taps a pageboy's shoulder during his St. Crispin's Day Speech (1:29:48), and thus awakens a feeling of brotherhood. Henry in the battlefield "resembles his men and is distinguishable only by the rather muddy coat of arms on his tunic" (Forbes 258), and such portrayal of the king as "a simple man" (Forbes 259) makes him seem as if he can truly be one of the simple but strong band of "brothers" rather than show his moving eloquence as a façade.

With rain and wounded soldiers crawling in the mud, these war scenes depict the ugliness of war more realistically compared to Olivier's clear sky and green field. Nevertheless, Branagh's film glorifies the sacrifice for the country. The most notable example is the scene which continues for almost four minutes after the battle of Agincourt, when Henry and his army retrieve the bodies of victims chanting *Non nobis*, which goes, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the praise" (1:52:05-1:55:53). *Non nobis* is mentioned in Shakespeare's text, but this fairly emotional scene is Branagh's addition, and the killing of the French prisoners is, again, omitted to conceal Henry's darker side.

The Chorus, which offers a critical commentary in Shakespeare's text, is not effectively used in Branagh's adaptation. For the first two scenes before the battle of Harfleur, the film reflects the critical undertone in Shakespeare's text. The prologue by Chorus who is dressed in modern attire disengages the audience rather than lead them into the play world as in Olivier's version by showing stage props and lighting apparatus.

In the rest of the film, however, the Chorus loses the sharpness in his commentaries, and Henry is presented in a positive light as a war hero. The Chorus, who stayed outside the scenes of the play, appears in the middle of the battle of Harfleur, covered in sweat, as if he is a TV reporter at the scene. From then on, he accompanies the English army, and in the epilogue he has scars above his left eye as if to say, as Henry claimed in his speech, "'These wounds I had on Crispin's day'" (*H5* 4.3.48). In this way, the Chorus gradually becomes "caught up in the plot that he is contriving" (Royal 107), and loses his critical attitude in the end.

As shown above, adaptations by both Olivier and Branagh present the English nation as a band of people united against the greater force from outside. Presenting Shakespeare's play as a shared history or story of national victory, Olivier's film glamorises the war, and defines Henry and the English nation as a heroic leader and orderly subjects. Branagh's film, on the other hand, delivers the ugliness of war in its realistic representation, but it nonetheless romanticises the sacrifice for the country. In both films, resulting sentiment is "O England, model to thy inward greatness, / Like little body with a mighty heart" (2.0.16-17).

Brexit, Nationalism and Shakespeare

As examined in earlier sections, Henry V constantly reminds his soldiers that they are English and fighting for England. They are addressed as "you noble English, / Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof" (3.1.17-18), "good yeomen, / Whose limbs were made in England" (3.1.25-26) who fight for "England and Saint George" (3.1.34). Such collective identity—"us"—can only

be defined in relation to "them" (Lorenz 29). In *The Making of English National Identity*, Krishan Kumar notes that "British national identity was forged through a series of powerful contrasts with Britain's continental neighbours, particularly but not only France" (ix); Britain's relationship with the continent has always been a complex one.

In 2016, the UK held the United Kingdom European Union Membership Referendum, commonly referred to as the EU Referendum, and voted to exit the EU. This is so-called Brexit (Moseley). Like the speeches of Henry V in Shakespeare's text and those in film adaptations, Brexit discourse is full of emphasis on comradeship, history and national pride. This section will analyses how pro-leave campaigns appealed to people with the image of a small but mighty country's fight for sovereignty and freedom against a giant power, and how Shakespeare was implicated in Brexit discourse for the exaltation of nationalism.

Brexit and Nationalism

In the Brexit campaign, the national flag seems to have worked in a similar way to the royal arms on Elizabethan maps. Steve Corbett observes the "extensive use of red and white in campaign literature connecting with the English national flag" (20).[2] About ten days before the vote, the popular tabloid *The Sun* embellished its front cover with a Union Jack and the message "BeLEAVE in Britain" ("It's *The Sun*"). Mentioning the EU flags in London, Boris Johnson asks, "Do we feel loyalty to that flag? Do our hearts pitter-patter as we watch it flutter over public buildings?" and answers himself, "On the contrary. The British share . . . a growing sense of alienation" ("Boris Johnson's Speech").[3] The Union Jack was thus used as a symbol to represent the British sovereignty against the European Union.

Slogans such as "Take back control" used by the Leave Campaign emphasized sovereignty and autonomy for the British nation while rejecting interventions from the EU. Such an appeal to "sovereignty" is not a new thing. G.R. Elton, in *England Under the Tudors*, maintains that "[t]he essential ingredient of the Tudor revolution was the concept of national sovereignty" (160). The Reformation was an English exit from Catholic rule in Europe, and it was promoted under the watchword of "sovereignty".

In the Act in Restraint of Appeals in 1533 which declared King Henry VIII instead of the Pope as the final authority in religious as well as political matters, Thomas Cromwell on behalf of the king defines England as "an

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[2] Kojo Koram notes that "[w]hile Leavers and Remainers might both see the union jack as a symbol flexible enough to be adapted for their own needs, this is largely an English approach to the flag" (5) as it proclaims English values for other parts of the union.
[3] Hereafter "Speech".

Empire, and so hath been accepted in the world, governed by one Supreme Head and King" (Bray 78). The act continues to state that "the King . . . made sundry ordinances, laws, statutes and provisions for the entire and sure conservation of the prerogatives, liberties and pre-eminences of the said imperial crown of this realm . . . to keep it from the authority of other foreign potentates" (Bray 78-79). Pointing out that the word "empire" here denotes "a political unit, a self-governing state" free from foreign intervention, Elton states that the 1530s marked the emergence of the modern concept of the country as "a sovereign national state" (161).

The same idea of the breakaway from European domination to establish sovereignty was used in Brexit, in which discourses re-imagined both the country and its people as marginalized and oppressed by the centralized power of the European Union. In his speech on the EU referendum in 2016, Boris Johnson asserted that the EU has "considerable powers . . . across the whole 28-nation territory" and "it is still becoming ever more centralizing, interfering and anti-democratic", by which "[t]he independence of this country is being seriously compromised" ("Speech").

Michael Gove, in his pre-referendum contribution to The Telegraph, maintains that "[t]he ability to choose who governs us, and the freedom to change laws we do not like, were secured for us in the past by radicals and liberals who took power from unaccountable elites and placed it in the hands of the people" and asks, "[a]re we really too small, too weak and too powerless to make a success of self-rule?" ("EU Referendum").[4] They conclude that "by leaving the EU we can take control" ("EU"), through the "devolution of powers back to nations and people" ("Speech"), as from the Pope to the English king and the parliament.

This breakaway from the EU was often publicized in heroic imagery of a fight. In the same speech, Johnson aligns the Leave Campaign against the EU echoing Henry V's small army that won against France's larger army.

> It is we in the Leave Camp—not they—who stand in the tradition of the liberal cosmopolitan European enlightenment . . . and though they are well-funded, and though we know that they can call on unlimited taxpayer funds for their leaflets, it is we few, we happy few who have the inestimable advantage of believing strongly in our cause, and that we will be vindicated by history. ("Speech")

Like Henry in his speeches, Johnson imagines himself and his followers as "a band of brothers" who are fighting for freedom despite their material restrictions, emphasizing the rightfulness of his cause by presenting Brexit as a memorable moment in history.

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[4] Hereafter "EU".

Some tabloids echo such discourse of leaving the EU as heroic bravery. *The Sun*, for example, celebrates that "Our paper led the fight against the EU" ("It's *The Sun*"), and *The Daily Mail* describes the Leave vote as "a magnificent affirmation of national self-belief and character" of "the real people of Britain" ("Take a Bow"). *The Daily Express* reads "[w]hen the history books are written, June 23, 2016 will be remembered as the day when Britain's bravery ushered in a golden age of global freedom" and proudly remembers, "[o]ur heroic men and women have made countless sacrifices over the centuries to ensure that not just we, but our friends across the globe can taste of freedom every day" ("Brexit"). All these papers celebrate the victory of ordinary people over elites.

Why do they present Brexit as a fight of the people? Cécile Leconte points out that "the key concept in all populist discourses is that of the 'people', either ethnically, socially or politically defined" and that "populist discourse . . . defines a single cause for multiple frustrations it tries to aggregate: the presumed betrayal of the 'people' by the elites" (258). To construct the "people" they serve, the politicians first create "an idealised conception of the community they serve", which Paul Taggart terms as a "heartland" (274). *The Daily Express*, for example, states that "[t]his is a great country, with a long and proud tradition of standing up for what is good and right" ("Brexit"). Such an idealistic presentation of the country and its people pervade Brexit discourse.

The heartland is "a construction of the good life derived retrospectively from a romanticized conception of life as it has been lived" (Taggart 278). A good example of Britain as the heartland is Michal Gove's. In the abovementioned article, Gove presents Britain as an ideal country in nostalgic recollection:

> In Britain we established trial by jury in the modern world, we set up the first free parliament, we ensured no-one could be arbitrarily detained at the behest of the Government, we forced our rulers to recognise they ruled by consent not by right, we led the world in abolishing slavery, we established free education for all, national insurance, the National Health Service and a national broadcaster respected across the world. ("EU")

In a similar vein with Tudor monarchs who attempted to construct the idea of the country and its nation through chorography, Gove re-imagines Britain as once great but betrayed and suppressed by the EU, presenting Brexit as a fight for the people to make it great again.

Shakespeare in Brexit

Shakespeare was quoted (and often misquoted) in this campaign to project Britain as a great country. Arguing that Shakespeare would vote to leave, Ben Macintyre concludes, "[h]is best lines, after all, were written for English patriots

standing up to continental interference: "This England never did, nor never shall, / Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror" ("To Leave or Remain?"). Daniel Hannan writes, "Shakespeare has his ancient Britons anticipate modern attitudes with uncanny aptness: 'Britain is / A world by itself; and we will nothing pay / For wearing our own noses'" ("How like a God"). A Washington Post article notes that "Brexit backers point to his patriotic verse—'This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England'" (Witte and Adam "In Shakespeare's Home Town").

These quotations are taken out of their original context. The first, from *King John* (5.7.112-13), is spoken by the Bastard as a closing remark after the king is poisoned to death. He concludes the time of the play as "when it [England] first did help to wound itself" (5.7.114). The second, from *Cymbeline* (3.1.12-14) is a rather instigating statement made by Cloten, a spoilt son of the evil queen, to lead the king into war with Rome. The third, from *Richard II* (2.1.50), is uttered by dying old John of Gaunt, who laments that "this, dear dear land . . . is now bound in with shame" and "That England, that was wont to conquer others, / Hath made a shameful conquest of itself" (2.1.57-63, 65-66). These lines used in support of Brexit are thus not the principal points of the original text. On the contrary, they convey the opposite messages. These are pernicious cases of political spin, intentionally taking Shakespeare out of context to manipulate people's emotions.

The attempt to regain or re-create strong Britishness came with the abhorrence and exclusion of the other, most prominently immigrants. After the Brexit poll, Britain saw a rise in open xenophobia, racism and hate crime (Cain; "Brexit 'Major Influence'"). The Brexit debate created "us" and "other" even inside Britain. *The Daily Mail*, for example, praises that "outside the echo-chamber that is the metropolitan liberal class, the real people of Britain . . . saw through the lies" and concludes that we should "pay tribute to the countless ordinary Britons who showed so much more wisdom than the self-serving political and financial elites" ("Take a Bow"). The effect of populist nationalism is the division, even within the "people" it imagines as united.

As we have seen, national pride abounds in Brexit discourse. Pro-leave politicians called attention to the crisis of "sovereignty", claiming that it is undermined and threatened by the ever more centralizing force of the elitist EU. In their words, Britain and its nation are imagined as marginalized and suppressed, deprived of freedom and power it once enjoyed, whilst Brexit is presented as a heroic deed for people to save the country from its marginalized position. Shakespeare was made part of this discourse for the exaltation of nationalism. Politicians selected most patriotic lines, out of context, to glorify Britain and to support their campaign with the words of the nation's bard. What Shakespeare's texts reveal, however, is a lamentation for national downfall as a result of the war against the other.

Conclusion

This paper examined how nationhood is created within and without the play world of *Henry V*, and how Shakespeare has been appropriated for political spin and propaganda to heighten the sense of national unity even though the original texts are ambiguous or argue against the ideology of uniformity. The first section explored the creation of nationhood within and without *Henry V*. The Tudor monarchs endeavoured to construct the nationhood through the clarification of national borders, compilation of history, and the creation and exclusion of the other. Chronicles and atlases were assembled to formulate the sense of a distinct nation represented by the sovereign. Although Shakespeare captures the emerging nationalistic feeling, he pictures the diverse and complex state of the nation. His Henry V follows the actual Tudor kings in his emphasis on national pride and history, but various parts of the text suggest a more diverse and complex figure of the king and his subjects.

The second section examined two film adaptations of the play by Laurence Olivier and Kenneth Branagh. Presenting Shakespeare's play as a shared history or story of national victory, Olivier's film glamorises the war, and defines Henry and the English nation as the heroic leader and orderly subjects. Though Branagh's film realistically represents the ugliness of war, it romanticises the sacrifice for the country, it gradually loses its critical attitude and become absorbed into Henry's nationalist narrative. In the end, both films define the English nation as a victorious people throughout history by presenting Shakespeare's play as a shared history or story of national victory, and making the audience a part of the narrative.

The final section analysed the representation of the country and people in the Brexit narrative, and how Shakespeare was employed in the leave campaign to uplift national pride. Pro-leave politicians emphasised comradeship, history and national pride by presenting Brexit as a heroic fight of the people to save the country from the oppression by the centralizing EU. Brexit was imagined as a victory which will bring back freedom and sovereignty the country once enjoyed, and Shakespeare was made part of this discourse. Shakespeare quotations that are made by the politicians are seemingly patriotic. If we look into the original context, however, what it reveals is often grief over the national downfall as a result of the war against the continent. In this way, Shakespeare provides us with a wider view of nationhood, resisting the simplifying force of politics.

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Mitashree Tripathy* ⓘD

From Casket to Court via Mercy and the Ring: Commemorating Shakespeare's Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*

Abstract: Shakespeare's comedies mark his artistic excellence in the portrayal of woman characters. Shakespearean women have invariably moved the audience and their understanding towards them from being sweet and mawkish to expressing their needs sternly for integrity, justice through wit and intelligence in his plays. Often strongly approved by the modern feminists, the qualities of intelligence and assertiveness are regarded as admirable qualities in Shakespearean comic heroines. As revolutionaries, Shakespearean female characters have always been projected as strong, sometimes stronger than the male counterparts; often going against the conventions of the society to symbolize what gender equality in the future may be like. Essential qualities like intelligence and wit always fulfilled and made Shakespearean heroines independent personalities. The female characters in Shakespeare's plays always played an important role in the dramatic run in both tragedies and comedies. This article studies the portrayal of intelligence by Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* making her the hero of the play.

Keywords: Elizabethan drama, Portia, intelligence.

Elizabethan Drama, Portia, Intelligence

The age was exemplified by vigor towards adventure that made it distinct among the ancient sources of knowledge. Literature flourished during the Elizabethan Age in the form of various genres like poems, essays, drama, etc. The period was famous to bring cultural and the artistic reformation in England. Writers like Sir Thomas Wyatt, Henry Howard, Thomas Watson, Edward de Vere, Edmund Spencer, Sir Philip Sidney, William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene and Ben Jonson were the most prominent literary professionals of that

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* Birla Global University, India. mitashreetripathy84@gmail.com

period. It is for reason that many historians considered this period to be the Golden age in English History.

Although the pursuit of literature was prosperous, and it demonstrated many artistic styles, however, the approach of common people towards literature was coarse and largely filled with criticism. But, "it was the Elizabethan writer's vigorous vitality alone, which overcame all obstacles, just as it still gives to his work its main value" (Sheavyn 1909, 7). The Elizabethan period encouraged a considerable number of playwrights make employment through the royalty offered by the patronage. Theatrical arts started consistently taking place, thereby encouraging many public, theatres that were gradually built on the outskirts of London. Although the Elizabethan society observed distribution of classes of the masses from monarch to nobility, from knights to merchants, from common citizens to laborers, theatre and drama attracted people from all segments of the society and thus became a fashionable amusement activity for all.

The Elizabethan society, however, also witnessed disparity in gender apart from class. Although England was governed by a queen, gender equality in that period was nonexistent. Heavy sexism prevailed and the society was patriarchal. Women were discriminated fiercely. They were raised to believe they were incompetent, inferior and inappropriate to execute dependency of family and outside. Women were deprived of their right to speak. Studies claim that women were the representatives of virtues like submission, calmness, sexual chastity; modesty, fidelity and fortitude all have their meaning in relationship to men. While men were considered the sole wage- earners of the family women were expected to be virtuous housewives and raise children (Balestraci 2012). However, Shakespeare in his dramas during Elizabethan period has represented women in the most diversified and organized ways. The characteristic features of women in Shakespearean drama remain as a persistent theme that although does not focus on "cultural observation or social criticism but primarily as a mythic source of power, an archetypal symbol that arouses both love and loathing in the male" (Lenz 1983, 18). Many authors argued that the queen was considered as a paradigm of innocence, modesty and continence; untouched and pure but with a kernel of a royal king and that the gender issues in the Elizabethan patriarchal society would be brought into forefront and resolved, however, "it became more important for patriarchy to maintain control of every other woman's behavior through a constricting moral ideology that posited feminine chastity as the ultimate virtue adorned by feminine silence" (Ritscher 2009, 29). The existence of a female reign could not eradicate the existing patriarchal codes rather they had become more rigorous than before. The disparity in gender also reflected in Elizabethan theatre where only men were permitted to take over the stage and women were judged to undertake any role as it seemed extremely unappealing.

The Elizabethan Drama

Elizabethan drama was among the most prominent and glorified literary forms in the Elizabethan Age. Although the reformation in the field of literature, art and culture bloomed across Europe, it has emphasized on subjects like religion and philosophy in Germany, art, architecture and sculpture in Italy and drama in England. The English drama had often been recognized for its spiritual and preachy essence. When Queen Elizabeth came into power most of the plays offered stories from the Bible, saying of the saints, stories extracted from the lives of the great people in the form of moralities that acted as guidance of life. Most of the teachings in the drama were about God and religion and nothing about the people or their lifestyle. But gradually that reformed and shifted from the religious essence to more or less secular. The crowd at the theatre was more willing and pleased to find the manifestation of their own and day-to-day activities. The drama made them laugh and cry through humor and disfavor of situations respectively, and made them ponder over their actions. The various forms that exhibited human actions in Elizabethan drama were in the form of love, revenge, hate, selfishness, passion, cheating, sacrifice, stealth, misery, guilt and everything that related to the audience.

Shakespeare comedies are gentler, the characters decreeing plays with a happy ending, but they fail to be funny. It is like, although the plays make the audience laugh, they laugh out of nervousness or in the words of Habib "if they live in a sunny world, it is a sunlight that is edged with an unsettling darkness. They love, make tender friendships, meet perils and villains, and overcome them" (Habib 1993, 41). Shakespeare's comedies mark his artistic excellence in the portrayal of woman characters. His woman characters are just the sunlight that is often hidden behind the clouds and storms of glum, but never restrained or crushed.

Most of his comedies are appreciated because of the comic confusion they create. Like Champion delicately elucidates the comic confusion and endeavors to bring clarity for the same as he claims that for a reader "if it is a situation comedy, he must understand the situation to enjoy its incongruities; if it is comedy of identity, he must perceive the gap between appearance and reality to which, at least for a time, the character is impervious; if it is comedy of transformation, he must understand the nature of the evil or the adversity which purges the character and be assured that its power is only temporary" (Champion 1970, 21). One of the most interesting features of the characters of Shakespeare comedies is that they gradually develop a harmony with the audience to act as an adviser. Shakespeare's expansion as a humoristic playwright is the easy and steady incorporation of the adviser into the plot with the intention that both the performance serves as the dual role; first of being the comic guide and the second an important character to the plot in his own right.

The wholeness and the vigor of the characters in Shakespeare's dramas revolve constantly around the scope, power and profoundness of Shakespeare making the plot of the drama gradually unfold. Despite the fact that Elizabethan society was strict in the even distribution of gender roles in dramas, the women characters especially in Shakespearean plays constituted the centrifugal part. Bamber describes Shakespeare's involvement with the feminine characteristics with the external world as he says "the playwright associates the feminine with the nature of external reality itself; that nature seems to change as he looks at it through the prisms of the different genres" (Bamber 1982, 25). However, his characters nevertheless depicted the discrimination in their dialogues for example in *As You Like it* when Jacques speaks "All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players" however as he proceeds to give a detail narration on "the seven ages of man", "the roles played by women are omitted from the stage without comment or notice" (Kemp 2010, 29) depicting the typical Elizabethan society.

Shakespearean Women

The concept of gender and sexuality have always been able to vary both in focus and emphasis through the modifications within the debate on feminism. Interestingly, both the theories actually traverse and are corelative. The theory of feminism attempts to form equality among various kinds of rights namely social, political, and economic in addition to equal opportunities irrespective of gender. The concept follows to eradicate sexism, discrimination, obsequiousness and domination towards women in the patriarchal society. Studies on feminism and relevant concepts reveal that "feminist critics look at how women are portrayed in literature as well as the political motivations for gender roles" (Habib 2022, 220-223). Representation of women in literature differ from men because of biological and societal theories. Frequently depicted as emotional and submissive, studies have analysed how feminist criticism has transisted over time.

Shakespeare's work, however, have been "used to articulate supposedly fixed notions of power and identity in which women are marjinalised and othered" (Ferguson & Aughterson 2020, 4). In Shakespearean plays, unlike other traditional forms of literature, there is so much to explore. The plays "reflect much of the contemporary popular attitudes of the time; women characters in his plays usually occupy the margins, and if powerful, they are demonised or seen as unchaste" (Sharma 2022, 64). Female characters in his plays have been able to be active and more resistant towards the stereotypes that the contemporary society has been defining. Feminist criticism of Shakespeare have brought into forefront some of the most pertinent aspects of Shakespeare's plays that

traditional criticism have either observed insufficiently or wholly ignored. Most of Shakespearean plays are distinguished since they challenge the conception of feminity by destabilizing the established stereotypes that revolve around women during the Elizabethan age. Feminine characters in all Shakespearean plays develop as an idealized source of power, an exemplary symbol that arouses both love and abdomination among the male characters. Shakespeare uses performative possibilities allowing the female characters to take the lead and dominate the challenging stereotype very much prevailing during his time. Studies reveal that "more often, Shakespeare uses disguise devices in his plays" (Shahwan 2022, 161) thereby empowering female characters to discover their vulnerability and determine opposition to the male society. The concept of clothing and appearance according to Shakepeare can infact affect and shift the way people perceive others. Shakepeare's plays particularly the comedies propose "a fuller narrative through several cross-dressed characters that enjoy a greater freedom of speech and movement" (Park 2019, 195). Adopting male disguise for objectives and motives, the female characters demonstrate their witty discourse and pursue romance which receive constant academic attention. More recent studies demonstrate creative responses and transpositions of Shakepeare's plays that depict and empowers females' voice. The adaptations explicitly convey how "for centuries women writers like novelists, playwrights, and poets have responded to Shakespeare with inventive and often transgressive retellings of his work" (Carney 2021, 1). These exposures inform of feminist approach from a feminist perspective involve "exposure of patrichal prejudices, explicit condemnation of misogynistic behaviours, compensatory reallocation of positions of power, and a decided shift to female-centred narratives" (3).

Elizabethan Age was an extremely hierarchical society and much of the rules and conventions were demonstrated in Shakespearean drama. Women were the second gender, weak and passive. Although, Shakespearean's plays reflect the Elizabethan image of woman, he manages to put their representations into question and revises them. Shakespeare is seen challenging, contesting and resisting the patriarchal ideology that "stereotypes, distorts, ignores or represses that experience, misrepresenting how women feel, think and act" (Gibson 2016, 27). Shakespearean women like Cleopatra, Viola, Rosalind, Lady Macbeth, Desdemona, Portia, to name a few, celebrate free spirit, confidence, resourcefulness and independence. Shakespeare has always regarded his women characters as the driving factors of the action of his plays, both in comedies and tragedies. Cleopatra in *Antony and Cleopatra* is identified for her strong determination to accomplish her goals, extraordinary grace, tantalizing seductions, royalty, and truth in her character makes her an unparalleled character in the play. Viola in the Twelfth Night is known for her perseverance, her sense of obligation and her loyalty towards her duty. Rosalind in *As You Like*

It, for example, is one among the most important characters of the play. With her wit, elegance, humor, and patience, she dominates the play. Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* is shown as an ambitious, sinful, cold woman who is stronger and more willful to commit a gruesome act of a murder. Desdemona in *Othello* is portrayed as an independent woman, adventurous and naïve about her relationships. Although passive, virtuous and innocent, Desdemona could not be seen demonstrating her wit and thus could not prove her innocence and fidelity before Othello.

The focus of the paper is to portray Portia both with the conventional quality of the women in Elizabethan Age that is mercy and violating the bounds of the same being logical, manly, independent and confident in the Shakespearean drama *The Merchant of Venice.* To maintain the same dramatic run Shakespeare in his *The Merchant of Venice* is seen portraying Portia as a submissive nature and later mounting her character as the leading one in the play and overcoming the cliché that hold back women during that time.

Shakespeare's Portia

Although, Shakespearean's plays reflect the Elizabethan image of woman, he manages to put their representations into question and revises them. Shakespeare is seen challenging, contesting and resisting the patriarchal ideology that "stereotypes, distorts, ignores or represses that experience, misrepresenting how women feel, think and act" (Gibson 2016, 27).Shakespeare's Portia is considered "particularly an empowered heroine" (Cieslak 2019, 51). Further, Tripathy justifies "empowered because of her cleverness in the use of words judiciously and the way she manages to outperform her limited rights through her intelligence in order to make it work in her favor" (Tripathy 2022, 10). Although Portia is a daunting and obedient daughter and could not go against the will of her father, however, like a traditional daughter Portia agreed upon taking a risk and abiding by the instructions of her father she welcomed every suitor who comes to beseech her. Her submissiveness and obedience towards her father portrays a feminist concern. She is lamented over the impact of her father's death and this clearly is an indication of male dominance in women's freedom in chosing her husband. Her silent protests against her incapability to use her freedom in private and delicate affairs clearly demonstrates her intellectual ability.

An excerpt from Act 2 Scene 7 where the Prince of Morocco enters the hall of Portia's house at Belmont is analyzed below.

> PORTIA: [to servant] Go, draw aside the curtains and discover
> the several caskets to this noble prince.

> [A curtain is drawn showing gold, silver, and lead casket]
> [to MOROCCO] Now make your choice.
>
> MOROCCO: The first, of gold, who this inscription bears:
> "Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."
> The second, silver, which this promise carries:
> "Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."
> This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt:
> "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
> How shall I know if I do choose the right? (2.7.1-14)

In the above scene, Portia is seen with confidence as she welcomes the Prince of Morocco to choose any of the caskets with no iota of fear about the consequences that may lead if he chooses the casket that contains her portrait. Very boldly as though she is throwing a challenge to the Prince she insists the prince to give try as she says: "The one of them contains my picture, Prince. / If you choose that, then I am yours withal."

Portia projects the same confidence, wit and will that clearly projected in her voice towards Arragon as she says:

> Behold, there stand the caskets, noble Prince.
> If you choose that wherein I am contained,
> Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized.
> But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
> You must be gone from hence immediately. (2.9.4-8)

It was quite evident from the suitors' attitude towards caskets that they did not hold any strong feeling for Portia. The theme of illusion- reality is clearly demonstrated. Prince Morocco, choosing the gold casket and Prince of Arragon choosing silver and both of them rejecting the dull lead casket made obvious portrayal of the flaw in their choices.

In act 2 scene 9 after Arragon leaves making the wrong choice of casket and reading aloud the content kept in the casket where he asserts "Still more fool I shall appear / By the time I linger here" (2.9.74-75).

Portia speaks perspicaciously as she compares men with moths who are attracted to the dazzling lights only to get burned by them.

> PORTIA: Thus hath the candle singed the moth.
> O these deliberate fools!
> When they do choose,
> They have the wisdom by their wit to lose. (2.9.80-82)

Portia is seen mocking at Arragon by calling her a 'deliberate fool' who believe that they are wise to deliberate, but in the end their excessive deliberation ultimately defeats them. The use of animal images in the play *The Merchant of Venice* Portia attracts considerable attention; however, most of the animal imageries are used both in a positive and negative manner. In the above excerpt, Portia uses 'moth' that is not so negative rather gentle ones as Ray affirms "these are negative images, but there is no violence or disgust in them" (Ray 2005, 135).

The messenger alerts of a young Venetian with all good manners and greetings and who has with him has brought all niceties and expensive gifts. This young Venetian in the words of the messenger seemed like an ambassador of love who is "so ripe and replete with the burgeoning promise of impending fruitfulness" (Pearce 2016, 7) that clearly suggests a prognostication of the one who would not only overshadow the nostalgia of the former precursors unworthy and monotonous but also a prediction of good hopes for Portia. Although Portia herself is very excited to know and see who this gentleman is, she still asks the messenger to stop praising this young man so much as if he is his cousin. She says:

> No more, I pray thee. I am half afeard.
> Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
> Thou spend'st such high-day in praising him. (2.9.96-97)

The Elizabethan audience is well aware of the fact that a messenger's cousin holds no status to marry a princess; but still Portia uses wit and humor to present her thoughts that eventually will lead to the love tryst of Portia and the young man as according to Bloom "this swift fillip, stirring up the courtship plot, is genially and very effectively tossed off" (Bloom 2006, xxvii). In the next scene the young man is identified as Bassanio, who Portia really likes, but due to the societal conventions she is unable to keep her feelings straight to him. Portia insists Bassanio to spend some time with her so that she does not feel sad should he leave if he made a wrong choice. However, she tries to control her temptation in not helping Bassanio know the right casket: "I could teach you / How to choose right, but I am then forsworn. / So will I never be" (3.3.10-12).

This scene demonstrates both her ardent love and respect towards the promise she made to her father and her morality to achieve her love towards Bassanio in a genuine way. Many authors suggest that Portia's eagerness for Bassanio's efforts to win her hand is in true spirit a comedy by Shakespeare as she achieves her choice despite the terms and conditions of her father who would not have agreed with her choice. Portia identifies the significance of the harsh observations to law that later on emerges to be the legal instrument that is her father's will. Although tired of this world and her inability to make proper

decisions with a rich mix of unhappiness towards the prospects of her marriage, Portia "over the course of the scene she comes to appreciate the will's ability to shield her from unworthy suitors who are unwilling to risk everything they possess" (Beecher, Wallace, Williams, DeCook, & Cormack 2015, 82). She remains ethical to her father's will and bond.

Soon after the casket scene where Bassanio chose the right casket and ultimately wins Portia, the audience witnesses a shocking scene where Antonio, Bassanio's dearest friend has sent him a letter that describes his financial loss in all his business ventures thereby giving him a mental pain. And also there is Shylock, a Jew who is typically compared with an animal; whose greed for money can't just be satisfied; who cannot be merciful enough to vindicate Antonio's loan and provide justice. Bassanio considers Antonio as the kindest person, cordial and a typical paradigm of ancient Roman honor alive in Italy. As soon as Portia listens to the dilapidated state of Antonio Portia offers to pay the loan to the Jew around twelve times the original sum as she says:

> What, is that it?
> Pay him six thousand ducats and scrap the agreement!
> Double six thousand, and triple it
> before allowing such a close friend to lose even a hair on account of Bassanio.
> (3.2.320-23)

Portia is enriched with generosity as she pays 6000 ducats to Bassanio to be further offered to Shylock to save Antonio's life. This makes her the most sympathetic and thus an admirable character of all the heroines of Shakespeare. As a capable lady Portia shows generosity purely out of love with Bassanio and also because she is generous with her money. The rare and harmonious unification of love, generosity and emotions in her refined character places her infinitely as the most celebrated and glorious character of Shakespeare. In act 3, scene when Portia is seen missing her husband Lorenzo praises Portia for her kindness towards a gentleman who, although a close friend to her husband but unacquainted with her.

> LORENZO: But if you knew to whom you show this honor,
> How true a gentleman you send relief,
> How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
> I know you would be prouder of the work
> Than customary bounty can enforce you. (3.4.1-5)

What makes her even truly an honest and noble soul is that she never regrets doing good. Also, her heart is as clear as crystal where, unlike Lady Macbeth, who speaks something and means something, Portia speaks exactly what she intends to. Later in scene 4 Portia shows her sense of clarity towards

relationships. For her Antonio must be a good person because he shares a close relationship with Bassanio, who is genuinely a good person and because both of them share time, are well mannered individuals both of them must be shared equal qualities as well.

> PORTIA: I never did repent for doing good,
> Nor shall not now, for in companions
> That do converse and waste the time together
> Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
> There must be needs a like proportion
> Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit,
> Which makes me think that this Antonio,
> Being the bosom lover of my lord,
> Must needs be like my lord. (3.4.10-18)

Interestingly, the very term *disguise* has been used in its true sense in Shakespearean dramas especially in the comedies particularly by female characters as Julia, Portia, Rosalind and Voila, who are in fact the male actors disguised as young women however, only Cleopatra and Rosalind are the only two female characters in the top ten biggest roles in Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare allocates female characters to male divulges a complex understanding of gender and what it means to be a woman. Perhaps this is what Shakespeare always wanted to bring to the forefront the very importance of women in a society and by uplifting the woman characters in his plays by giving them life Shakespeare envisioned what a society actually should be made of. Disguise in Shakespearean drama frequently gives an impact on the audience regarding a feeling of hubris and, thereby, alienating from the characters that are swindled. Shakespearean drama uses disguise as an important tool for gaining information that would otherwise be withheld from them. Rosalind, for example finds out that Orlando is genuinely in love with her only when Rosalind was disguised as a boy. In Act 3 Scene 4 Portia develops a plan along with Nerissa to be disguised as a male where she is seen to describe the masculinity in a satiric manner as she declares:

> PORTIA: When we are both accoutred like young men,
> I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
> And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
> And speak between the change of man and boy
> With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
> Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
> Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
> How honorable ladies sought my love,
> Which I denying, they fell sick and died. (3.4.68-76)

Wells describes "Shakespeare gives Portia more pre-disguise scenes than any of the other disguised heroines, firmly and extensively establishing her character before she disguises" (Wells 1999, 58). What makes Portia's disguise an exemplar is unlike Julia and Rosalind, who were more interested in probing their self- emotional consequences of a sexual disguise, Portia's disguise was a feed on the central theme of the play that is the conflict between self interest and love, to transform for a better reason. Portia's initial state of being weary, confused and in plight to chose a suitable suitor, but later on a transformed personality to save a life from death, to save a friendship and to gain confidence from Bassanio that would make their marriage sustain is an amazing flexibility that Shakespeare unfolds gradually.

Act 4 Scene 1 happens to be the most dramatic, and the most famous trail scene not only in the play rather in the history of theatre. Portia, disguised as Balthazar comes to rescue Antonio from the cruel hands of Shylock. Trained in law, Portia knows exactly and enough to cleverly save her husband's dear friend as she has already conceived a plan. Calderwood views "Portia's transformation into the lawyer Balthazar endows her at the trail with the masculine power over life and death- a power she carries back into womanhood and Belmont where as the possessor of secret knowledge she can rescue Bassanio from dishonor and infidelity and can revivify Antonio with news of his ships" (Calderwood 1987, 36).

Shylock has already discarded the offer of six thousand ducats by Bassanio and still in continuation to demand a pound of flesh from Antonio's breast instead. In act 4, scene 1 Portia urges Shylock to be merciful and excuse Antonio as she absolves the famous mercy plea:

> PORTIA: The quality of mercy is not strained
> It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the place beneath. It is twice bless
> It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
> 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest.
> It becomes The thronèd monarch better than his crown.
> His scepter shows the force of temporal power,
> The attribute to awe and majesty
> Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings,
> But mercy is above this sceptered sway.
> It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings.
> It is an attribute to God himself.
> And earthly power doth then show likest God's
> When mercy seasons justice. (4.1.192-205)

Portia is seen both as an eloquent and humble person using rhetorical factors of mercy as a plea to Shylock and where Shylock is seen to repeatedly scorn her

plea. With the most beautiful lines Shakespeare has ever quoted and Portia's personalized opinion on mercy comes with the idea of deliverance in Christianity. Portia, who is well-versed, expressive and rhetoric conveys Shylock and also the audience in a way that mercy is a subtle feeling that is, an individual's trait, gentle and soft just like the showers of rain which when touch the surface of the earth nurtures it from within. Mercy is considered to be the most powerful thing. It is mightier than the kings who hold their crown symbolizing worldly powers to impress their subjects and instill deep rooted reverence among the neighbors. However, while power is one of the qualities of a king, Mercy happens to be the trait of God. And when the king harmoniously amalgamates the heavenly trait of mercy with the power to administer justice, it results in the power that approaches nearest to that of God. Portia's well-ordered mind led her to true wisdom. Holmes, Walter and Bidwell cite Mr. Moulton, who believes "Portia's speech on mercy is one the noblest in literature, a gem of purest truth in a setting of richest music" (Holmes, Walter and Bidwell 1886, 131).

Bassanio's reply to Antonio that he might as well stand to lose a wife who is so dear for a friend who means a world to him, makes the silver-tongued Portia speak in irony: "Your wife would give you little thanks for that / If she were by to hear you make the offer."

This irony may have been understood by the audience as if spoken as an address from Portia disguised as Balthazar to the audience. Portia is trying to add a little pun to her speech and he does this deliberately as she clearly understands her relationship with Bassanio is harmless to his friendship with Antonio and vice-versa. Gradually, Portia makes the court scene intense by agreeing to the contract and to Shylock by almost getting praised as noble judge, excellent young man, wise and upright judge, honest judge. The intensity gets profounder when she with bravery and confidence asks Shylock:

> Tarry a little. There is something else.
> This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood.
> The words expressly are "a pound of flesh."
> Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh,
> But in the cutting it if thou dost shed
> One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
> Are by the laws of Venice confiscate
> Unto the state of Venice. (4.1.321-328)

The above scene is one of the finest qualities of Portia. She is fine-tuned with the art of rhetoric. The trail scene indeed brings the best of her, her divinity that lets her shines. The scene not only demonstrates her wit, her lofty sense of religion, her decent yet highly applauded principles, but also her thoroughly picked feelings as a woman. Baker and Vickers profess "she maintains at first a calm

self-command, as one sure of carrying her point in the end; yet the painful, heart thrilling uncertainty in which she keeps the whole court, until suspense verges upon agony, is not contrived for effect merely; it is necessary and inevitable" (Baker and Vickers 2005, 48). How cleverly and craftily Portia avoids the tension created through her finest logical abilities. Just a pound of flesh and not a single drop of Christian blood, which is both impossible and plausible and thus unavoidable. Portia not only saved Antonio's life from Shylock, but also made him refuse to accept thrice the sum of money that was offered to him earlier. Rather, in addition, as per the law, because he had attempted to take a Christian's life being a Jew, the victim that is Antonio now would take half of his goods and that his life is now in the hands of the Duke. Portia not only overturned slavery, but also turned the scale in favor of Antonio. The scene "locates in Portia a power to destabilize the system of masculine dominance through her intercessory influence" (Espinosa 2013, 66). Portia's verbal and equivocation capacity makes her a crucial figure in the masculine world.

Despite being recognized as a life savior, when she was offered money, her rejection to three thousand ducats, not only makes her a grounded character in the whole play, but also shows how pragmatic she is for not taking credit of her own achievements: "He is well paid that is well satisfied. / And I, delivering you, am satisfied, / And therein do account myself well paid."

For Portia, the highest reward is the satisfaction of delivering a job successfully. Portia is aware of her potentialities and exactly know how to make use of them in the right way. Although appreciated as a noble lawyer in the form of Balthazar, Portia recognized for her performance enhanced her self-worth that she already is aware of. Not only she is confident about her own stature, she exactly knows how to carry herself as well too. In the concurrent plot after Portia circumvented Shylock with the legal obscurity, what occupies the attention of the audience is the playful nature of Portia. When Bassanio has persuaded Portia to take something just for a remembrance as a gift, very intentionally, and facetiously, Portia asks him: "And for your love, / I'll take this ring from you. / Do not draw back your hand. / I'll take no more, / And you in love shall not deny me this" (4.1.51-52).

Portia constantly tests Bassanio the first time during the casket scene and the second time when she "provides Bassanio one more opportunity to assert the primacy of his marriage" (Mahon 2002, 295). Portia is aware, of course, is aware that the ring in dispute is the ring that Portia had presented to Bassanio and that he had vowed then never to part away from it come what may. Disguised Portia keeps Bassanio in the dark while the audience is privy of the small script that she is in fact teasing and testing Bassanio's affection for her to the very limit. Despite Bassanio's denial and unwillingness of parting from the ring, he decides to take it out because he cannot disapprove Antonio's urge to do so. Knowing Portia now completely, the audience is conscious that Portia would

ask for the ring and this keeps the audience intact with more drama in the upcoming scene. Muir describes "love acts rightly, for Bassanio, in satisfying the plea of one love, gives the ring back to his other love. The three are held together in a bond of reciprocal love" (Muir 1975, 84).

Portia knows that Bassanio parted with the ring half-heartily in the name of his friendship, but still she likes to continue showing her false anger to him.

> PORTIA: If you had known the virtue of the ring,
> Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
> Or your own honor to contain the ring,
> You would not then have parted with the ring. (5.1.214-217)

Bassanio had pledged never to part with the ring but has certainly broken his pledge. He is moreover also certain, that his giving away the ring does not portend his sabotaging of his love as Holmer notes "Shakespeare resents Portia wisely aware of the potential for error in the man she loves" (Holmer 1995, 265). Many authors compare Portia's ring to Bassanio with Othello's handkerchief to Desdemona, and both the gifts are a lover's first gift. However, while Othello had a tragic situation Portia forgives Bassanio. Portia understands her magnitude and love for Bassanio is equal with his friendship towards Antonio. With the falsification in her anger towards her husband, Portia attempts to secure her husband's loyalty towards her. The ring plot manifests Portia's teachings to Bassanio "a good lesson about marital loyalty, which in her view supersedes the loyalty between friends" (Halio 2000, 12). The dramatic quarrel between Portia and Bassanio describes the argument-reconcile relativity that usually takes place between the couples in love and that manifest the physical and the spiritual sides of human nature. Portia has already witnessed Bassanio offers to forfeit her love conducive to Antonio's life and his friendship. Her confidence in Bassanio received support when she learnt that Bassanio denied to take off the ring, but quickly breaks as she finds the ring has been sent to her. This must have shaken her wifely crux and reminds her husband to focus on her wife. However, Bevington is positive as he points out that "Portia can hope that Bassanio, who has shown such loyalty in male-to-male friendship, will also turn out to be the loyal husband she has been seeking" (Bevington 2005, 71).

Portia giving the ring to Bassanio through Antonio and telling him to hold onto it better than the last one clearly portrays how harmoniously she has included Antonio in her relationship with Bassanio and in fact at the same time she is dexterous enough to use the ring plot as a reminder that she still knows how to control Bassanio. Wheeler on this point views that it is Portia, who has to teach both Bassanio and Antonio to identify the significance of marital love over friendship. Wheeler points that it is important that "both Venetians have to learn the serious consequences of the implied contract in any oath" (Wheeler 2015, 201).

Conclusion

The paper analylised texts from the play *The Merchant of Venice* of Shakespeare to portray, glorify and signify Portia as an empowered heroine. The play demonstrates a great deal of feminist values throughout. Shakespeare is insubordinate towards the conventional gender stereotpes in the play. Although Shakespeare existed in a culture where men were considered poweful and priviledged, however, his advocacy of gender equality in the play triggered the audience to realise that some female characters are more spiritual and intellect driven in comparison to their better halfs yet unrecognized by the society. The female protagonist emphasises on challenging the traditional style stereotypes of weakness and silence and does not initate the societal standards of naivity and obedience. Portia is portrayed as a radical feminist considering gender as her source of discrimination and oppression. As an eminent role in the play she represents a strong woman who symbolizes a woman of knowledge and wisdom. She is a combination of being both rebellious and submission which further adds both charm and progession to the play. Through her eloquence Portia is able to successfully make Bassanio chose the right casket. In the court, Portia is seen giving a wonderful speech on mercy exhibiting exquisite knowledge about an individual being merciful. She successfully invalidates the situation and turns the table where Shylock is seen falling into his own trap. The ring episode deliberately reveals the pre-determined agenda of Portia and her control over husband and a constant reminder that Portia is not a stereotypical wife. She is fun loving, adorable with a plethora of patience. Her keen sense of logic suggests she's only one of its kind female character compared to those who conventionally obey and follow the rules of the era. Her act of getting in disguise and fighting for justice in the court overturns the conventional behavior in the Elizabethan age. Portia presents apparently negative traits stereotypical of women, like pride in appearance and paltriness, however, she holds a good grip over her disguise and successive implementation of masculine traits smartly. The feminine assertiveness that comes with her disguise further emphasized by the development of her eloquence is accepted and celebrated by the audience. The entire play was Shakespeare's treatment towards the Portia's character that only got deeper as the scenes unfolded, making her one of the most commemorated and unconventional heroine of the conventional Elizabethan age.

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Monica Matei-Chesnoiu[*] (iD)

Epitomes of Dacia: Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania in Early Modern English Travelogues

Abstract: This essay examines the kaleidoscopic and abridged perspectives on three early modern principalities (Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania), whose lands are now part of modern-day Romania. I examine travelogues and geography texts describing these Eastern European territories written by Marco Polo (1579), Abraham Ortelius (1601; 1608), Nicolas de Nicolay (1585), Johannes Boemus (1611), Pierre d'Avity (1615), Francisco Guicciardini (1595), George Abbot (1599), Uberto Foglietta (1600), William Biddulph (1609), Richard Hakluyt (1599-1600), Fynes Moryson (1617), and Sir Henry Blount (1636), published in England in the period 1579-1636. The essay also offers brief incursions into the representations of these geographic spaces in a number of Shakespearean plays, such as *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*, as well as in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* by Shakespeare and Wilkins. I argue that these Eastern European locations configure an erratic spatiality that conflates ancient place names with early modern ones, as they reconstruct a space-time continuum that is neither real nor totally imaginary. These territories represent real-and-fictional locations, shaping an ever-changing world of spatial networks reconstructed out of fragments of cultural geographic and ethnographic data. The travel and geographic narratives are marked by a particular kind of literariness, suggesting dissension, confusion, and political uncertainty to the early modern English imagination.

Keywords: early modern English geography, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, *Pericles*, Shakespeare, travelogues.

Many kinds of travellers (in early modern England and abroad) offered kaleidoscopic perspectives on the places they travelled to and produced eccentric texts based on their experience of travel. As Melanie Ord notes, "the literature of advice on travel in early modern England includes recommendations addressed to specific travelers preparing to make particular journeys, travel guides,

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[*] Ovidius University of Constanta, Romania. mchesnoiu@yahoo.com

position papers on the benefits and dangers of travel, and *ars apodemica*, or travel methods, which are not clearly distinct from these other subgenres" (1). This method of travel narrative is not different when concerning marginal parts of Eastern Europe. In "Maister Rothorigo to the Reader" at the beginning of the *Travels of Marco Polo*, translated by John Frampton (1579), Dacia is included in a European continent composed of "Portugale, Britania, Spaine, France, Almaine, Italie, Grecia, Polonia, Hungarie, or Panonia, Valachia, Asia the lesser, Phrygia, Turkia, Galatia, Lydia, Pamphilia, Lauria, Lycia, Cilicia, Scythia the lower, Dacia, Gaetia, and Trasia" (Polo sig. *iiiᵛ). This long list is a curious amalgam of early modern names of countries and of ancient regions, as well as downright geographic eccentricities, such as the inclusion of countries of Asia Minor in a larger Europe—probably a result of their being part of the Roman Empire. Such a hotchpotch was the norm in late sixteenth-century travel and geographic writing. Readers and translators did their best to find their way in this jungle of classical allusions and quotations, mingled with travellers' comments. The common practice of collating a variety of texts and commentaries shapes a hazy notion about the three principalities of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania. These places lie in the region of ancient Dacia, but at the time in which these travelogues were produced or translated, the kingdom of Dacia was more than one millennium away from its former denotation in ancient texts.

Relevant for the constructed early modern English concept of Dacia is the possible definition of the area of modern-day Romania (the principalities of Wallachia, Transylvania, and Moldavia) in early modern travel writing. Is it the geography, topography, ethnography, cultures and peoples in these provinces that we are looking for? Or does this area suggest a looser, more conceptual and broader political allegory of empire, unrelated to a specific location, but emerging out of the idea of early discourses associated with the region? My purpose is to try to disentangle geocritically the engagements between the global and the local involved in the manipulation of space in early modern English travelogues, which percolated into Shakespeare's oblique and metaphoric use of contrastive and often incongruous locations. I argue that these Eastern European locations configure a specific spatiality that conflates ancient place names with early modern ones in order to reconstruct a space-time continuum that is neither real nor totally imaginary, but it represents a fictional world of spatial networks reconstructed out of fragments of cultural geographic and ethnographic data. When confronted to such exotic place names, writers, translators, and compilers of early modern English travelogues responded by adding their own impressions and creativity to the experience of space activated by these names.

Why do such eccentricities and inaccuracies occur in early modern travelogues about the three principalities of modern-day Romania? Why is it so difficult to trace a consistent pattern in the wilderness formed of contradictory,

repetitive and incomplete information? Unavoidably, travel writing in late-sixteenth- and early seventeenth centuries was far from what one might consider to be the genre. As William H. Sherman cogently observes about travelogues in this period, "the written record of travel is haunted by missing texts and persons" (Sherman 18). Travelogues were mixed with any sort of geographic, historical, political, religious, ethnographic, and miscellanea writing; there was little pretence to accuracy and texts addressed a variety of readers. The transmission of texts was fraught with difficulties and interpolations, which mostly belonged to English editors and translators. This is mainly because the first English print publications about travel were translations from foreign texts; in their turn, these source texts in Italian, French, Flemish, Latin, or Spanish followed the insidious pattern of unreliable transmission and publication, so they were far from the expectation of truth that we have come to think as suitable for the genre of travelogue. Since there were no actual travelogues to speak of in late-sixteenth- and early seventeenth-centuries that described the principalities of Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia, readers and writers relied on expertise provided by geographic treatises. A variety of travel writers brought along their cultural baggage in their writings, but few of them condescended to depict a remote area of Eastern Europe which, in ancient times, was called Dacia, and which largely comprised the early modern principalities of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania.

The experience of travel in the early modern period was superimposed on various models of travel writing as produced by various types of travellers. The interest these travellers invested in the regions to which they travelled was essential in shaping travelogues and it depended on ideology related to imperial aspirations. By travelling horizontally and vertically through texts, early modern readers were exposed to the operations of an ideology of cultivation, in the sense that travel writers used their cultural background to enrich the material about the less-known Eastern European spaces. Travel to the faraway areas of Eastern Europe, however, was well beyond English travellers' scope and interest. One might hope that ambassadors to the area would be those who could best describe the places and leave reliable testimonies. Yet not many English travellers ventured to the three provinces in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. No English ambassador was assigned to the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia in this period, as this function was fulfilled by the ambassador of England to the Ottoman Porte.[1] Starting with 1583, Elizabeth I appointed ambassadors to the Ottoman Porte, such as merchant William Harborne (1583-1588), Sir William Barton (1588-1596), or Henry Lello (1597-1606). Yet these

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[1] I am indebted to Paul Brummell, the British Ambassador to Romania (2014-2018), for this information concerning the history of British diplomacy to Eastern Europe, mainly in this period up to 1700.

English diplomats did not write about the three principalities and were not interested in the life of the local people.

Because of the scarcity of information and the few English travellers actually going to the three principalities, early modern texts about Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania are based on the common pool of geographic and cartographic knowledge propagated via translations. Abraham Ortelius (in the 1608 edition of *Theatrum orbis Terrarum*) quotes Steven Broderith (a Croatian-Hungarian bishop) and Hungarian historian Antony Bonfinius, who described Transylvania as "sometime a part of *Dacia"* (*Theatrum 97*). Ortelius continues with a brief description of the three principalities and their various names, as they are integrated in a larger map of Europe:

> The two Walachies *Walachia Transalpina, Walachie* beyond the mountaines, and *Moldauia,* do enclose *Transsiluania:* that resteth vpon the riuer *Donaw,* this vpon the Euxine sea, or *Mar maiore,* as the Italians call it; both of them together with *Transsiluania* do now possesse that part of *Europe,* which anciently was called Dacia. (Ortelius *Theatrum* 97)

No one could argue about the accuracy of the geographic information in Ortelius, but the close association of the names of the early modern provinces (Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania) and the ancient one (Dacia) creates an eerie feeling of something that is not real.

The 1601 English edition of Ortelius's treatise, *An Epitome of Ortelius his Theater of the vvorld*, is a translation of a Latin abridgement (or epitome) published in Antwerp and is accurate in the description of Moldavia. This principality is placed under the general heading of Polonia: "*Moldauia* is a parte of Walachia, the chief cittie is *Sotschen,* the people are good soldiers, and it is said that the regents of this country do cause their yong children to be marcked with hot irons, that thereby their descent may the more certainly bee knowne" (Ortelius *An Epitome* 94ᵛ). Sotschen was the German variant of the name of the Moldavian city of Suceava, currently in modern Romania. The cruelty of treating children in Moldavia—even if they are royal princes—confers an unpleasant tone to the otherwise impersonal narrative, as does the image of martial aggressivity suggested by the allusion to soldierly practices.

A similar impression of cruelty to children—even if accompanied by an aestheticized collection of images—can be inferred from the travelogue by French geographer and diplomat Nicolas de Nicolay, entitled *The nauigations, peregrinations and voyages, made into Turkie* (1585), translated by T. Washington the Younger. Apart from the illustrations showing men and women from the Ottoman Empire in various costumes, Nicolay subtly emphasizes the viciousness and corruption of the Great Turk. Nicolay mentions the Turks' tradition of taking young children as "Azamolgans," or "children of tribute" from "Grecia,

Albania, Valaquia, Seruia, Bossina, Trebisonda, Mingrelia and all other prouinces of his Dominion of the Christians" (69ʳ). Nicolay denounces this "tribute of soules" as "Barbarous infidelity" (69ʳ) and invites all Christian princes to try to free these unfortunate children from servitude. An exotic figure described by Nicolay is the "Dellis or Zatasnicis" (126ʳ), a kind of armed bodyguard who accompanied "Achmed Basha into Transsiluania" (126ᵛ). Nicolay even provides an illustration of the fearful warrior, whose terrible attire is meant to impress and terrify the enemies (Nicolay 127ᵛ see Figure 1). The name of Transylvania is mentioned in association with the Turks' aggressivity, as the Sultan uses these *sui generis* warriors to project an image of invincibility when facing the Transylvanian prince. The exoticism and eccentricity of Nicolay's account of the Ottoman warrior is extended to the region to which he accompanied the pasha,

Figure 1. A "Delly" in Nicolas de Nicolay, *The nauigations, peregrinations and voyages, made into Turkie* (1585), p. 127ᵛ

suggesting that the Sultan needed such imposing figures of Turkish men of arms to keep people in the area in awe and under control.

Other English translations mentioning the three provinces of Dacia draw directly on classical sources, with no relation to actual travel to these regions. *Omnium gentium mores* by German humanist Johannes Boemus was translated by Edward Aston as *The manners, lauues, and customes of all nations* (1611). The account gives a lengthy history of the country of Dacia, drawing on Pliny, who wrote of that part of Thrace which is called Getica, and which "is now called Valachia" from the Flacci, a Roman family (Boemus 212-13). As concerns the language in Wallachia, Boemus notes: "the Romaine language is yet spoken in that Countrie, but they speake it so corruptly, as a Romane can scarce vnderstand it, the Romaine letters also bee there vsed, sauing that the forme or fashion of the letters is somewhat altered" (213). About the climate of Wallachia, Boemus mentions that "the ayre is very intemperate and cold" (214),

with almost "continual" winters, so the soil is barren and barely gives sustenance (214). People have no houses or set places, "but rested where euer they were weary" (214), which gives them a semi-nomadic existence. According to Boemus's description of the Wallachians, "Their diet was very vile and base, by reason of the horrible intemperatnesse of the aire, and they went alwaies bare-headed" (215). Not only was the local food unpalatable and basic, but the covered head—which was a mark of higher social status and implied respect for hierarchy—was not a practice among the semi-savage Wallachians. Language, however, which is a defining element of culture, associates these uncivilized peoples with the nobility of Latin. This description offers an image of half-savage people at the margins of the civilized world, whom neither climate nor natural resources favour, and who live precariously in harsh conditions.

Not only are the Wallachians famed for the inclement climate of their country and the indomitable nature of their inhabitants, but also the geographical positioning is rather uncertain, according to the historians' point of view. Transylvania is included in the Kingdom of Hungary, while Moldavia is associated to the Kingdom of Poland, and even Russia. *The estates, empires, & principallities of the world* (1615) is the English translation by Edward Grimeston of *Estats, empires et principautez du monde* by the French historian Pierre d'Avity.[2] Avity describes the kingdom of Hungary under the rule of Matthias Corvinus, but he somehow turns to Ptolemy's ancient description of the country, which lies between the rivers of "Danou" (Danube) and "Tibisce" (Tibiscus, or the Timiş River in Latin). In relation to the kingdom of Hungary, Avity says that "it doth also imbrace that part of Dacia, which they call Transiluania, the which notwithstanding, hath his Vayuodes, and obeies not this new prince" (Avity 613). An image of recalcitrance and adversity is transferred to the people and their princes, as passed on from ancient times. Despite being part of the kingdom of Hungary, as the narrative goes, the principality has its own voyevode and is relatively independent of this country. Yet the phrase "obeies not" (Avity 613) sends a signal of unruliness, preserved and transmitted from the ancient inhabitants of this territory. The scholarly references about

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[2] Pierre d'Avity, sieur de Montmartin (1573-1635) was a French writer who received his early education in the Jesuit college of his native town of Tournon, on the river Rhône, where he acquired a good knowledge of Latin and Greek. He studied law in Tolouse and Paris. Considerable part of his life was passed in military service and he spent some of the intervals of military service in travelling. He visited Italy and Germany and accumulated materials for his *Estats et Empires du monde*, a work on which he was engaged but left incomplete; part of the work had been published during his lifetime and part was in the press at the time of his death. Although Avity travelled to Italy and Germany, it is not certain he travelled to Transylvania, which he describes in this treatise. Probably this is why he relies on ancient sources in using the ancient name of the country, Dacia.

Transylvania in Avity's treatise are incontestable, but the veracity of the account is not so, as it is flawed with ideological bias. It is certain that the French historiographer never travelled to this area and the information is collected from classical sources.

Since there are no actual travelogues to speak of in late-sixteenth- and early seventeenth-centuries describing the principalities of Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia, readers rely on historical and geographic treatises, which are, in their turn, mostly based on classical texts. From this perspective, Dacia is the land inhabited by the barbarous Goths. In Francisco Guicciardini's famous *History of Italy* (1595), translated by William Jones, the Goths invading Italy are described as "Christians by name and profession, and tooke their firste beginning from the partes of *Dacia*, and *Tartaria*" (*Guicciardini 19*). Indeed, what better association could the Italian historian find for the distant lands of Dacia than with the aggressiveness of the Goths (who sacked civilized Rome), and who had their ancient origins in Tartaria? This historical region of Asia and Eastern Europe formed part of the Tartar Empire in the Middle Ages. The area was associated with barbarity and death in the Western imagination, as the name "Tartar" came from the infernal region of Tartarus in classical mythology. In *The Merchant of Venice*, during the trial scene, the Duke implies that Shylock has borrowed his indomitable and unforgiving attitude towards Antonio "From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd / To offices of tender courtesy" (IV.i.32-33). Indeed, Guiciardini's Venice—which the Duke implicitly invokes as an epitome of civility—may be associated with compassionate behaviour, while Tartaria, inhabited by warlike Tartars, as well as the regions of the vilified Turks, represent marginal areas of Europe, where brutal practices are opposed to Western notions of civility.

English geographers, on the other hand, tend to give a more balanced view of what they call Dacia in Europe. Bishop George Abbot never travelled, but he wrote about the countries of the world from the comfort of his home. In his *Briefe Description of the Whole Worlde* (1599), Abbot writes: "On the South-side of *Hungarie,* and South-east, lyeth a countrie of Europe called in old time *Dacia,* which is large and wide, comprehending in it *Transyluania*, *Valachia*, *Moldauia*, and *Seruia.* Of which little is famous, saue that the men are warlike, and can hardly be brought to obedience" (sig. B3ʳ). While being accustomed to point out the most salient features of peoples from various regions, nothing seems to emerge as worthy of note for the nations in the three provinces of Dacia, except for the fact that they are indomitable warriors. This judgemental note comes from an Englishman who never travelled abroad, but compiled information about various countries from other people's narratives. Alternatively, Shakespeare and Wilkins offer a broader view of the cosmopolitan social space of the brothel in *Pericles*, where "a poor Transylvanian" (4.2.19) is already dead for having lain with the diseased prostitutes at the brothel in

Mytilene. Although he has no voice in the chorus formed of Western European ailing men (the Spaniard and the Frenchman) who frequented the brothel on the island of Lesbos, the poor Transylvanian is redeemed through his death, even if he died from venereal disease.

Italian historians paid attention to the Eastern European principalities (Wallachia, Transylvania and Moldavia) because of the Venetian and Genovese interests in these territories. Ralph Carr of Middle Temple was the English translator of Uberto Foglietta's *De causis magnitudinis imperii Turcici*. In *The Mahumetane or Turkish historie* (1600), the author shows sympathy for the chaotic state of the provinces of Dacia, then under Ottoman rule, but he introduces several errors. Writing of the Hungarian victories against the Turks, Foglietta mentions John Huniad, who was "Prince of *Transiluania* at this present *Moldauia*, and by the *Hungarians* named *Sibenbourg,* that is to say, *Septemcastrum*, but by our elders *Dacia*" (Foglietta 34ᵛ). There is great confusion in this passage; not only is Transylvania mistaken for Moldavia (while they were two separate provinces at the time), but the group of seven Transylvanian cities (Siebenburgen) metonymically replaces the entire province of Transylvania, which is also referred to by its ancient name, Dacia. When Sultan Soliman died, in 1566, as the Italian historian narrates, his son Selimus succeeded to the throne of the Ottoman Empire, but the "Intestine and inward contencions and diuisions" continued, as in the "infortunate countries of *Thracia*, *Dacia*, *Maesia*, and the most part of their wofull and miserable neighbour the Kingdom of *Hungary*" (Foglietta 101ᵛ). The conclusion is a Latin adage, translated into English: "There is no Kingdome or Power, be it neuer so great and mightie, which discord and ciuill discencion in it selfe, doth not distroy and bring to confusion" (Foglietta 102ʳ). The reference is to the ancient names of these Eastern European regions, which proves the overwhelming influence of classical literature. This is the general view that English geographers and historians traded about the three provinces at the margin of Europe, ruled by the Ottoman Empire: as a result of their geographic marginality, politics in these countries is dominated by confusion, corruption, and internal dissension, borrowing the features of the decaying Empire to which they belong. As the Ottomans were arguably viewed as the others, the enemy, in the Western European imagination in early modern times, countries falling under their area of influence were indiscriminately perceived as having dishonourable features of dissension, confusion, and political uncertainty.

A small number of English travellers actually wrote about these regions, but it is almost certain that they never travelled to the provinces. The Protestant chaplain William Biddulph's *The Travels of Certaine Englishmen* (1609) is a carefully edited epistolary narrative that seeks to challenge previous accounts, which sees the Ottoman world through a highly prejudicial lens of biblical knowledge. As Gerald MacLean notes in *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English*

Visitors to the Ottoman Empire: 1580-1720, "While chaplain in Aleppo, Biddulph travelled to Jerusalem using the Bible as his guidebook and disbelieved anything he saw that was not confirmed by it" (MacLean xiii). Biddulph's notions about Wallachia and the area of the Black Sea draw mainly on classical sources, not direct information. For this reason, Biddulph uses the ancient name of the Black Sea (*Pontus Euxinus*) and references to Ovid to justify his description of Byzantium/Constantinople. Biddulph propagates an image of sovereignty that the Turks have over the area, with examples from classical culture: "for the Turke is master of the Sea *Pontike*, which hauing 2. mouths, the one comming from *Propontidis,* and the other from the Sea *Euxinum,* (which is the Blacke sea) is by *Ouid* called the Port of two Seas" (Biddulph 17). Nowhere in Biddulph's text do we find direct references to Wallachia, Transylvania, or Moldavia, not even to the ancient province of Moesia inferior, of which Wallachia was part in ancient times. However, Biddulph spices his discourse with references and direct quotations in Latin from Ovid, as if, for him, this is the only source of information for the area to which the Latin poet was banished, at Tomis,[3] on the shore of *Pontus Euxinus*. Perhaps it is for this reason that Shakespeare has Othello compare the powerful surge of his emotions with "the Pontic sea" (III.iii.460), which gushes forth "To the Propontic and the Hellespont" (III.iii.463). There is nothing more compelling than the emotions suggested by these troubled seas, whose names of ancient Greek origin scan beautifully.

Other English travellers were less focused on Biblical matters and the salvation of the soul and more concerned with practical notions of travel and trade. Richard Hakluyt's compendium of travel writing includes the voyage of Master Henry Austell from Venice to Constantinople, and from there, by way of Moldavia, Polonia, and Silesia to Hamburg in Germany. Austell was an English factor to Constantinople in 1582 and travelled with a caravan of merchants (Hadžilemović 68). From the Ottoman capital, the ambassador William Harborne sent Austell on a mission to Moldavia, Poland, Germany and The Netherlands in 1585. Sultan Murad III offered Austell a free pass through the territory tributary to the Ottomans and he was accompanied by the Italian Giacomo Manucci, a secret agent of Sir Francis Walsingham. Austell followed the same route as the English merchant John Newberrie in 1582, through Eastern Bulgaria and Dobrogea. When the English party reached the country of "Bogdania" or "Moldavia" (Hakluyt 196), Austell's main point about the inhabitants is that "they are *Christians* but subiects to the *Turke*" (Hakluyt 196). When the party arrived to Iași, the capital of Moldavia, they were well received by the prince of Moldavia: "wee came to *Yas* the principall Towne of *Bogdania,* where *Peter* the *Vayuoda* prince of that Countrey keepeth his residence, of

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[3] Modern-day city of Constanta, Romania.

whom wee receiued great courtesie, and of the gentlemen of his Court: And he caused vs to be safe conducted through his said Countrey, and conueyed without coste" (Hakluyt 196). The narrative about the generosity and hospitality of the Moldavian prince matches the general impression of benevolence that the English merchants encounter in the Romanian principalities. Yet the matter-of-fact tone of the narrative is suitable to an English merchant accustomed to being received well by the local authorities. The reference to the Moldavians' Christian religion is one of the few accurate remarks about the Romanian principalities. In general, early modern English travellers presuppose that the Eastern European countries under Ottoman rule are converted to Islam.

Some English travelogues vehiculate the idea that the Ottoman Empire is the vilified enemy, while others keep an objective tone when referring to the three provinces. Countries of the East exerted a certain fascination among English travellers, especially when they travelled to Jerusalem and the Middle East on land. When they passed through the Romanian principalities going south, they left records of the inhabitants' life. However, these records are not always accurate because much of the knowledge is acquired indirectly and is influenced by the classical culture accumulated before the travel and the geographic texts they had consulted. Fynes Moryson's four-volume *Itinerary* (1617) is a travelogue first written in Latin and then translated into English by the author. However, Fynes Moryson and his brother Henry travelled from Venice to Jerusalem by sea, and from there they went to Constantinople. Therefore, Moryson never actually crossed the three principalities by land, and the information about these countries draws on the writer's excellent classical scholarship. In Chapter 3 of the third book, Moryson gives a geographic description of Turkey and he includes the countries that are under the domination of the Ottomans. In this context, Moryson writes of the two parts of the ancient province Moesia, the lower and the upper Moesia, which is divided into three parts, "*Bulgaria, Wallachia* and *Moldauia*" (119). Moryson gives an objective description of Dacia, as gathered from geographic treatises: "*Dacia* or *Transiluania*, was of old possessed by the Saxons, who there built seuen Cities or Castles, of which the Prouince is called *Septem-Castrensis*, vulgarly *Sieben burgen*, and of old it belonged to the Kingdome of *Hungary*, but at this day is tributary to the Turks" (119). Moryson's account about this region is a compilation of information gathered from books written mostly in Latin; for this reason, he names the seven cities of Transylvania, built by the Saxons, in both Latin and German. Then he passes to the description of Hungary and the countries of Greece. The information, therefore, is objective, with no emotional involvement or particular details, because he never travelled to the region of former Dacia.

The exoticized English narratives of the East and the Islamic countries in many travelogues contrast with other travellers' stories about their travels to

the Ottoman-ruled regions. Sir Henry Blount's *A Voyage into the Levant* (1636) proposes a secular, rationalist, Baconian inquiry into the Islamic world by a wealthy, classically-educated, gentleman traveller. The political situation was favourable to Englishmen travelling to the Levant, in the sense that, as Gerald MacLean observes, "By the late sixteenth century, English merchants and diplomats were as eager to deal with the Ottomans as the Ottomans themselves were keen to ally themselves with the English against the Spanish, and formal hostilities were set aside" (MacLean xvi). However, travelogues referring to the Ottoman regions emphasize the dangers of travelling by land or sea; robbery, kidnapping, captivity, being taken as a spy were real dangers threatening travellers to the Ottoman-occupied regions. For the Staffordshire gentleman who travelled to the Levant, the purpose of travel was "knowledge" of "humane affairs" (Blount 1), as he admits in the first page of the travelogue. Part of his journey from Venice to Constantinople was on land, while accompanying the Pasha of Bosnia, which offers the opportunity to comment on the places he encountered on the way. In a wood near the confines of Hungary, the merchants divided the caravan into two parts because they believed the wood to be "full of Theeves" (Blount 8); they were robbed, indeed, but they managed to arrive safely to Belgrade (Blount 9). Since he travelled to Constantinople south of the Danube, via Belgrade and Sophia, Blount did not actually go via Wallachia (north of the Danube), but he did stop on the banks of the Danube and he describes the majestic river as follows: "*Danubius*, of old called *Ister*, now *Duny*, and is held the greatest River in the world, deepe and dangerous for Navigation, runnes Eastward into the *Euxine* or the *blacke Sea*" (9). Blount says he tasted some of the Danube water, which he found "as cleare and pure as well" (Blount 10). The natural resources and the beauty of the southern Danube area of Europe are commendable, on the whole, but dangers of being robbed by thieves in the woods lurk in every place. Despite the lure of the Levant for the English traveller in the seventeenth century, he is always extra careful of the travelling conditions on land.

Several views are valid in relation to this marginal area of Eastern Europe, from which, as many travellers agree, nothing good seems to emerge. "Dacia" can be viewed as an exotic but also real space unto which early modern England projected discursively, if not in reality, its colonizing fantasies. Since the three principalities were mostly in and out of Ottoman rule—either part of the Ottoman Empire or principalities tributary to it—they were a projection of the destructive side of the Turkish domination. Members of early modern communities learned to conceptualize countries of south-eastern Europe as epitomes, or abbreviations, of the collections of texts about these places. Since few English travellers actually ventured to these regions, the principalities projected an image of untrodden paths, places that could linger in the imagination and were enriched through classical learning. For this reason,

references in English travellers' texts about the three principalities display a particular kind of literariness: while based on mostly literary and historical sources, and little factual information, these texts acquire an aura of improbability, just as fictional literature. This is why the remotely valid association of Dacia and Transylvania is possible in the minds of early modern English readers: as in fiction, borders between reality and imagination are blurred and readers may come to take imagined truth as reality about a faraway land in Eastern Europe, to which few have travelled, and about which even fewer have recorded impressions. This is the Neverland of scarcely documented fact and fictionalized discourse, whose inhabitants are not described as real people but rather as characters anticipating picaresque novels.

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Book Reviews

Tetsuhito Motoyama, Rosalind Fielding, and Fumiaki Konno, eds. and trans. *Re-Imagining Shakespeare in Contemporary Japan: A Selection of Japanese Theatrical Adaptations of Shakespeare*. **London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2021. Pp. xi + 315.**

Reviewed by *Miki Iwata*[*]

When Shakespeare was growing into a British national poet in the 18th century, English intellectuals tried hard to establish an authentic reading of Shakespeare. Elizabeth Montagu, for example, in response to Voltaire's unfavourable assessment, maintains that "It is strange that Mr. de Voltaire […] should not rather speak with admiration than contempt of an author, who by the force of genius rose so much above the age and circumstances in which he was born" (17). In the post-postmodern contemporary world, however, to offer a *correct* attitude towards Shakespeare seems almost impossible. His plays now function as a platform open to a variety of different interpretations, and this anthology of contemporary adaptations of Shakespeare in Japan provides new additions to this already rich well of literary imagination.

Julie Sanders, quoting Charles Darwin's idea that the environment is "not monolithic and stable," but "a matrix of possibilities," argues that adaptation and appropriation "are all about multiple interactions and a matrix of possibilities" (160). Sanders's description of adaptation seems especially appropriate in Japan, a country which had a radically different cultural environment from that of Europe when it met Shakespeare in the late 19th century. After more than 250 years of national seclusion during the Edo period, Japan rediscovered the West as the threatening other. At that time, to read Shakespeare could mean a serious attempt to understand the other and re-fashion themselves in the reflection of the other. Since then, "Shakespeare in Japan" has

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[*] Rikkyo University, Japan. mikiiwata@rikkyo.ac.jp

been offering multiple possibilities of his works to Japanese and, sometimes, non-Japanese audiences.

The editors and translators of *Re-Imagining Shakespeare in Contemporary Japan* are acutely conscious of this peculiar context of the history of reception of Shakespeare in Japan. Even though the three theatrical adaptions included in this volume were written and performed either at the end of the 20th century or in the 21st century, this anthology begins with a general introduction which gives a whole picture of "Shakespeare's reception in Japan," starting from possible (but unproven) interaction between Shakespeare and Japanese drama in the late 18th century, through the *kabuki* or other overtly Japanised adaptations in the Meiji period, which sought to introduce the English playwright to the Japanese audience of the day, and the *shingeki* (New Theatre) versions, focusing on the representation of "authentic" Shakespeare, to the underground, free adaptations since the 1980s.

These vicissitudes of acting style are deeply interconnected with the translation, as Japanese is drastically unlike English in terms of both grammar and vocabulary. For example, personal pronouns in Japanese are so diverse and highly gendered that the simple "I" in English could convey a variety of different implications according to the translator's choice. Thus, the introduction also offers the history of Japanese translation of Shakespeare's texts, ranging from the word-for-word translation of Tsubouchi Shōyō (1859-1935), through the modern versions that more resemble spoken Japanese by Fukuda Tsuneari (1912-1994) and Odajima Yūshi (1930-), to the gender-conscious translation of Matsuoka Kazuko (1942-). With the help of this conscientious introduction, the reader understands well what historical and cultural backgrounds these three contemporary plays may connote before they actually set about them. As in other countries, Shakespeare has allowed Japanese adaptors to hold a mirror up to themselves.

Given this background, all the three plays included in this volume, to some degree, deal with the Japanese historical/social/cultural contexts of the time when these plays were written and performed. And, interestingly, those particular contexts are intertwined with the sense of "topophilia." It was a term coined by Yi-Fu Tuan, the pioneer of humanistic geography, to indicate the spiritual relationship between man and place. According to him, humans, either a group or individuals, like it or not, cannot escape from forming an emotional connection with their environments, but we should note that it includes "all the human being's affective ties with the material environment," and is not confined to favourable or positive feelings (Tuan 93). Thus, while all the three plays in this volume reflect the Japanese topography of the day, their setting varies from nightmarish to nostalgic.

Another characteristic of these plays—though it may reflect more about the editorial attitudes of the editors than about the playwrights and theatre

managers—is that, throughout the volume, the authorship of the selected plays is attributed not to an individual author but to the theatre company. By this, the reader can see the importance of the collaborative and social dimension of dramatic art. Though this feature will not be so conspicuous in the latter two plays in the volume, *HAMLET X SHIBUYA—Light, Was Our Revenge Tarnished?* (2012) and *The New Romeo and Juliet* (2012), since the playwright and the head of the company are identical, the situation is a little more complicated in the case of the volume's opening play, *The Three Daughters of Lear* (1995) by the Tokyo Shakespeare Company (TSC).

The TSC was founded in 1990 by the director Edo Kaoru, who has been working on the translation of Shakespeare by herself rather than using the existing translations for their performance. Her emphasis on creating the most appropriate words for them is well demonstrated in *The Three Daughters of Lear*. The play was first written by Okuizumi Hikaru, her spouse and novelist who won the Akutagawa Prize, one of the most renowned literary prizes in Japan. However, it was repeatedly revised and altered, first by Edo and then by collaborative hands through rehearsals. The process of its making is strongly reminiscent of the pioneering feminist adaptation of *King Lear*, i.e., *Lear's Daughters* (1987) by the Women's Theatre Group (WTG) in collaboration with Elaine Feinstein.

The WTG version is a kind of prequel to Shakespeare's play and describes how the three daughters of Lear grew up to become the characters shown in the play. The violently patriarchal Lear oppressed his wife to death, bullies the two elder daughters and fondly pets the youngest only to make her a typical "father's daughter." The details of their experiences in the play are based on the actual voices of ordinary women in workshops that WTG and Feinstein held many times for this project. Thus, by rejecting the individual, controlling author, which already has a masculine connotation, WTG transformed fragmentary and anonymous voices of women into a work of art that highlighted problems in the society in which they lived. Although it might have been a mere coincidence, it is interesting that the first collaboration between Edo and Okuizumi in a similar vein to WTG also deals with *King Lear*.

However, while WTG's *Lear's Daughters* is a prequel of *King Lear*, *The Three Daughters of Lear* depicts the afterlives of the daughters and the fool in Hell. The fool, who disappears from Shakespeare's play in the middle of Act 3, is now Satan's liaison man and descends to the bottom of Hell where Goneril and Regan suffer an endless punishment: to count iron nails and swallow them up every day, in order to administer a test for them. Only one of them, if she succeeds to prove more evil than the other, can be promoted (or, in fact, degenerated) to Satan's subordinate witch. The fool expects Virgil as a guide of Hell but, instead of the classical poet, his henchman who does not have any memory of his former life, if any, and calls himself the Hell Wag takes the roles of a guide and an assistant of the test.

At a glance, the play's setting in Hell does not really chime with the idea of "topophilia" mentioned above. However, as one of the editors of the volume, Testuhito Motoyama, points out, we should note that the Hell setting in the play is in fact "a response to Japanese society during the early 1990s" (44), when the economic bubble was exploded. The long and serious effect of the asset bubble collapse was later called the "Lost Decade" of Japan. *The Three Daughters of Lear* was written and performed in the midst of the Lost Decade, which "makes Hell [in the play] part of the world in which the audience belongs" (44). In the latter half of the play, as a part of the test for the elder sisters, the Hell Wag assumes the shape of Cordelia, supposedly with the help of Satan's magical ring. However, the climactic moments insinuate that the Hell Wag is in fact the genuine Cordelia and she, with her self-righteous and obstinate love, has the least hope of salvation among the three sisters. In the first performance in 1995, this insinuation was unmistakable because the fool finds at the last moment that he forgot to lend the magic ring to the Hell Wag. Even though the ending was later revised and has become more ambiguous, the editors restore the 1995 ending in this volume. Their decision illustrates the play's trait as a literary record of the ambience of Japanese society in the Lost Decade.

The second play, *HAMLET X SHIBUYA*, was made and performed by Kakushinhan Theatre Company (the word "kakushinhan" stands for "a crime of conscience" in Japanese), a theatre company of the Lost Generation, the appellation for those who experienced adolescence during the Japanese Lost Decade. According to Rosalind Fielding, the "cityscape of Tokyo […] is essential to the company's performances and often takes on a role as a character in its own right" (148). Especially in *HAMLET X SHIBUYA*, the two most representative districts of Tokyo, Shibuya and Akihabara, are merged into a single, literary third world where the worldview of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is aptly used to highlight the serious social problems of contemporary Japan.

In blending Akihabara with Shibuya, Kimura Ryunosuke, the company manager and playwright, had in mind a case of indiscriminate murder that happened in Akihabara in 2008. The culprit, driving a rented truck, first plunged into Akihabara's traffic-free zone and then, leaving the vehicle, randomly attacked passers-by with a knife, causing 7 deaths and 10 injuries. Kimura splits the Hamlet figure into two characters whose names are Shibuya and Akihabara respectively. Akihabara in the play is urged by the ghost of his father to take revenge on society's cruelty, that led him to commit suicide. To answer the plea of the dead father (who may be either a genuine ghost or Akihabara's hallucination), he drives a truck not into Akihabara's pedestrian area but into a huge intersection in front of Shibuya station. On the other hand, Shibuya's girlfriend is one of the 7 victims of the murder and, because of the traumatic shock of losing her, Shibuya forgets her name and begins to call her "Ophelia." As the play progresses, Shibuya increasingly loses his sanity and starts to believe

that it is he who is the culprit of the indiscriminate murder, who killed Ophelia. Thus, while a Hamlet split into Shibuya and Akihabara is merged again in the course of the story, the revenge theme in the original is scattered widely through the various contemporary elements of Japan in the early 21st century.

Although it is clear that the Akihabara case is quite influential in the making of Kimura's play, it was also occasioned by a traumatic disaster, the Tohoku Great Earthquake and Tsunami on 11 March, 2011, which triggered the nuclear disaster in Fukushima. Kimura comments in the interview with the editor(s) that nuclear plants could be the symbol of the old value systems "that infringe upon the dignity of individuals" and says, "Witnessing 3.11 made me feel that what I feel now is more important, and that led me to found Kakushinhan" (165). The post-3.11 Japanese society which Kimura describes in *HAMLET X SHIBUYA* is dauntingly bleak, but not without a ray of hope, since, in the final scene, Shibuya's "Ophelia" (once again, she can either be a ghost or a creature of his imagination) reminds him of her true name—Light.

For Shimodate Kazumi, the manager and playwright of the Shakespeare Company of Japan (SCJ), a theatre company based in Sendai, one of the main cities in the area affected by 3.11, finding the element of hope is far more urgent than for Kakushinhan. Before 3.11, SCJ produced adaptations of Shakespeare whose settings were relocated into towns in Tohoku and whose language was transformed into various local dialects of the region, with the purpose of defying Tokyo-centrism and developing their local dialects into a profoundly dramatic language. After the disaster, however, Shimodate became totally at a loss and thought that they could not go on playing any more. And yet, he changed his mind because, he confesses, "an elderly lady, who approached me in Sendai after 3.11, said, 'Please don't give up Shakespeare. It's something I always look forward to. Please stage something not sad and not long'" (233). The result of SCJ's attempt to answer her request, and cater for local audiences who were all more or less directly damaged by the disaster, is *The New Romeo and Juliet* (2012).

This work is indeed not sad nor long. The place of the play is a hot spa resort town in the countryside of Miyagi prefecture in Tohoku, while "Two households, both alike in dignity | In fair Verona" in *Romeo and Juliet* are transformed into the two families which run two representative hotels in the hot spa town. There are also lots of concrete references in the play that suggest the time is the 1960s—the days when the elderly who suffer from 3.11 enjoyed their bloom of youth. The play is full of the rich vernacular language which the audience use in their everyday life (the contrivance that the translators applied for conveying that element is the use of Scottish dialect). The young couple take a drug that makes them apparently dead, but both of them wake up in time at the united funeral and the play ends in the joy of their rebirth.

Compared with the other two adaptations, Shimodate's revision may sound too faux-naïf and complacent in that it looks to cater for the audience's nostalgia without tackling imminent social problems. Nevertheless, decisively holding that attitude in the immediate aftermath of 3.11 itself can be regarded as a radical assertion of what drama can do for those who are deeply wounded by the unprecedented catastrophe. *HAMLET X SHIBUYA* and *The New Romeo and Juliet* appear to show opposite stances, but both reflect their serious considerations in reaction to the 3.11 disaster in each way. Reading these plays together, we can see, to borrow from Sanders again, "multiple interactions and a matrix of possibilities" for Shakespeare in contemporary Japan.

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Boika Sokolova and Janice Valls-Russell, eds. *Shakespeare's Others in 21st-Century European Performance.* **London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2021. Pp. 312.**

Reviewed by *Nora Galland**

This volume intends to focus on European productions of *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* that "think of the Other not in racial, but in ethnic terms" (2), for most of the essays "foreground ethnicity as an issue of debate" (6) to explore performances in which "[r]acial dichotomies are substituted by ethnic differences" (12). This was justified in the introduction by a reference to Shaul Bassi's demand to favor ethnicity over race (Bassi 13). Drawing on "Paul Gilroy's controversial claim that the category of 'race' should be dropped altogether", Bassi argues that it should otherwise be "at the very least, supplemented […] by the largely underutilized notion of ethnicity" (Bassi 13). In *Shakespeare's Others*, the conceptual distinction between "race" and "ethnicity" is left unexplained—both terms being at times used interchangeably in some chapters (34, 73, 128), or as antonyms in the introduction by Boika Sokolova and Janice Valls-Russell (2, 4, 6, 12).

What is most striking in this book is probably the lack of critical theory to address race, in particular the construction of whiteness. The volume is very uneven for some chapters do explore the naturalization of whiteness on stage (chapter 9), or the mechanisms through which race is erased or deconstructed (chapters 7 and 8), thus being aware of the repercussions casting choices have on the construction of race—intended or unintended by directors—while others seem completely oblivious to it (chapters 2 and 4).

The white supremacist vision of a white, or "racially homogeneous" (52) Eastern Europe is repeatedly hammered on the grounds that "in European countries without colonial histories, the acting profession is still white" (12), and again when it comes to discussing a Bulgarian production, it is said that "Bulgaria has no colonial history, and [that] the acting profession is racially, though not ethnically, homogeneous" (264). This assumption about the racial reality of Eastern Europe also appears at the beginning of the introduction to comment on Suren Shahverdyan's *Othello* production: "Such emphasis [on race] is far removed from the dominant interpretations on stages where performances

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* University Côte d'Azur, France. nora.galland@hotmail.fr

are shaped by race relations, as in the United States, Britain and other European countries with imperial histories, in other words, by the grim legacy of colonialism and slavery" (1). Thus the Roma communities, the main racial minority of Eastern Europe, are treated as an invisible presence in what is introduced as the "white" part of Europe. Precisely, Ioana Bunescu, from Malmö University in Sweden, wrote extensively about "the negative attitudes", including indifference, "towards the Roma minority in eastern Europe" (Bunescu 43) in her ground-breaking study *Roma in Europe: The Politics of Collective Identity Formation* (2014, Routledge).

Race is at times oversimplified and reduced to racial difference, mainly Africanness, or African blackness, while whiteness and the Roma people are disturbingly sidestepped which creates a critical void in particular in chapters 2 and 4. The seminal work of Ayanna Thompson, a scholar well-known for her work on *Othello*'s adaptations and casting politics, is only quoted once to insist on the multiplicity of retellings *Othello* offers (3). Dympna Callaghan is another race Shakespeare scholar only quoted once (102). One might wonder why the general bibliography of the volume has not included more race scholars to conceptualize and theorize the deconstruction of race on stage, mainly through performances of whiteness.

The book is divided in three parts made up of 13 chapters that "consider the aspects of performances pertaining to the role of the Stranger within their specific political, geographic, cultural and linguistic contexts" (10). The first part is entitled "Relocating otherness: the Other-within" (24-126), the second part examines "New nationalisms, migrants: Imperfect resolutions" (127-228) while the third part deals with "Performative conversations" (229-268), *i.e.* conversations with theatre practitioners, Karin Coonrod, Arnaud Churin and Plamen Markov. The volume ends with a coda entitled "Staging Shakespeare's Others and their biblical archetype" (269-80) by Péter Dávidházi.

Each section starts with a short introduction by Lawrence Gutner to bind the essays together. Three contributions focus on *Othello* in Italy by Anna Maria Cimitile (chapter 1), Bulgaria by Boika Sokolova and Kirilka Stavreva (chapter 2) and Portugal by Francesca Rayner (chapter 9), and three on *The Merchant of Venice* in France by Janice Valls-Russel (chapter 5), Romania by Nicoleta Cinpoeş (chapter 6) and Hungary by Natália Pikli (chapter 7). The last four essays analyse both plays in Poland by Aleksandra Sakowska (chapter 3), Serbia by Zorica Bečanović-Nikolić (chapter 4), the Netherlands by Coen Heijes (chapter 8), and Germany by Bettina Boecker (chapter 10).

Lawence Guntner introduces the first part as "a close analysis of the strategies of representation, interpretation and re-imagining of local European alterities" (26), *i.e.* the hierarchical constructions of whiteness.

In chapter 1, "'Venice' is elsewhere: the Stranger's locality or Italian 'blackness' in twenty-first century stagings of *Othello*", Anna Maria Cimitile

explores the phenomenon of "translocating Shakespeare" (31), or the fact that, with "the displacement of 'Venice' to another Italian region or city, the text is translated into a regional Italian dialect" (30). She analyses the Sicilian 2013 *Othello* by Luigi Lo Cascio in which references to the eponymous character's black skin suggests the darker skin tone of Southern Italians. Cimitile also examines Giuseppe's Miale di Mauro's Neapolitan 2017 *Othello* in which the director "re-appraise[s] *Othello*'s 'blackness' by using as critical lenses the Gramscian vision of the 'Southern Question' and Pasolini's view of regional cultures and dialects" (40).

In chapter 2, "Refracting the Racial Other into the Other-within in two Bulgarian adaptations of *Othello*", Boika Sokolova and Kirilka Stavreva also tackle the issue of the "otherness-within" (50) with the 1975 *Othello* production of Lyuben Grois who decided to have "a racially unmarked Othello" (51). Here, the authors universalize whiteness by suggesting that whiteness is "racially unmarked" (51), and that this performance is "erasing Othello's race" (51). What happens is that the production erases Othello's *blackness* to relocate it "within a local context of cultural traumas inflected by communist society" (51). What the authors introduce as a "de-raced interpretation of the play" (52) is actually about the deconstruction of the *whiteness* of Othello treated as an "Other-within" (52). In doing so, they explore Lilia Abadjieva's 2005 *Othello* considered as "a tragedy of gender" (53) as well as the 2008 *Othello* by Ivan Mladenov presented as a "tragedy of social exclusion" (60).

In chapter 3, "Estranged strangers: Kryzysztof Warlikowski's Shylock and Othello in *African Tales after Shakespeare* (2011)", Aleksandra Sakowska deals with a "purposeful stereotypical treatment of ethnicity in *The Merchant of Venice*" and the exaggeration of "racial stereotypes in post-Holocaust Poland" (70) that Warlikowski deconstructs throughout his five-hour performance. While the treatment of otherness is often intermingled with mockery, Warlikowski explores different kinds of otherness: "Lear (the old man), Shylock (the Jew) and Othello (the black man)" (73) in blackface. Sakowska argues that in this production, Othello "becomes post-historical and to a certain degree post-racial" (81).

In chapter 4, "Drags, dyes and deaths in Venice: *The Merchant of Venice* (2004) and *Othello* (2012) in Belgrade, Serbia", Zorica Bečanović--Nikolić analyses Egon Savin's 2004 *The Merchant of Venice* in which the director "stressed difference and otherness in all its guises: sexual, racial, national, religious" (96). She also focuses on Miloš Lolić's 2012 *Othello* in which "Othello's face was at first painted black, in the old-fashioned manner, plainly denoting his racial otherness" (99). She claims that African blackness is "hardly an issue in contemporary Serbian society" which explains the use of blackface, as she puts it: "the obviously conventional black make-up was both

part of the theatrical tradition and of the semiotic function of colours in this production" (99).

In chapter 5, "*The Merchant of Venice* in France (2001 and 2017): Deconstructing a malaise", Janice Valls-Russell examines Andrei Șerban's 2001 *The Merchant of Venice* and Jacques Vincey's 2017 *Business in Venice*. Both productions "set the play in the audience's here and now […] [mark] a break with the French tradition of moving the action elsewhere" (112), they also explore "the othering process" and its very "banality" (112). Drawing on Jean-Paul Sartre's essay *Réflexions sur la question Juive*, Valls-Russell introduces Vincey's Shylock as "a secular, isolated figure, unattached to a wide community" (122) while Șerban's character is depicted as belonging "to a diasporic network" he could turn to "for support" (122).

Guntner then presents the second part as dealing with productions that took place in countries marked by an "ongoing redefinition of nationhood based on ethnicity [which] has led to a rise in xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism and homophobia" (128).

In chapter 6, "'Barbarous temper', 'hideous violence' and 'mountainish inhumanity': Stage encounters with *The Merchant of Venice* in Romania", Nicoleta Cinpoeș analyses László Bocsárdi's 2010 *Merchant* which "extended the Stranger's case beyond the Jew" (135) and Horațiu Mălăele's 2017 *Shylock* in which "the mockery of justice was a grotesque display of double standards and hypocrisy" (145).

In chapter 7, "Staging *The Merchant of Venice* in Hungary: Politics, prejudice and languages of hatred", Natália Pikli presents the performance history of the Jew on the Hungarian stage and the representation of the Jew in Hungarian cultural memory. She then explores the Mohácsi brothers's 2013 *Merchant* that "placed Shylock's story into a world permeated by 'casual' racism and anti-Semitism, where Jewish jokes and intolerant remarks were a source of fun for both onstage and off-stage audiences" (156). On the contrary, Bertalan Bagó's 2016 *Merchant of Venice* "made light of otherness, downplaying any straightforward sign of Jewishness" (163).

In chapter 8, "Dutch Negotiations with Otherness in Times of Crisis: *Othello* (2006) and *The Arab of Amsterdam* (2008)", Coen Heijes draws a parallel between Theo van Gogh's murder case and Johan Doesburg's 2006 *Othello*, for "[f]ollowing van Gogh's murder, the debate in the Netherlands focused on Muslims and migrants from Morocco" (175). Heijes points out that if this production resorted to blackface, Othello quickly removed the make-up only to leave his eye sockets completely black during "a memorable opening" suggesting "Othello's attempts to integrate in a white society" (176). *In The Arab of Amsterdam* (2008) directed by Aram Adriaanse, Shylock is rebaptized Rafi who introduces himself as "a Jewish Arab, an Arab Jew" (179) from Baghdad—thus being an outsider no matter where he lives.

In chapter 9, "'Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago': Radical Empathy in Two Portuguese performances of *Othello*", Francesca Rayner analyses radical empathy—"understood here as a process of disidentification with gender and racial stereotypes underpinned by a sense that such stereotypes demand artistic and political transformation" (196)—in Nuno M. Cardoso's 2007 *Othello* and in Nuno Carinhas's 2018 *Othello*. Rayner explores Cardoso's production to conclude that his "deliberately non-political reading meant that the gender and racial politics were left unexamined" (198). In Carinhas' production, she argues that "[t]he all-white cast functioned instead to naturalize whiteness as the racial marker that needs no explanation or justification" (199-200).

In chapter 10, "A tragedy? *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* in Germany during the 2015-16 refugee crisis", Bettina Boecker explores Christian Weise's 2016 *Othello*—"a post-colonial adaptation of Shakespeare's play" (212) —as well as Nicolas Stemann's 2015 *Merchant of Venice* in which the director "others everyone, but altogether does away with the idea of a centre, there is no 'Us' to give substance to the Other" (219).

In the third part of the volume, Boika Sokolova and Kirilka Stavreva start with "*The Merchant of Venice* in the Venetian Ghetto (2016): Director Karin Coonrod" in which they have a discussion focusing on the protean character of anti-Semitism that is expressed in several languages in the production. Then Janice Valls-Russell's conversation, entitled "Inverting *Othello* in France (2019): Director Arnaud Churin", explores the motivations of the director according to whom "*Othello* […] cannot be narrowed down to racism. It is rather a complex play about diversity, hatred of the Other, and the mechanisms of patriarchy" (231). In the end, Boika Sokolova and Kirilka Stavreva's interview, "Migrant *Othello* (2020) in Bulgaria: Director Plamen Markov", reveals that this production "sidestepped the topics that have recently defined otherness in Othello—race, sexism and age—to focus instead on the anxieties of migration" (231).

In the last section, Péter Dávidházi examines the extent to which the Other is needed in a crisis drawing a parallel between on the one hand Othello and Shylock and on the other the Biblical figure Jephthah. In all three cases, Dávidházi argues that "there is the same desire to use the Stranger for gaining power and to preserve his negative stereotype for the same purpose, thus exploiting the Other ruthlessly both as an aid and as a scapegoat" (274). He also refers to the "Shibboleth test" (275) and the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter to theorize the use of modern dialects on stage as well as gender politics.

Although the volume might seem uneven when it comes to the (de-)construction of race—whiteness in particular—on stage, it gathers thought-provoking reviews of a variety of European performances dealing with Shakespeare's Others. It is therefore a useful companion for anyone exploring otherness in contemporary adaptations of *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* on European stages.

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Pia Brînzeu, *Fantomele lui Shakespeare* [*Shakespeare's Phantoms*]. Timişoara: Editura Universităţii de Vest, 2022. Vol. 1. Pp. 428. Vol. 2. Pp. 379.

Reviewed by *Monica Matei-Chesnoiu**

Fantomele lui Shakespeare [*Shakespeare's Phantoms*] is a challenging and exceptional book, a landmark in Romanian culture, and also one that defies any effort of providing a comprehensive statement of its objectives and achievements. Not only do the two extensive volumes (1:428 pp. and 2:379 pp.) examine an almost exhaustive list of contemporary novelistic and dramatic adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, but they also address a wide variety of readers, from the amateur Romanian booklover interested in present-day fiction to the erudite Shakespeare scholar, who is aware of the latest developments in the field of Shakespeare studies. The book itself is a ground-breaking megaproject in the area of Shakespeare studies in Romania and internationally, and it is a celebration of what Shakespeare means to all of us, young and elderly, student and university professor of British and American literature, translator, or director and actor set on producing a Shakespeare play or interpreting a character.

Fantomele lui Shakespeare opens with the clarification of the title's concept and methodology; as Brînzeu admits, Shakespeare "haunts us" with "intertextual phantoms" (1:9, my translation), rendered in various critical conceptualizations, from "*biotexts*," to "*palimtexts*" (1:9) and "*afterimage*" (1:10). While admitting that there are no limits to the expansion and development of these texts, alluding to the semioticians' "porous" borders (1:11), Brînzeu graciously accepts—with all of us—that Shakespeare was an intertextual writer himself, who appropriated other literary worlds (1:12). I particularly appreciate the statement according to which we should admit to having unleashed "the waters of a huge textual flow" (1:13) into the world. This geographic metaphor links the book's argument to notions of spatial literary studies, which runs as an undercurrent throughout this multi-spatial and multi-cultural investigation.

The critical literature invoked in the Introduction includes references to earlier rewritings of Shakespeare's plays (by Nahum Tate, Alexander Pope, Lewis Carroll, G.B. Shaw, Bertolt Brecht, Boris Pasternak and Eugen Ionescu), but also critical metaphors related to quantum physics (1:15) and Elizabeth Fowler's concept of "phantom templates" (1:21). Brînzeu has done much to

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achieve a paradigm shift in Romanian Shakespeare's studies by deciding to write the book in Romanian, as the paperback offers a wealth of material to the Romanian reader, who has fewer opportunities of information in this field than the reader in English. Citations from Shakespeare's plays are from the most accomplished and recent Romanian translations, and citations from the adapted texts of the novels are also from Romanian translations (where these versions exist).

Volume I looks into the novels *The Daughter of Time* by Josephine Tey, *Within the Hollow Crown* by Margaret Campbell Barnes, the whodunnit *Richard II: The Death of Kings* by Margaret Frazer (in *Shakespearean Whodunits* edited by Michael Ashley), *The King's Sister* by Anne O'Brien, *Vinegar Girl* by Anne Tyler, *The Great Night* by Chris Adrian, *Shylock Is My Name* by Howard Jacobson, *Escape from Verona* by David Gray, *Romeo's Ex: Rosaline's Story* by Lisa Fiedler, *Juliet* by Anne Fortier, *Saving Juliet* by Suzanne Selfors, *Gertrude and Claudius* by John Updike, *Ophelia* by Lisa Klein, *Something Rotten* by Alan Gratz, and *A Nutshell: A Novel* by Ian McEwan; the short story "Yorick" by Salman Rushdie; and the plays *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (*Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui*) by Bertolt Brecht, *Shylock's Revenge* by David Henry Wilson, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* by Tom Stoppard, and *Vărul Shakespeare* (*Cousin Shakespeare*) by Marin Sorescu, showing the "huge textual river" (1:13) generated by Shakespeare's plays in the minds of contemporary writers.

When discussing Shakespeare's historical inaccuracies in *Richard III*, as revealed in Josephine Tey's *The Daughter of Time* (1951), Brînzeu concludes, "Literature may even defeat literature" (1:29). An almost prophetic critical statement about the dangers of the dictators' rise to power deserves being quoted in full; analysing the textual intersections between Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* by Bertolt Brecht, Brînzeu notes: "Just like Shakespeare, Brecht understood too well the ways of recurring history: certain presidents' aura of greatness is often illusory, and when corruption and crime are used to promote a destructive policy, evil comes back from the depths of hell, 'intertextually' recycling destinies and generating similarly scandalous events" (1:55, my translation). This statement shows that Brînzeu is not only an excellent connoisseur of historical development, a thorough Shakespeare scholar, and a fine analyst of dramaturgical adaptations, but she has the power— like Shakespeare, I would say—of foreshadowing events in history, while analysing dramatic adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. It is impossible not to observe the similarity between the rise of Hitler's power in 1938 Germany—as alluded to in Brecht's play—and the rise of all dictatorships, in any place and at any time.

Some subchapters of this thought-provoking book are organized according to spatial metaphors (the labyrinth, anamorphic imagery, the garden), and are entitled suggestively, "The Labyrinth of Great Treasons" (1:69), "Anamorphic Games: Who is, in Fact, the Traitor?" (1:76) and "The Intertextual Garden" (1:80), when discussing *Richard II* and its adaptations. The metaphor of

the moon in relation to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* offers the occasion for enticing subchapter titles, such as "Moon Symphony" (1:169), "Moon and Amor" (1:171), or "Moon Queen" (1:187), when referring to the narrative embodiment of Titania's character in the Buena Vista Park, in Chris Adrian's *The Great Night* (2011). Images and texts from the Manga version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are seen as semiotic translations of the "*reversed ekphrasis* type*" (1:193). *The Merchant of Venice* is interpreted under the metaphoric sign of three: the love triangle (Antonio, Bassanio, Portia), the money triangle (Antonio, Bassanio, Shylock), the law triangle (Duke of Venice, Portia, Shylock), the family triangle (Shylock, Jessica, Lorenzo), the three wives' triangle and their rings (Portia, Nerissa, Jessica), the geographic triangle of the three Italian cities (Venice, Belmont and Padua), or Antonio's three ships (1:203). This close reading is particularly inspiring, especially when Brînzeu notes that these "unstable" triangles "fall one against the other" (1:203) in the play. The balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet* is examined across several intertexts, such as David Gray's *Escape from Verona* (2011), Lisa Fiedler's *Romeo's Ex: Rosaline's Story* (2006), Anne Fortier's *Juliet* (2010), and *Saving Juliet* by Suzanne Selfros (2008).

Volume II discusses the novels *Dom Casmurro* by Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih, *The Nature of Blood* by Caryl Phillips, *New Boy* by Tracy Chevalier, *A Thousand Acres* by Jane Smiley, *Fool* by Christopher Moore, *The Gap of Time: The Winter's Tale Retold* by Jeanette Winterson, *Mama Day* by Gloria Naylor, *Indigo, or Mapping the Waters* by Marina Warner, and *Sycorax* by John Brian Aspinall; and the plays *Lear* by Edward Bond, *Come and Go* by Samuel Beckett, *Macbett* by Eugen Ionescu, and *Mac Bird!* by Barbara Garson. The subchapter titles in this volume are organised according to spatial metaphors and the triad symbol. Chapter titles such as "The Green-Eyed Monster" (2:45), "The Illusion of the Centre" (2:88), and "On Stage" (2:171), when examining the novels *Dom Casmurro* (1899) by Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, *The Nature of Blood* (1997) by Caryl Phillips, and *Fool* (2010) by Christopher Moore, reveal the submerged spatial and geometrical pattern of Brînzeu's book. The entire volume argues that Shakespeare continues to live in the minds of contemporary writers through these intertextual phantoms.

This wide-ranging book comes at a time of considerable rethinking about the resources needed for expanding the field of Shakespearean adaptations and appropriations, an arena rapidly growing to embrace film, global performance contexts, reception studies, and textual studies—especially in Romania. Brînzeu's two volumes are traditional in their outlines, but they are also a model of how to make diverse novelistic and dramatic adaptations of Shakespeare's plays work for Romanian readers. This review has done scant justice to its subject. Brînzeu's volumes are learned, historically capacious, thoughtful, and concerned with challenging topics in several related subdisciplines (adaptation studies, translation and performance studies). A broad survey of contemporary adaptations of Shakespeare (in novel and drama)

coexists with brief but astute readings of thirty Shakespearean plays, among which *Richard III*, *Richard II*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* (in Volume I), as well as *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest* (in Volume II). The scholarly range of this book is admirable and motivating, and its readers are fortunate to find it on their shelves. The book is a godsend to students (especially doctoral students) and provides a mine of riches for more conventional readers.

Hongwei Chen 陈红薇**,** *Shakespeare in Post-War British Drama* 《战后英国戏剧中的莎士比亚》**. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2019. Pp. 284.**

Reviewed by *Yanhua Xia**

Along with the canonization of Shakespeare, countless works have been created through rewriting Shakespeare's plays. This practice is characterized by scattered sporadic cases before the 1960s. However, as Christopher Innes writes, "with the germination and growing of deconstructionism and post-modernism since the 1960s, a large number of western dramatists and novelists have participated in the rewriting of Shakespeare's works. Writers, actors, stage designers, and directors worked together to produce variations on the original texts of Shakespeare's plays, and to rewrite new works for stage performance. It is an age which can rival with the Elizabethan times" (1). This great interest in rewriting Shakespeare across the world has reached a peak by the end of the 20st century from the United Kingdom and the European continent to Asia and North America. At the same time, to interpret the new variations of Shakespeare's works in the world since the end of the 20th century has been a popular topic for academics. In her recent monograph *Shakespeare in Post-War British Drama*, Professor Hongwei Chen, a leading scholar of Shakespeare studies at the University of Science and Technology Beijing, China, intends to make an original exploration into the distinguished British writers' works of rewriting Shakespeare in the post-war era.

In this work, the author has combined the history of rewriting Shakespeare's plays in the first place, and analyzed the value of rewriting Shakespeare's plays with a large number of examples. It involves a long list of writers, has a broad scope and in-depth analysis, which reflects the author's profound academic vision. In the history of world literature, the history of rewriting is actually very long. As early as Homer's time, the same story is often passed down through the rewritings of different people. It is an important phenomenon in the history of literature that the rewriting of different times takes the ancient Greek and Roman mythology as the motive. In her book *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon wrote that the German thinker Walter Benjamin once put forward the view that "a story is always the repetition of a story" (2),

* School of Foreign Languages, China West Normal University, China. philipxiayanhua@ 126.com

which should be taken as an objective understanding of the rewriting phenomenon. However, it is regrettable that there is a lack of research on the rewriting history of Shakespeare in China. This could be remedied with the publication of Chen's *Shakespeare in Post-War British Drama*.

As to the body of this book, it expounds the topic from an interdisciplinary perspective and points out that through the rewriting of Shakespeare's plays, "Shakespeare has gained unprecedented vitality, presence, and influence" (35). To achieve this goal, the author does not focus on the original works of Shakespeare but takes contemporary variations of Shakespeare plays, films, and television shows in different cultural contexts as study objects. She investigates these different works by combining the study of post-war British drama, Shakespeare culture, and rewriting theories together. The author has selected eight representative playwrights from a large number of contemporary British writers to carry out the project. The aim of this choice is not to make comprehensive research on the eight writers, but to choose two representative works from each writer's corpus, which makes a total of sixteen works as the research object, to discuss how Shakespeare could be rewritten, replayed, and uniquely understood in the context of post-modern culture.

In the history of world literature, the literary creation of many writers is literary rewriting, and Shakespeare is no exception. In the author's opinion, although Shakespeare, as a master of drama, has long been a literary symbol and a symbol of humanistic value, his dramatic works are not absolutely original. Based on detailed facts, the author found the creation of "copinism" was a fashion during the Renaissance and Shakespeare himself was even a master of rewriting. In the process of his drama creation, he absorbed countless references from former texts and history. Geoffrey Bullough, author of the magnificent eight-volume *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, once pointed out, "Shakespeare's writing is filled with ideas, images, plots and characters borrowed or interpreted from other dramatists and poets" (Bullough 1). Being in the copinism-inspired era, Shakespeare had no scruples about "stealing" from all the poetry, romances, chronicles, medieval and Tudor plays within his reach, recycling, and rewriting them. Documents of different sources have proved that many of Shakespeare's works are rewritten. Shakespeare scholars have done a lot of detailed research and found that *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet* and other great classics of Shakespeare are not genuine original works, but have the origin of one or more source texts. *King Lear*, for example, was influenced by several pre-texts and is a mixture of many ancient myths, stories, and legends related to the ancient king named Leir. Chen argues that as a playwright in the age of copinism, "Shakespeare, like countless others who have adapted his plays for dramatic, aesthetic, commercial, or ideological reasons, has used history, characters, and other sources as the basis for astonishing works" (6).

The author's analysis is not to show that Shakespeare himself was a master of rewriting, but to show that it is reasonable for Shakespeare's plays to

be rewritten and reproduced by others. Since the 17th century, Shakespeare's plays have been constantly rewritten, and it is these rewrites that make Shakespeare's plays live in our collective memory constantly. In fact, paraphrasing has become a new way of understanding Shakespeare's plays, or a new text for understanding Shakespeare's plays. Take, for example, John Fletcher's adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* in the early 17th century. Fletcher named his version *The Women's Prize*, also known as *The Tamer Tamed*. In this new play, the gender relationship in Shakespeare's original play is reversed. The original plot of Petruchio taming his wealthy, shrewish wife Katharina was changed into the wife taming the husband. The whole play's theme was changed from male chauvinism into feminism. Nahum Tate, for another example, turned the tragic *King Lear* into *The History of King Lear*, a comedy about the restoration of Lear and the reunion of lovers, which was played in Britain for more than 150 years. According to the author's statistics, from 1660 to 1777, there were more than 50 adaptations of Shakespeare's plays similar to the biography of King Lear, some of which deleted, added, and re-wrote the original texts of Shakespeare's plays to varying degrees in terms of plot and language. The titles of the plays were changed and the characters reconstructed. "Entering the 19th century, Shakespeare became even more revered" (9). With the passing of time, the Elizabethan playwright Shakespeare has become a complete symbol of British and even Western culture, a great poet, philosopher, and prophet who revealed the secrets of the human spirit. Because Shakespeare has become a symbol of England, the world's interest in rewriting Shakespeare's plays has never abated. In the early 20th century, even Bernard Shaw, the master of modern theatre, was keen to create plays by rewriting Shakespeare's plays, and works such as *Shakespeare and Shaw* (1949) and *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1950) were Shaw's rewrites of Shakespeare and his plays.

This book has systematically sorted out the rewriting of Shakespeare's plays in different periods according to chronological order, so that readers could see a special way that Shakespeare's plays existed through rewriting and generate "a rethinking of what we mean by creativity" (Kastan 2020, 6). Shakespeare himself is a writer of rewritten plays, and his plays have been accordingly widely rewritten by later generations. For a long time, due to the lack of theoretical support, literary works created through rewriting are often regarded as derivative products of the original works, and it is generally necessary to make a claim of which works they are adapted from. However, the author points out in her book, "whether in the 1970s or 1980s or 1990s, although the study of rewriting practice in this period has introduced the perspective of post-modern cultural concepts such as intertextuality, people have not yet realized that contemporary rewriting is a creative form with post-modern cultural characteristics that is different from traditional rewriting and adaptation.

And even less aware that contemporary rewriting is an independent creative practice" (18). That is to say, rewriting has not been extricated from the dependency on the original work, and rewriting has not been recognized as a literary creation in its own right.

Therefore, how to evaluate the rewritten literary works has become an important question to be answered in the 20th century, especially since the post-war period. Within the post-modern cultural context of great influence, various theories such as the theory of intertextuality, multiple context theory, theory of reference, the author theory, narrative theory, translation theory, reader response theory, and Harold Bloom's theory of correction, are advanced to redefine "rewrite" with unprecedented new visions. Indeed, the post-modern trend of thought not only provides the thematic motivation for contemporary rewriting, but also offers a narrative mode beyond the traditional rewriting. Based on the rewriting theories of two critics, Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier, the author found a theoretical breakthrough to solve the rewriting problems that had not been solved for a long time. Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier put forward the idea of "recontextualization" in the rewriting of Shakespeare's works in their edited anthology *Adaptations of Shakespeare*, which states that "rewriting is a process of the re-contextualization of the original text, including both literary and performance changes to the past works" (4). Therefore, a rewritten work is actually a new work which can evoke the reader's memory of the original work but differs from the original work. The theoretical discussion of rewriting is obviously the most important feature of Chen's book. Through a lot of discussions and analyses of the theory of rewriting, Chen summarizes that the theoretical ideas of post-modern culture have produced a huge impact on the rewriting practice of Shakespeare. They have not only changed the basic idea of Shakespeare rewriting, but also made rewriting itself become an independent creative practice of literature.

Through the rewriting of Shakespeare's plays and the discussion of contemporary theories of rewriting, Chen's pioneering research not only equips us with important insights, but also provides us with an example of how to do academic study. The study of the rewriting of Shakespeare's plays is both a contemporary and a historical topic. The author fuses together literature, drama, film and television adaptations to make a comprehensive investigation, which breaks the disciplinary boundary and places the rewriting of Shakespeare's plays in the historical process to conduct a dynamic study. "What is rewriting? Why rewrite?" "Rewriting: critical dialogues with Shakespeare" "Shakespeare's legacy in post-war British drama" "Who Writes Shakespeare?" are the four consecutive and logical questions to be looked into. These four questions are actually the various manifestations of Shakespeare's plays in post-war British drama. Based on these key questions, the process of the emergence, construction, and evolution of the idea of rewriting is sorted out, the mechanism of the

function of the theory of rewriting is revealed, and the path of the study of the theory of rewriting is discussed. Compared with previous researches, this book is more open, comprehensive, profound, and novel.

Under the cultural background of post-modernism, the rewriting of Shakespeare by post-war British playwrights is not only an unprecedented subversion of Shakespeare's plays, but also a new form of confirmation of the contemporary value of Shakespeare's plays. This book has given an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon: from the rewriting of Shakespeare's plays, we can see that contemporary rewriting is derivative rather than parasitic or belonging to secondary creation. Contemporary rewriting is a unique literary or cultural category widely accepted by the public which not only helps "Shakespeare get turned into the iconic literary figure he has become" (Kastan 2021, 163), but also is an independent literary and aesthetic existence produced in the post-modern theoretical context.

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Theatre Reviews

***Twelfth Night*. Dir. Justin Anderson. Metropol Theatre, Tirana, Albania.**

Reviewed by ***Marinela Golemi***[*]

In *Twelfth Night*, Viola is separated from her twin brother Sebastian after a shipwreck in the Adriatic Sea. In this moment of uncertainty, Viola asks, "What country, friends, is this?" (1.2.1), and her captain recognizes this unfamiliar place as Illyria. Illyria is often identified as present-day Albania because of 19th-century British travel writers. When Mary Edith Durham visited Albania in 1902, she wrote that Illyrian tribes resided in Northern or "High Albania" (1). Similarly, Lord Byron's famous visit to Albania was monumented by a portrait of him clad in Albanian dress, and letters which romanticized Albanian culture and history. As David Fermor suggests, Byron "produced an 'imagined geography' of Albania as a wild and exotic realm of the Oriental 'other'", misrepresenting it as a stage for his travels (1). A romantic notion of national identity formed around Illyrian descent as a means of laying claim to Western history (Dzino 16). Most Albanians take pride in the commonly accepted theory that they are Illyrian descendants. Ledio Xhoxhi, for example, writes that "Shakespeare has never been in our Illyria, but he has written about her in the comedy *Twelfth Night*". Nearly three decades after its 1987 premiere in Albanian theatre, Justin Anderson and Jonida Beqo's 2018 production of *Twelfth Night* (*Nata e Dymbëdhjetë*), staged at the Metropol Theatre in Tirana, revitalizes this link between history and fiction. In this production, Shakespeare's tale finds its Illyrian home.

The performance opens with live instrumental music as the siblings and the ship's crew dance to cheerful Albanian rhythms. The bare, blue and dimly lit stage becomes the ship. At the sound of thunder, the dancers take hold of long blue chiffon fabrics that drop from the sky and become the sea waves that

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[*] Northern Arizona University. marinela.golemi@nau.edu

separate the siblings. The production's concern with place surfaces from the initial moment when the Albanian music and costumes are heard and seen. Then, the answer to the first line of the show, Viola's question, "Çfare vendi është ky, o kapitan?" ("What country is this, captain?"), is obvious and familiar—an Albanian Illyria. As a result of localization, Cesario, Malvolio, Sir Toby and Maria are renamed Çerçiz, Maliq, Tobi and Maro, respectively. Moreover, all the actors are dressed in traditional Albanian garments, most notably the fustanella (a Balkan kilt), while live Albanian folk music guides the whole performance.

Albanian music, consisting of a tambourine, clarinets and accordions, is integral to the production, because it limits and propels the plot. The live vocalist band sings to transition from scene to scene and to evoke emotional responses from the audience that surrounds the stage in their high chairs. A female lead singer joins in a mournful tune as Olivia enters the stage to pay respects to her dead brother, represented by a mannequin torso dressed in his clothes. As Marcus Cheng Chye Tan argues, music is performative and "musical range can determine or disguise gender" (109). Following Tan's idea, I argue that the Albanian folk music sung by the male musicians, marked by long sustained vowel sounds that imitate crying, reflects the patriarchal and homosocial tradition which musically guides the plot. Moreover, the iso-polyphony underscores the palimpsestic nature of the production that welcomes intercultural exchanges but ultimately chooses to return to Illyria.

Anderson and Beqo's *Twelfth Night* exemplifies both intercultural and intracultural relations and tensions as evidenced by the migratory nature of the play and their collaboration. When Viola and Sebastian arrive in Illyria, their attire indicates that they're Albanian, not foreigners. Their clothes represent their class and regional background. For example, men wear a traditional round wool cap called "qelesh", as a national symbol of Albanian identity. This varies across regions: Sir Andrew wears a red cloth around his cap to mark his Northern Albanian identity, whereas Sir Toby and Malvolio sport a tall cap to signify that they are from Southern Albania. As for Orsino, he wears a flat-topped red cap to indicate his high class and wealth. Although all men wear the traditional "xhamadan" vest, their class status in the court is represented by their woven belts: golden for Toby, black with red and white stripes for the rest. Only Cesario and Sebastian wear black flat-topped caps to underline their foreignness. The clown's attire consists of a black cloak and pantaloons, and a wool flower on his cap.

The women's attire also varies from Southern to Northern Albania as indicated by the shape of the sleeves, the skirts, and the embroidery. Thus, the production celebrates intracultural exchanges between Southern and Northern Albania. The twin plots also reflect the cultural and political differences between Northern and Southern Albania, as suggested by the different costumes of the

characters. The fashion of the play centers on gender, but in the Albanian production ethnicity, class and cultural regionality are palimpsestic.

The use of traditional Albanian music and costumes celebrates the local, while also emphasizing a patriarchal and heteronormative society. Hence, the production registers anxiety about changes in sexual behaviour in Albania. Any moments of physical interaction or near-kissing scenes between Cesario and Orsino are interrupted. The ending especially reinforces the status quo regarding acceptable representations of Albanian masculinity and sexuality when Orsino informs Cesario, who has let her hair down and removed her fake mustache, that "Çerçiz I will call you as long as you are dressed like a man, but when you are dressed like a woman, a princess and a queen you'll be for me". The crowd giggles when she dips him for a kiss, but, ultimately, she returns dressed as Viola for the wedding celebrations, where the men and women perform separate gendered dances, before they all join together in a "shota" circle dance, as is customary in Albanian weddings. Thus, the performance concludes by honouring local traditions that uphold patriarchy and heteronormativity.

In the end, the homoeroticism between Cesario and Orsino is justified by the female body underneath, whereas the relationship between Antonio and Sebastian remains ambiguous and alludes to Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick's definition of homosocial bonds between men that maintain patriarchy (1-2). In Act 2, Scene 2, Antonio kneels to apologize for his bad service, Sebastian joins him, and they hold hands until Sebastian exits. Antonio's decision to follow him because he "adores" him (2.2.43) is translated as "te dua" to mean "I love you". This is the only opportune moment when their relationship and love is ambivalent. Yet, the production doesn't experiment with the homoeroticism between them because of local cultural limitations imposed on adaptations. The ambivalence that the production depicts toward gender and same-sex relationships reflects Albania's desire to join the EU while also maintaining a historically rooted (Illyrian) cultural identity that is unique but still benefits from global encounters.

The paradoxical desire to be global but maintain a local identity is embodied in Justin Anderson and Jonida Beqo's Albanian production of *Twelfth Night*. The artistic collaboration between the directors, theatres, and cultures exemplifies the glocal essence of non-Anglophone Shakespeare performances, which are never either local or global, but always somewhere and something in between. Anderson expresses his hope that these "intentional intersections [. . .] will allow an audience to not only receive something that is at once familiar from a literary and theatrical standpoint, but to experience a story that is both for and of the historical context of Albania" (Johns). Although the production upholds local culture, it is supported by a global literary, theatrical, and industrial force. Marcela Kostihová describes this as a "two-fold desire to 'return' into the fold of (Western) European countries and also a return to

essential [Albanian] nationhood" (132). The production captured the desire of a globally isolated country to maintain a bridge to Western Europe as well as a means of navigating Albanianness.

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***Troilus and Cressida*. Dir Alexandros Cohen. Argo theatre, Athens, Greece.**
***Troilus and Cressida*. Dir. Maria Panourgia. The National Theatre, Rex theatre, Athens, Greece.**

Reviewed by *Xenia Georgopoulou*[*]

Troilus and Cressida Between Two Extremes

On 7 December 2021 Alexandros Cohen's production of *Troilus and Cressida* premiered at the Argo theatre in Athens. Once more, after *Timon of Athens* (2014) and *Cymbeline* (2016), the director chose to stage a Shakespearean play that is rarely performed, in Greece or elsewhere. And yet, on 11 March 2022, the same play appeared on the "Eleni Papadaki" stage at the Rex theatre in Athens, in a production of the National Theatre of Greece, directed by Maria Panourgia.

Having watched both productions, I saw two diametrically opposed views of the play's world. Cohen created a more sophisticated image of the two adversaries, putting both his Greeks and his Trojans around office tables, where they discussed their next moves sitting on office chairs, in a set (designed by Giannis Arvanitis) that also included three clocks and several props that alluded to an office (large notice boards, dossiers, desk lamps, several items of stationery etc.). On the contrary, Panourgia opted for a primitive background, where the Greek and Trojan tents were represented by two African-style huts, and the Greeks and Trojans themselves moved like apes,[1] supposedly eating some kind of nuts that they threw to each other. However, the huts stood on a black, glossy floor (the set was designed by Myrto Lambrou), as if to remind of former luxury.

Undoubtedly, in *Troilus and Cressida* Shakespeare gives us a degraded view of the ancient world (mostly the Greek world). It is no wonder that it was one of the Shakespearean plays Karolos Koun, one of Greece's most inspired directors, staged during the dictatorship of 1967-1973, when a decadent image (due to its kitsch aesthetics) of the Greek illustrious past was used as part of the dictators' rhetoric.[2] However, Cohen and Panourgia chose two totally different

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[*] National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. georgopx@yahoo.com
[1] Louiza Arkoumanea admits that the actors' movement reminded of Anthropidae (Big Apes).
[2] On this connection see Georgopoulou, *Shakespeare Horizontally and Vertically*, 21-23.

ways to illustrate the fall of ancient heroes and values described by Shakespeare. Cohen apparently focused on the moral degradation of political games, showing us on stage a room where decisions were made, which was actually the same for both parts. Panourgia, on the other hand, saw this decadence as a return to a primitive condition. However, the decline of a civilization does not mean a return to its origins, so, to me, this idea made no sense at first sight. And yet Louiza Arkoumanea in her review provides an interesting view of the production, describing the space created by Panourgia as

> a fluid space of dawn and dusk, at the distant past and our possible future, where we are animals and humans at once, where pre-human meets meta-human, at the beginning of civilization and at its imminent end.

The decline of ancient values and ideals in Shakespeare's play is also illustrated by the Greek and Trojan heroes' idleness, underlined in the National's production by the costumes, designed by Ioanna Tsami, which consisted mostly of white underwear and padding around the actors' buttocks and thighs that looked like additional fat on their bodies. These figures, too far from the idealized bodies of ancient heroes (Bouras), definitely added to the decadent image of both adversaries, giving indeed an impression of idleness and looseness.

The depiction of this idleness was also one of Cohen's goals, too. In his director's note in the programme he explains the basis of his staging: "In order to highlight this dense, philosophical, 'precious' text, we tried to put aside anything that causes or forwards the action, and to be led, if possible, towards a more intense immobility, which could even verge on apathy" (6). This choice was in line with the overall aesthetics of the production as described by Cohen: "We decided that the closest aesthetics would be that of the Parnassist poets, who sought the containment of passion and intense feelings, aimed chiefly at calmness and serenity". "However", Cohen pursues, "as human nature is hard to tame, we consciously organized within the production short cracks which disrupt the Parnassist aesthetics and give room to Romanticism and deep sentimental involvement" (6-7).

Panourgia, on the other hand, in her much shorter director's note with the title "Almost Humans", mentions different sources of inspiration from different cultures, eastern and western. She put the characters in a primitive environment (which she also saw as futuristic) that she called "Sad Tropics", from Claude Lévi-Strauss's book *Tristes tropiques*. "The creatures that inhabit this unfinished world", Panourgia explains, "behave like hungry ghosts from Thibetan mythology, who eat non-stop but never satisfy their appetite" (7). This constant eating activity seemed to be in line with Shakespeare's text, in a play

where both men and women are described as food.[3] Eri Kyrgia also observes that *Troilus and Cressida* is the only Shakespearean play where so many characters use food symbolism to express a variety of feelings (21). Panourgia's creatures also embodied "the emptiness and narcissism of Casanova", or they were "overwhelmed by a mad desire for blood, as in the legendary *Nosferatu* by Friedrich Murnau" (7). The Casanovan narcissism was hard to be traced in the subhuman form that Panourgia had chosen for her characters (although Louiza Arkoumanea traced their self-admiration as their bodies reflected on the glossy floor); however, Nosferatu could be brought to mind by the long, sharp teeth protruding from several actors' mouths—though only if the spectator had read the director's note in the programme. In this primitive context, these teeth rather recalled certain species of apes with long, sharp canines, such as gorillas. In the world created by Panourgia, the characters "move as in a dream or like semi-conscious ghosts that are driven in the state of bardo, between life and death, where war lasts for ever" (Panourgia).

In the National's production, the costumes, with the same paddings for both male and female actors, somehow dulled the two sexes' bodily differences. It is no wonder that Panourgia also used actresses for male parts (Eudoxia Androulidaki played Priam and Agamemnon, and Theano Metaxa was also given the part of Aeneas). On the other hand, Cohen used an all-female cast, except for the part of Troilus. Rafika Chawishe, who played Hector, referred to the cast as a "modern female chorus" (Kranioti). As Cohen explained to me, in a personal conversation I had with him, he believes that modern society seems to return to some secret matriarchy, where women, whom he regards as more antagonistic, have a more active role in decision making. As for Troilus, he saw him as a rather passive character, which made him choose a male actor for the part.[4]

But what was the overall impression of the two productions? Panourgia argued that "[a]lthough the play is characterized as satirical-grotesque, there is nothing funny in this wild depiction of human nature" (7). Stella Charami also observed that "the comical element [wa]s hardly recognized", despite the fact that she traced a "cold ridiculousness" in the production. On the other hand, Konstantinos Bouras saw a "constant overloading with forced comical element". I have to admit that there were some dramatic moments in the National's *Troilus and Cressida* (one of the strongest being Cassandra's appearance, played by three actresses forming a circle), and yet the element of the grotesque was more

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[3] On this metaphor see Georgopoulou, "Food and Identity in Shakespeare's Plays", 75.

[4] In the past, Cohen has even turned male characters into female in his Shakespearean productions, as in *Timon of Athens*, where Flavius became Flavia, or *Cymbeline*, where Pisanio became Cornelia. On this matter see Georgopoulou, *Shakespeare Horizontally and Vertically*, 54-56.

than evident, due to the costumes and the overall movement of Panourgia's creatures. As Bouras points out, the paddings around the actors' buttocks and thighs reminded of the *somation*, a grotesque costume accessory used in ancient Greek comedy performances. Despite the fact that he acknowledges the inverted image of the Greek ideals in Shakespeare's play, the critic regards Panourgia's aesthetic choice as a caricature that ridicules Shakespeare's play.

I would agree with Charami that in Panourgia's staging of *Troilus and Cressida* the "particular visual identity outweigh[ed] the staging function", leading to an "introvert" result. Similarly, Nikos Xenios argued that the production was "aesthetically autonomous", but "deviate[d] from the original concept of the play". Nevertheless, no matter whether Panourgia's visual choices made sense or not, her staging certainly depicted a decadent world which is definitely there in Shakespeare's text. On the other hand, Cohen's production proved that there is no need to resort to extreme aesthetic choices to illustrate Shakespeare's degraded antiquity; the director may as well create a more sophisticated environment for his characters, focusing on the philosophical aspect of Shakespeare's text to the same end.

Both directors, in their own ways, transmitted to their audience Shakespeare's description of a whole world's fall that seems irreversible. And yet Arkoumanea saw hope, "a ray of light", in Panourgia's *Troilus and Cressida*. Charami, on the contrary, argued that the director's reading was "even more pessimistic [than Shakespeare's] (if not nihilistic), since it allude[d] directly to primitive civilizations and savage tribes". As for the director herself, she believes that there is no optimism at all in the play itself, and she did not want to change that (Marinou, Zois). Cohen also sees in the play the description of "an era of ultimate cynicism, when heroes and ideals have collapsed" (Xanthos).

But if there is no hope in the play, both directors find hope in artistic creation. "What we can do is plan and hope", Cohen says (Theodorakou), and Panourgia locates hope in "what we do, what we can still dream of" (Marinou).

Troilus and Cressida, dir. Alexandros Cohen. Photograph by Patroklos Skafidas

Troilus and Cressida, dir. Maria Panourgia. Photography by Karol Jarek

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[5] The second part of the title is a paraphrased Greek proverb.

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