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Shakespeare and/in Europe: Connecting Voices

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Nicole Fayard[*]

Introduction
Shakespeare and/in Europe: Connecting Voices[1]

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

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

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

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[1] Nicole Fayard wishes to thank the University of Leicester for a period of study leave during which this article was written.

[2] In a coproduction by Wrocław's Teatr Polski and the Staatsschauspiel in Dresden.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[15] See Cavecchi and Tempera; Cinpoeş and Valls-Russell; Muňoz-Valdivieso; Schneider, Florian; Höfele; Lupton, Nathans; Wells, Pujante and Hoenselaars; Nicolaescu; Lambert and Engler; Bradshaw et al.; Orkin; Stokes; Stríbrný; Vos.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Je suis Shakespeare: The Making of Shared Identities in France and Europe in Crisis[1]

Abstract: This essay investigates the ways in which Shakespearean production speaks to France and wider European crises in 2015 and 2016. *The Tempest* and *Romeo and Juliet* were directed by Jérôme Hankins and Eric Ruf respectively in December 2015 and reflected significant contemporaneous issues, including: (1) two Paris terrorist attacks which sent shock waves throughout France and Europe; (2) the belief that shared identities were under threat; (3) concerns over shifting power dynamics in Europe. The portrayal of these issues and their reception bring into question the extent to which cultural productions can help to promote social change or shape perceptions of national and pan-European events. This essay focuses on whether the plays successfully complicate binary narratives around cultural politics in a context of crises by creating alternative representations of difference and mobilities. It concludes that appropriating Shakespeare's cultural authority encourages some degree of public debate. However, the function of Shakespeare's drama remains strongly connected to its value as an agent of cultural, political and commercial mobility, ultimately making it difficult radically to challenge ideologies.

Keywords: Shakespeare in France; Eric Ruf; Jérôme Hankins; Cultural production and social change; European crisis; Heterotopia; Shakespeare myth; Postcolonialism.

This article investigates the ways in which Shakespearean production speaks to France and wider European crises in 2015 and 2016. I examine two performances of *The Tempest* and *Romeo and Juliet* directed by Jérôme Hankins and Eric Ruf respectively in December 2015. These productions corresponded with two Paris terrorist attacks which sent shock waves throughout France and Europe. The portrayal of such significant issues in the plays brings into question the extent to which cultural productions can help to promote social change or shape public debate. How does performing Shakespeare's theatre today influence the audience into having meaningful thoughts and conversations about

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their own lives? Can it be argued that it contributes to the construction of contemporary collective identities?

Lay and State Islamophobia surged in France following the 2015 terrorist attacks as well as support for the far-right party the Front National. This helped the party to achieve a record number of votes in the regional elections of 2015 and caused a democratic crisis in the 2017 presidential elections opposing current President Emmanuel Macron to Front National leader Marine Le Pen. Similarly, populist parties with anti-European policies further prospered in most European member states as resentment against Germany's austerity policies, Europe's weak leadership and rejection of cultural differences fuelled distrust against the Union. Hankins explicitly linked his production with the killings: "comment travailler dans une salle de spectacle après les massacres du Bataclan?" (how can we put on a show following the slaughter in the Bataclan?) (Thiébault). Critics likewise reflected on the relationship between Ruf's production and "cet instant, après le 13 novembre, en plein choc électoral" (today, after November 13, as we reel from the shock of the elections) (Bouthors). The content of these productions therefore reflected major tensions over 2015-16, firstly between the need to negotiate cultural difference and the belief that shared—i.e. hegemonic—identities were under threat. Secondly, they underscored the contemporaneous shifting power dynamics within the European project, especially the undermining of the core principles of free movement and "unity in diversity" that define Europe's identity (Bigo et al.).

I shall principally focus on the ways in which Hankins' and Ruf's productions might have succeeded (or not) in complicating binary narratives around cultural politics in a context of crises. This tentative breaking-down of tropes entail the creation of sites of distortion or liminality, maybe suggesting alternative meanings and representations of difference and mobilities. These would be welcome outcomes, to be read in the light of Homi Bhabha's concept of interstitial or third spaces defined as sites where new identity projects could develop and explicitly challenge established constructions of cultural identities (Bhabha "Frontlines", 2). Likewise, Foucault's heterotopias—cited by Ruf as defining principles in his work—offer self-reflexive spaces that mirror, refract or warp reality (Foucault 24). Examining the development of alternative meanings would thus help to consider the role played by theatrical productions in commenting on and shaping perceptions of national and pan-European events. Performance and social change have long been bound together, and have stimulated scholarship and artistic practice since the late twentieth century (Corey 1; Landy and Montgomery). Kushner, Burnham, Fung and Paterson (62, 66) highlight the ability of the theatre to cast light on injustices and marginalization, whilst Greene and Kondo (Kushner 77) write about the power of art and performance to transform society by articulating progressive alternative possibilities and "construct[ing] political subjectivities that promote

political change." Relying on Homi Bhabha's analysis of cultural identity and Foucault's heterotopias, I therefore intend to examine interpretative and scenic distortions in both productions as well as the ideological values they underscore, more specifically when issues of mobility, difference and exclusion are involved. This will help address the ways in which the plays might be agents for change or engagement. I also problematize these concepts by examining the role played by the signifier Shakespeare in the construction of these third spaces of renegotiation in the light of Roland Barthes's *Mythologies* and Emile Durkheim's cultural logic of collective representations. I conclude that the function of Shakespeare's drama in these productions is, in fact, more likely to be connected to Shakespeare's value as an agent of cultural, political and commercial mobility than, ultimately, to help radically to challenge ideologies or promote fundamental social change. Nevertheless, audience reception of both plays suggests that appropriating Shakespeare's cultural authority encouraged some degree of public debate.

Shakespeare and the Politics of Mobility

Let's begin with an anecdote located outside of Europe. In June 2017, a mere six months after the election of US president Donald Trump, right-wing protesters attempted to "shut down" a Central Park production of *Julius Caesar* in New York. For the British daily *The Guardian*, both the show and the campaign against it had clear political motives: "The protest was aimed at an artistic decision to set the play in a modern political setting, with Caesar looking decidedly like Donald Trump. As in every production of the play in the 418 years since it debuted, just as happened in 44BC, Caesar is assassinated." (Wahlquist and Beckett). The press further commented on the director's request to the actors to resume the play on the line "Liberty! Freedom!" (Wahlquist and Beckett). The production was part of a strategy sponsored by social media, and director Oskar Eustis fully expected a political backlash. Right on cue, the controversy surrounding the show caused it to be condemned by Fox News and led to two corporate sponsors withdrawing their financial support. A report by Fox News entitled "NYC Play Appears to Depict Assassination of Trump“ suggested that Caesar/Trump was "brutally stabbed to death by women and minorities", and omitted to mention until the end of the feature that the play had been written by Shakespeare in the sixteenth century rather than being designed as a new anti-Trump work (Beckett). Following a shooting at a charity baseball game in Virginia, Donald Trump Jr. went as far as suggesting on Twitter that there were links between the NYC play and the murders. Significantly, the timeframe of this process overlapped with the controversy over President Trump's travel ban in place since December 2016. Immigration had been the

main focus of the president's campaign, and the policy—barring visitors from seven majority Muslim countries from entering the country for ninety days—was perceived as divisive on human and civil rights grounds (Laughland).

What makes this example fascinating is its concurrent association of "Shakespeare" with both sides of the ideological spectrum of the politics of migration and mobility. Using Shakespeare's drama to mirror national and global concerns is certainly not a new phenomenon. Thus, Shakespeare has long been perceived as a symbol of European cultures (including countries across the British Empire), and such symbols are crucial in the creation of integrated economic and political communities. The global circulation and mobility of his plays (via publishing, translation, theatre performance or digital products) follows the construction of collective representations of national and supranational identities: it is primarily an economic and cultural product that is controlled by social and ideological needs. As such, it helps maintain social hierarchies and systems of exclusions around national and supranational unity, difference, integration, and mobilities. In *The Rules of Sociological Method* (xliv), Emile Durkheim defined collective representations or myths as abstractions devised by social groups to reflect the values of society and spur people into action. Collective representations are invested with authority, and their role is to regulate behaviour. They rely on totems or systems of beliefs and rites which unify and bind the social group together around a sacred object (Durkheim xlix). Examples of familiar totems around which groups identify include national identity and values, the national flag and currency—or Shakespeare. Durkheim adds that the role and therefore invocation of totems is prominent in intense moments in history, such as the Second World War, the adoption of the Euro or terrorist attacks, all leading in their aftermath to reconstructions of the cohesive nation or group of nations. In *Mythologies*, published some sixty years after Durkheim in 1957, French semiologist Roland Barthes reflected on the ways in which contemporary social value systems build on language to create modern myths. Everything can be myth, and myths serve to reproduce models of national and collective identity. Importantly, the historical process which has led to their creation is rendered invisible. Thus, using Shakespeare as a sacred myth would also mean that his name and his theatre fulfil very specific ideological needs. For Barthes (*Mythologies*, 223) myth is conservative and helps to preserve the cohesion of the group. Besides, myths conveniently hide the utilitarian nature of the constructions that they incarnate, such as the economic and political function of mobilities. According to Durkheim, the totem is not only holy to the believer, but is part of the holy itself. This means the totem also becomes part of the ritual. These constructions also conceal the fact that the values we ascribe to myths are the products of power struggles. Amongst these is hidden the fetish of colonialist discourse: the very nature of myths causes cultures to be perceived as coherent entities rather

than elements of a wider network of power relations. This necessary process of concealment plays an important role in the silencing of voices claiming to be different or unequal. Therefore, belief in the myth serves to conserve the social order.[2]

The anecdote I offered above illustrates the extent to which, as a highly prized ideological fetish and cultural commodity, Shakespeare's drama can be encoded to shape constructions of migration and mobilities. This is important, as Geographer Tim Cresswell (22) has suggested that "there seems little doubt that mobility is one of the major resources of 21st-century life and that it is the differential distribution of this resource that produces some of the starkest differences today." Mobility involves the movement of people, ideas and commodities (such as Shakespeare). It is regulated by multilateral political and economic agreements as well as ideological conflicts. For Cresswell (18), the politics of mobility entails "entanglements of physical movement, representation, and practices". Importantly, human mobility is embodied, either within actual processes of physical movement or stasis. It is also discursively constituted through its various past and current representations—as when migrants from specific countries are constructed as putative terrorists—, and therefore involved in the production of complex power relations (Cresswell 20-22). As highlighted by Foucault (23), the concern with mobility is also reflective of twentieth and twenty-first century societies' intense preoccupation with space: how to measure, appropriate and control it, and also how to situate oneself within it. Thus, mobility relies on hierarchies and involves human, financial and environmental costs. The extent of these costs came to the fore during the so-called "European crisis" and its connections with the governance of mobility.

In 2015, France declared a state of emergency following two terrorist attacks orchestrated by ISIS in Paris. The first of these attacks made twelve victims in January at the headquarters of the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* and seventeen victims in total on separate sites. In November of that year a further 130 young people died at the Paris nightclub Le Bataclan. The timing of these attacks in the midst of the recent European crisis is important. Although the causes of the crisis are multidimensional, it was exacerbated by the sudden escalation of migration into Europe of asylum seekers from the Middle-East, Pakistan and Africa in 2015-16 (Buonano 102). The inability of EU leaders to manage the situation revealed deepening divisions between member states as some closed their borders to refugees. Following revelations after the killings in Paris that the terrorists had entered Europe illegally via Greece, Europe's security and justice policies became heavily contested. European and national leaders reframed the immigration crisis as a critical internal security threat as

[2] See also Bourdieu, as well as Fayard for an analysis of the Shakespeare myth in France.

electoral challenges from far-right parties and increased anti-immigrant sentiment within public opinion flourished (Buonano 107). Communications around the refugee crisis of 2015 strategically and linguistically associated European identity with the idea of space, defining mobilities and migration in geographical terms such as “relocation”, “hotspots” and “border control” (Commission européenne). Narratives represented migration and uncontrolled movement within Europe as a “crisis” causing the “destabilization” of “our own societies” and the very idea of Europe (Boitiaux). The founding principles of mobility and diversity in the “new” Europe thus overtly shifted towards the spatial redrawing of Europe from an open to a closed space designed to keep out the body of the Other in movement perceived as a threat to collective unity.

This redefinition of the group around a framework of national and supranational European unity, integration and exclusions typifies the construction of collective representations (Durkheim). The concept of Europe, like the concept of the nation, is built on imagined communities that rely on discursive constructs to uphold their symbolic values (Anderson 46). In the case of Europe, these constructions are based on the idea that there is a need to preserve a European consciousness, rooted in symbols and ideas about what Europe used to be and what it should be, drawn from various sources such as history, culture, literature, interpretations of political ideologies (Pagden). Europe is a concept with multiple incarnations, frequently associated with appeals to higher moral values and disinterestedness such as Europe as the land of human rights and civilization. Thus the motto of the European Union, “Unity in diversity” (European Union), is one of the rituals whereby Europe seeks to give itself an identity. Importantly, this motto both acknowledges and disavows processes of exclusion by outlining the rules of inclusion.

These rituals were illustrated in President Hollande’s speech to the French nation condemning the 2015 terrorist attacks, in which he declared France to be at war with the terrorists and called for stringent border controls in France and Europe (Hollande). Whilst stressing the core values of the French Republic “which makes no distinction as to color, origin, background, religion” (Hollande), Hollande asserted France’s:

> détermination à défendre la liberté au jour le jour, c’est-à-dire la volonté de faire de la France un grand pays, fier de son Histoire, de son mode vie, de sa culture, de son rayonnement, de son idéal universel, du respect et même de la ferveur que notre pays inspire au monde chaque fois qu’il est blessé (France’s determination to defend freedom day after day, that is to say, the will to make France a great country, proud of its history, its way of life, its culture, its influence and of its universal ideal, proud of the respect and even the fervour that our country inspires in the world every time it is wounded) (Hollande).[3]

[3] All translations are mine unless otherwise specified.

These values were strongly supported with the "Marche républicaine" of 11 January 2015, a rally for national unity known as the French march for freedom in the English-speaking world, during which the defence of freedom of speech was illustrated with the widespread use of the slogan "Je suis Charlie" (I am Charlie). And yet these appeals to national cohesion and citizenship remained based on the grand narrative of civilization which dominated Hollande's references to the terrorists as "barbaric" "foreign fighters" and "cowardly" "enemies of Europe" (Hollande). Against these negatives, Hollande opposes the positive values of the French nation-state defined *inclusively* as "our democracy" and "our Republic". However the nation-state is also defined *exclusively* in the singular as only one culture and one way of life. In post-colonialist terms, the aim of such familiar oppositions between a dominant ingroup that views itself as morally superior and homogenous against the barbaric outsiders[4] is to strengthen the legitimacy of the State in times of threat. As Homi Bhabha (1996) has shown, the rhetoric of colonialism relies on fetishized discourses which articulate simultaneously the recognition and the disavowal of difference. Their function is to create the fantasy of unity and coherent identities, ultimately providing means of exercizing power. Here, the fantasy of coherence also serves to erase the internal borders erected by the French Republic in its failure to deal with multiculturalism and its diversity (Gallen). Although France is "multicultural in the sense that its population is increasingly diverse" (Simon 14), for French political elites supporting equal opportunities and promoting the values of ethnic communities undermine Republican values and national cohesion. Such attempts are condemned as "communitarianism": a form of cultural separatism seen as a negative consequence of the recognition of cultural differences (Simon 14; also Safran). By contrast, France's national identity, grounded on a commitment to the Jacobin ideal of the democratic nation state, is ostensibly based on the overriding principle of the Republic of Equality. Its assimilationist model, further complicated by the adhesion to *laïcité*,[5] presupposes that French citizenship is only available to those who are prepared to renounce their former cultural identity and conform to French Republican values presumed to be neutral and "universal" (Bancel et al. 31-43). This implies the cultural erasure of markers of otherness and—in the name of equality—disregard for inequalities resulting from non-normative identity markers (Bowen 84). Disturbingly, the country's intensified focus on the migrant crisis, radicalization and security were

[4] The state of emergency included stripping convicted terrorists born in France with dual citizenship of their French citizenship, therefore excluding them from the ingroup.

[5] *Laïcité* (secularism) refers to the strict legal separation between the religious and civic spheres and is seen as one of the most important foundations of French citizenship. According to *laïcité*, all conspicuous religious symbols—including headscarves—are banned in official public spaces, including schools.

also closely connected to the ideologies of far-right parties keen to fuel the strong anti-Muslim sentiment that France has inherited from its colonial era. These concerns further explain the immediate association in France and throughout Europe between the terrorist threat and the migration crisis after the Paris attacks, thus transforming the excluded minority into the enemy within (Nail).

The Politics of Mobility in Contemporaneous French Shakespearean Performance

We have so far overviewed three recurrent representations of the European crisis pertaining to: (1) achieving coherent identities and unity requires the exclusion of difference; (2) the Other, and the Other in movement, threatens fantasies of coherence; (3) embracing difference leads to crises of leadership at both national and supranational levels. Within this context of heightened identity politics in France and Europe, Jérôme Hankins and Eric Ruf produced two plays by Shakespeare which, I will argue, explore this rhetoric in critical ways.

Jérôme Hankins' *The Tempest*

Jérôme Hankins graduated from the Yale School of Drama in 1989 and has worked as a translator and theatre director in France since 1990. He has worked with renowned French directors Antoine Vitez, Jacques Nichet and Christian Benedetti, and lectures on drama at the University of Picardie in Amiens. He is the author of the latest translation into French of *Julius Caesar* (2002) for the prestigious collection *La Pléïade* directed by Jean-Michel Déprats. *The Tempest* was first performed in December 2015 by Hankins' company Outil companie and presented again throughout January 2016-2017. Hankins (44) firmly believes that "il n'y a aucun effort à faire pour que Shakespeare devienne notre contemporain : il est notre contemporain parce qu'il nous comprenait et ces pièces montrent cette compréhension—que nous devons montrer à notre tour." (Making Shakespeare our contemporary takes no effort: he is our contemporary because he understood us and these plays show this understanding—which it is now our job to show.) In choosing to produce *The Tempest* he thus consciously aimed to reflect on present-day events, explaining in an interview that the play "se nourrit de l'actualité, 'fait boule de neige' des attentats du 13 novembre et de la crise des réfugiés" (takes inspiration from the news, bounces off the attacks of November 13 and the refugee crisis) (Thiébault). The belief that Shakespeare continues to live and relate to our lives today (rather than we attributing meaning to his plays) in both quotations illustrates the strength of the myth. Hankins' critical ambivalence is reflected in the production programme which associates the myth with European identity, but also immediately destabilizes it. Thus,

Hankins puts forward a post-colonial critique of the history and spatialization of established cultural identity production by situating Shakespeare within a Renaissance context eager to dominate other populations classified as “savage” and “cannibal”. He also refers explicitly to the recent killings and the values of universal rights, democracy and freedom of speech under threat:

> *La Tempête* de Shakespeare débute par le chaos général. […] Cet éclatement de la communauté humaine en proie à la peur de l‘inconnu pourrait aussi refléter l’état de nos fragiles démocraties contemporaines. Cri de notre universalité menacée. […] Les artistes de *Charlie Hebdo* maniaient avec virtuosité la déformation afin, justement, que nous nous « entendions mieux en nous-mêmes. » Lorsque, avec tant d’autres, ils furent assassinés dans leur propre salle de rédaction […], je me suis dit qu’elle était plus fragile que jamais, notre chance d’être encore libres (en conscience et en actes) d’explorer une pièce qui décrit certes l’être humain comme un monstre, mais aussi comme un « miracle au monde. » Et que par conséquent nous avons plus que jamais aujourd’hui besoin du théâtre où les acteurs trompent l’œil pour mieux montrer. Et voir. (Programme)[6]

Hankins’ comments propose politicized techniques of representation which include references to Montaigne’s humanist (and also mythic) view on the paradoxical coincidence between chaos and order,[7] and to the idea that distortion generates clarity. He reproduced this mirror-like effect by using techniques favouring Baroque perceptions whereby “tous les personnages seraient donc vus sous deux angles (au moins)…” (all the characters would therefore be seen from two angles [at least]…) (Hankins 40). He structured the play around the principle of anamorphosis, which he identified as a key technique whereby Shakespeare generates distortion. Anamorphosis is known in art as a deviation from perspective. As opposed from projecting objects in a picture as if they were seen from a widow, in anamorphosis the image is elongated to create an

[6] “Shakespeare’s *Tempest* begins with complete chaos. […] This atomization of human society faced with the fear of the unknown reflects more than ever the fragile state of contemporary society. Our threatened universality crying out. The artists from *Charlie Hebdo* excelled at distortion so that we could “feel better in ourselves.” When, with so many others, they were murdered in their own newsroom […], I thought that our opportunity to be free (in conscience and in action) to explore a play that, admittedly, describes the human being as a monster, but also as a “miracle to the world”, was more tenuous than ever. And that consequently we need today more than ever a theatre where actors deceive the eye to demonstrate better. And see.

[7] Hankins refers to Shakespeare quoting Montaigne in *The Tempest*. The programme cites: “A universal society of evil and threat.” In Book III Chapter IX (461) of his *Essays* Montaigne suggests that change and disorder are natural phenomena mostly resulting in recovery.

impression of distortion (as in Holbein's *The Ambassadors*[8] for instance). The undistorted image appears as the viewer's gaze is directed to the projection point of the anamorph, allowing the viewer to "'re-form' the object" (Topper 115). With its ability to question perspectives and fixities, anomorphosis disrupts passive everyday perception and discourses, and might therefore encourage critical perspectives on the world. This therefore suggests a useful way of breaking-up or reframing images of experience, as well as of creating different sites of representation of identity. These ideas allude to theoretical spatial fields of critique of identity which are useful to analyse the production. Foucault (24) defined heterotopias as "different spaces" or "other places" whose function is either to "create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory", or "to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled" (Foucault 27). A heterotopia is an imaginary space of displacement in which several spaces and slices of time which would normally be incompatible can be juxtaposed within real space, such as the space of the theatre. Like anamorphosis, it has a mirror-like ability both to reflect yet refract our reality—thus distorting in order to show more clearly, and revealing paradoxes. It therefore functions as a counter-site to represent and contest the space we live in (Foucault 24). Strong critical and political potential can also be found in spaces of liminality. In his work on cultural "in-betweenness", Bhabha ("Frontlines", 2) highlighted the ability of the "third space" to create new, hybrid forms of identity because this space questions the historical and spatial production and meaning of fixed cultural identities. As we shall see next, aspects of these critical spaces were deployed in Hankins' production to reflect and refract practices implicated in the politics of mobility and identity in France and Europe.

According to Hankins, the production was supposed to reflect a fundamental area of human experience: "cette pièce est un laboratoire, une expérience sur ce qui se passe quand on a tout perdu" (the play is a laboratory, an experiment on what happens once we have lost everything) (Thiébault). Caliban's portrayal was key to this interpretation. The character was based on a young homeless Syrian refugee in Malta stating in a 2013 TV interview:

> "Ici, personne ne m'aime, alors je parle aux murs, aux chats et à la mer." On croirait entendre Caliban, enfant abandonné sur l'île avant l'arrivée de Prospero et Miranda. Caliban qui sera, dès le début du spectacle, pelotonné dans un drap sur un vieux tapis, ou refugié dans une tente Quechua ("jungle" de Calais) : il est arrivé sur cette île comme à Lampedusa ou à Lesbos. […] C'est

[8] 1533, Hans Holbein the Younger. The painting hangs in the National Gallery in London. https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/hans-holbein-the-younger-the-ambassadors

> là que Prospero le tient parqué, depuis que l'indigène s'est révélé violeur de femmes. ("No one here loves me, so I talk to walls, cats and the sea." He sounds like Caliban, a child abandoned on the island before Prospero and Miranda arrived. Caliban who will be, from the beginning of the show, curled up in a sheet on an old carpet, or sheltering in a Quechua-style tent (as in the Calais "jungle"): he arrived on this island in the way refugees did in Lampedusa or Lesbos. [...] It is there that Prospero has been keeping him prisoner, since the native has proved to be a rapist of women) (Hankins 37-38).

The clear connection between Caliban's portrayal and prevalent constructions of mobilities (movement, representations and practices [Cresswell 20]) into France and Europe[9] is useful as it presents Caliban as a mirror image of hegemonic representations of refugees, including those mediated through our screens and Hankins' former reference to European tropes of colonization. The ambiguity of his portrayal also appears to follow Hankins' baroque, anamorphic model. And yet these representations remain fundamentally problematic since they rely on the ambivalent stereotypical discourse of the Other as both savage and docile, child-like and a sexual predator, helpless and highly sophisticated (Newton 34). These tropes repeat the combined affirmation and denial of difference at the heart of fixed identity discourse and therefore appear to contradict Hankins' desire to question fixities. This contradiction appears to be strengthened by Hankins' argument that Caliban and Prospero share the same discourse, explaining the curious complicity between the two characters (Hankins 39). Arguably, representing the performance of subjective ambiguity in this fashion offers critical advantages: it reveals the way in which stereotypes are involved in the formation of subjectivity. These discourses and their representation both appear to remain firmly caught in hegemonic representations rather than offering alternative narratives. The invocation of the Shakespeare and European fetishes thus initially seem to reinforce colonial hierarchies and therefore to maintain the cohesion of groups.

At the same time, the paradoxical relationship between Caliban and Prospero also provides an active space for the antagonistic interaction of cultures. This process is made evident in the final scene of the play, in which Hankins (43) wanted to highlight Caliban's unresolved situation. As the rest of the characters partake in a Renaissance dance, Caliban "the Cannibal" wraps explosives around himself—in a shocking reminder of the tragedy at the Bataclan. By contrast, Prospero hypocritically asks the audience for indulgence, in an all too familiar public defence of the crisis of leadership. I read this scene

[9] Organised sexual assaults in Cologne and other parts of Germany during the New Year's Eve celebrations of 2015-16 led to a backlash against immigrants and refugees. Hankins' paradoxical portrayal of Caliban as immigrant-victim-savage-rapist is congruent with contemporaneous discourses.

as a good example of the work of anamorphosis and heterotopia. On the one hand, the scene is a metaphor for the ways in which the post-colonial subject is maintained in positions of Otherness in contrast with the mythology of "civilization". On the other, it violently exposes this process as a construction, revealing the workings of colonialist discourse rather than keeping them invisible. It also articulates difference without pretending that all forms of culture are the same and proffering harmonious collaboration as a solution.

Importantly, Hankins offers powerful alternative narratives of difference by turning the stage into a heterotopic space refracting the empty space of dispossession, and renegotiating constructions of otherness. The performance of *The Tempest* opens with a drowning. The bare stage features a beach of grey sand with a bunker in the background, introducing past memories and myths of both objectionable and desirable mobilities into France and Europe. A body washed up on the beach lies face down on the stage. This instantly evokes the image of three-year old Syrian boy Aylan Kurdi lying dead on a Turkish beach in September 2015, drowned with his mother and his brother after their boat sank on their way to Greece. Aylan and his tragic death are emblematic of the European migration crisis. Thus presenting the body of the displaced Other in the first image of the production ushers in the metaphor of the practice of mobility and its embodiment from the outset. This metaphor performs a dual critical function. The association of practices of mobility with death and immobility rather than chaos subverts binary models of difference. Representations of "the refugee" as a deviant intruder are also destabilized. True enough, any corpse lying unattended on a beach is soon enough likely to become an intrusive concern… But the body plainly declares the limits of its presumed imposition on society by advertizing the impossibility of its participation. In addition, unlike Aylan, the lifeless body on the beach in *The Tempest* is anonymous. It only reveals four stretched-out arms and legs covered by a tarpaulin. No further identity markers or any possessions can be made out, paradoxically advertizing the constructedness of difference. Here, then, drawing on the totemic value of Shakespeare to illustrate models of French and European identity helps to reflect the mechanisms that maintain group cohesiveness.

As a result, I believe that the introduction of such contradiction and ambiguity generates a liminal space ushering in a spatial politics of inclusion rather than exclusion. According to Bhabha ("Frontlines", 1), such spaces might have the ability to generate "innovative sites of collaboration and contestation". Such a space of contestation is strengthened in *The Tempest* through the deployment of strategies of artistic and linguistic anamorphosis used to challenge linguistic hierarchies. In Shakespeare's play the subjugation of Caliban involves learning Prospero's language and culture of colonization and abandoning his own. Whilst a possible way towards resistance could entail rejecting European civilization, here contestation is used to reverse processes of

exclusion and reshape public perception of contemporary debates. As discussed above, representations of mobilities likewise include metaphors of linguistic and cultural integration vs. alienation, with the language of universalism stressing the incompatibility of difference with equality. The cast for *The Tempest* includes both professional actors and students from the local university and schools, exhibiting a wide range of experiences and performance skills. The play, performed in French, also incorporates an unexpected linguistic range spanning from songs performed in English to native and local accents including scenes in "picard"—historically the regional language of the Picardie in Northern France where the play was produced. Hankins wanted to reflect the fact that Shakespeare's plays were performed with a range of accents (Thiébault). Linguistic diversity also reflects France's unacknowledged linguistic reality. "Picard" belongs to the regional languages which, whilst being part of the French cultural heritage and important markers of difference, are struggling to retain their identity. In the name of universalism the French Constitution states that "French is the language of the Republic", enshrining standard French as the sole official national language and the symbol of the state and of French identity. Although regional and minority languages are recognized as belonging to the heritage of France, this overlooks the fact that France is inherently linguistically diverse as a result of the presence of regional and minority languages, as well as the languages of migration, and crucially that these languages are living means of communication for multilingual citizens. This debate was prominent in October 2015 when the government's attempt to ratify the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (pending since 1999) was rejected for fear that the recognition of particularized rights and identities as opposed to universal, collective ones would cause a break-up of the unity of the nation. Here again, the fetish of universalism simultaneously asserts and fixes the difference of outgroups (Rutherford). By contrast, Hankins' Shakespearean production introduces a liminal space in which hybrid French theatrical cultures and languages explicitly contest fantasies of coherent identities. There is no ambiguity here regarding processes of linguistic identification and recognition. The play offers a polysemic space advertizing its incoherence rather than concealing it under the pretence of unity/exclusion. Thus, the production reverses processes of identification by borrowing from the cultural authority of Shakespeare to reshape public perceptions of current affairs.

Such an emphasis is reflected in available reviews of the plays. For blogger Tata Jacqueline, the production examines "qu'est-ce que c'est que d'être humain à nos jours? Un tyran, quelqu'un d'aimant, de noble, un monstre, un esclave, un travesti/transexuelle, un être divin, comique, dramatique presque tragique?" (What is it to be human today? A tyrant, someone loving, noble, a monster, a slave, a transvestite/transsexual, a divine being, a comic or dramatic being, or someone who's almost tragic?). The stress here is on the meaning of

difference and the fluidity and multiplicity of identity. Local students felt that the production speaks especially to today's young people by placing human issues centre-stage to help the young build tomorrow's world (Morain). It is therefore possible to conclude that the production directly confronts narratives surrounding the European crisis and the Paris terrorist attacks in critical ways, showing that cultural icons can be appropriated in an attempt to promote social debates. Critics' comments suggest that the production might resonate with the construction of social and political subjectivities that seek to promote change. Notwithstanding this, it is unlikely to initiate change *per se*. It conveys conflicting messages about processes of subjectivity formation, and relies on cultural myths that support the underlying status quo.

Eric Ruf's *Romeo and Juliet*

Eric Ruf's *Romeo and Juliet* opened at the Comédie-Française in December 2015. This location is significant as the Comédie-Française and its company are the most prestigious theatrical institutions in France. It is perceived as an index of legitimization and a symbol of French cultural identity and stasis. Actor, director and scenographer Eric Ruf, who has been a member of the Comédie-Française since 1993, was appointed as its current administrator in 2014. He chose to open his first season with Shakespeare because "at the Comédie-Française Shakespeare is kind of a French author… when performing world theatre, Shakespeare is an obvious choice" (Ruf). A double process of fetishization of Shakespeare's theatre is at work here: its cultural authority makes it an ideal component of theatrical institutions' repertoires. Consequently, Shakespeare's cultural power grows.

As both director and scenographer, Ruf understands the theatrical space as an interpretative site. Moreover, following Foucault's definition (24), he explicitly conceives of the theatre as a heterotopia (Rivier 13). As a result, his interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet* is governed by the organizing principles of visual paradoxes and spatial in-betweenness. Ruf is especially interested in the paradoxes within the play, wanting to display the juxtaposition of comedy with tragedy, burlesque with cruelty or pitting Juliet's strength against Romeo's depressive state. Ruf's first concern is to rid the play of the romantic mythology surrounding it and lay bare its fundamental meaning: "une histoire d'amour mais aussi une histoire de haine" (a love story, but also a story about hatred) (Rivier 4). A focal point in the production is the notion that Romeo and Juliet are rebelling against outdated ideologies, such as male domination, religious violence and conflicts between warring groups. Rebellion is directed at top-down, undemocratic authority. Ruf also focuses on character interactions within a context opposing two generations or cultures with highly contrasting beliefs and needs. Rather than representing physical violence, which seeks to contain

difference, the emphasis is on highlighting antagonistic political identities. Thus, fights and duels are edited out of the plot and replaced by the sudden spreading of blood stains on shirts, stressing the wounding power of social codes.

The metaphor of cultural difference provides the foundations of another heterotopic space, a distorting mirror that reveals the way we hide behind the fiction that cultures can "easily coexist" (Bhabha "Frontlines" 209). Ruf builds a site of liminality that highlights uneven and conflictual identities tentatively allowing the construction of cultural difference. In an attempt to distance the audience from well-known, sentimental interpretations of the play, the plot is relocated to Sicily in the 1930s—an "in-between" intended to be all at once visually neutral, contemporary and historically distant. The cultural backdrop of poverty, religiosity and civil war best conveys, Ruf believes, the dangerous space of murder and vendetta in which he situates Romeo and Juliet. It also provides an intersection of space and time allowing the heterotopia to "function at full capacity" (Foucault 26). The atmosphere of threat is conveyed through the building of a flexible stage set denoting the exceptionally high walls of a crumbling, oppressively hot Mediterranean city. These walls are in constant movement, forming a centrifugal maze of narrow alleyways and windows with occluded view. They are simultaneously isolating and penetrable—like a heterotopia. Ruf's aim is to shock the audience into a realization of the risks and possibilities inherent in incommensurable cultural conflict: "l'histoire est certes tragique, mais avant de mourir, il faut vivre, semble nous souffler Shakespeare" (the story is certainly tragic, but before we die, we have to live, seems to suggest Shakespeare) (Demarthon). This paradox is powerfully represented in the staging of Act II scene 2, traditionally known as the balcony scene. Suliane Brahim (Juliet) performs whilst precariously standing on a narrow stone shelf over a thirteen-foot drop, representing the remains of a former balcony. Ruf's intention is that:

> Cela m'intéressait que les spectateurs découvrent qu'en réalité le balcon était tombé ! D'autant qu'avec une simple corniche, si Juliette tentait en effet de fuir, elle était coincée. Prise au piège dans cet espace-là comme un sentiment fuyant, ce serait du point de vue interprétatif, explicite. Roméo […] la verrait comme l'on voit un somnambule auquel on doit parler avec précaution et raccompagner à son lit doucettement, de peur qu'il ne tombe. Ce danger réciproque—fuir sans tomber et empêcher quelqu'un de tomber—devrait, selon moi, tendre la scène. […] Dans cette scène extrêmement connue, Juliette apparaît au balcon et plus personne n'écoute. Le fait que le lieu soit dangereux, cela rend les spectateurs actifs car ils s'interrogent : va-t-elle tomber ? (Rivier 6-5).[10]

[10] I wanted the audience to find out that in reality the balcony had collapsed! Especially with a simple cornice, if Juliette tried indeed to flee, she was stuck. From an interpretive point of view, it would be clear that she was trapped in this space like

What might happen in this space of risk-taking is different and unpredictable. It is a space of intervention (a third space) between cultures—between the culture of traditional values and the culture of rebellion—rather than a fixed space. A number of critics disapproved of this scene for distracting the audience from Shakespeare's lines for fear of an accident (Di Gregorio). Such an attempt to re-essentialize Shakespeare's play by returning it to the fiction of origins seems meaningful, as the critics' resistance may confirm that the production has tentatively opened a new site of renegotiation of meanings.

The production offers other spaces of intervention which are less controversial. Ruf turns the heterotopic space of (very) public toilets into the loci of Romeo and Juliet's romantic meetings. The final scene of the play is also distorted. In V. 3 Ruf made Juliet's tomb into a replica of the Capuchin Catacombs of Palermo, in which naturally-preserved mummies dressed in sumptuous clothing (therefore presenting them as socially-coded) are displayed in niches along the walls of the cemetery (Gervot). The play ends with the death of the rebellious Juliet. This is a striking intervention: Ruf rejects the idea that Juliet's sacrifice should lead to any form of reconciliation, mirroring the contemporaneous response of violence by more violence. Turning Juliet's death into the natural order of things, as it were, means that the play ends in pure tragedy as no kind of order can be restored in the end—again, reflecting a fundamental crisis in (national and supranational?) leadership. In addition, the living are prevented from interacting with the dead. The heterotopic space of the cemetery itself is disrupted, offering, through the medium of theatre, a new space of alterity and otherness. This may further contribute to shattering illusions of harmonious integration. It is Ruf's belief that the production addresses current issues: "ce que [Shakespeare] soulève est si contemporain, et on ne peut qu'être admiratif de sa grande polysémie" (what [Shakespeare] raises is so contemporary, and one can only admire his great polysemy) (Grangeray). Here again, the belief in the clarity of Shakespeare's intention and that his plays transcend history makes them into myths (Bourdieu).

The majority of public responses to the production confirm that Ruf's intention to reflect current affairs was fulfilled. Critics highlight the parallels between Ruf's Sicilian-Shakespearean space, contemporary intolerance (Gomes) and today's upsurge of patriarchal, sexist violence (Grapin). Many reviewers welcome Ruf's unconventional approach. A minority, however, deplore his

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a fleeting feeling. Romeo […] would see her as one sees a somnambulist that must be approached with caution and taken back to bed very carefully, lest they fall. This reciprocal danger—fleeing without falling and preventing someone from falling—should, in my opinion, dominate the scene. […] In this extremely well-known scene, Juliette appears on the balcony and no one is listening. The fact that the place is dangerous makes the spectators active because they ask themselves: will she fall?

interventions on Shakespeare's text or the thwarting of audience expectations with the balcony scene (Di Gregorio; Grapin; Rivier). The choice of François-Victor Hugo's translation is occasionally considered to be a poor choice: despite Ruf's inclusions of contemporary language and diction, its romantic character is said to suppress the earthiness of Shakespeare's language (Capron). For Bouthors, the play is excessively distanced from reality following the attacks of 13 November: the audience is said to need a more robust message. For David, the stereotypical images of 1930s Italy tone down Ruf's emphasis on identity politics. By contrast, others feel that highlighting the links between power and prejudice is an inspired, socially-committed intention that gives new life to *Romeo and Juliet* and makes it uniquely relevant today (Chevilly; Gomes). Armelle Héliot, the French daily *Le Figaro*'s influential critic, argues that the production both speaks to the audience at a personal level and has the power to bring people together. Ruf's novel interpretation of Shakespeare's plot is also praised for providing two constructive social messages in winter 2015: individuals matter more than the group; the theatre transcends death and fear (Barbier). In an interview actor Jérémy Lopez, who plays Romeo, also stressed the relevance of Shakespeare's play to help process the horror of the Bataclan massacre: although we are aware that *Romeo and Juliet* will end in horror, we must suspend disbelief awhile in order never to become immune to that kind of horror—sentiments which all noticeably reflected national calls for unity and defiance in the face of terror in winter 2015 ("Les Captifs amoureux").

Significantly, divisions of opinion among critics respond to Ruf's paradoxical construction of his production. Disagreement reflects public debate and appears to support the claim that the production potentially opened new sites of negotiation of meaning and identities. It would follow that the potential threat to some certainties would be perceived by some as deeply destabilizing. I might therefore argue that the alternative subjectivities that emerge offer a space from which resistance to some hegemonic narratives of identity and mobilities can surface (Bhabha "Culture"). Some of these are interpreted here as potential threats to the Shakespeare myth, even though Ruf's appropriation of the playwright's authority entails strengthening of this myth.

Is it possible to conclude from the above analyses that Hankins' and Ruf's productions offered productive spaces of intervention where meaning can be displaced and renegotiated (Bhabha "Culture")? The spaces of liminality they created have, without a doubt, resulted in underscoring the politics of mobility and hegemonic practices in the construction of identities in crisis. Understanding subjectivity as multidimensional offered a very useful notion of identification as constructed, thus avoiding essentialist polarities between the dominant and the dominated. The productions' main take-home message for reviewers was their effectiveness in highlighting contemporary social and political crises following

terrorist attacks. Both productions thus successfully commented on socio-cultural differences, injustices and marginalization (Kushner). The disruption introduced by innovative spaces of confrontation was also illustrated by critics' discomfort in the face of Ruf's scenography. It might also be argued that the strength of Jérôme Hankins' production of *The Tempest* was to cast light on the human cost of mobility and the political cost of imagined communities. Similarly, the loss of financial backing for the NYC play partly revealed the process of concealment. However, it must be noted that the production was backed financially by other agents with their own specific agenda. This exposes this particular Shakespearean event as a cultural and economic product with ideological added value.

I would therefore hesitate to claim that the productions constitute counter-narratives able to transform society. This is because they continue to accommodate the difference of cultures within essentialist and universalist frameworks. I have shown that both directors and critics systematically associate Shakespeare's plays and thoughts with the productions. Some negative reactions to Ruf's production result from fears that the Shakespearean fetish might be undermined. Overall, the act of performing Shakespeare's plays as markers of contemporary social and political concerns relies on the conviction that his drama transcends history and is a symbol of social cohesion. Of especial interest is the close association between Shakespeare's theatre and intentions, and specific ideological interests. This is shown through the *belief* that his work, and by implication, Shakespeare himself, represent something more than the stories that they tell. The principle behind this process is that mythical objects aligned with discourses constituting group identity as a unified political, historical, geographical and cultural entity assume notions of individual agency. I referred to the "Marche républicaine" earlier. On the occasion of the rally an image released on Facebook showed Shakespeare's portrait with the caption in English "to be or not to be Charlie". The association of Shakespeare's name—and presumed opinion—with a movement that benefits State narratives is fascinating. This image competed with other totems of national identity based on the iconographic symbols of the French republic such as Marianne and the Tricolour. This is also replicated when, as shown above, directors and critics claim that Shakespeare's plays are especially resonant with contemporary society, that he "understands us". Ruf further associates Shakespeare with national identity by claiming that he is "kind of French". However, the belief in Shakespeare's congruence conceals that his name is unrelated with French national values *per se*. Through decades of ascribing characteristics to his theatre that are attached to shared identities, it has acquired considerable social and cultural value giving it the quality of myth. The belief that Shakespeare speaks to us today disregards the historical and social conditions of the plays' own production. It ignores the fact that Shakespeare's plays are sites where cultural

production constantly occurs and new social and political means are produced and communicated (Barthes; Bourdieu). The processes whereby the playwright's authority is discursively constituted and the result of institutional practices committed to furthering the existing social order also remain invisible. If Shakespeare has become and is used as a sacred myth that mirrors the myths associated with the nation, then his name and his theatre fulfil very specific ideological needs which go hand in hand with the valorization of accepted culture, especially high culture. As myths work to hide the traces of their own determinate historical production, Shakespeare's plays are important because they help maintain social hierarchies and specific politics of representation. This has implications for Ruf's and Hankins' productions. Under the guise of offering critical heterotopias and liminal spaces, the metaphors of rebellion and difference are likely to serve to maintain myths built around the nation and the politics of mobilities. Hankins' production, for instance, has shown that the ambivalence in the representation of Caliban partly fed into the power of colonial discourse, which relies on a contradictory mode of representation. By virtue of being staged by and at the Comédie-Française, Ruf's play ultimately represents and reproduces the values of high culture[11] and of the French republic.

The individuation of myths also makes it unclear who is involved in power relations, since borders, boundaries and power networks appear transparent. There is therefore little sense of historical, ideological and theoretical continuities and hierarchies, which prevents any investigation of the real motivations behind cultural production, mobility as well as social and cultural exclusions. The latter are seen in a vacuum. In addition, it is also necessary to consider that Shakespeare's extraordinary presence in Europe (and elsewhere) is also about the *fact* of movement rather than just its causes or consequences (Cresswell 22). Shakespeare's mobility itself is as much productive of social relations and produced by them as it can represent them. This entails particular politics, economics, geographies but also hierarchies of production and mobility, which in the case of Shakespeare in Europe, should not be ignored.

For Barthes ("Myth Today", 57), myth is always *depoliticized* speech: its role is to pass off a socially-constructed reality as natural and innocent. This applies to politics of representations and self-definitions, which in the case of nation building or Shakespeare, can often be ignored. Let's not forget that, irrespective of the myth, behind the nation and the supranational lay the subject and its discursive constructions. Invocations of Shakespeare's theatre, therefore, also serve to legitimize European and French societies in accordance with a climate that promotes social and cultural stasis. Its ultimate role is to

[11] Audiences tend to be homogeneous and largely consist of highly-educated, middle-class Parisians.

strengthen an underlying sense of collective being. This interpretation is useful to explain the paradoxical popularity of Shakespeare in France and elsewhere. It also serves to highlight one of the most profane (and concealed) motivations behind the always-increasing circulation of Shakespeare knowledge and performance within the European Union and beyond.

To some extent Jérôme Hankins and Eric Ruf's productions confirm this model. If, as claimed by reviewers, they can both speak to individuals and bring people together, then this would suggest that the Shakespeare myth may be invoked to strengthen a sense of collective being. Importantly, this discourse has also been complicated since both directors have also successfully appropriated Shakespeare's cultural authority to create heterotopic spaces, and partly to challenge the construction of political subjectivities, whatever the impact of their intervention may be. Barthes' claim (*Mythologies*, 229) that myths are on the side of the state—whether conservative or progressive—therefore appears to be partly borne out by the two productions examined in this essay. Whilst their appropriation of the Shakespeare myth in these productions is unlikely to create radical social change, it has shown its potential for encouraging meaningful debate, which is a significant achievement.

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Cross-Cultural Casting in Britain: The Path to Inclusion, 1972-2012

Abstract: This essay uses three productions to chart the progress of the integration of performers of African and Afro-Caribbean descent in professional British Shakespearean theatre. It argues that the three productions—from 1972, 1988 and 2012—each use cross-cultural casting in ways that illuminate the phases of inclusion for British performers of colour. Peter Coe's 1972 *The Black Macbeth* was staged at a time when an implicit colour bar in Shakespeare was in place, but black performers were included in the production in ways that reinforced dominant racial stereotypes. Temba's 1988 *Romeo and Juliet* used its Cuban setting to challenge stereotypes by presenting black actors in an environment that was meant to show them as "real human beings". The RSC's 2012 *Julius Caesar* was a black British staging of Shakespeare that allowed black actors to use their cultural heritages to claim Shakespeare, signalling the performers' greater inclusion into British Shakespearean theatre.

Keywords: Shakespeare; Theatre; Diversity; Race; Black British; African.

Inclusivity in British production of Shakespeare—subliminally or not—often revolves around finding locales or characters that fit contemporary stereotypes of ethnic minorities. This category of production is one that Ayanna Thompson defines as "cross-cultural casting." This shifting of a play's time and/or place "to a different culture or location" (76) has been a useful tool for companies seeking to increase the diversity of their stages. The form has evolved in Britain since the early 1970s and has been utilized by touring companies, regional theatres, minority-led theatre companies and the major national theatre companies. Over time, cross-cultural productions have progressed from being staged in marginalized spaces to being fully absorbed into the contemporary mainstream theatrical ecology. This essay will look at three such productions as a way of investigating the evolution of cross-cultural casting from 1972 to 2012. These three productions—Peter Coe's *The Black Macbeth* (1972), Alby James' *Romeo and Juliet* (1988) and Gregory Doran's *Julius Caesar* (2012)—trace the history of integrated casting in microcosm from the marginalization of black British

actors to their inclusion into mainstream Shakespearean production. There is not space for a full account of the challenges that have faced performers from diverse backgrounds, but a précis of the current climate is worth briefly noting here as it will be important context for cross-cultural productions.

While there has been progress in terms of casting black and Asian performers in Shakespeare since the 1970s, a glass ceiling remains stubbornly in place. In one respect this mirrors a common experience, described by Marcus Griffiths: "You're lucky if you walk into a rehearsal room and see half the room filled with people who look like you. It's a given that you're going to walk in a room and see at least 75% white and then everyone else" (interview with author, 20 September 2017). For the majority of productions of late twentieth and early twenty-first century Shakespeare, Griffiths' assertion is a confirmable fact. The initial data that underpins the British Black and Asian Shakespeare Performance Database was a survey of the ethnic make-up of British Shakespeare casts, encompassing 225 productions and spanning thirty years. Published as "The Shakespearean Glass Ceiling", its findings point starkly to an informal quota in which professional Shakespearean productions are composed of a ratio of 80-90% white performers with the remaining 10-20% of casts comprised of actors from Britain's ethnic minority population, the majority of those being of African and Afro-Caribbean descent (Rogers, "The Shakespearean Glass Ceiling"). This ratio has remained remarkably stable and there are, on average, no more than two to four black and/or Asian actors per production, "a figure that has not significantly increased in numerical terms since the 1980s" (Rogers, "The Shakespearean Glass Ceiling" 421). The exceptions to this trend are productions that use settings that reflect the heritage of those same ethnic minority performers, enabling directors to hire casts with a higher than average proportion of black and Asian actors.

It is worth noting that although this essay focuses exclusively on cross-cultural productions that had African or Afro-Caribbean settings and used casts from those heritages, other ethnic population groups have similar stories in terms of integrating Shakespeare. Performers of south Asian heritage have more recently been achieving recognition for their work and are being included in Shakespearean productions, albeit in smaller quantities than their African and Afro-Caribbean counterparts. East Asian performers, however, remain virtually absent in twenty-first century British Shakespeare. It is these facts that underpin what follows and, although there has been much progress in the integration of British Shakespeare since the 1970s, there is still a basic inequality within the entertainment industry and, consequently, within British Shakespearean production in the twenty-first century.

The Black Macbeth

The first recorded all-black cast in a professional Shakespeare production in Britain occurred when Peter Coe directed *The Black Macbeth* at the Roundhouse in London in 1972. One report of its then forthcoming production noted about its milieu, "it is, we are assured [by Coe], not a gimmick but [done] 'to put the important witch-craft element in a more credible setting'" ("Two black Macbeths"). By "a more credible setting", Coe was referring to the transportation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* from Scotland to Barotseland in Zambia. There were a number of alterations to Shakespeare's text in order to accommodate this shift in locale. The Witches became "ju ju"—described as such in the programme—and the eponymous couple were re-named Mbeth and Lady Mbeth while other tweaks to the script assuaged any doubt that the setting was no longer Scotland; "We hear our bloody cousins are bestowed in Somalia and the Congo" was one such modification and "The devil damn thee white thou black-faced loon" another. John Barber's description in his *Daily Telegraph* review of the "ju ju"/witches illustrates the energy of the production, as he writes of "masked and befeathered dervishes in animal skins who dance to jungle-drums and intrude frequently into the action throughout." Across the board, the picture the reviews build is of a *Macbeth* infused with the tribal heritage of Africa, but one that also left critics dissatisfied because the actors' "speech-rhythms and intonations are not ours" (Barber).

Peter Coe had assembled a largely untrained cast of African, Caribbean and African-American heritage performers for *The Black Macbeth*. "Untrained" at least in the manner that critics would recognize as an English stage convention, epitomized by the technique of stars such as Olivier, Gielgud, Guinness and Ashcroft at this time. Many of the cast also clearly spoke Shakespeare's verse in their natural accents, or at least an approximation of one from its African setting. In the days before Barrie Rutter's Northern Broadsides forced British Shakespearean production to be more inclusive of regional—and international—accents, speaking Shakespeare in anything other than Received Pronunciation (RP) was met with varying degrees of scorn, derision and superiority from the critics.

Most of the cast were dismissed outright by the critics, largely on the basis of poor verse speaking, but two were rewarded with accolades. In praising Jeffery Kissoon's Malcolm (Meru) and Mona Hammond's Lady Mbeth, Irving Wardle in *The Times* was ebullient, describing Hammond's Lady Macbeth as "a reading of true passion and originality whose stone-faced exhaustion after the banquet and sleep-walk scene are as good as any I have ever seen." Seemingly oblivious as to the primary reason for his approbation of Hammond and Kissoon, Wardle continued, "Both performances, interestingly, are delivered with the fluency of standard British acting." Wardle was, in effect, praising the pair for

their ability to speak verse according to unwritten specifications of English classical theatre. This response to the "fluency" of the verse speaking—and the dismissal of the rest of the cast—speaks to deeply ingrained notions about the ownership of Shakespeare's plays and highlights the ways in which speech has been used to exclude performers of colour from the classical canon. The importance of RP to the British theatrical establishment had been understood by the African-American actor Paul Robeson when preparing to play Othello at the Savoy Theatre in 1930, who took elocution lessons from Amanda Ira Aldridge in order to assimilate.

The Black Macbeth's African setting came under scrutiny from some critics, in ways that also highlight cultural prejudices that permeate white, British society. There are two primary sources for stereotypes of Africa in Coe's *Macbeth*, both of which were noted by Frank Marcus in his *Sunday Telegraph* review. First, the perception of the continent as "exotic" and, to a large extent, "primitive" is visible in the drums, animal skins, "ju ju"/witchdoctors that permeated Coe's recreation of Africa. Commenting on these aspects, Marcus stated that "The tribal rivalries of ancient Scotland, the witchcraft and the ghosts (although Banquo's remains surprisingly invisible here) have much in common with African folklore." While tribal ceremonies occur in Africa, the *perception* by western Europeans and North Americans about the continent is driven in part by media coverage. In a recent *National Geographic* issue on race, the magazine issued a *mea culpa* regarding its own part in perpetuating these "exotic" images of Africans and their descendants in the western world:

> …until the 1970s *National Geographic* all but ignored people of color who lived in the United States, rarely acknowledging them beyond laborers or domestic workers. Meanwhile it pictured "natives" elsewhere as exotics, famously and frequently unclothed, happy hunters, noble savages—every type of cliché. (Goldberg)

The use of African rituals within *The Black Macbeth*, placing the production in the context of a specific tribal culture and the entire spectacle that accompanied these decisions similarly perpetuated the stereotypes of black people.

The portrayal of Malcolm also drew on images that would have been familiar to a contemporary, white English audience, in this case the shorthand for the brutal politics of postcolonial African regimes. Malcolm—who, after Macbeth's death, inherits his father Duncan's throne—was, in Coe's production, the Shakespearean equivalent of the western-educated African leader: "The king's son…alone among ebony torsos and heavy fur robes, wears colonial khaki (an Oxbridge graduate perhaps?)" (Dawson). It was likely this very image of the Oxbridge graduate that enabled reviewers to praise Kissoon's acting, given the familiarity of its semiotics to a presumably educated audience.

However along with the familiar khaki, there is also an image of post-colonial turmoil embedded in Frank Marcus's perception of this particular son of a monarch: "Mr. Coe finds in his *Black Macbeth* a modern political analogy, namely a transition from feudal barbarism to a new-style military efficiency, represented by Malcolm (played with relaxed assurance by Jeffery Kissoon)". In using the African setting, both for its tribal and post-colonial semiotics, Coe was presenting his largely white English audience with simple signifiers that were readily identifiable—and simultaneously stereotypical.

With the hindsight of over four decades of socio-political change, Coe's *Black Macbeth* contains a level of discomfort because of the stereotypes deployed in the production—*and* their reception by critics. With the few productions at that time that were providing black actors with opportunities, it was most often through the use of cultural stereotypes. Like Peter Coe, William Gaskill used the African tribal image when incorporating three black actors as the Witches in his 1966 *Macbeth* at the Royal Court and Jonathan Miller cast Norman Beaton and Rudolph Walker to play Ariel and Caliban in a postcolonial *Tempest* in 1970. All three directors—Coe, Gaskill and Miller—were radical in their casting, but conservative in the execution of concepts that were based on the dominant cultural stereotypes of people of colour. That the stereotype was in play can be seen in Coe's own comment about his rationale for staging *Macbeth* in Africa, that the supernatural aspect of the play sits better within the context of western perceptions of the continent.

Where Coe—as well as Gaskill and Miller—were radical was in their casting of performers of colour at all. As late as 1979, the actor Norman Beaton had described classical theatre in Britain as "virtually a closed shop" for home grown black British talent. As actor Frank Cousins recalled, there were few opportunities as a result of the systemic prejudice performers of colour encountered:

> In those days black actors were only used if a script specifically called for a Caribbean or African character. Mainstream parts were never considered appropriate for ethnic actors, and if one put oneself forward you were told you were too black, the accent wasn't right or you were just "not suitable". (King-Dorset 159)

The subtext of being "too black" or speaking in an accent that was not RP permeates the reviews of *The Black Macbeth*, which combined to view the performers as "not suitable" for Shakespeare. Thus hiring even one black actor would have been far from the norm, but to hire twenty-two—as Coe did—was revolutionary. That the director had to hone the script so that it would specifically require actors of African and Afro-Caribbean heritage perhaps speaks more to the prejudices of the establishment and its audiences than the stereotypical signifiers that dominated Coe's production.

That *The Black Macbeth* also existed—and could probably *only* exist—on the margins can be seen in the casting of mainstream classical theatre at the same time. While Oscar James and Mona Hammond were playing leading roles in *The Black Macbeth*—the first performers of colour to play Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in Britain—black actors at the RSC in 1972 were, as Stewart Trotter (25) wrote about Trevor Nunn's *Coriolanus*, "do[ing] little more than whoop round bonfires and die in battle. All the verse speaking is done by white actors blacked up". The statement is perhaps harsh, as the context was the RSC hiring a core group of young, black actors at the beginning of their careers. Yet Trotter's description is not entirely unfair either, as Alton Kumalo—one of the young, black performers who had been in the RSC in the 1968 and 1969 seasons—recalled: "For about two years, all I ever played [at the RSC] was messengers. I got tired of playing the same roles because they are limiting. So, I made a very vocal protest. But they argued that Shakespeare did not write black roles and that there were not many blacks in England in Elizabethan times" (Baker). The contrast between the two experiences is stark: Alton Kumalo was playing messengers for the Royal Shakespeare Company, yet Kumalo's co-founder of Temba Theatre Company, Oscar James, was playing a leading role in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in a fringe space in Camden.

"Nobody was Offering Black Actors Shakespeare"

The theatre companies Temba and Talawa had direct connections with Peter Coe's *The Black Macbeth*. Oscar James and Mona Hammond—Coe's "Mbeth"s—were at the forefront of the black British theatre movement, each a key figure in the history of these two important companies. Mona Hammond was one of four women that established Talawa in 1986, while Oscar James co-founded Temba in 1972 with Alton Kumalo. Alby James, Alton Kumalo's successor as artistic director of Temba, expressed surprise in a 1987 piece in *The Independent* that black actors were still being told by "some directors…that though they were very impressed by their audition pieces, they could not yet see a way in which they could be cast in certain roles". The phrases "see a way" and "in certain roles" are key to understanding the subtle ways in which actors of colour have been systematically denied opportunities, including in the classics. They also illustrate that the experiences that Frank Cousins had recalled of actors being told they were "not suitable" because of their skin colour or accent were still prevalent in the late 1980s. Reflecting in 2016 on the reasons Talawa began staging the classics, Yvonne Brewster stated it had been Talawa's policy "to give black actors work they weren't being offered—and nobody was offering them the chance to do Shakespeare" (Jays). A new phase in the history of the integration of Shakespearean production in the UK began when Alby James took

over from Alton Kumalo as Temba's artistic director, as minority-led theatre companies began to claim the classics for themselves.

Alby James brought to Temba a significant amount of experience in mainstream theatre—including the Royal Shakespeare Company—and an ambition "to produce the highest quality classical work" (Shand 19). Speaking to *City Limits* as Temba was mid-way through its Manchester residency in 1985, the conversation segued to a discussion of integrated casting, sparked by the example of Hugh Quarshie having played Posthumus in *Cymbeline* at the Royal Exchange the previous year. James observed that "Too many directors don't know how to use integrated casting. They leave the actor to do the job and that leads to racist responses from reviewers." Temba's solution to the conundrum, the director noted, "might include transposition to the Caribbean or Africa" (Shand 19), an option that had only been done twice in professional theatre: *The Black Macbeth* and a Caribbean-set *Measure for Measure* at the National in 1981, directed by Michael Rudman with Norman Beaton as Angelo in what was his second—and final—professional Shakespeare production.

Three years after the Manchester residency Alby James directed a production of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1988, featuring a young David Harewood in his first job out of RADA as Romeo, opposite Georgia Slowe as Juliet. The play featured a multi-racial cast and was transposed from Verona to pre-revolutionary Cuba in 1878. Using the history of the island, James rooted his production in a society that had evolved from its slave-owning beginnings. As the director explained, the black population of Cuba had been able to buy their freedom and, as a consequence, "there was considerable mixing of the two races" (Carpenter 31). Africans had also become the single largest ethnic group in Cuba and with that came the fear of an uprising on the scale of the Haitian revolution (Carpenter 31-32). The Cuban town was represented by slatted mahogany, a Spanish guitarist playing live music and a prologue portraying the violent death of a woman attempting to raise the Cuban national flag. The multicultural cast was also split down ethnic lines: "The Capulets were intermarried Spaniards and Cubans, the Montagues descendants of African slaves" (Loehlin 80). There was also a dreadlocked Mercutio (Joe Dixon) and a Rosaline—normally Romeo's off-stage beloved, prior to his meeting Juliet—who dabbled in Flamenco dancing.

Temba's *Romeo and Juliet* was the first recorded production of a Shakespeare play by a minority-led theatre company (Rogers, British Black and Asian Shakespeare Performance Database) and, as such, received unfavourable treatment from the mainstream press. While Peter Coe's *The Black Macbeth* placed black actors in situations that the largely white audience could accept (stereotypical settings, as shown above), Alby James presented a production that deliberately challenged racial perceptions. It is clear from

reviews that the "white gaze" of the mainstream critics was bewildered about James' production: Grevel Lindop (33) remarked in *Plays and Players* that the "Cuban detail fails to illuminate", a sentiment that Michael Billington shared in his review for *The Guardian*. Those members of the cast who were RADA-trained actors, however, generally exceeded expectations. In a similar bias for British-trained verse speakers that was apparent in reviews of *The Black Macbeth*, David Harewood and, particularly, Joe Dixon as Mercutio were singled out for praise. Despite the critical response, Temba's achievement with *Romeo and Juliet* was to look beyond the stereotypes and at the humanity of Shakespeare's characters within the Cuban context, an aspect that some critics could not—or would not—see.

Temba's staging of a Shakespeare play was undoubtedly a challenge to the establishment, what James phrased as a "political" message: "For one thing, as far as some whites are concerned, Temba ought to be doing its own thing—always separate" (Carpenter 32). This separation speaks to a view that guided arts policy, epitomized by the solutions posited by *The Arts That Britain Ignores* in that "black" theatre should be a place for the expression of "black" concerns. Yet James went on to get at the core of the issue, observing that some people "don't wish to see us integrated into the *mainstream* of English theatre" (Carpenter 32). Staging a Shakespeare play with an interracial cast was a challenge to that status quo, because what is more mainstream in British theatre than Shakespeare? An extra layer of complexity—and one that is barely acknowledged in discussions of race and Shakespeare—can be found in the reaction to Temba's challenge to the status quo. As James tells it, by staging western classics with an integrated cast, "that kind of presentation flies in the face of their [the detractors'] denial—that is, that blacks are real human beings just like whites are" (Carpenter 33)—and, I would add, that talent in portraying humanity does not lie solely with human beings in greater proportions depending on the whiteness of their skin.

For Temba, an interracial cast in a production of *Romeo and Juliet* was less about the setting and more about presenting people of colour in ways designed to break dominant negative stereotypes. It is this aspect that signals a shift between using cross-cultural casting to present an idea of black people that harnessed those stereotypes—as did *The Black Macbeth*—and portraying characters for their innate humanity. Alby James' message was deceptively simple, he staged *Romeo and Juliet* so that "you can see black and white people in the same drama." That itself was radical because, as he explained, although there were casts that had both white and black actors, "In those productions, blacks and whites are antagonistic to one another. The black people are mad, hysterical, aggressive. In those dramas, no black person can love any white person…and it reinforces the fear the white person has of black people." In

many ways, this is the dynamic that many productions of *Romeo and Juliet* portray, when the casting depicts an interracial conflict between the Montagues and the Capulets. Often utilizing contemporary urban settings, this approach to the play has allowed a simple binary to be read and reinforced. For example, Andrew Visnevski's 1982 production at the Young Vic elicited descriptions from reviewers that were steeped in stereotypes. Benedict Nightingale took Visnevski's Verona to be "Newark or Detroit" (both cities with large African-American populations) and delineated the families as "*tribe* Capulet" and "*tribe* Montague" (my italics). In this racially encoded production, the critic's choice of "tribe" evokes the repetitious media representation of Africans and their western descendants as "primitive".

Perhaps the most telling statement to come from the "white gaze" of mainstream critics was from Charles Spencer in *The Daily Telegraph*: "For this multi-racial company, it must have appeared sensible to set the play among the blacks, whites and mulattos of 19th century colonial Cuba". Spencer's "it must have appeared sensible" is patronizing and also indicative of a confusion caused by the lack of the standard binary narrative of black and white racial conflict that reflected recent British history in the "race riots" of the 1980s. What betrays the need for a narrative along black and white lines was Spencer's comment about Shakespeare's play itself and the analogy he used, that it "is in any case a timeless story which would fit just as easily into contemporary Belfast as it does into 16th-century Verona". In imagining the play transposed to the site of sectarian violence between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, Spencer inadvertently exposes a subtle bias inherent in the criticism of the Temba production. For Spencer, it appears that Shakespeare's play had more relevancy as a depiction of "The Troubles"—a conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism at a basic level—than as a site to explore race relations in Britain in the 1980s in a less binary, less combative way, which is the approach that Alby James was offering.

With *Romeo and Juliet*, Alby James' Temba was advocating for "accurate, realistic portrayals" of people of colour—and people of colour in love with white people, and vice versa—because the "theatre, cinema, and television, never focuses on these love relationships. Instead, the powers that be in the media and politics pretend these relationships don't happen…[Black people] can't be so easily stereotyped if we have dimensions and humanity" (Carpenter 33-34). Although some critics could not see past the setting, ultimately Temba's foray into Shakespearean production was a vital piece of theatre that went beyond cultural stereotypes to find the humanity within the play using an integrated cast. The twenty-first century would bring about its own challenges in terms of "cross-cultural casting", but the rewards of this method also brought it fully into mainstream theatre with London 2012's Cultural Olympiad.

"Shakespeare's African Play"

One very real indicator of progress for black actors in the twenty-first century is that the "closed shop"—as Norman Beaton phrased it—for black actors in classical theatre is no longer operative. Performers of African, Afro-Caribbean and south Asian heritage now regularly appear in productions of Shakespeare's plays. For example, young actors of African and Afro-Caribbean heritage frequently work in classical theatre, as Marcus Griffiths has done since leaving Guildhall in 2011. Griffiths' early work at Shakespeare's Globe in *Much Ado About Nothing* was quickly followed by four seasons with the RSC, where he rose through the ranks from playing a host of small roles in *Julius Caesar* in 2012 (Marullus, Pindarus, Publius, Octavius' Servant, Coffin bearer) going on to appear in David Tennant's *Richard II* in 2013 (Greene), a season in the Swan performing Shakespeare's contemporaries in 2015 to the 2016 season (Laertes in *Hamlet*, Cloten in *Cymbeline* and the King of France in *King Lear*). His experience—and that of many other young actors—speaks to the level at which BAME performers are now regularly working within mainstream classical theatre.

Cross-cultural casting has also become increasingly visible in mainstream theatre since Temba's *Romeo and Juliet*. In the late 1980s, the form became increasingly popular in regional theatre particularly in cities with multiracial populations as a way to appeal to a wider, underserved (or potential) audience. Cross-cultural casting has since become one way mainstream theatres become more inclusive in their casting, providing the impetus to hire more actors from minority backgrounds. It has also often given performers of colour the opportunity to play the leading roles that go more often to their white counterparts. The final production in this study is the 2012 RSC production of *Julius Caesar* which was directed by Gregory Doran, set in Africa and was the first—and thus far only—time the company had staged a Shakespeare play with an all-black cast. Not since Michael Rudman's *Measure for Measure* at the National Theatre in 1981 had there been such a large ethnic minority presence in a Shakespeare play on one of Britain's major national stages.

Gregory Doran's production of *Julius Caesar* was inspired, in part, by a conversation the director had with the South African actor John Kani, who told him "*Julius Caesar* is Shakespeare's African play" (Davies). The genesis of this production is far more complicated than this isolated comment can express, but it encompasses both the global reach of Shakespeare's work while simultaneously speaking to its parallels with Africa. Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is effectively a play about politics, power (and its abuse) and philosophies of governing. It is little wonder that the impetus for setting *Julius Caesar* in Africa was primarily political, although this is often mistaken in criticism as a "wash" of African dictatorships. The title of the article, from

which I intentionally drew the quotation about "Shakespeare's African play" is one example, as the subeditor's craftsmanship directed the reader's attention to the twentieth century's post-colonial dictators: "*Julius Caesar* with a little help from Idi Amin and Mugabe" (Davies). As mentioned previously, one of the ways that western culture tends to read African narratives is through the narrow prism of postcolonial dictatorships, which limits the perception of both the continent and its inhabitants—and their descendants around the globe. In reality, Doran's production narrative—and its motivation, which was stated repeatedly in the publicity surrounding the show—came from the African *opponents* to those dictators, from Nelson Mandela to Sonny Venkatrathnam to the Market Theatre, Johannesburg's own John Kani. While the play itself—and the critics' "white gaze"—may allow for the simple narrative of African dictatorship, the production itself was aligned with the struggle for human rights and racial equality.

Although Doran's *Caesar* has been written about and described amply—most importantly by Paterson Joseph, who played Brutus, in his newly published memoir *Julius Caesar and Me*—it is worth précising here before discussing its implications. Unlike its two predecessors *The Black Macbeth* and Temba's *Romeo and Juliet* which both depicted specific locales, the setting for Doran's production was a fictional postcolonial African country. Michael Vale's set was "like a war-damaged, concrete cross between the kind of football stadium where the ANC [African National Congress, the party of Nelson Mandela] held rallies and a Roman amphitheatre" (Taylor). Julius Caesar (Jeffery Kissoon) was a suave leader in a safari suit, waving a flywhisk as a subtle reminder of his growing power. As well as the obvious signifiers of African dictatorship, there was also joy in the carnival atmosphere with which the play started. "The air pulses with festive drumming as the populace parties under a baking sun, celebrating Caesar's latest victory alongside a traditional shaman, who'll soon double as the herald of doom," wrote Kate Bassett (62). It is worth noting that, unlike with Coe's *Black Macbeth* and James' *Romeo and Juliet*, there was no critical sniping at the verse speaking in Doran's production. Instead, the cast was heralded as "a superb ensemble of black British actors" (Bassett 62), perhaps an indication that the critics recognized a familiar form of Shakespearean verse speaking. After all, as Marcus Griffiths recounts, "If you look at it technically, we were doing everything [great British classical actors like Gielgud and Olivier] were doing: the poetry was there and the metre was being honoured" (interview with author, 20 September 2017).

If Peter Coe had seen an African setting as a way in to the supernatural aspect of *Macbeth* and Alby James staged a cross-cultural *Romeo and Juliet* in an effort to both portray black peoples' humanity and to integrate performers of colour into mainstream theatre, the theatrical politics of Doran's *Julius Caesar* were global in origin. Under Michael Boyd the Royal Shakespeare Company

became a more internationally orientated organization and one of his signature achievements was the "Complete Works Festival" in 2006. Its purpose was to celebrate Shakespeare's work by staging the entire canon within a year, undertaken by both the RSC and a number of national and—importantly—international guest companies. It was, as Boyd noted, a fulfilment of his ambition "to make the RSC a more outward-looking theatre company, a company that would show real curiosity in trying to find the best practice in Shakespeare production elsewhere, looking for inspiration and lessons to be learned" (Smith 13). The 2012 World Shakespeare Festival—of which *Julius Caesar* was a part—was the logical extension of both Boyd's philosophy of internationalism and the "Complete Works Festival". Transnational Shakespeare in London's Olympic year was no accident and the rhetoric surrounding the capital's Olympic bid was distinctly inclusive, epitomized by Tony Blair's words in 2005 upon London's successful acquisition of the 2012 Summer Olympics: "London is an open, multi-racial, multi-religious, multicultural city and rather proud of it. People of all races and nationalities mix in with each other and mix in with each other well" (Tran). The World Shakespeare Festival (WSF) grew out of this philosophy, which had been embedded in London's bid to the International Olympic Committee as "Olympism and Culture", a full arts programme that was unveiled at the National Theatre in September 2008. The WSF was to be "be spearheaded by the Royal Shakespeare Company" with a focus "on international collaborations and the notion of Shakespeare as a world figure" (Higgins 2008). While the RSC presented the work of companies from Russia, Iraq and Brazil, their most high-profile home-grown productions were two that used cross-cultural settings and British casts that reflected their international heritage: *Julius Caesar* and a *Much Ado* with a British south Asian cast.

Each of Boyd's programme notes for the World Shakespeare Festival picks up on the global themes of the Olympics. His welcome to the *Julius Caesar* audience noted, "The internationalism that informs all the RSC's work this season…reflects the fact that Shakespeare is no longer English property." Michael Boyd's use of "English" in describing the ownership of Shakespeare is in distinct contrast with the description in his *Much Ado* programme note of *Julius Caesar* as "British-African." While to the un-attuned ear definitions of "English" and "British" may elide, integrated Shakespeare is a concept that sits more comfortably on the "British" side of the discourse because of the racial connotations both hold. "Englishness" is a term loaded with implications of racial politics that were made visible in the co-option of the English flag in the 1970s and 1980s by neo-fascist groups. As Afua Hirsch (266) puts it, "Englishness is not an identity that many English people feel is open to immigrants". Whether intentionally or not, by stating that Shakespeare was no longer *English* property Michael Boyd signalled a greater level of inclusion for

Britain's ethnic minority population in home grown Shakespeare by describing Doran's *Julius Caesar* as "British-African".

The significance of the RSC's 2012 *Julius Caesar* in terms of the history of integrated casting should not be underestimated. In order to understand its importance, I want to interrogate—with assistance from the production's cast and other black British practitioners—Michael Boyd's description of it as "British-African". The term itself is more specific than those usually applied to the non-white population of Britain: "BAME" and "minority ethnic". These labels were rightly queried by the director Roy Alexander Weise in a recent blog post on Tiata Fahodzi's website, with much more complexity than there is space here to relay. Two points stand out from Weise's writing: that the acronym BAME (Black and Asian Minority Ethnic) is "lazy" because this "shortcut removes the complexity of Black and Asian people, cultures and experiences" and that the word "minority" implies that "people like me—people who aren't white and European, essentially—as 'having little importance, influence, or effect'", as something lesser within the dominant white cultural framework. Or, to put it another way, stories that stem from these backgrounds are viewed by the dominant, white culture as not important enough to be told. Michael Boyd's use of the description British-African brings some cultural specificity—and, consequently, respect—to the black British practitioners whose work created Doran's *Julius Caesar*. In being staged by the Royal Shakespeare Company—the top of the profession—the production itself also sent out a powerful message of inclusion.

In a majority white country with a majority white theatre audience, the semiotics of inclusion were lost in the "white gaze" of the critical reception of Doran's *Julius Caesar*. In her essay "Making up Africa in the Cultural Olympiad," Colette Gordon (206) stated that the mixture of signifiers of "East African accents, West African music, and the elements of South African political iconography…elicited some concern about staging Africa as a country". There is no doubt that there was some crossover with the stereotypical ways in which African narratives are read by the "white gaze", what Gordon misses in her analysis is that Doran and his cast never meant their *Julius Caesar* to be a naturalistic representation of a specific postcolonial African nation. The cast's varied personal histories provided the historical foundation for the aspects of the play that deal with dictatorships and the aftermath of revolution. Adjoa Andoh's (Portia) father was a Ghanian journalist who came to Britain as a political émigré and Ivanno Jeremiah's mother fled Idi Amin's Uganda (Caesar 6). Cyril Nri (Cassius) had "fled the Biafran War, also known as the Nigerian Civil War, as an infant" (Joseph 68). This multiplicity of experiences and backgrounds enabled a melding of different African customs which, as Theo Ogundipe (Soothsayer) explains, provided the cast with "ways to assist the narrative" via their rich, multiple heritages (interview with author, 11 October 2017).

Echoing Alby James thirty years previously, the most important point regarding this production of "Shakespeare's African play" with its all black British cast was encapsulated by Marcus Griffiths: "We were going to own Shakespeare for our own culture" (interview with author, 20 September 2017). By "our own culture", Griffiths did not just mean the cultures of the cast's African heritage but by the broader terms of what it means to be—in Boyd's phrase—British-African. While the family histories of the cast underpinned their understanding of the politics in *Julius Caesar* and the play's parallels with events that have recurred across the African continent, Griffiths' point was about inclusion—and about the pioneers in his cast. Griffiths recounted having seen Paterson Joseph (Brutus) in Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* at the National Theatre when he was seventeen, never thinking he would share the stage with him a few years later:

> He's as British as they come, he grew up in Harlesden. Ray (Fearon) [Mark Antony] grew up in Harlesden, too. Cyril (Nri) moved over here, but he's lived here for years and went to the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Jeffery Kissoon was one of the very first black faces on television. They are part of this culture. They're a fundamental part of this culture. (interview with author, 20 September 2017)

For Griffiths the epitome of modern Britishness is "a melting pot," which encompasses its multiple heritages. As he puts it, he was "born in this country. I'm a UK resident and I'm a proud Brit, but I'm also a proud Jamaican. Can't I be all three?" (interview with author, 20 September 2017). What this *British*-African production of *Julius Caesar*—with all the complexity that entails—achieved was to bring the British African experience into mainstream classical theatre, alongside the more traditional, *English*-centric ways of telling this story. British-African stories were being presented in Shakespearean form on the stage of one of the world's premier classical theatres, heralding the full inclusion of black British actors into the centre of the country's cultural life.

Coda

There is a coda to the progress that has occurred in British theatre since the 1970s, sketched here through three productions. Despite the growth in cross-cultural productions, outside of this Shakespearean method of producing the plays an ingrained tendency remains to cast black and Asian performers in the same, stereotypical catalogue of roles. These parts make up what I have referred to elsewhere as an "unofficial black canon" (see Rogers, "The Shakespearean Glass Ceiling"). For example, of the three productions of *Macbeth* staged in

2018—at the RSC, the National and Bristol's Tobacco Factory—each one cast a black or Asian performer as Banquo; the touring version of the NT's 2018 *Macbeth* also continued on form, casting Patrick Robinson in the role. These parts are often large enough for an actor—any actor, regardless of ethnicity—to make an impact within the production, yet rarely do BAME actors play leading roles. Since 1930, only eight actors from minority backgrounds have played Hamlet, for example, and the two in 2016 (RSC, Black Theatre Live) were both cast in cross-cultural productions. Hamlet, King Lear and Macbeth are among the most coveted roles in the Shakespearean canon and in 2016, against all prevailing trends, there were four black British actors cast in those three roles: Paapa Essiedu (Hamlet), Ray Fearon (Macbeth), Raphael Sowole (Hamlet) and Don Warrington (Lear). However, only the *Macbeth* at the Globe could be considered to fully exist outside the cross-cultural milieu. The combination of a semi-static "unofficial black canon" combined with the overall rarity of a black British actor playing a leading Shakespearean character indicates that although *access* to jobs in classical theatre has improved exponentially since *The Black Macbeth*, systemic inequality remains stubbornly in place in twenty-first century British classical theatre.

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King John in the "Vormärz": Worrying Politics and Pathos

Abstract: This article picks up on a tendency of recent criticism to look to Shakespeare for insights into contemporary politics, and extends it backwards to the period of German history known as the "Vormärz"—the period between 1815 and 1848. It establishes parallels between that period and the current debates about Brexit, and shows how equivalent issues are reflected in the accounts of *King John* given by three leading German critics of the "Vormärz" period—which also successively demonstrate the deleterious rise of German nationalism. These issues include: the weaknesses, mistakes and crimes of the powerful, and their effect both on the nation directly afflicted with them, and on others; the issue of national sovereignty and its relationship to the fellowship of nations; the struggle against arguably alien ways of thinking; the dividing line between necessary compromise and rank betrayal; the dilemma of choice; and the poisoned chalice of democratic freedom. And the parallels they establish between Shakespeare, the "Vormärz" and us are as instructive as they are unsettling.

Keywords: Brexit; Europe; Reception; Germany; Politics; Nationalism.

I

On 6 February 2017 Gary Watt, Professor of Law at the University of Warwick, published an article about Brexit in the *Journal of International Dispute Settlement*. There is nothing very surprising about that, you might think. After all, the most obvious unintended consequence of Brexit is that disputes which are in most cases purely local in origin are taken for settlement onto the international stage. Yet there was something unexpected, even disconcerting about Watt's intervention. For it was concerned not with statutes and cases, not with treaties and trade agreements, but with Shakespeare. And not just any Shakespeare, either, but with a play which is arguably the least well known single-authored play in the entire canon: with *King John*.

Watt's thesis is that "when we seek to illuminate our present politics with the insights of drama, we will find that *King John* […] casts the longest and

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perhaps the strongest light" (Watt 60). In the rhetorically charged dispute of the first scene Watt (62) sees "Shakespeare […] speaking directly to the same passions that have arisen in the Brexit dispute." In the conflict between England and France, Watt finds parallels with the various contentious issues dividing Britain and its former EU partners in a divorce process, which, at the time Watt was writing, had barely begun. The dire warnings which continue to be issued as to the consequences of Brexit have an echo, for Watt, in the threat of excommunication pronounced by the Papal legate against the recalcitrant King of England. The use of the same means to intimidate England's (temporary) ally France matches, according to Watt, the strong-arm tactics employed by the EU to stop member countries concluding individual trade deals with Britain. Indeed, Watt even goes so far as to identify Shakespeare's Pandulph with Jean-Claude Juncker in this regard. The logical corollary, then, would be to see in John's willing sacrifice of his sovereignty to Pandulph and his accepting it back at the latter's hands a paradigm for what might happen if Britain decided to make substantial concessions in order to remain within the single market. This would of course be anathema to those for whom the Brexit vote was above all about self-determination. For Watt, this too is prefigured in the history of King John. "John's reign," he writes "is as good a candidate as any to represent the resurgence of English nationhood […]" (Watt 71).

In this resurgence, with its obvious links to Brexit, Watt detects a clear reference to the events of Shakespeare's own lifetime. There it was inextricably bound up with the question of religion. When John briefly defies the authority of the Pope, and does so moreover on his own, he behaves for all the world like a Protestant nation defying a predominantly catholic Europe. In seizing on the connection, Watt is moved to ask questions like: "Could it be that a predominantly Roman Catholic EU is still modelled along essentially Papal lines or still espouses the same federal, even feudal ambitions? Was the Roman Catholic communion of nations the template for the European Community?" (Watt 67). And while he is more than prepared to countenance the possibility that the answer to these questions will be negative, he still insists that the perceived difference in confession between the United Kingdom and its Southern neighbours is one of the factors that marks the former out as distinct and not belonging. Another such factor has to do with the matter of migration. Here Watt uses the autograph passages by Shakespeare in *Sir Thomas More* to remind his readers of that author's sense of solidarity with the displaced and the dispossessed. And he cites Victor Hugo and others in order to sketch a picture of Shakespeare as a good European[1]—a tactic emphasized when he extends Shakespearean condemnation equally to nationalism, National Socialism and the murder by a right-wing extremist of the British Labour MP Jo Cox (Watt 80).

[1] "A little more, and Shakespeare would be European"—Victor Hugo, quoted in Watt, 78.

In addition to these narrowly political parallels, Watt identifies psychological similarities that help to explain the Brexit vote and its aftermath. As he puts it in his abstract: "the dynamics of human motivation which Shakespeare attributed to individuals living four hundred years before he wrote, apply as well four centuries on, in the year of 'Brexit'" (Watt 58. See Watt 60). Of particular importance here is John's notorious vacillation, which would apply very neatly, but by no means exclusively, to Theresa May's attempts to reconcile the conflicting camps within her own party. The disunity of the country as a whole is summed up, for Watt, in the Bastard's report to the King about the state of his kingdom (4:2:143-146). Identifying the citizens of Angiers, who are called upon to arbitrate between the English and the French, with the voters called upon to decide the future of the United Kingdom, he pinpoints both their unwillingness to fulfil a potentially dangerous role which properly belongs to others, and the sense of unexpected power which may have contributed to the knowing cussedness of the result. He also sees a parallel between these citizens and theatre-goers, and is thus able to posit the whole Brexit scenario, and the negotiations that followed, as a form of theatre, imbued with some uncertainty about the relative roles of actors and onlookers. He lays considerable stress, too, on the fire imagery in Shakespeare's play, applying the successive stages of kindling flames, fanning them, and being unable to contain them to the referendum process itself.

In order to characterize and classify such parallels, Watt uses a kind of shorthand, whereby the word "sovereign" stands for politics, "sterling" for economics, and "bastards" for "illegitimate reasons" such as racism and xenophobia. One of the corollaries of the first term, in this scenario, is, precisely, nationalism—"reclaiming sovereignty", as a rallying cry, being exactly equivalent to "make Britain great again". In order to make his argument about economics, Watt insists that the term "commodity", used in one of the play's most famous speeches to mean dishonourable political expediency, is often associated in Shakespeare with profit in the financial sense. He also makes much of the linguistic connection between "tread" and "trade", and takes the view that the accommodation between France and England is intimately bound up with the latter. In his discussion of "bastards" he is careful to distinguish between the real villains and those of whom he says that they "have a certain innate nobility of purpose despite formal imperfections of status" (Watt 76). Among these, he includes not only King John himself, but also the people he calls the "'common folk'" of England, "who, if not lacking legal legitimacy, generally lack the formal imprimatur of gentility or nobility and, in many cases, those educational and financial advantages that tend to improve one's social status" (Watt 76). By this sleight of hand he effectively doffs his apostate hat to those who voted for Brexit. After all, there is general consensus that the Brexit vote was in part a reaction to a situation whereby a self-serving elite had for too long ignored the

needs and concerns of the underprivileged. By endorsing Shakespeare as the champion of the latter, Watt is doing penance for that unconcern. In an equivalent move, he also equivocates in his repudiation of nationalism. “This is not to say”, he says,

> that the idea of a nation cannot be a beautiful thing. A nation is a construct of communal human invention. As such, it can be a beautiful work of culture. Shakespeare frequently portrayed the well-ordered state in terms of a well-managed garden that holds nature in harmony with human art. (Watt 80)

In this context it is significant that he quotes with approval the unashamedly jingoistic final speech of the play, in which the arch-bastard makes the ringing claim that, for as long as it stands united, England will never be defeated.

II

It is here that Watt brings in “the Germans”. “German authors”, he says, “have long been appreciative and insightful critics of Shakespeare” (Watt 80). And he goes on to quote a German critic called Franz Horn, who, in a translation presumably by Henry Reed, said of *King John*: “The hero of this play stands not in the list of personages, and could not stand with them, but the idea should be clear without personification. The hero is England” (Watt 80. See Reed 153). The dates given for the publication from which this quotation is taken are 1823-1831. And this puts them firmly in the period which is known as the “Vormärz”. For those working in German studies, the word “Vormärz” is convenient shorthand to designate the period between 1815 and 1848, between the restoration that followed the defeat of Napoleon and the revolution that demonstrated how uncontainable the energies were which Napoleon had set in train. With the “Vormärz”, the history of German literature enters a distinct new phase, reflecting both in form and content the socio-political conditions of its production: the rise of the middle classes at a time dominated by a tussle with the legacy of the eighteenth century which was ultimately resolved in favour of values that are perhaps best described as Victorian. Almost exactly in the middle of it, in March 1832, falls the death of Goethe, symbolically sealing a generational shift that had been apparent for some time but raising old anxieties about the nature of German literature and its place on the world stage. Around the same time we see the appearance of the famous translation of Shakespeare’s complete plays by August Wilhelm Schlegel, Dorothea Tieck and Wolf Graf Baudissin—the unfairly misnamed “Schlegel/Tieck” translation (Schabert 841). Yet although this was the translation that eventually triumphed and took on canonical status, it had numerous rivals in the period, which are no

longer considered current (Roger 367-380). This translation work is preceded and accompanied by an enormous wealth of German scholarship on Shakespeare—some of it admittedly more in the fragmentary and enthusiastic Romantic mode, and some more traditionally philological (Roger 55-69). As a result of this activity, virtually all the major writers of the period engaged publicly and in print with the work of the English dramatist. Arguably, these acts of homage are most significant in the case of the period's playwrights, such as Georg Büchner (Dedner); but they were by no means restricted to them. Relatively early on, the universal veneration of Shakespeare came to be viewed negatively as idolatry. It is no accident that two influential texts on the subject have in their title the word "Shakespearomanie", "Shakespeare Mania" (Grabbe, Benedix). And one of the manifestations of this cult was the acclaim given to actors and actresses who excelled in playing Shakespearean roles (Schabert 746). Naturally, this kind of attention also extended to the visual arts and music—there are numerous depictions both of celebrated actors in Shakespearean roles and of Shakespearean characters as imagined by artists; and Mendelssohn's famous incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is merely the tip of an iceberg (Schabert 768-9). It is thus no exaggeration to say that this period between restoration and revolution was saturated with Shakespeare—albeit, arguably, in every sphere of intellectual life except the repertoires of most theatres.

This high-water mark in the history of German Shakespeare reception occurs, not accidentally, at a crucial point in the history of Europe and the European ideal. In a way that is no less ideologically significant than the confessional differences of which Watt makes so much, the crucial distinction between Britain and continental Europe is bound up with the fact that Britain never actually became part of Napoleon's European project. That was why Britain took so long to abandon its arcane and archaic system of weights and measures—and never did so completely. This also explains why the legal system in this country is so markedly different from those that apply elsewhere in Europe. And the most visible sign of this continuous division is that the British do not drive on the same side of the road as the rest of the continent. In one sense, then, the defeat of Napoleon, which the British helped to bring about, was a defeat of the European ideal, and could be presented specifically as a triumph of the individual nation over the levelling and regimenting forces of unification. The echoes of this in the rhetoric of Brexit are unmistakeable. At the same time the forces of reaction, in their unremitting efforts to turn the clock back to a former age, had the effect, in the "Vormärz", as in parts of the current European Union, and, I suspect, as in the future United Kingdom, of increasing mobility and migration as political dissidents and disaffected citizens tried their luck in places regarded as less oppressive. On the other hand, it can be argued

that the very defeat of Napoleon made possible the realization of precisely that ideal which he is alleged to have pursued—the ideal of a United States of Europe, of a "Europe thus divided into nationalities freely formed and free internally" (Ingram 49). Without the hegemonic presence of a single power, without the constant bloodshed attendant on resistance to that presence, without occupation, attrition and actual battles, the "'Common folk" of Europe were able to get on with their lives in a Europe made recognizably more homogenous by the departing armies and the system they served. And by one of those ironies in which history delights, that very increased homogeny helped lead to the formation of precisely the sort of nation with which emotional identification became possible.

In the "Vormärz", such nationalism was aligned rather differently than it is now. At the time, of course, there was no such nation as "Germany". Instead, there was a confederation known as the "Deutscher Bund". Like the United Kingdom after Brexit, the states that made up the German confederation were by no means of one mind as to the direction to be taken after the defeat of the French emperor and the failure of his European project. Indeed, as in the Brexit scenario, the states themselves were deeply divided between the old elite, who were desperate to return to the status quo ante, and the young radicals, who hoped for a loosening of the repressive structures that prevented their development. For these last, though, who called themselves "Junges Deutschland", "Young Germany" and who were quickly suppressed because of the threat of subversion that they posed, the promise of freedom was vested not in the communion of nations, but in a form of national democracy. It was only after the failure of the revolutions of 1848 that the nation was achieved by specifically military means and thus became associated with the forces of conservatism, specifically Prussian conservatism. In this context, then, to posit England as the hero of Shakespeare's play is neither politically nor psychologically neutral. On the contrary, it smacks more than a little of nation envy.

It is not insignificant, though, that this envy should be expressed in a reference to *King John*. For that play occupies a special place in the history of German theatre. *King John* was the first Shakespeare play with which Goethe inaugurated his intendancy of the theatre at Weimar in 1792—as Roger Paulin explains:

> It was with Eschenburg's *King John*, not *Hamlet*, that he ushered in his Shakespearean productions, a play representing historical and political forces as they clash and recede and collide again, depicting human impotence in the face of inscrutable powers, human ignobility and cynicism, with moments of Senecan horror. It is the Shakespearean world which Goethe excluded from his own practice of tragedy, but whose validity and potency […] he nevertheless recognized as essential and right (Paulin 226).

And he goes on to say of this influential staging: "Arthur's later death on stage, the great actress Christiane Becker's untimely death, the poet's meditation on the fragility of human existence, the starkness of tragedy—all these, too, emerge from the recollection of one electrifying moment […] of Shakespearean production." (Paulin 226-7) In this view, what attracted the impresario to Shakespeare's play was on the one hand its thoroughly disillusioned view of history and politics, its "commodity", and on the other its ability to awaken high passion, its pathos. And if these two facets contributed to the play's popularity in the period between the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror, how much more strongly did they apply twenty-five years later, after Napoleon had seduced various German princes into behaving in ways that uncannily resembled those depicted in the play. Nor should it be forgotten that the position of the "Vormärz" between Romanticism and Victorianism, between Wordsworth and Dickens, coincided not only with what is widely regarded as the invention of childhood, but also with a period in the history of the theatre when histrionics still met with approval (Austin, Gubar, Bate and Rasmussen 127-128). So it would not be out of character for people of the period to feel drawn to a play in which significant roles are played by a young child, who pleads successfully for his life but then, alas, loses it anyway, and his mother, whose maternal feelings find expression in some of the most uncompromising rhetoric Shakespeare ever wrote.

That the play was highly regarded in the period can be concluded from various pieces of evidence, both positive and negative. Heinrich Heine, who, even while ostensibly writing about the play, ignores it almost completely, does nonetheless take pains to include it in its rightful place in his chronological overview of the tragedies. And he mentions by name three different actresses whom he had seen in the role of Constance (Heine 64). Ludwig Tieck, father of Dorothea and moving spirit behind the joint translation project, records his puzzlement at the fact that critics regularly rate *Richard II* less highly than *King John*, thus attesting to the fact that the latter must have had, if not a pre-eminent, then at least a respectable position in the canon at the time (Tieck 103). August Wilhelm Schlegel, the other half of the binomial translator team, chose *King John* as the place to begin a demonstration of philological superiority over Tieck, whose alterations to his translations he deeply resented (Schlegel, "Anmerkungen" 292). Christian Dietrich Grabbe, widely regarded as one of the most important dramatists of the time, who, precisely because of his awareness of his own debt to Shakespeare, distances himself from his model by attacking what he calls "Shakespearo-manie", even while decrying the bombast of the play, praises the bastard as one of Shakespeare's most magnificent creations (Grabbe 432). Elsewhere, he names the play in one breath with *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* as one of Shakespeare's "größeren Stücken", major or greater plays (Grabbe 544). Karl Gutzkow, who, though today he is rarely performed and

known only to specialists, enjoyed a very high reputation in the period, modestly says of his production of the play that it was unparalleled for its precision (Gutzkow 400-401). Karl Immermann, who, in addition to his day job as a lawyer and his side-line as a playwright and prose-writer, was briefly the director of the theatre in Düsseldorf, records in his diary not only how he adapted the play in four acts, but also insisted on maintaining it in the repertoire at a time when members of his theatre wished to remove it. And perhaps most tellingly of all, Anna Jameson, the English-language writer whose work on Shakespeare's heroines was so influential in Germany that it was appended to no fewer than two sets of Shakespeare's collected plays, gives undisputed pride of place to *King John*. In the section of her book devoted to figures from the History plays, and hence from European history, three of the six genuinely historical figures come from this play (Jameson II, 190-238). Here it is the aptly named Constance of Brittany who is given special prominence and pole position—a woman who, in Shakespeare, is left with literally nothing but affectionate maternal ambition and the powerful rhetoric it inspires, but whose historical counterpart, when not being buffeted as the pawn of conflicted male egos, was able to rule much more wisely and well than her macho adversaries.

III

It has been established, then, that the "Vormärz" is known for the breadth and depth of its engagement with Shakespeare, and that, in the period, *King John* enjoyed a much higher reputation than it does now. Following the lead of Gary Watt it has been possible to suggest parallels between the "Vormärz" and Brexit, and to see these reflected in various comparable ways in Shakespeare's text. In this connection we have noted that one of the German critics of the "Vormärz" was quoted by a British critic of the Victorian age and quoted again by Watt in the aftermath of Brexit. Together, these considerations would seem to suggest that there might be good grounds for taking a careful look at what important critics of the period have to say about the play. If nothing else, this will shed light on a critical tradition which is acknowledged to be important, but which cannot easily be grasped in its entirety.

The doyen of Shakespeare scholarship, in this regard, is August Wilhelm Schlegel. In the spring of 1808, Schlegel gave a course of lectures in Vienna under the title "Über dramatische Kunst und Literatur" ("On Dramatic Art and Literature"). These lectures appeared in print in 1810; but while this technically puts them before the "Vormärz", their influence continued to be felt for a long time after that original publication, with a second, revised edition appearing in 1816. Indeed, by a nice coincidence the first English translation appeared at the very beginning of our period, in 1815, while at the end of it, in

1846-47, the lectures were re-published as part of the posthumous *Sämmtliche Werke* (*Collected Works*) edited by Eduard Böcking. There are thirty-seven lectures altogether, and they cover the theory and history of Western drama from the Greeks to the followers of Goethe and Schiller, with a brief speculation as to the future of the genre. Schlegel divides his subject matter into three periods, which he calls respectively the classics ("die Alten" Schlegel, *Vorlesung* I 9), neo-classical plays ("ihre Nachahmer" Schlegel, *Vorlesung* I 9) and Romantic ones ("die romantischen Dichter", Schlegel *Vorlesung* I 9). As befits one of the founders of the discipline of comparative literature, Schlegel's lectures are European in scope, covering not only the Greeks and the Romans, but also the Italians, the French and the Spanish, before concluding with the Germans. The English theatre features in lectures 25 to 34, between the French and the Spanish, and clearly under the aegis of what Schlegel calls the spirit of the romantic drama ("der Geist des romantischen Schauspiels" Schlegel, *Vorlesung* II 5). After an introduction in which Schlegel characterizes this spirit and compares the Bard with Spanish playwrights, notably Calderon, Shakespeare takes up some ninety pages in a work which in Lohner's edition is almost exactly 520 pages long. One of the reasons for the disproportion—apart from the fact that, by Schlegel's own admission, he expanded the Shakespeare sections between the lectures and their publication (Schlegel, *Vorlesung* I 13)—is that he feels the need to write individually about each play.

King John, then, is discussed in lecture 31, which is devoted to the history plays and the *Merry Wives*, and is followed, in the printed text, with an appendix concerned with plays attributed to Shakespeare. This creates the slight impression that these plays are in a sense bringing up the rear, that they fall outside the main event. And yet Schlegel bestows very high praise on them, hailing them as "one of the most valuable of Shakespeare's works" (Schlegel, *Lectures* 419). The singular is deliberate, for Schlegel regards especially the cycle of plays from *Richard II* to *Richard III* as a single entity, taking the view that: "offenbar hat sie der Dichter alle zu einem großen Ganzen zusammengeordnet, es ist gleichsam ein historisches Heldengedicht in dramatischer Form, wovon die einzelnen Schauspiele die Rhapsodien ausmachen" (Schlegel, *Vorlesung* II 184).[2]

Together, these plays constitute a lesson in historical verisimilitude and political reality. From them young princes can learn important truths about

> die innere Würde ihres angestammten Berufs [...] aber auch die Schwierigkeiten ihrer Lage, die Gefahren der Usurpation, den unvermeidlichen

[2] Black (419) translates: "the poet evidently intended them to form one great whole. It is, as it were, an historical heroic poem in the dramatic form, of which the separate plays constitute the rhapsodies."

> Fall der Tyrannei, die sich selbst untergräbt, indem sie sich fester gründen will; endlich die verderblichen Folgen von Schwächen, Fehltritten und Verbrechen der Könige für ganze Nationen und auf mehrere Menschenalter hinaus. (Schlegel II 184)[3]

The political appropriation of these plays is evident here—though whether it is applied to the puppet kings installed by Napoleon, the German princelings who struck deals with him, or the implacable behaviour of the rulers of the German Federation, is a matter for the reader. And although *King John* is not strictly a part of the cycle, being set substantially earlier, the play is presented by Schlegel as a forerunner and epitome. "Im *König Johann*", he writes, "sind schon alle die politischen und nationalen Motive angegeben, die in den folgenden Stücken eine so große Rolle spielen: Kriege und Friedensschlüsse mit Frankreich; eine Usurpation und die tyrannischen Taten, die sie nach sich zieht; der Einfluß der Geistlichkeit, die Parteiungen der Großen" (Schlegel, *Vorlesung* II 187).[4] Again, the resonance of this vocabulary—beginning with the zeugma of "political" and "national"—for the times in which Schlegel was writing and being read is unmistakable. Beyond this, it is the cynicism and "commodity" of the Bastard and his ilk which catches Schlegel's eye. It is as a contrast to this that the scenes with Arthur and Constance are seen as standing out: "Mitten unter so vielen Verkleidungen der wirklichen Gesinnungen und nicht gefühlten Äußerungen macht es einen desto tieferen Eindruck, wenn uns der Dichter die menschliche Natur ohne Hülle zeigt und tiefe Blicke in das Innre der Gemüter werfen läßt" (Schlegel, *Vorlesung* II 188).[5] And even though John is scarcely a paragon among monarchs, his last moments are presented as metaphysically uplifting: "die letzten Augenblicke Johanns, eines ungerechten und schwachen Fürsten, […] sind so geschildert, daß sie den Unwillen gegen ihn auslöschen und mit ernsthaften Betrachtungen über die willkürlichen

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[3] Black (420) translates: "the intrinsic dignity of their hereditary vocation, but […] also […] the difficulties of their situation, the dangers of usurpation, the inevitable fall of tyranny, which buries itself under its attempts to obtain a firmer foundation; lastly the ruinous consequences of the weaknesses, errors and crimes of kings, for whole nations, and many subsequent generations."

[4] Black (422) translates: "In *King John* all the political and national motives which play so great a part in the following pieces are already indicated: wars and treaties with France; a usurpation, and the tyrannical actions which it draws after it; the influence of the clergy, the fractions of the nobles."

[5] Black (423) translates: "When, amidst so many disguises of real sentiments and so much insincerity of expression, the poet shows us human nature without a veil, and allows us to take deep views of the inmost recesses of the mind, the impression produced is only the more deep and powerful."

Vergehungen und das unvermeidliche Los der Sterblichen erfüllen" (Schlegel, *Vorlesung* II 188).[6]

With these words, which closely echo Paulin's summary of Goethe's response to the play, Schlegel ends his remarks about *King John*. There is a brief postlude, though, when, in an appendix devoted to the doubtful works, Schlegel takes an inclusive view of the Shakespeare canon, opining that works should only be excluded from it on the basis of sound circumstantial evidence. In the light of this, he regards *The Troublesome Reign* as an early work of Shakespeare's, which he then revisited in his maturity. And with that we get an insight into the philological aspect of Shakespeare criticism which is otherwise not massively present in the lectures.

It is hard to overestimate the influence exerted by Schlegel and his lectures. The speed with which they were translated into English gives some indication of this. And Roger Paulin, in his biography of Schlegel, quotes Böcking to the effect that they were read from "Cadiz to Edinburgh, Stockholm and St Petersburg" (Paulin, *Schlegel* 3). For Heine (19) it would be unjust not to recognize the importance of these lectures. Anna Jameson (I, 68) uses the English translation to launch a feminist diatribe against those who would belittle Shakespeare's heroines with their faint praise. And in a review of a production of the play under Immermann's direction in Düsseldorf on 16 April 1835, Grabbe not only makes explicit reference to this lecture, but takes over Schlegel's view of *King John* as the prologue to the cycle of the histories (Grabbe, "*König Johann*" 542). Moreover his account of Arthur as the "purest […] pearl of the whole" clearly echoes Schlegel's view of the character.

Elsewhere, though, Grabbe's remarks seems to reflect the account of the play by another critic of the time—by that same Franz Horn whose views have also been seen to influence Henry Reed and Gary Watt. Grabbe does not mention Horn; but everything he says about the play—about the number of times John has himself crowned, about the Bastard as a kind of chorus, about the death of the King, even about the relationship between long and short words, was already there in Horn. Heine too relies relatively heavily on his predecessor—and partly for that reason admits in the introduction that he cannot be passed over in silence, and that some of his observations are just (Heine 21-2). Even in the absence of a published translation, then, it can be concluded that Horn was widely read and influential.

Horn too is writing after, and in full knowledge of Schlegel. (He references the lectures in his introduction (Horn, I 33), and later (Horn, 2 198) picks up Schlegel's phrase about the "innere Würde" of princes). His work is

[6] Black (423-424) translates: "even the last moments of John—an unjust and feeble prince [...] are yet so portrayed as to extinguish our displeasure with him and fill us with serious considerations on the arbitrary deeds and the inevitable fate of mortals."

a great deal more expansive than that of his predecessor, running to some 1,500 pages ostensibly on the bard alone. Like Schlegel, Horn focuses his remarks on individual plays, and looks at the history plays chronologically, starting with *King John* and finishing with *Henry VIII*. He does not, however, leave them until last, but starts the sequence in his second part and finishes it in his third—by which time there are still thirteen plays to go. He takes over Schlegel's view of the relationship between *King John* and the *Troublesome Reign*. Like Schlegel, he works comparatively, including equivalent discussions of European theatre. And he follows Schlegel too in making a distinction between the neo-classical and the Romantic. Indeed, it is commensurate with his post-Romantic sensibility that he should lay considerable stress on Shakespeare's genius; that he should refer to Richard the Lionheart as a romantic hero (Horn, 2 191-2); that he should conjure the image of ordinary English sailors enjoying *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*; and that he should ask himself and us what it was in the material of the play that should attract Shakespeare's heart (Horn, 2 193).

The avowed aim of his study, though, is rather different. He devotes the first thirty-five pages to the subject of Shakespeare in Germany, offering an interesting early account of that reception from Johann Elias Schlegel to the translations by the Vosses. In answer to his own rhetorical question about the purpose of his book he indicates that his primary intention had been gently and joyfully to indicate "wie weit wir sind" (Horn, I 40)—whereby the "we" is the Germans and the question of how far they have come refers to Shakespeare studies. There is some ambivalence here about the nature of the metaphor. On the one hand it can refer simply to the idea of a field of knowledge that has to be worked over; but on the other there is more than a hint of the notion of gaining ground in an act of acquisition. Accordingly, a little later, Horn (I 44) writes: "wir wollen streben, daß Shakespeare ganz der unsrige werde"—but in case this striving to ensure that Shakespeare belongs entirely to the Germans should sound too jingoistic, Horn is keen to open the race to all nations, who should all do likewise. The nature of the competition becomes abundantly clear when Horn justifies including an encomium of Goethe's own history play *Götz von Berlichingen* as follows: "denn wenn an uns Deutsche die Frage ergeht: 'was habt ihr durch Shakspeare und mit ihm erreicht?' so zeigen wir mit fröhlichem Stolz zuerst auf diesen Götz und sehen dann wohl mit einigem Muthe umher, hinzusetzend: 'Was habt ihr lieben anderen Europäer zu bieten gegen dieses?'" (Horn, I 19).[7] From this it also becomes easy to see why the second half of Horn's introduction is devoted to the non-German reception of Shakespeare,

[7] If the question is asked of us Germans: "What have you achieved through and with Shakespeare?", we will first of all point with glad pride to this Götz, and then, looking round not without courage, will add: "What have you other dear Europeans to offer in comparison?" (My translation)

"Shakspeare im Auslande" (Horn, I 35). What is at stake is the elaboration of a national literature, to be achieved through critical engagement with, and creative responses to, the British national poet.

For this to be possible it is necessary both to establish Shakespeare's credentials *as* a national poet—something Horn does by reminding us of the unschooled love of the English people ("Volk" Horn, I 39) for their bard—and to prize him away from the sphere of narrow nationalism, making him a poet not for a single country, but for the entire earth—or at least that part of it which is receptive to the art of poetry. The equivocation this necessitates is one that is typical for—and indeed may be constitutive of—the entire Brexit discourse. It wishes to be national without being nationalistic; it equivocates fatefully between the global and the national, between the rights of others and its own rights; it muddles the political and the ideological; and it uses the word "we" in a variety of ways that obscure the extent to which it is an instrument of parochial exclusion.

In his account of the play itself, Horn adopts a broad deductive approach whereby the points he wishes to make about *King John* are embedded in a very wide-ranging general discussion. Thus in seeking to reinforce Schlegel's point about the relationship between our play and *The Troublesome Reign*, Horn begins with a section about imperfect works produced by geniuses, and expatiates upon *Titus Andronicus*, Goethe's *Werther*, *The Yorkshire Tragedy, The London Prodigal*, and *King Leir* before putting forward the argument that in *King John* Shakespeare was able to correct the defects of his own amazing but imperfect juvenilium. He then embarks on a quasi-comprehensive account of history and historiography, which culminates in an encomium of Shakespeare as someone who was able not only analytically to untangle the knotted skein of history, but also to bring it convincingly to life. In the process he uses the history plays to scotch any suggestion that Shakespeare might have been wild or untamed. But he also presents his own very particular view of the way history works and uses this to reinforce his project of adumbrating a national literature.

Horn's take on the subject is a notably protestant one. He has grudging praise for the extent to which Pandulph has been able to divest himself of his human feelings in the service of the papal idea, but he is in no doubt about how misguided that idea is. His view of the unusually prominent role played in post-classical history by religion, love and women—or to be more precise, by fanaticism, clerical ambition, wantonness and feminine intrigue—is probably rather truer of German drama—notably Goethe's *Götz*, Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* and Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*—than it is either of history itself or Shakespeare's take on it. Indeed, the link to Schiller is almost audible when Horn (2, 187) actually complements "Liebe" with "weibliche Cabale". In thinking about the relationship between the colossal capital letters of history and the tiny lower case of the individual, Horn is not only addressing one of the

central problems of history plays more generally, but doing so in a way that touches specifically on the fraught issue of the relationship between the personal and the political. And the way he distributes brickbats and awkward plaudits seems specifically designed to set up Shakespeare's history plays (of which *King John*, of course is the first) as a model for a specifically national historiography.

Thus Horn gives half-grudging credit to those who seek to make sources accessible and those who chronicle the events of their times. But he is so dismissive of those who seek to hang history on the cross of their fixed ideas that he loses control of his metaphors. Indeed, he expresses a marked preference for the views of simple English sailors over the quibbling purists of literary criticism or the monomaniacal theoreticians of history. Crucially, and tellingly, he insists on the indispensable necessity of the study of history for all those who do not wish to be "Unfreie", "unfree men" (Horn, 2 189). He notices (2 192) that it is "das freie England" that John submits to the Pope, and insists that the whole point of the play—the "Idee des Ganzen" (Horn, 2 196) is that such subjugation can only ever be temporary: "edle Selbständigkeit eines tüchtigen Volks und rein gesetzliche Freiheit desselben kann nur angetastet, auch wohl für eine Zeit lang erschüttert, nicht aber zertrümmert werden."[8] It is in this context that he elevates England to the status of the one character in the play that survives unscathed. And it is in this context that he expresses unabashed envy of the English for having such an unexcelled teacher to draw out for them the lessons of their national history. Yet even here, even while quoting Faulconbridge's jingoistic last words, Horn equivocates. "Aber Shakspeare", he writes, "ist unendlich mehr als Faulconbridge, und die Leser und Zuschauer sollen es auch seyn;—sie sollen nicht stehen bleiben bei England zu Anfange des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts oder bei England überhaupt, sondern sich erheben zur reinen Ansicht eines Staats, eines Volks" (Horn, 2 197).[9] Especially given the existence of Watt's xenophobic and small-minded "Bastards", it is tempting to argue that the whole Brexit debate turns on the delicate question of what might be meant here by a "pure view" of a nation state. By the same token, in noting the discrepancy between word and deed, between ideal and reality, Horn touches on an aspect of politics that was particularly in evidence in his own time as it is in ours. And in his insistence that the nation, provided it remains united, will ultimately survive the vicissitudes of the political process, he is expressing a hope that applies

[8] Horn 2, 196. "The noble sovereignty of a diligent nation and the purely judicial freedom of the same can only be infringed, even, I daresay, temporarily undone, but never utterly destroyed." (My translation)

[9] "But Shakespeare is infinitely more than Faulconbridge, and the readers and spectators should be too; they should not get hung up on England at the start of the fourteenth century, or even England at all, but raise themselves up to the pure view of a state, a people." (My translation)

equally to a state that has yet to be formed as to one which will have to refashion itself after the crisis of Brexit.

Having thus elucidated what it was in the story of King John that appealed to Shakespeare's intellect, he turns his attention to matters of the heart. And he builds up to his discussion of Arthur and Constance by claiming, persuasively but not quite accurately,[10] that, Shakespeare never repeated himself, either in his characterization or in his depiction of what Horn (2 203) calls "die heiligsten Gemüths- und Lebensverhältnisse", the holiest relations of affection and circumstance. The remark is used as a stick with which to beat some very distinguished writers, both German and English, of whom there are so many that Horn needs cite only Byron and Scott (Horn, 2 203). In a similar way he deprecates the depiction of "die meisten Mütter in unseren Romanen und Dramen" (most mothers in our novels and dramas) (2 205) who have a besetting tendency to protest too much. And he reserves some of his richest rhetoric for the condemnation of the way young people are portrayed in German novels and plays. Shakespeare's Arthur, by contrast, miraculously manages to avoid being embarrassing—not least because the first words he is given to utter ring so true. Thus is it not only in the inferences that he draws from the messiness of politics that Shakespeare can teach German writers how to build a national literature—but also in the way he manages pathos.

In his volume in the *Critical Tradition* series, Joseph Candido includes only one German author, apart from Schlegel, from the period between 1815 and 1848—and that is a man called Hermann Ulrici. The date Candido gives is 1846—which is the date on which Ulrici's first book on Shakespeare—or the first version of his book on Shakespeare—was translated into English. That book was called *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art and His Relation to Calderon and Goethe* and was a version by A.J.W. Morrison of a book that had appeared in German in 1839. Shortly after the appearance of that translation, though, a new version appeared in German. From this Calderon has been excized, though Goethe is retained. A third edition appeared in 1868, and a fourth in 1874, all under the title *Shakespeare's dramatische Kunst. Geschichte und Charakteristik des Shakspeareschen Dramas.* A new English translation, from the third edition, by Dora L. Schmitz, appeared in 1876 and was reprinted in 1889 and 1909, all under the title *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art. History and Character of Shakespeare's Plays.*[11] From this plethora of publication details four important

[10] For me, one of the most intriguing things about the play is the way in which it anticipates famous moments from elsewhere in Shakespeare, such as the blinding of Gloucester, the murder of Macduff's children and the attempted murder of Fleance, or the notorious asides of Richard of Gloucester.

[11] It will be from this translation that I quote here, with the aim of looking beyond the "Vormärz"—though the original belongs firmly to that period.

facts can be deduced: that this work, even in its first version, belongs to the period after Victoria actually ascended the throne; that it outlives the "Vormärz" and lives on into the period of German unification; that it was influential both in Britain and in Germany; and that, having begun as a comparison between three literatures and hence a European project, it then becomes merely bi-lateral: an instrument of the co-operation and rivalry between the Britain and Germany that characterized the period before, and ultimately led to, the First World War.

As with Schlegel and Horn, Ulrici's is an ambitious and compendious work. It begins with an overview of the history of the English theatre up to Shakespeare's time. This is succeeded by a consideration of Shakespeare's life and his age, and of his style as compared with the art of his time. There follows, in the Schlegel manner, a discussion of the individual plays, divided, as is now customary, into tragedies, comedies, and histories, whereby the Roman plays are included under the latter category. After that comes a discussion of the apocryphal plays—including *The Troublesome Reign*, which Ulrici is inclined to regard as not by Shakespeare, though certain scenes seem to him to be in Shakespeare's manner. And that in turn is followed, as in Schlegel, by a consideration of the history of Shakespearean drama in England and Germany and a special account of the relationship between Shakespeare and the two authors who in the meanwhile have attained pre-eminent status in the German theatrical pantheon: Goethe and Schiller.

Ulrici follows Schlegel too, in seeing the English history plays as a cycle inaugurated by *King John*. The fact that he includes the Roman plays in a broader cycle, though, enables him to mark a decided shift of emphasis. Placing *Titus Andronicus* at the end of the first part of the cycle allows him to conclude: "So the cycle closes in a truly historical spirit by gently pointing to the new glory of European humanity, which was to be developed within the sphere of the Germanic family of nations" (Ulrici, *Shakspeare's dramatische Kunst* 184). His remarks on the English cycle are infused by the same spirit: "From the important reign of King John—to which England owes her Magna Charta, the fundamental law of her whole constitution—English history is carried down to the days of Henry III, in whose reign we have the regeneration of the nation and the beginning of a more definite development in the spirit of modern political life" (Ulrici, *Shakspeare's dramatische Kunst* 184). As in Horn, the nation is actually England, but not exclusively so: "Here too accordingly the whole cycle shows us the principal moments of the political life and progressive history of England, in which are reflected the fundamental features of the historical development of the European nations down to Shakespeare's own day" (Ulrici, *Shakspeare's dramatische Kunst* 184). In this scenario, *King John* represents the Middle Ages, and the medieval state is characterized by two conflicting principles, represented by the feudal system and the Catholic Church respectively: "It developed partly out of the deeply-rooted tendency of the

Germanic mind towards *unlimited personal* freedom, partly upon the basis of ethical ideas and of the general view of life entertained by *Christianity* as conceived by the spirit of the Age.” For Ulrici, this battle between the Church and State is the essence of John’s vacillation: “The Relation between Church and State is the pulse of the whole historical action; John’s dilemmas, his degradation and his death are its work” (Ulrici, *Shakspeare’s dramatische Kunst* 216). And the result is a victory for the former, a defeat of the typically nefarious combination of the French and the Pope: “The result of the disturbances and struggles is the freedom of the English people; it is established inwardly by the overthrow of John’s despotic government, outwardly by the victory over France and over the pretensions of the Church. […] The rivalry of the Church against the State, and its endeavour to obtain external power and dominion proves its own ruin” (Ulrici, *Shakspeare’s dramatische Kunst* 218). Yet Ulrici does not leave it there, but provides a kind of coda couched in manifestly Hegelian vocabulary: “Both [Church and State] are rather forms of the moral ethico-religious spirit, and […] therefore neither Church nor State can accomplish anything *without*, much less *against* the moral force, let the latter appear externally ever so powerless” (Ulrici, *Shakspeare’s dramatische Kunst* 218). Just how far this moral spirit is a foul emanation of heteropatriarchy then becomes clear when Ulrici, in a clearly Victorian riposte to Anna Jameson, detects its workings in the fate of Constance and Arthur too: “Their story may be said to form a pendant to the more fundamental moral of the play: that nothing is more disavowed by history than passionateness and want of self-control, the hereditary failings of woman’s nature. Women ought not to interfere with history, as history demands action, for which they are essentially unfit” (Ulrici, *Shakspeare’s dramatische Kunst* 219).

IV

The moral of the play, of course, is nothing of the kind; and one can only imagine what it must have been like for L. Dora Schmitz to have to render this farrago of offensive nonsense into English. Nor I think is it an accident that the person who wrote this also envisaged a bright future for a European humanity developed within the Germanic family of nations. Ulrici, then, is, in Watt’s terms, irredeemably a bastard—a bastard, moreover, who demonstrated with chilling clarity where such bastardy comes from and where it leads. Yet some of his arguments are simply an extension of those put forward by Horn. On the other hand, reading Horn, even with the sharpened sensibilities of hindsight, it is hard not to agree that many of his perceptive observations are indeed worthy of imitation—and to agree with the broad thrust of his remarks not only about Shakespeare as a national poet—but also about the shortcomings of his

compatriots. This striving for betterment in the company and following the example of others has something of a saving grace about it. Schlegel, though, the foolishly inclusive Schlegel, who opened the door of the Shakespeare canon to anyone with a halfway valid reason for entry, at least deserves our respect for seeing Shakespeare in a properly European perspective. For the loss of that perspective is precisely one of the corollaries of Ulrici's descent into Bastardy. At the same time, the issues addressed by all three authors—the weaknesses, mistakes and crimes of the powerful, and their effect both on the nation directly afflicted with them, and on others; the issue of national sovereignty and its relationship to the fellowship of nations; the struggle against arguably alien ways of thinking; the dividing line between necessary compromise and rank betrayal; the dilemma of choice and the poisoned chalice of democratic freedom; the teaching and the teachings of history and their relation to politics and ideology; even sexism, sentimentality and the cult of the child: all these issues are as pertinent in the age of Trump and Brexit as they were when first addressed in regard to *King John* in the "Vormärz'".

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Transversal Connections: The Cervantes Quatercentenary in Spain and its Comparison with "Shakespeare Lives"[1]

Abstract: Taking as its cue the 2016 quatercentenaries of the deaths of both Shakespeare and Cervantes, the essay offers some insights into the "transversal connections" between both events as celebrated in Spain and the UK. The questions it raises and attempts to resolve are fourfold: (1) What are the reasons and also the benefits of yoking together two such apparently disparate authors, whose strongest link is, arguably, the fact they both passed away in 1616? (2) What work is being done to restore these writers to life, especially in schools where, for a variety of reasons, literature has lost its core-curricular status, and in general society where the classics seem to have less and less import? (3) What might Shakespeare or Cervantes be said to stand for in their respective cultures, both in terms of the genres they wrote in (it is often forgotten, for instance, that Cervantes was also a poet and a dramatist) and the extra-literary values they are said to transmit? (4) What is the role of the State in the safeguarding and promotion of the nation's cultural heritage?

Keywords: Quatercentaries, Shakespeare, Cervantes, criticism, education, values, cultural industry.

> Transversal connections are still waiting to be explored between the burgeoning Shakespeare cult of commemoration and the cult of European writers including Dante, Racine, Voltaire, Molière, Calderón, Cervantes, Goethe, and Schiller, who were all appropriated by the secular cult of hero-as-poet worship in the nineteenth century, so well envisioned by Thomas Carlyle. (Hoenselaars and Calvo 8)

The quatercentenaries of the deaths of both Shakespeare and Cervantes in 2016 provide plenty of evidence of such Carlylesque outpourings. The near-coincidence of their deaths lent symbolic weight to their now widely

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[1] I am indebted to the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness and project FFI-53587-P "The reception of Shakespeare's Work in Spanish and European Culture" for funding the research for this article.

acknowledged status as twin peaks of a putative Western "canon" of great literature and, Pace Bloom et al., even of Western civilization as a whole. But it is important to remember that that status did not grow of its own accord, that it is something that has had to be worked on, and even fought for, over the last four centuries. Equally true is the fact that, once established, the authors' canonicity has had to be continually reaffirmed—if necessary, by political decree. The essay offers some insights into this process by considering the impact of Cervantes's death in Spain in 2016 and by comparing it to the British response to Shakespeare's. The questions it raises and attempts to resolve are fourfold: (1) What are the reasons and also the benefits of yoking together two such apparently disparate authors, whose strongest link is, arguably, the fact they both passed away in 1616? (2) What work is being done to restore these writers to life, especially in schools where, for a variety of reasons, literature has lost its core-curricular status, and in general society where the classics seem to have less and less import? (3) What might Shakespeare or Cervantes be said to stand for in their respective cultures, both in terms of the genres they wrote in (it is often forgotten, for instance, that Cervantes was also a poet and a dramatist) and the extra-literary values they are said to transmit? (4) What is the role of the State in the maintenance and perpetuation of the nation's cultural heritage? (Here in Spain the assumption continues to be that that heritage is dependent on direct government intervention, something that potential private sponsors have used as an excuse not to commit to cultural projects such as the commemoration of an author's death.)

A Holy Alliance

> Is it not strange that on this common date,
> Two titans of their age, aye of all Time,
> Together should renounce this mortal state,
> And rise like gods, unsullied and sublime? (Service 99)

Robert William Service's poetic tribute to Shakespeare and Cervantes is symptomatic of the way their joint deaths have been commemorated in Western culture.[2] The "strange" coincidence of the common date *must* mean something; but what? What bonds them as the "transcendant team" the poet imagines them to be in heaven, save for the wishful fantasy that there may after all be some reason they should pass away in the same year, if not quite on the same day?

[2] See Gregor ("Collaborative Encounters") for an attempt to unpick this poem and two recent Spanish fictionalizations: José Carlos Somoza's play *Miguel Will* (1999) and Inés París's film *Miguel y William* (2007).

In Spain the pairing of Cervantes and Shakespeare in the kind of holy alliance Service imagines dates back to at least the decade of the 1830s, as traditional comparisons with the prolific playwrights Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca gave way to equally hazy valuations of the relative greatnesses of the man from Stratford and the "manco de Lepanto" (Pujante, "Shakespeare or/and…"). It was in this more mystic vein, for example, that the poet and playwright José Somoza (691) penned a dialogue between the pair where Cervantes acknowledges how both had overcome the adversities of humble background and physical impairment (sic) to attain "immortality on the wings of our genius". And though in an earlier essay Somoza had more promisingly alluded to the comic potentiality in both author's work to set the behaviour of "men of honour" against the carnivalesque antics of clowns (Pujante and Campillo 87), he falls short of outlining a common aesthetic. Instead, he confines himself to the observation that their different life-styles (Cervantes the soldierly man of action, Shakespeare the "static" stay-at-home actor) somehow actuated different artistic motivations and so choice of genre: narrative for Cervantes and drama for Shakespeare.

It is chiefly at this spiritual, artistically non-specific level that Cervantes and Shakespeare were twinned in the tercentenary celebrations in Britain and indeed much of the British empire (Kahn). In Spain, whose strict policy of neutrality in the Great War meant that any references to Cervantes' literary rival were carefully scrutinized and even muted (Calvo), Shakespeare was acknowledged chiefly as the author of light-hearted conservative comedies like *The Taming of the Shrew* (Gregor, *Shakespeare* 2010). True, at a purely symbolic level he was the man who had invented "Hamletism", the disease of paralysis and inaction which, as Salvador de Madariaga would powerfully argue, explains Spain's "secret desire for action and … secret incapacity to do anything" (Pujante and Campillo 422). Aesthetically, however, he was not considered in the same league as Cervantes. After the war, once Spain had clarified its position vis-à-vis the former combatants, the comparisons between Shakespeare and Cervantes stepped up apace. But they continued to be blighted by a lack of critical rigour and failure to shed any light on the complex relations between them in terms of sources, resources and possible artistic intent. In the first editions of his complete works of Shakespeare, translator Luis Astrana Marin pointed to some common vectors between Shakespearean and Golden Age drama—only to abandon the idea of a possible link with Cervantes from the fourth edition. In 1944 Nicolás González Ruiz, who adapted a number of Shakespeare's works for the Spanish stage in the early years of the Franco dictatorship, discovered a common pattern in the lives of both authors: a humble upbringing and non-university education compensated for by their natural geniuses, the main difference between them being what González Ruiz sees as

Shakespeare's "intuitiveness" versus Cervantes's greater "experience". In 1964, in an essay marking the tricentenary of Shakespeare's birth, Carlos Pujols adduces the Sonnets as evidence of the discrepancy between the kind of writer the poet wished to be and the kind of writer he actually was—a discrepancy mirrored in Cervantes' oscillations between more conventional work like *Persiles* and the groundbreaking *Don Quixote*. With the rise of English Studies in Spain in the latter part of the century, including the foundation of specialized associations and increased investment in relevant research (Monterrey), critics have revisited the relationship between the two writers. However, barring discussion of particular cases, such as the existence and Shakespeare's presumed authorship of *Cardenio*, the results of these enquiries have been far from conclusive. This was brought home at the twenty-seventh Conference of the Spanish and Portuguese Society for the English Renaissance held in 2016 in the Spanish city of Valladolid, an event which assembled some twenty-five scholars from both camps. Disappointingly, less than a quarter of the papers addressed possible comparisons (mainly shared sources) between them, the parallel sessions approach emphasizing the chasm between Hispanists and Anglicists in the comparative approach to both authors. As José Manuel González (11) laments in his 2006 volume *Cervantes and Shakespeare*, there remain "few publications and studies to have looked in any detail or depth at the comparative and contrastive features of their respective work or which defend and confirm the importance and impact of their literary legacy". By the time of the quatercentenary, the number had risen very little.

Cervantes and Shakespeare "Live"

But on to the quatercentenary itself. There is, as Nico Frijda has argued (111), a powerful socio-psychological compulsion to commemoration whose object is the obliteration of the distance, both spatial and temporal, separating us from the cherished "places" of memory. Such purely symbolic acts as the laying of wreaths, the penning of articles, production of TV shows, delivery of speeches, wearing of poppies, etc., serve to mitigate the loss of the object, keeping it alive in the individual and collective memory. However briefly, such acts "dissolve the discontinuities between now and the past, between one individual and others, between those who are there and who are not there any more" (Frijda 111). The kind of *emotional* investment Frijda addresses in his book may not run quite as deep in the case of the honouring of dead authors. But the compulsion to bring the commemorated object back to life still to a certain extent underpins the reverence. The description of Shakespeare in a British parliamentary debate marking the occasion of the quatercentenary as "our greatest living bard"

is possibly less ingenuous than it sounds:[3] made by the incumbent MP for Stratford-upon-Avon, the Kurdish-born Nadhim Zahawi, it expresses both a sense of Shakespeare's abiding influence on the present and, as hinted in the pronoun, his ability to speak for a communality of which the fervent pro-Brexit migrant is clearly proud to feel a part.

As if to assert the *physical* presence of both Shakespeare and Cervantes in their respective commemorations, the quatercentenaries were preceded by a hunt for the bones of both authors. Visits to the tombs of famous writers and the attendant desire to somehow "possess" the dead have, as Nicola Watson (29) has shown, been a feature of literary tourism from the nineteenth century. Ground-penetrating radar scans in the first case and DNA sampling in the second were simply the technological means to what essentially was the same necrophiliac end. Though frustrating in their findings—Shakespeare seems to be missing his skull, while Cervantes, if he exists at all, is scattered amongst a multitude of remains discovered in a common ossuary at a Madrid convent—both searches momentarily kept alive the illusion of a material object of celebration.[4] Like the vapourized victims of 9/11 or the First World War, such objects are not of course essential to the proper performance of the rituals of commemoration. In the case of writers whose work purportedly "outshines" both marble and the gilded monuments, neither the body (or absence thereof) nor the tomb in which it is (or is not) enshrined should be allowed to stand in the way of the worshipper's commemorative fervour. The discovery of a headless Shakespeare and a fragmentary and scattered Cervantes did not dampen the celebrations that followed, but it did bring to the fore the problematic nature of what have been known as the traditional "sites of memory", of which graves are an obvious instance. Amongst other things, the absence of the Shakespearean cranium and the dissemination of Cervantes seemed to bear out Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney's point (2) that "canonical 'memory sites' themselves have a history and, although they represent in many ways the terminus ad quem of repeated acts of remembrance, they only continue to operate as such as long as people continue to re-invest in them and use them as a point of reference". Without them, their occupants and what they allegedly stand for might simply cease to exist.

[3] For an account of Zahawi's intervention and *Hansard*'s tactful correction of it to "our greatest bard", see "Parliamentary Debates" (435).

[4] The results of the Stratford investigation were presented in the Channel 4 documentary "Secret History: Shakespeare's Tomb" aired in Britain on 26 March 2016. A report of the Spanish search can be found on National Geographic's Spanish website under the title "Aquí yacen los huesos de Cervantes, o eso parece" ("Here lie the bones of Cervantes, or so it seems") ("Aquí yacen").

As well as possibly explaining the concern in the vicar of Holy Trinity's denial of the evidence on the Stratford tomb,[5] the exposure of the historicity of Cervantes's remains added an urgency to the debates in Spain in the months leading up to the Cervantes event. In these, comparisons inevitably rose between the organization of the Cervantes fourth centenary and of "Shakespeare Lives". Thus, in a TV debate screened in April 2016 by the private channel Intereconomía, the presenter of the late-night programme "El gato al agua" (literally "cat in the water", an expression suggesting "winning the day" or "pulling it off") asked his guests whether they thought Spain was doing as much to honour the four hundredth anniversary of the death of Miguel de Cervantes as Britain was to commemorate Shakespeare. Given the nationalist, ultra-conservative stance of the channel as a whole, the question was not an innocent one: the "debate" (which admittedly only lasted three minutes) was preceded by a prefatory video and narration where the words "controversy", "secrecy" and "fiasco" featured prominently. One regular panelist on the show stormed that the whole issue was a "question of state", that Spain (by which he meant the "soft" right ruling People's Party of Mariano Rajoy) was missing a golden opportunity to promote itself as both tourist destination (as if it really needed to) and home to the third most spoken language in the world. When it was politely pointed out to him that the government was already doing something, mainly by entrusting the celebrations to the Instituto Cervantes, an adjunct of the Ministry of Education, the irate panelist waved a dismissive hand as if to brush the whole quatercentenary aside.

The superficiality and brevity of the debate was perhaps as symptomatic of the medium in which it was held as it was of the seriousness of the topic being discussed. For a slightly more in-depth treatment non-specialists could also turn to national newspapers, in both their virtual and printed formats. But the conclusion there—that the government was not taking the Cervantes commemoration seriously enough, especially not when compared to the Shakespeare celebrations in Britain and the rest of the world—was largely similar. Nor did this necessarily depend on the ideological standpoint of the organ involved. In *Vozpópuli*, an online paper with a focus similar to that of Intereconomía, cultural editor Karina Sainz added statistical weight to the argument that Cervantes was getting a rough deal when it came to the attention being paid to two such national icons. "Over 140 countries throughout the world," she noted, "will be taking part in the commemoration of the fourth centenary of the death of Shakespeare" (Sainz Borgo), whereas for Cervantes, of 130 activities announced in October 2015 by the newly created National Committee for the Commemoration of the Fourth Centenary of the Death of

[5] His insistence that the search had failed to provide "sufficient evidence" to conclude the skull had been taken was extensively reported in both the British and the US press.

Miguel de Cervantes (see below), only "around fifty" had been officially confirmed. As an example of what Cervantes biographer Andrés Trapiello saw as the authorities' disinterest and apathy regarding such a stellar event, Sainz cites the gaffe on the memorial plaque placed at the site of Cervantes's recently discovered bones: a quotation from the novella *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* (*The Works of Persiles and Sigismunda*), wrongly transcribed as "Los trabajos de Persiles y *Segismunda*". After an appreciative nod in the direction of the BBC and British Council's "Shakespeare Lives" programme, which included a series of events pitched specifically towards Spanish audiences, the author of the article echoes the concerns voiced by, among others, Darío Villanueva, head of the Real Academia de la Lengua, about Spain's rather lackadaisical approach to its own commemoration. To the National Committee's own "lack of foresight" should, Sainz hints, be added the apathy of private corporations which had so far failed to deliver.

The concerns of *Vozpópuli* were echoed at the other end of the ideological spectrum by the high-distribution centre-left daily *El País*. In an article published on the same day (28 January 2016), provocatively entitled "Let the English Keep Cervantes; They'll Treat Him Better" (Ruiz Mantilla), a number of high-profile writers and academics were invited to express their opinions on the forthcoming events. With a resumé of the "Shakespeare Lives" programme pointedly set on the right-hand side of the page, the opinions of the invited authors, Javier Marías, Arturo Pérez Reverte, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, Soledad Puértolas (all members of the official language academy, the Real Academia Española), Javier Cercas and Andrés Trapiello, feature on the left. Predictably, there is a unanimous condemnation of the authorities' lack of foresight but also of the lack of respect and even a certain "hostility" towards the classics which, for Marías, is "comparable to that which existed towards the world of culture in general under [the late dictator, Francisco] Franco". An example of what Cercas calls "the scorn for Cervantes felt by the elite of his own time", the hold-up in the commemoration proceedings is, for Trapiello, also symptomatic of the "indecency of our governors … in a country which seems bent more on self-destruction than on self-construction". Without actually explaining the connection between this allusion to Catalan nationalism and the potential break-up of Spain and the fact that in a 2015 survey "only two in every ten Spaniards acknowledged that they'd ever read *Don Quixote*",[6] Trapiello suggests that instead of digging up Cervantes's bones, "we should pay more

[6] The survey he refers to, conducted by the Spanish Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS), showed that only two in ten Spaniards had read the *whole* novel, while forty percent had not read any of it. Of those who had read all or some of it, mainly at school, half acknowledged that they did not know the protagonist's real name was Alonso Quijano.

attention to his oeuvre, which is what's really alive"—just like Shakespeare's which, he claims, thanks to updated versions, has been miraculously restored to "life" in UK schools and theatres.[7]

The National Poets

As well as the individual or communal need for proximity to the dead and the "coherence" (Frijda) that it seems to provide, the motives for such ceremonies can also be less "pure". In a volume on the symbolic aftermath of 9/11, David Simpson has argued that in the cultures of commemoration even such emotionally-charged events as the attack on the World Trade Centre

> can become particularly sensitive occasions for assessing the balance of change and continuity within the culture at large. They often declare their adherence to time-honoured and even universally human rituals and needs, but nothing is more amenable to political and commercial manipulation than funerals, monuments, epitaphs, and obituaries. (1)

Across the post-catastrophe case studies examined in the volume lies the shadow of President George W. Bush's address to the nation in which what he interpreted as an attack on "our way of life, our very freedom" was the prelude to his "war on terror" speech in Congress where he thanked the House for the delivery of $40 billion to "rebuild our communities and meet the needs of our military". While the military was instantly gratified, thus enabling the immediate start of the disastrous campaign in Afghanistan, the rebuilding work took much longer and proved far more expensive—as well as more polemical—than initially planned (Weikart 125). Even use of the Ground Zero memorial and museum for the annual commemoration of the attack failed to escape manipulation, with current President Trump typically seizing the moment to criticize his predecessor's failure to prevent the attack or, during the last presidential campaign, to show footage of his rival, Hilary Clinton, stumbling while leaving the service as "proof" of her unsuitability for office. While Shakespeare and Cervantes can hardly be accused of serving such opportunist

[7] Trapiello's own contribution to making Cervantes more accessible was a modern-language edition of Don Quixote (2015) which is now freely available online for use in schools and colleges (http://www.iesmontevives.es/sites/default/files/archivos_adjuntos/Quijote%20de%20Trapiello.pdf). Prefaced by no less an authority than Mario Vargas Llosa, this simplified version, together with Pérez-Reverte's earlier abridged and "digression-free" rewriting (2014), has perhaps predictably rankled certain sectors of Spanish academia who have gone so far as to dub it an "embarrassment" and a "crime against literature" (Arranz).

ends, the "industry" which has grown around the former especially, or his invocation in the least ennobling of conflicts, raise serious questions about the neutrality of idolatry.

But what 9/11 also throws into relief is a less explicit aspect of commemoration that inevitably fed into the quatercentenary: the existence of *crisis*. "We are living in a world witnessing multiple and intersecting crises," warns a recent study of memory and recovery (Larkan & Murphy 1). The UK referendum on leaving Europe, the rise of right-wing extremism across Europe and the US, the ongoing refugee crisis, years of hardship under austerity and public debates about man-made climate change are all cited as the "crisis-scapes" which have brought notions of memory, forgetting, recovery and crisis to the forefront of social scientific analysis. The claim of national purity is arguably all the more urgent and necessary at a time when both Britishness and Spanishness are (so to speak) up for grabs, requiring substantial redefinition before, on the one hand, withdrawal from the European Union and, on the other, the possible segregation of one of the nation's most important and prosperous regions. Neither Brexit nor the crisis in Catalonia were adduced as explicit motivations for the impending ceremonies, but the strong state presence in both initiatives and the heavy regional participation in the second, which included a representative of the Catalan government, point to clear links between the figure of the person or event commemorated and a loosely defined concept of national identity. Though obviously not determining the *celebration* of the Shakespeare and Cervantes centenaries, Brexit and the situation in Catalonia have both impinged on the manner in which both events have been *articulated*. Commemoration, that is, could also have a kind of mythopoeic function, keeping alive the illusion of a togetherness and sustaining even larger narratives that, as Graham Holderness (xiii) put it in a different context, speak of "unity, integration and harmony in the cultural superstructures of a divided and fractured society".

If Shakespeare's status as the "national" British poet was, as Michael Dobson and others have influentially argued, established at least as early as the Restoration, it is striking to see how similar assertions of Shakespeare's nationality and nationhood resurface at the very point the concept of Britishness is at stake. Coming on the back of the September 2014 referendum on Scottish independence, which was narrowly averted, and just a few months before arguably the most important vote in recent British history, on whether the UK should leave the European Union, the quatercentenary celebrations were pitched not just as a tribute to Shakespeare but, as the then Foreign and Commonwealth Office minister Hugo Swire put it, "the most significant soft power opportunity for the UK in recent times" (*Daily Hansard*). Perhaps fittingly, it was the man responsible for calling both referenda, Prime Minister David Cameron, who led

the celebrations with a confirmation of Shakespeare's centrality to British identity as well as of his impact on the international community. Shakespeare's Britishness is at the heart of Cameron's carefully worded inauguration of "Shakespeare Lives". Shakespeare, he claimed, "lives today in *our* language, *our* culture and society", an appeal to "us-ness" which, through the writer's "enduring influence on education" and the outreach work of British institutions like the RSC and Shakespeare's Globe, would spread its tentacles across the world, as far as China and Zimbabwe, or, as in the Globe world tour, "from Iraq to Denmark". The sheer range of the countries mentioned—a communist mega-state, a socialist former British colony where Shakespeare has escaped censorship even in his most anti-tyrannical mode, a member of the evil axis once demonized by Bush and a member of the EU which, like Britain, has steadfastly retained its own currency—is, it was assumed, incontrovertible proof of Shakespeare's ability to overcome local differences and, by inference, of Britain's continued influence over the world at large.

By comparison, the Spanish celebrations were more domestically-oriented, insisting on those aspects of Cervantes which bolstered the idea of a "national" identity, composed of, but at the same time overarching, the different regionalisms into which the "nation" is actually divided. Again the context here is all-important: the celebrations were being planned just months after a consultation of the Catalan people had revealed that some eighty percent were in favour of independence from Spain. The unifying impulse for the quatercentenary was evident in the very composition of the committee charged with overseeing the commemorative acts which constituted the quatercentenary. Indeed, as the "royal decree" passed in parliament on 17 April 2015 makes clear (Real Decreto), the Spanish celebrations were officially orchestrated by a committee comprising a range of public organisms, including representatives from six of the Autonomous Communities with which the name of Cervantes is generally associated. As Honorary Presidents stood the King and Queen of Spain, while the rest of the committee, from the Vice-president of the People's Party government to a representative from the State Society for Cultural Action, was composed exclusively of members of public or semi-public institutions. Chief amongst them were the respective heads of the Instituto Cervantes and the Real Academia de la Lengua, who together performed a role similar to that of the British Council, channelling different cultural initiatives to reach audiences both at home and in a number of extra-territorial locations, chiefly Spanish-speaking South America.

The official post-commemorative accounts of the Cervantes fourth centenary suggest a very different narrative from that propagated on television and in the press, which took place before Rajoy's People's Party secured a mandate for its second, albeit minority, government on 27 June 2016. The

discrepancy is not just in terms of the number of activities (exhibitions, performances, publications and projects) produced but in terms of the *significance* of the Cervantine legacy. To a question raised in the Spanish parliament on 8 March 2017 by a representative of the Quixote-region of Castilla-La Mancha, the Minister of Education, Culture and Sport, Íñigo Méndez de Vigo, gave the statistical lie to the doom-laden predictions made in the build-up to the event. So, together with the 301 officially approved "cultural activities", 123 publications and studies and 491 projects, there had, he claims, been literally "millions" of events which simply did not feature on the Ministry's specially created website. As to the delegate's familiar appeal to Cervantes' universality, the minister reminded his questioner of the participation of schools and "civil society", together with the transmission ("irradiación") of the writer's life and work to Latin America, before mentioning that the annual Premio Cervantes, Spain's most prestigious national literary award, would be given to "don" Eduardo Mendoza—a Catalan novelist who writes mainly in Spanish (*Diario de Sesiones* 29)!

Méndez de Vigo's triumphal intervention in parliament, coming just weeks before the Catalan leader Carles Puigedemont was to call for a second, and this time "binding", referendum in the region, was legitimized by a speech, made a few days earlier, by the King of Spain, Felipe VI ("Palabras de Su Majestad"). Like Cameron's introduction to the "Shakespeare's Lives" project, Felipe's address to the authorities that had made the Cervantes quatercentenary possible is a masterful piece of mythopoesis. The Shakespeare "lives" idea, which had caused so much mirth in the British House of Commons when it was first mooted, was adopted with characteristic solemnity by Felipe in his end-of-event address to the organizers of the Cervantes event. Underpinning the royal concept of a Cervantine afterlife was the perdurance of his work, his influence and also the "values" associated with them: the "ideal of justice, of tolerance, of freedom, of beauty, of solidarity, of love or of friendship" that are the hallmark of "Cervantine society" and, through Cervantes, the bases of a nation's "collective identity". It is surely no coincidence that, with the Catalan crisis already looming, the values that the monarch put most emphasis on should be precisely those of "freedom and dialogue". Meanwhile the "plural and enriching identity" of the territory explored by Don Quixote and Sancho, explicitly identified as the lands of Castile, La Mancha, Andalusia, Aragon and last but not least Catalonia, should be cited as the object of an author who "marked a moral and vital path for us to follow, which does not end in a sterile fight against windmills but in the belief of the possibility of a shared history of fruitful coexistence, ceaselessly projected towards the future". The ongoing influence and popularity of Cervantes is, it is claimed, a consequence of the values, especially unity within plurality, his work is assumed to embody.

The Heritage Industry

In both quatercentenaries the State—whether government itself or the cultural organisms dependent on it—played a prominent role, directly stimulating the celebrations or, as in the Spanish case, channelling and approving the activities to be funded or sponsored. This support is of course not disinterested: show-casing such cultural assets as Shakespeare or Cervantes is an important boost to a nation's "brand" and so its commercial standing in the international market; by the same token, it can, as we have seen, bring ideological dividends such as the illusion of power over other countries or, as in the Spanish case, the myth of national unity. The economic implications of this are not to be underestimated, especially bearing in mind that Spain had only recently begun to emerge from a severe crisis where, according to the most pessimistic reports (Shim), direct public investment in the arts fell as low as one percent. This is doubtlessly why written into the 2015 decree was a clause classing the event as "of exceptional public interest" and thereby promising fiscal incentives of up to ninety percent to non-profit-making bodies and private "sponsors" willing to take part. As part of an additional cost-saving package of measures, the decree specifies that membership of the national committee would be purely honorary, that the day-to-day running of the committee would fall to civil servants already working for the Ministry of Culture and that the institutions represented on the committee together with any other public or private body involved in the celebrations were free "to make contributions or collect moneys to fund the [commemorative] activities" (Real Decreto).

Much of the criticism levelled at the Spanish government over the running of the Cervantes event sprang, as we saw, precisely from the perception that it was not putting as much financial muscle into it as its British counterpart. Now, this is not strictly fair since, as Jennifer Craik (51) has shown, for years governments across the globe have tended to adopt a "mix-and-match" approach to arts funding, combining traditional direct patronage strategies, indirect funding through "arms' length" agencies such as art councils, ministerial directorates and departmental arrangements, and finally what she calls "facilitative strategies" designed "to build philanthropic, sponsorship and partnership liaisons between culture and public and private sector agencies, clients and communities". Part of the problem in the Spanish case is, since the inevitable fall-off in the direct patronage approach, rather too much onus was placed on agencies like the already under-funded Instituto Cervantes or on the basic good will of private sponsorship agencies such as banks, which themselves had undergone major restructuring as a result of an EU bail-out to the tune of over seventy billion euros. The private-funding model may well be working at institutions like the Museo del Prado in Madrid, which now relies sixty percent on private donations, but the lack of private sponsorship culture in Spain meant

that it had little impact on the quatercentenary where only forty corporations responded to the government offer and then only after certain local politicians, amongst them the mayor of Cervantes' home town Alcalá de Henares, had practically had to go begging for the cash (Gibson 146).

In a blog entitled "Cervantes, Shakespeare y Rajoy", dated 12 March 2016, Pérez-Reverte would ask how after four hundred years no-one had had the time to prepare a decent quatercentenary for Cervantes, as they had for Shakespeare in Britain. He did nonetheless take ironic solace in the fact that:

> The best monument to Cervantes and to his Quixote, what gives meaning to that extraordinary book, is precisely the country that made it possible: that forgetful, ungrateful, disloyal, miserable, unsupportive, suicidally illiterate place, without which the book that best defines us could never have been written. (Pérez-Reverte)

The great unwritten of what Pérez-Reverte calls the "international embarrassment of the Cervantes year" was political and economic instability and also a fracturing of the nation's "identity" which no amount of commemorative fervour could properly conceal. That similar issues may well have underwritten the British event, however potently it was marketed and internationally celebrated, is, I would contend, a story still waiting to be told.

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"I fear I am not in my perfect mind." Jan Klata's *King Lear* and the Crisis of Europe

Abstract: In his Shakespearean productions Jan Klata tends to radically experiment with sets, texts, and contexts. He puts the plays in culturally and politically specific locations, experiments with bi- or multilingual productions, and incorporates other texts into the Shakespearean frame. In this way, he uses Shakespeare as a means to address contemporary problems and tensions that are vital for his geopolitical reality, exploring the issues of national identities, the cultural legacy of Europe and its nations, as well as past conflicts and present crises. Klata's *King Lear* (Narodowy Teatr Stary, Kraków, 2014), set in the religious context of the Catholic Church and using mostly Polish language, with only decorative additions in foreign languages, does not engage in European politics with the same directness and force as his earlier productions. And yet, as I wish to argue, this performance is also strongly concerned with European identity, and may, therefore, be seen as a valid voice in the discussion on how Shakespearean productions help to understand our current-day reality.

Keywords: Jan Klata, *King Lear* in Poland, Europe, Catholic Church, diversity, unity, identity.

Europe's history is defined by attempts to emerge as a unity out of plurality, and be recognized as a single entity standing united regardless of, and sometimes because of, its diversity. Discussing the early emergence of a European sense of belonging, Andrzej Wicher mentions the religious and political concept of *Res Publica Christiana*, a term sometimes applied to medieval Europe (104). The idea of European kingdoms united through the rule of Rome dates back to the office of Pope Gregory the Great, who, according to Ullman, called it the "Society of the Christian commonwealth," *societas respublicae christianae* (qtd. in Wicher 104), but the concept of a community of European Christian states, based on the idea of *civitas Christiana*, was first put forth in 1306 by Pierre Dubois in *De recuperatione terrae sanctae* (On the Recovery of the Holy Land). The notion of the community of European states specifically points to

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Christianity "as Europe's main ideological 'glue', or its uniting factor" (Wicher 104), the common religious identity being believed to create an image of an ideologically united entity. It was of serious political significance especially in the face of military threats, and was used, for example, to negotiate peace conditions with the Grand Khan in mid-thirteenth century. In 1246, Brother John de Plano Carpino[1] and Benedict the Pole were sent by Pope Innocent IV to the Great Khan with a peace mission. Wicher (105-107) explains how they tried to use the image of a united Europe in foreign politics negotiations, and notes that the emissaries were aware that such mystification was necessary to cover up the fact that Europe was governed by chaos and conflict, as it rendered it a potentially easy prey for the Mongol Empire, a realm that was, by contrast, portrayed as homogeneous. With reference to the medieval context, Wicher (115) stresses that any discourse on identity, national or other, is still fuelled by the desire to "strengthen the emotional bond between the members of a group," a task which is typically achieved by emphasizing similarities at the cost of differences. He also points (105) to the fact that in spite of political plurality—medieval Europe having been plagued by numerous internal conflicts—the need to create a group identity was readily acknowledged then, even though it did not reflect the actual reality.

The current state of European affairs can be seen as an extension of, and variation on, those desires. Twenty-first-century Europe keeps reimagining itself as a unified entity. Embracing its diversity and plurality, multiculturalism and multilingualism being treated as key aspects of its complex geopolitical, economic and cultural identity, Europe sees itself as a larger body, united by shared past and present interests. History plays a key role in creating today's sense of European identity, and, importantly, Christianity remains one of its vital elements. Another feature of Europe's shared heritage is Shakespeare. An icon of Western literature and culture, "Shakespeare" is used to solidify the cultural identity of contemporary Europe. The very nature of scholarly organizations such as the European Shakespeare Research Association (ESRA), and events such as international conferences or projects, suggest that Europeans assume they have common interests, and tend to seek platforms to develop them. Celebrating the diversity of voices in a variety of communication networks, Europeans continue to assert the need to celebrate the sense of belonging. In the past, the desires to seek connecting voices were motivated by dramatic and immediate political necessities, and one wonders to what extent the continuity of those desires is fuelled by similar anxieties. In the face of such troubles as the growth of local nationalisms, Brexit being one of the consequences, or reactions to terrorist threats and waves of refugees, Europe's identity as based on and respecting a sense of community may be seen as being in danger, and therefore

[1] Other spellings of the name include John of Plano Carpini and Pian del Carpine.

in need of addressing. In this paper, Jan Klata's 2014 *King Lear* is discussed as a performance that, like his other Shakespearean productions, is strongly concerned with the European cultural legacy and identity, and may be seen as a valid voice that addresses current problems and tensions in our immediate geopolitical reality.

Jan Klata's Shakespearean productions engage in provocative ways with the issues of Europe's diversity, and presenting multilingual and multicultural experiences they suggest the underlying desire to communicate values assumed to be shared. His strategy differs from other directors' uses of heteroglossia in productions such as Karin Beier's 1995 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or 1997 *Tempest*, in which differences, discontinuity and misunderstandings were accepted or even, as Carlson (159) claims, glorified in a postmodern vein. Klata's multilingual productions also frequently emphasize linguistic and cultural diversities as a source of miscommunication, as in *Titus Andronicus* in 2012, in which linguistic misunderstandings, as well as cultural prejudices and stereotypes, were used to comic effects.[2] Such diversities, however, in both *Titus Andronicus* and Klata's other Shakespearean productions, are ultimately explored as platforms for discussing international relations. Those relations, frequently originating in conflicts from the past, serve to expose the tensions of the present, and provide a strong sense of continuity as well as illustrate the desire to communicate. Through the medium of the theatre—the experience of actors working together and of various audiences watching the productions in different places—those dialogues and tensions may lead to a mutual understanding, and help to see Europe and the world as a place of shared experiences not *in spite of* but *in* its diversity.[3]

Unlike the significantly Polish/German *Titus Andronicus*,[4] or the German/Polish/English *Hamlet*,[5] *King Lear*, a 2014 production at Teatr Stary in Kraków, does not engage in European politics with the same directness and force as Klata's earlier productions.[6] Importantly, it is not a multilingual production. It is performed almost exclusively in Polish, with occasional interventions in other languages that appear to be purely decorative. The first lines to be heard in the production, however—the lyrics of a song to the opening scene—are in a foreign language. As is typical of Klata's productions, the musical opening is highly theatrical and carefully choreographed. Lear, dressed in papal vestments, is sitting on a stylized throne, which is carried onto the stage by several men in red

[2] See Mancewicz.

[3] For a more detailed analysis of the various strategies in Klata's multilingual productions see Cieślak, "'… the ruins of Europe'".

[4] In Teatr Polski in Wrocław and Staatsschauspiel Dresden, premiered in September 2012.

[5] In Shauschpielhaus Bochum, premiered in March 2013.

[6] For a detailed analysis of the production see Cieślak, "*King Lear*".

robes. As Lear is being brought downstage, eight priests in plain black robes, their backs to the audience, perform a reverential dance: they approach Lear one by one, bow and retreat into the row.[7] This introduction to the world of the Catholic Church is performed to a cover version of Prince/Sinéad O'Connor's famous "Nothing Compares 2 U," entitled "Shanzhai". It is performed by Fatima Al Qadiri, and is sang in a meaningless stream of mock-Mandarin ("Hyperdub release"), except for the repetition of the word "shanzhai", connoting fake brands and smuggled goods.

Another equally mysterious language is used during the scene on the heath (3.1) involving Lear, Kent, the Fool and Poor Tom. The heath is represented by a transparent cage-like plastic box, which descends from above and traps Lear. Kent chooses to stay inside with him, and then the Fool and Poor Tom join them. During the storm scene, to music and strobe lights, the demon-like Fool, dressed in black papal vestments and a mitre, screams and howls incomprehensibly, and then dances inside the "cage". In his fake performance of madness, Poor Tom bangs his hands on the cage, then jumps on top of it, and, as if having a fit, starts "speaking in tongues". What he actually says is the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic, a cultural text that for an acute viewer may become recognizable in the context of the Catholic setting, even if it is spoken in an archaic language.

The use of those diverse languages is subtle, and may seem only ornamental, but is, in fact, symbolic, and can be understood as an allusion to the significance of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the roots of Europe's identity. Aramaic, one of the biblical languages, is the language of Christianity, a religion that provided the ideological basis on which the new Europe was built after the fall of the Roman empire. Ironically, however, it is not a European, but an Afro-asiatic, language. What is more, the area where it used to be spoken is now a site of political and religious struggles that significantly affect European, as well as global, politics. A serious phase of the current European migrant crisis started a few years ago with a wave of refugees from Syria and Iraq, the territories where Aramaic used to be spoken countries ago. The mock-Chinese of Fatima Al Qadiri's "Shanzhai", in turn, can be seen as an allusion to the economic power of Asia, and the ways in which it affects Europe. On the one hand, dynamic and accommodating Asian manufacturers help to fuel the wellbeing of Europe's economy by producing goods at very low rates that

[7] All characters in the production are priests and cardinals and are understood as male, including Lear's daughters. However, while Goneril and Regan are played by men, Cordelia is the only character played by a woman, Jaśmina Polak, and she also plays the Fool, dressed in a mock-papal black costume. Although the Fool may evoke associations with Pope Joan, the legendary "heresy" at the heart of the Catholic Church, the production does not treat Cordelia or the Fool as female.

European labels sell for much higher prices. On the other hand, the European market is also flooded with cheaper alternatives from Asia that come to Europe through various channels. As direct online purchase and delivery are now increasingly popular, European companies are easily bypassed, and recognizable local labels have to compete with “shanzhai”. Fatima Al Qadiri’s cover version, in itself an alternative of an existing musical “label”, reflects a financially and ideologically problematic dilemma currently faced by Western markets.

Those rare moments of linguistic distractions, however, are located in an otherwise homogenous environment, as the production is set in the heart of the Catholic Church. Lear is presented as the pope, and all the other characters as priests, including Lear’s daughters—the daughters of the Church. Klata, justifying that choice, says that he was looking for a contemporary equivalent of absolute monarchical authority, understood as divine, never to be questioned or transferred. At the same time, the Catholic Church can also be seen as the basis on which Europe is alleged to be built. The vestiges of the medieval *Res Publica Christiana*, with Rome at its center, are invoked to represent a certain European heritage, with its common system of values. Finally, *King Lear* being the study of an aging and deteriorating mind, an identity falling apart as it struggles with its own weakness, can also be interpreted as a symbolic comment on Europe, whose integrity and unity is weakening. Considering the production premiered in December 2014, these allusions cannot be taken as commenting on the recent crises affecting the EU, such as the terrorist threat, record influx of refugees, and Brexit. However, the predicaments encountered by other ailing member states provided enough warning signs to make the production look both prophetic and relevant. Lear, motivated by what he believes to be sensible and just at the time, makes decisions whose consequences he cannot predict. The kingdom’s division eventually destroys the kingdom, as well as Lear himself.

There are two focal points in Klata’s production: one is the study of Lear’s weakness, age and dementia; the other is the vision of a catastrophe resulting from the fall of authority—royal and ideological—that is believed to be absolute and divine. Lear’s weakness, both physical and mental, is highlighted by the fact that throughout the performance he is carried or pushed in his wheelchair-like throne. Then, after the confrontation with Goneril and Regan in 2.4, a bare intensive care bed is brought in, and Lear is placed in it. This moment of incapacitation is very moving, as Goneril and Regan put up the bed’s railings and fiddle with the remote control to adjust the position of the bed, while Lear lies in it, motionless. Lear walks by himself only twice. First, he manages to get out of bed for the mock-trial of Goneril and Regan (3.6), but his power is only mobilized for a fleeting moment. Quickly realizing the futility of his action, Lear retreats to his bed. The other instance of Lear’s mobility is powerfully used at the end of the production. Significantly in the light of Klata’s thematic focus, the performance ends on Lear’s death, omitting Cordelia’s return, her reconciliation

with Lear, and their tragic death. The final sequence shows Lear surrounded by all the characters who appear to have returned to their initial, subservient role. He admits: "I am a very foolish, fond old man [...] I fear I am not in my perfect mind" (4.6.53-56). He then walks away—unassisted—from the stage while the others, singing a Polish equivalent of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" ("Sto lat"), do not seem to notice his departure at all. As the scene shifts from what initially seems to be a birthday celebration into an odd end-of-life ritual, all the priests wave upwards, as if saluting Lear's departing soul. Thus—with a physically weakening Lear, and with such an ending—the production specifically records Lear's last journey, and the struggle of a failing body before it finally gives in to death.

Following the death of Jerzy Grałek, the actor playing Lear, in February 2016, the production went on. Lear's physical presence was replaced by pre-recorded audio fragments of Grałek's previous performances of *Lear*. The throne and the bed are still in the production to delineate the space Grałek/Lear occupied, and the other actors perform as if Grałek were on stage. But the audience cannot see Lear, only hear his voice. As Lear is now literally a disembodied mind and voice, this change has emphasized his mental weakness and the deterioration of his identity. Interestingly, before the performance begins, a slightly blurred image of Grałek/Lear's face is projected on the curtain. That face, deliberately a little out of focus, confronts the spectators as they are taking their seats. Thus, when the curtain rises, the performance appears to take the audience inside Lear's head. Without Grałek, the production no longer portrays Lear's physical weakness, but relies on his ephemeral presence, and appears to be exploring the fantasies of the disintegrating, haunted and tormented mind of a person who cannot accept his failing body and authority. As the audience is shown the workings of his mind, Lear's aged and crippled body may be imagined as lying somewhere else, confined to a hospital bed.

Whether Lear's body is present or not, it is possible to see Lear as a metaphor of the united Europe. No longer "in his perfect mind", visibly struggling with his overpowering weakness, and growing increasingly ephemeral, Lear is the embodiment of an empire falling apart. Like Lear, Europe can be understood both ways: as a physical and quantifiable entity—a geopolitical and economic union of its member states—but also, more symbolically, as an idea of unity and understanding—a cultural and ideological construct that celebrates the possibility of communication and cooperation in all its heterogeneous complexity. As Klata's production traces the disintegration of Lear, we observe Europe undergoing a crisis which some fear may destroy it ("German Business Leaders"). Lear's decision to divide his kingdom, which in Klata's production could be seen as dictated by Lear's fear of his growing weakness, or as a result of his loss of a "perfect mind", not only leads to his fall, despair and death, but also wreaks havoc all around him. Similarly, the wave of

nationalism and right-wing extremism, the refugee crisis, terrorist threats and decisions such as Brexit, are not just factors that blur the image of the united Europe, but may have acutely devastating consequences for its existence.

Such dramatic impact of Klata's interpretation of *King Lear* is enhanced by the second thematic focus of the production, which is the fatal fall of sacred and absolute power. As God's anointed representative, King/Pope Lear is both a physical being and an abstract idea of unquestionable, God-like perfection. This concept is further emphasized following Grałek's death, when Lear becomes literally an abstraction, although just as powerful. Likewise, Europe can be seen as a symbol of the possibility of harmony, and a promise of such harmony and peace in the world, as long as it manages to remain united (Bruter). The fall and disintegration of that idea is, therefore, threatening in ways that are hard to imagine. The recent growth of conservative nationalisms, for example, led to the victory of right-wing parties in several European countries. Thus in Poland, the Law and Justice party (PiS) took power in 2015 with a parliamentary majority. Their extremist government has recently violated several basic premises of democracy, presenting a challenge to the European Union, and leading to serious speculations about the possibility of "Polexit".

When analysed from the perspective of the production's political implications, Klata's choice of the Catholic Church for his setting proves particularly significant. Klata claims that it was not his intention to allude to any specific pope (discussion with the director, 5 August 2015), but for Polish audiences the immediate association would be with John Paul II. The election of Karol Wojtyła, a priest from a communist country, as Pope in 1978, had such an impact, especially then, that in the Polish awareness he became a synonym of the Vatican and the quintessential head of the Catholic Church. Consequently, any other symbol of the papal figure is bound instantly to evoke "the Polish Pope". Moreover, the production focuses on an ageing authority figure, which further strengthens similarities with the exceptionally long-serving John Paul II and his declining health towards the end of his life. In the Polish context, therefore, this association adds another political dimension to the production. John Paul II has been a celebrated icon of the Polish Catholic Church, and during his life he had strongly invigorated and motivated Polish clergy and believers. The fall in mass attendance observable after his death has been accompanied by the more disturbing fact that Polish Church authorities frequently disregard, ignore or dispute Pope Francis' appeals and opinions. Klata's *King Lear* may, thus, also be seen as a metaphor for the fall of the Polish Catholic Church, or the foreshadowing of a possible schism, which in turn reflects some of the ideological and political divisions across Europe.[8]

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[8] I am much indebted to Gemma Miller for drawing my attention to the issue of John Paul II's significance for the Polish Church, and its relation to Sinéad O'Connor's

The evocation of Sinéad O'Connor is important in this context, too. Her famous speeches drawing attention to corruption and abuse within the Catholic Church, and especially the tearing up of John Paul II's photograph during her Saturday Night Live television performance in October 1992, are clearly to be brought to mind with the opening soundtrack "Nothing Compares 2 U". Klata typically avoids commenting on his use of popular songs in productions, but he consistently uses pop-cultural or musical references that are recognized, understood and interpreted by audiences. Those pop-cultural references always have interpretative consequences, playing on the audience's ability to make associations in all its diversity. Pink Floyd's "Comfortably Numb" for the opening of Klata's *Hamlet* is to be treated as a sinister statement on the "state of Denmark", while, in his *Titus Andronicus*, Fancy's "Slice Me Nice" that accompanies the moment when Titus feeds Tamora the pie made of her sons is morbid, but comic, incidental music. Just as Sinéad O'Connor's song is instantly recognizable in "Shanzai", her strong anti-Catholic statements were likely to be known to many audience members. In an ironic twist, the song, offering a strong statement about the counterfeit goods industry, contradicts the basic message in "Nothing Compares 2 U". Importantly, using this soundtrack in the opening dance for King/Pope Lear may also aim to call into question the legitimacy of religious authorities, especially in the light of contemporary criticism of the Catholic Church which is increasing censured nowadays for peddling a cheap pretence of spirituality.

It has to be noted, however, that most audiences would not know Fatima Al Qadiri's song, recognize the language or register the "shanzai" theme. This aspect of the production only comes into focus when its intricacies are analyzed. The association with Sinéad O'Connor, and her political statements, would be much more readily available for many audience members, at least in Europe. However, the opening sequence, and consequently the whole production, would be received differently in a different cultural context, like, for example, in Beijing, where *King Lear* was performed in November 2016 in Beijing People's Art Theatre as part of the commemoration of the anniversary of Shakespeare's death. Chinese audiences could realize, for instance, that "Shanzai" was sung in mock-Chinese, but might miss the political allusion to Sinéad O'Connor's anti-clerical statements on television. Also, the impact of the Vatican setting for global audiences could be seen as having a more general meaning, while for the Polish ones the association would be more immediate.

Shakespeare's *King Lear* is not only a tragedy; it is also a very pessimistic play. Concerned with the ideas of ageing, frustration, helplessness

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anti-papal manifestation. Gemma pointed out those issues as we were responding to each other papers in the "Shakespeare and/in Europe: Connecting Voices" panel at the 2017 ESRA Congress in Gdańsk.

and gradual deterioration, it offers a bleak view of the world. As Edgar and Albany remain alive, sanity can be restored, and the kingdom reunited, making catharsis possible. Such a cleansing vision, however, is not immediately available in the play, because of the overpowering sense of loss and defeat after Cordelia and Lear die. In fact, the very question of the succession to Lear's throne is not easily resolved. Kent, Albany and Edgar are possible candidates after Lear escapes to his death, so the play's ending is marked by the sense of division on the way to restoring peace in the realm. In itself, thus, the play could be read as an interesting metaphor for the current condition of Europe, which recognizes the need to remain united, but resonates with a variety of differing voices.

Klata's *King Lear*, ending on the moment of Lear's death, denies us any hope for a positive resolution. Without as much as a hint that harmony and order can be restored after chaos and destruction, the production only celebrates loss and death. It cannot be claimed that the production was envisioned as a metaphorical warning for Europe's imminent future, as some of its themes became clearer in the context of events following the premiere, such as the migrant crisis, or the radicalization of nationalistic governments. It is clear, however, that politicized productions can live their own lives. In view of recent events changing the political scene of Europe, Klata's *Lear* has acquired a sharper focus, and a strong interpretative line. Evolving in the course of performances—a situation dramatically illustrated by Grałek's death, and subsequent changes in *Lear*—and resonating with dynamic contexts, such productions will be fuelled by the changing perspectives of audiences and critics. Klata's *Lear*, thus, while retaining the more universal aspects of an iconic image of a deteriorating mind and a weakening authority, becomes also a symbol of a much more immediate iconic notion—that of Europe struggling with its current weaknesses. The Catholic Church in the production, gloriously celebrating the appearances of strength, but shaky in the moment of transition, evokes both the past of the European Christian community, and the present of Europe's struggles with political, economic and ideological challenges, both internal and external. The fact that Klata is no longer the artistic director of Teatr Stary in Kraków in consequence of a political decision by local government following the last elections, and that some of his productions, like *King Lear*, are no longer performed, further stresses the radical potential and the political significance of such productions.

In hindsight, then, Klata's *King Lear* can be seen as a strong comment on the European, and global, state of affairs. As always in his Shakespearean productions, Klata uses many linguistic and cultural references. In *Lear*, apart from the pseudo-Chinese "Shanzhai" and Poor Tom's Aramaic prayer, there are other culturally-specific intrusions, like the cult hit of Bronski Beat, "Smalltown Boy", to which Edmund performs his victory dance, or the afore-mentioned

rendition of “Sto lat” as a celebratory song to the dying Lear. The fact that those elements create the sense of a plurality of voices which are historically, geographically and politically diverse, as well as culturally specific, is not something that is necessarily crucial for the production. Many audience members would be unaware of their impact beyond the purely aesthetic or performative. However, politically-informed audiences and critics can easily recognize that, in the context of the possible crisis of European unity, it may be important to remind people of the voices which connect us.

In *Lear*, as in his other productions, Klata uses heterogeneous elements to create a harmonious whole. His Shakespeare speaks in many voices, but, despite that multiplicity, his Shakespeare communicates well. Similarly, Europe may be speaking in many voices and struggling with misunderstandings, and yet hope to reach common ground and communicate its sense of a plural identity. However complicated this identity may be, it is both necessary and inevitable to cherish its multiplicity and diversity, as well as the complexities of the processes that have shaped, and continue to shape it. Through the acknowledgement and appreciation of the heterogeneity of the voices that constitute that identity, we can continue to engage in constructive dialogues about our shared cultural legacy(ies), and our future. Otherwise, the bleak vision of loss that ends Klata’s *King Lear* may become Europe’s reality.

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Finding Refuge in *King Lear*: From Brexit to Shakespeare's European Value

Abstract: This article considers how Shakespeare's *King Lear* has become a Brexit play across a range of discourses and media, from theatre productions and journalism to social media. With its themes of division and disbursement, of cliff edges and tragic self-immolation, *Lear* is the Shakespearean play that has been turned to as metaphor and analogy for the UK's decision following the 23 June 2016 referendum to leave the European Union. Reading this presentist application of Shakespeare, the article attends to Shakespeare as itself a discourse through which cultural ideas, both real and imaginary, about Brexit and the EU are negotiated. It asks how can we might remap *Lear* in this present context—what other meanings and histories are to be derived from the play, especially in Lear's exile and search for refuge, or in Cordelia's departure for and return from France? Moving from a consideration of a Brexit *Lear* to an archipelagic and even European *Lear*, this article argues that Shakespeare is simultaneously a site of supranational connections and of a desire for values of empathy and refuge that reverberate with debates about migration in Europe.

Keywords: Shakespeare; Brexit; EU; Maps; Archipelago; Presentism; Refuge.

> Give me the map there. (Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act 1, Scene 1, line 35)[1]
>
> This is like a Shakespearean tragedy where everyone is trying to do what is right. It is like watching *King Lear*. You wonder, how can these smart people be so deluded. (Varoufakis, interview with BBC *Newsnight,* 3 May 2017)
>
> I'm happily reminded of that scene in King Lear, when a blind man is led to the top of cliff by a man mad and jumps off willingly. (@RobOHanrahan, Twitter post, 29 March 2018)

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[1] All quotations are from *King Lear*, ed. Grace Ioppolo (New York: Norton, 2008) and will be given within the text.

> Britain is fast becoming the King Lear of the diplomatic world: rampaging insanely around the stage and blaming everyone else for the loss of his kingdom. (Robert Saunders, *The Guardian*, 9 January 2019)

Brexit Cliff Notes

King Lear is Shakespeare's Brexit play. Or, at least, it is the Shakespearean play that most readily seems to supply a metaphor for the UK's decision following the 23 June 2016 referendum to leave the European Union, as the last three epigraphs highlight. A play in which the blinded Gloucester desires to dive off the Dover cliffs has been mapped on to talk, in the advent of a no deal Brexit, of a cliff edge, of unchartered territory, of free fall. The traditional semiotics of Dover, what Paul Gilroy calls "the nation-defining ramparts of the white cliffs" (Gilroy 14) now symbolize "an anxious, melancholic mood" and, in times of Brexit, British self-immolation. At the time of writing, *The Economist* magazine is running a GIF advertisement that features a train hurtling over a cliff edge, a visual metaphor that implies *Lear*'s Dover ("Truth About a No Deal Brexit"). Gloucester's failure to actualize his desire—"th'extreme verge" (4:6:26) he is on is an imagined precipice fashioned into vision by his son Edgar—suggests further resonances with Brexit. The cliff edge is not real, Brexiters might claim, and leaving the EU will not realize any material differences in trade, travel, and the rights of individuals. "Nothing" will come of the something that is Brexit, to echo Lear's riposte to Cordelia, and claims to the contrary, or indeed plans by the British government to stockpile foods and medicines, are dismissed as part of "Project Fear". Conversely, taking things to the absolute limit point will, like Gloucester's fake free fall, have some remedial, restorative function in the Aristotelian sense of tragedy's deeper purpose. Genre is another reason why *King Lear* is Shakespeare's Brexit play. The individualized tragic arcs of Gloucester and Lear himself become a British tragedy, a story of noble self-annihilation or "heroic failure" (O'Toole, *Heroic Failure*) that, depending on perspective, may or may not entail restoration and healing.

"Nothing will come of nothing", "Brexit means Brexit"—the self-contained logic of Lear's anaphorism can be heard in British Prime Minister Theresa May's equally tautological policy pronouncements on exiting the EU (Henley). When language itself seems inadequate, and reveals rather than conceals a void, a descent into nothingness, *Lear* once again becomes about Brexit. Policy by politicians, meaning by Shakespeare, one might suggest, echoing Terence Hawkes' playfully polemical formulation, "Shakespeare doesn't mean: *we* mean *by* Shakespeare" (Hawkes, *Meaning* 3). Shakespeare becomes both Europhile and Eurosceptic. Long before Brexit, *Lear* had crept into the zeitgeist, with Daniel Hannan MEP, one of the early architects of Brexit,

describing the European Union as "like the poor mad King, increasingly detached from reality" (Hannan, "EU as King Lear"). A Shakespeare fan, Hannan later turned to *Cymbeline*, another play set in ancient Britain, to counter emerging appropriations of Shakespeare as a Europhile. "Britain is a world by itself; and we will nothing pay | For wearing our own noses" (Hannan, "How like a God"). What Hannan neglects to mention is that Cymbeline is willing to pay tribute to Rome even though he has been victorious. To use Shakespeare for Brexit is, then, to attend to Shakespeare as a discourse, not unlike literary criticism itself, and the "process whereby, particularly in times of crisis, a society 'means by' a work of art" (Hawkes, *Meaning* 136). It is to read presently, that is to acknowledge how the present occupies the primary site of interrogation (Hawkes, *Shakespeare in the Present* 3). And, it is to foreground, as a recent essay collection on *Brexit and Literature* argues, the potential role of art to shape and intervene in the "cultural beliefs, real or imaginary, about Europe and the UK" (Eaglestone 1-6) from which Brexit sprung, to do some hard thinking in contrast to what Lyndsey Stonebridge calls the "banality of Brexit" (Stonebridge 9).

Recent stage productions and social media posts provide evidence of such presentist appropriations and disruptions, as *Lear* is used as a discursive intervention into Brexit. This is a play that continually explores seeing—as the business of the Dover-cliff scene establishes—and that prompts a thought experiment on what we notice in reading. Lear's declarative instruction "Give me the map there" highlights the contingency of location: what is one to see on the map? England, or Britain or an archipelago? How is *Lear* to be remapped in the context of Brexit, or its associations with this contemporary issue? What other meanings and histories are to be derived from the play, especially in its interrelated themes of disintegration and division, Lear's exile and search for refuge, or in Cordelia's departure for and return from France? Moving from a consideration of a Brexit *Lear* to a connected, even European *Lear*, this article argues that Shakespeare is simultaneously a site of supranational connections and of a desire for values of empathy and refuge that reverberate with debates about migration in Europe.

Maps and Border Crossings

It is unsurprising that *King Lear* should emerge as the Shakespearean play most conducive and apposite to a current event such as Brexit. The play has become the quintessential Shakespearean play for the modern world, supplanting *Hamlet*. R.A. Foakes locates this shift in critical thinking to the 1960s: "the main tradition of criticism up the 1950s had interpreted the play as concerned with Lear's pilgrimage to redemption [...] but in the 1960s the play became

Shakespeare's bleakest and most despairing vision of suffering, all hints of consolation undermined or denied" (Foakes 3-4). Resonating powerfully with the threat of nuclear war in the 1960s and, more recently, the age of the Anthropocene and the threat posed by climate change (Dionne 29), *Lear* has come to be regarded as acutely responsive to our present times. A number of high-profile stage productions reaffirm the play's ascendancy. These include Jonathan Munby's stage production in the West End, broadcast in cinemas through National Theatre Live, with Ian McKellen in the lead-role, and Jonathan Eyre's film for BBC / Amazon Prime starring Anthony Hopkins. As Marjorie Garber argues, contemporary productions and world events alike have shaped and changed Shakespeare—the plays "are 'Shakespearean' in their protean life, not restricted to some imagined (and unrecapturable) terrain of Shakespeare's 'intention' or control" (Garber, *Shakespeare After All*, 652). So, to invoke Shakespeare in relation to Brexit, is to use Shakespeare discursively, to mean by and through Shakespeare, a process Hawkes traced in, among other texts, Lear's map. Hawkes (*Meaning* 126-27) uses the king's call for a map as a conceit to tour both temporally and spatially through critical readings of the play, disclosing the operations of literary historicism, new historicism and cultural materialism. In Hawkes' hands, Shakespeare functions like the play's Dover, which as Jonathan Goldberg (538) establishes, "names a site of desire, the hope for recovery or, at least, repose". Shakespeare becomes a conceptual space on to which we project our desires, or through which we address ideological contradictions and the dynamics of power in our own times, or indeed find a means to efface or sublimate them in the (re)turn to the historical past. In this formulation, Shakespeare as an evolving cultural entity evidences the extent to which "we are involved in the continuous 'making' rather than the discovery of cultural meanings" (Hawkes, *Meaning* 127), a distinction that recognizes our agential role—and that of the present as a site of interrogation—in the production to Shakespeare's meaning. Bringing in these actors exposes the fallacy of the universalist, transcendent Shakespeare who somehow intuits each epoch for itself.

Stage productions demonstrate how Shakespeare's cultural meanings are made rather than simply discovered latent within the text. Jonathan Munby's 2018 production, which first ran at the Chichester Festival Theatre, before transferring to the Duke of York in the West End, from where it was broadcast in cinemas in the UK and Ireland (*King Lear*, Dir. Jonathan Munby), is a case in point. The main talking point about this production was the star turn of Ian McKellen, with Susannah Clapp praising the seventy-nine year old actor's study in decay—"McKellen's Lear crumbles gradually, as if he were a Dover cliff being eroded"—and Arifa Akbar writing, "There is a sense of an actor putting the finest last touches to his majestic legacy". But in this 1930s styled production, which moved from "wood-panelled rooms and chandeliered dining

halls" to "a barer stage set and a stark white backdrop on Lear's arrival to Dover" (Akbar), Lear's proverbial division of the kingdom was also given a topical and decidedly Brexit hue. In the NT Live broadcast, the pre-production cast interviews structured audiences into making this connection. The Irish actor Sinead Cusack mentioned that the cast kept thinking Brexit during rehearsals and performances. Her Kent is all "steadfast devotion towards the King", as Paul Taylor notes in his review, in a disguise as "an abrasive Irish serving man". So, when Ian McKellen's Lear takes up a map on which featured Britain and also Ireland, current events intersect with prior histories, points of contact between islands, and future relationships. Lear, scissors in hand, disposes of Scotland first, then England, now in two halves, and Ireland, as the last and, what seemed to this audience member at least, the reluctantly or awkwardly received, territory.

The meanings of this scene are open to various readings, but Susan Bennett's theorization of theatre in terms of a production-reception contract provides a model for thinking about the relationality of Munby's production, Brexit and one's own status as audience member. As Bennett (106-118) argues, production choices are interpreted through the immediate reception context such as the theatre foyer, the programme, the performance space, the mise-en-scene, but also geographic location, wider socio-cultural structures of seeing and, one might add, current events. As an aggregate, these elements contribute to a production's range of meanings. In other words, as a spectator, I saw Brexit in the opening scene because of the local context of the production's choices and the location of my own viewing in the context of contemporary political discourses about Brexit and the EU. On the evening I saw this production broadcast live in a Dublin cinema, the sound in the theatre picked up the laughter among the live audience in the Duke of York. There was no laughter audible among the cinema audience. While there is a dual risk here of generalizing about audience reactions and simplifying the specificity of local reception contexts, it would seem that the granting or disposal of Ireland produced an unsettling affect, one bound up with a more generalized Brexit affect, and the uncertainty it has generated about the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Other production elements may be suggestive of these issues, with Lloyd Evans, in a negative review, dismissing Phil Daniels' Fool as "a banjo-playing Ulsterman who impersonates McKellen in a way that seems both hilarious and enjoyably disrespectful" (Evans).

The visual of Ireland in the production—and in Brexit debate—brings into focus Brexit's destabilizing effect on the border issue and the political stability of Northern Ireland, which voted by 55.8% to remain in the EU, slightly lower than Scotland at 62% remain (BBC). Since the triggering of Article 50, the border has emerged as a significant point of contention in the UK government's negotiations with the EU. It even has its own Twitter account, @BorderIrish,

which uses the rhetorical figure of prosopopoeia to anthropomorphize a geopolitical entity. The Irish Government and EU position of avoiding a hard border on the island of Ireland and protecting the Good Friday Agreement has been resolute in the form of the "backstop", which sees the UK remain in the customs union until such time as the future relationship between the UK and EU is determined (Carswell). Commitments from Theresa May's government, reliant on the support of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), have been characterized by equivocation, as well as requests for further assurances that the backstop will be temporary in nature.[2] Brexit thus poses deeper implications for identity valences and politics in Northern Ireland because the additional frame or context that EU membership provided over the past decades could be eroded, to be replaced by the "old binary choice of British and—or versus—Irish", or a "border in the mind" (Gormley-Heenan and Aughley 502). Brexit, which has been understood in the context of a resurgent English nationalism, with Europe serving as Englishness's 'other' (Henderson et al. 198) may be the causation of a return to traditional divisions of unionist and nationalist in the North. The "updated border debate" has "inevitably brought a long history aggressively back into current affairs" (Ferriter loc. 2067).

The Irish border was introduced in 1920 with The Government of Ireland Act, which partitioned Ireland into six counties of Ulster and the twenty-six counties of what became, following the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1922, the Irish Free State. However, "ideological partition was a long reality in Ireland before the physical border was imposed owing to the distinctive development of Ulster" as a "bastion of Protestant settlement and British influence" (Ferriter loc. 32) in Ireland. It is not too much of a leap to suggest a connection between the border and Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1606). The play comes only three years after the accession of King James, which realized a political union of England, Scotland and Ireland and that would see the plantation of Scots in Ulster from 1606 on, thus sowing the seeds of religious and political divisions on the island of Ireland. Shakespeare, writing for the King's Men, had already explored the new Jacobean geopolitics in *Macbeth*, a play that might also speak to Brexit matters, especially from a Scottish perspective. *King Lear* comes at the Scottish-Anglo union perhaps more indirectly with its setting in an ancient, pre-Roman Britain, but, as John Kerrigan has shown, it too is marked by the question of Britain and the form political union might take in the future. The play literalizes these issues in the figure of the map. As Lear knows, maps are political: they submit a territory to knowledge, visualize borders, and delineate lines of dominion. But

[2] Following the 2017 general election in the UK, which saw Theresa May's Conservatives with a slim majority in parliament, May secured a "confidence and supply" arrangement with the DUP. In return, the DUP secured an additional £1bn in exchequer funding for Northern Ireland.

apart from Lear's instruction, "Give me the map", Shakespeare gives no specific indication as to what the map contains, or what the audience is to see on it. Lear's donations to Goneril and later to Regan presume a gesture to the map but do not presume or provide any detail in the description of its contents:

> Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
> With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,
> With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
> We make thee lady. (1:1: 62-64)

Lear's cartographic information is, as critics have noted, generalizing and impressionistic—as John Gillies (46) notes the imagery used here does not presume a map upon which the topographical features Lear mentions "are notionally depicted"—but his cartographic imagination is richly symbolic and ideological. Lear imagines his kingdom as a pastoral space (Klein 95) that is now being subjected to a pragmatic disbursement. The vagueness as to what the map actually contains contributes to its potential significations—it can be localized and also national, or indeed both, since "the very movement of Lear's thought from direct cartographic reference to a rich (almost iconic) imagination of the cartographic content, suggests a national map of monumental or iconic force" (Gillies 46). Productions have, therefore, choices to make about the map, from its contents to questions of size, who carries it on stage and whether or not it is torn (Fitzpatrick 105). In Gregory Doran's 2016 production at the RSC, starring Anthony Sher, the map was laid out across the front of the stage. It featured Britain alone (*King Lear*, Dir. Gregory Doran). The 2012 production at the Almeida, with Jonathan Pryce as Lear, displayed what appeared to be a detail of counties, implying a more localized, internal division of the kingdom (*King Lear*, Dir. Michael Attenborough). Peter Holland (qtd. in Fitzpatrick 105) describes Adrian Noble's 1993 production at the RSC, which was "played out over a map of England which papered the stage floor". This suggests "The Ditchley portrait" of Elizabeth by Marcus Gheeraerts that depicts the queen standing on a portion of a graphically reproduced Oxfordshire, the county serving as a synecdoche for her kingdom (National Portrait Gallery). In Noble's production, the paper England is ripped with Edgar's entry as Poor Tom in Act 3, scene 4, a move that demystifies the map as royal iconography. Whereas in these earlier productions the map is of one island, with England and Britain functioning as synonyms, Munby's includes Ireland, a production choice that, I would argue, brings the invisible border into visibility, as Brexit itself may yet do, and puts present geopolitical challenges into historical context. The visual of the map foregrounds how the Lear story is encrusted with prior histories that are at once English, archipelagic and European. Its sundering on stage suggests Britain's separation from the EU.

In the early modern period, cartography marched in step with English colonialization especially in Ireland. More than graphic renderings of terrains and places, English maps of Ireland were richly symbolic and ideological (see Klein; Smith). John Speed's inclusion of Ireland in his *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain and Ireland* (1611) "pictorially creates the impression of inner union" (Klein 105) that earlier Elizabethan maps, such as Laurence Nowell's *Generall Description of England and Ireland* (1564/5) lacked. Fully incorporated into James' union, "Ireland no longer presents an obstacle to the cartographic effect of spatial cohesion" (Klein 104). Shakespeare's *Lear* arguably responds to this Jacobean myth-making not least in its location in ancient Britain but also through Ireland's occlusion, its relegation to an unseen place signifying its incorporation into James's new kingdom. In the earlier play *Leir*, Cordelia marries the King of Hibernia, not France as in Shakespeare, where that decision enhances Cordelia's exile—she is literally off the map; even upon her return to the apportioned and divided kingdom, she occupies an enclave, the "French camp" on English soil. To mention Ireland, effaced in *Lear*, briefly referenced in *Leir*, alongside France, is to highlight the contingency of Englishness and Britishness in both the play and in history.

This goes some way to explaining Munby's production choices. The appearance and then disbursement of Ireland as part of the cutting of the map decentres England and Britain. Islands rather than a singular island are figured, a move that puts the production into conversation with the turn in Shakespeare and early modern studies to archipelagic histories, an approach that takes on a new significance in the context of Brexit. This approach recognizes the interactions between English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh peoples, languages and cultures in the period. Taking their cue from the work of historian John Pocock, who broadened early modern English history into an islands history, scholars have interrogated the historiography and literature of the period, in the process attending closely to the formations of Englishness and, from 1603, Britishness. As David Baker (6) explains, "Britain" is understood less as discrete formation than an ongoing problem that is "imbricated at every point with the histories of the other nations […] that co-existed with it on the British Isles". Exponents of the British or archipelagic approach have shown how literary texts are themselves ripe historiographic ground for disclosing the formation of England's imagined insularity as less "the inevitable effect of geography" than "the product of an ideological narrative that mystifies centuries of violent struggle and cultural negotiation" (Chedgzoy 41). *Lear* is one such text where Shakespeare turns to "British and archipelagic subject matter" (Kerrigan 14), a realization James Joyce has young Stephen Daedalus make in *Ulysses* when he asks, "Why is the underplot of *King Lear* in which Edmund figures lifted out of Sidney's *Arcadia* and spatchcocked on to a Celtic legend older than history?" (Joyce 271). Such diverse markings or intertexts that contribute to Shakespeare's *Lear* find

their way on to the map in Munby's production, which simultaneously points *back* to prior histories of contact and *presently* with its inclusion of Ireland.

Indeed, *Lear* undertakes nation-exploration or, more precisely, nation-disclosure, as a quick pan over events reveals. Not only is there the business with the map, but also Lear's diminished and disorientated sovereignty that follows quick on the division of the kingdom, travel across the sea to and from France, which contributes to the play's geographic and spatial contraction and expansion, of neighbours at once invisible and proximate, as well as "whispers, rumours, reports and letters [which] filter into the play's action—with accompanying hints of a world of observers and interpreters" that observe the main political actors (O'Connor 117). These disorienting effects are compounded rather than resolved by the play's conclusion: with the multiple deaths, there is an uncertain future: "The weight of this sad time we must obey, | Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say. | The oldest have borne most; we that are young | Shall never see so much, nor live so long" (5:3:325-28). Idiomatic language may offer some assurance here, but the fact that these lines are assigned in the quarto text to the Duke of Albany, a title King James himself held, but to Edgar in the folio, suggest deeper uncertainties in the Jacobean *Lear* about the union's future (Kerrigan 17; O'Connor 116-17). Combined these moments simultaneously suggest the play's own time and resonate with our own. There is in *Lear* the peculiarly fragmented iteration of what G. Wilson Knight (qtd. in Fitzpatrick 99) calls "island patriotism" that occurs elsewhere in Shakespeare, and that survives in the isolationism that underpins Brexit, but also an implicit sense of what is nearby, and of the impossibility of Lear's kingdom separating itself from geography and history because it forms part of an archipelago, what Pocock (qtd. in Baker 8) describes as an "island group lying off the north-western coasts of geographic Europe", a reality that, from a presentist perspective, speaks to the connectedness that underpins EU membership.

Pocock's relation of his archipelagic historiography to Europe is especially interesting from the present context for its dual sense of distinction (islands) and connection (to Europe). In *Archipelagic Identities*, John Kerrigan (21) helpfully historicizes Pocock's approach, noting that "as a New Zealander, Pocock felt moved to reassess British history at a time when the United Kingdom was turning its back on the Commonwealth and joining the European Economic Community. It was as though Britain deserved one last look as it put its empire behind it". Kerrigan connects the subsequent interest among historians and literary critics in the early modern formation of Britain to devolution in the 1990s—its own division of the kingdom or union—which saw the establishment of parliaments and devolved government in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. "Devolution matters", Kerrigan (2) notes, "because it has encouraged the

peoples of the islands to imagine different relationships with one another, and with the peoples of Europe—the future of the European Union providing one horizon". In these instances, the European dimension brings an opportunity but equally a dramatic reorienting of what was previously central, or regarded itself as such, so that a formerly dominant England is unsettled. Devolution still matters now. It speaks to a sentiment that England itself has not only been left behind—"Who will speak for England?", ran a *Daily Mail* headline ahead of the Brexit referendum—but has also been supplanted by "a sclerotic Europe that tries to achieve the impossible by uniting countries as diverse as Germany and Greece" (quoted in Henderson et al. 187).

Scholarship has a role to play in examining the depth of links and contiguities between British and European history. As writers on the British question have noted, the European dimension has been overlooked. In a dialogue, Baker and Maley reflect on how an archipelagic perspective foreclosed a continental view. Baker notes that "British history requires border crossing investigations, but recently has run up against a border of its own" (Baker and Maley 19) in its inattention to continental Europe. "British history is a history of forgetting", Maley suggests, "It often excludes Europe, and excludes too the nations and nationalities of which it—the British state—is composed" (Baker and Maley 21). This culture of forgetting has important implications, not least in helping to historicize and explain the logic of isolationism and restored sovereignty that underpins Brexit, as evidenced by the Leave campaign slogan, "Take Back Control" (see Howorth and Schmidt 7). As Brian Cheyette (68) writes, "Brexit means that our national straightjacket—Englishness, not even Britishness—becomes much tighter" and, with that, a devaluing of multicultural and also migrant perspectives.

Work on early modern Ireland has been important in conveying the wider European dimension (see O'Connor and Lyons), not simply in terms of the Reformation, but also comparative work on English colonialism in Ireland with that of Spanish colonialism in the Americas (see Palmer). There is too a long tradition of European Shakespeares, detailed in an excellent survey (Semple and Vyroubalova 80-96). Recent studies of English Renaissance drama have also expanded our understanding of the geography and transnational fabric of the plays. For example, Peele's *Battle of Alcazar*, which includes an exuberant encomium celebrating the inviolability of Elizabeth's island kingdom from foreign intervention, provides a diversity of busy scenes that convey that island's relation to European and indeed world geopolitics (see Griffin 95-116; Roby 25-42). This helps to contextualize *Lear*, which is certainly not alone or unique in producing a geography and history that exceeds the island nation rather than adheres to its boundaries. More generally, then, a term like "English Renaissance drama" might belie border crossings, continental European

locations, and the representation of European languages to be found in plays of the period. These critical appraisals are not just significant to our understandings of early modern drama and theatre, but signal for our own times prior histories of cultural contact, of imagining other worlds and peoples, that can provide some corrective to a resurgent white nationalism that Europe has been experiencing in the last decade.

Dover Crossings

In a play world that can seem marked by insularity, and an increasing focus on Lear's regression into the self, there is nonetheless movement across the English Channel to France and back. Indeed, if Brexit is predicated on an appeal to the sovereignty of the land, and to the protection of borders—as in Theresa May's claim that "Brexit must mean control of the number of people who come to Britain from Europe" (quoted in Docherty 182)—*Lear* figures land as "route rather than a root" (Aldea 151); significantly, the word "root" does not occur in the play. Dover, the site of the play's tragic pathos, is also an index of travel and contact, suggesting routes in and out of Lear's kingdom. It names "a site of desire" (Goldberg 538), where Gloucester seeks to end his life, and where Lear will be reunited with Cordelia and find repose or recovery, a "place of illusion" (Goldberg 539) because neither of these desires is entirely satisfied. Yet Dover is also the location of the French camp following Cordelia's arrival fresh from France in Act 4, scene 4. The play makes dramatic capital of geographic realities, with English proximity to France meaning that Cordelia is never that far away from Lear.

Some appropriations of Dover and *Lear* have attempted to sidestep these proximities, choosing instead to appeal to images of Dover as a wall, the white cliffs literalizing fortress Britain in ways that reactivate the one-island fixation of Elizabethan discourse. The right-wing *Daily Express* newspaper ran a front page on 29 March 2018, a year ahead of the UK withdrawal date of 29 March 2019 with a quote from Boris Johnson, "Our national journey out of the EU is almost over and a glorious view awaits" with the Dover cliffs in the background. Responses on Twitter suggested that the newspaper had photoshopped the cliffs to make them whiter. Others suggested analogy with *Lear*. Comedian Rob O'Hanrahan retweeted the *Express*'s front page with the comment: "I'm happily reminded of that scene in King Lear, when a blind man is led to the top of a cliff by a mad man and jumps off willingly".

From a search within Twitter it is possible to quickly see how *Lear* and Dover are used as metaphors for Brexit discourse, frequently as an critical intervention and from a Remain or pro-EU position, as this brief sample reveals:

> #**Brexit** Britain is a **King Lear** of nations, old & foolish, taking advice from charlatans **and** liars who flatter its conceit of greatness. (@nickreeves9876, 7 October 2017)
>
> Did Brits forget their Shakespeare? How **King Lear** brought division, war **and** chaos? #**Brexit** #Britain #TheresaMay (**Rosa** @ros1a, 13 Dec 2017)
>
> The longer the Brexit Dementia goes on, the more I think about King Lear, giving away every last vestige of influence in the expectation of freedom ... expecting to hang onto his powers and privileges. Didn't end well. (@PeterArnottGlas, 2 May 2018)
>
> In "King Lear", Edgar, disguised as Poor Tom, takes his blinded father, Gloucester, to what he believes is a cliff edge. It's not. Gloucester, distraught, jumps to his death but (surprise!) survives. A lesson is learned. That's not like Brexit though. It's actually a big cliff. (@BorderIrish, 12 February 2019)

This grouping of tweets gives a sense of the frequency of the Brexit-*Lear* analogy that highlights some phenomena common to the quotation and also remediation of Shakespeare in modern and especially digital culture. Shakespeare functions as the return of the expressed (Garber, *Shakespeare and Quotation* 69), a cultural touchstone through which, to loop back to Hawkes, we produce meaning. Twitter, as a social media platform, foregrounds the "we" in this transaction. As Anna Blackwell argues (79), studying it provides a "framework through which to view instances of everyday engagement with Shakespeare's creative legacy, as well as his broader cultural capital". In the above tweets, Shakespeare is a catalyst, a recognizable, agential thing that provides a vocabulary for the user to intervene in a discourse such as Brexit, and the conduit for that intervention. The tweet quotations themselves represent "a distinct, micro-adaptive creative mode" (Blackwell 79) in that they are small, often localized, iterations of Shakespeare that still appeal to and reactivate Shakespeare's cultural cachet.

Evident too is the participatory nature of social media and digital cultures as a collective of individuals who desire to and also make meaning through Shakespeare on Twitter, that it through the combination of the legacy technology of expression that is Shakespeare and the comparatively new technology of expression that is the tweet (see Calbi; O'Neill). But the latter, as a platform where other and older media are remediated (Bolter and Grusin), renews and hybridizes the former, older medium. Shakespeare thus becomes new media in the process and *Lear* becomes associated with Brexit. In turn too, individual tweeters self-brand, perform political commentary, and generate followers and community. In this way, Shakespearean quotation, or meaning by

Shakespeare on Twitter, constitutes more networked "affective publics" that, as Zizi Papacharissi (318) argues, provide "a way for citizens to feel their way into a story", through posting, commenting and sharing. Shakespeare is one among a range of cultural reference points or technologies of expression that are available to users as they habituate themselves to the platform's participatory affordances—tweeting, retweeting, commenting—and enact vernacular forms of media engagement that contribute to the flow of the Brexit story.

The phenomenon being briefly traced here is not unique to Twitter, but occurs in other media too, including TV and newspapers, which are increasingly experienced as part of media convergence (see Jenkins), as well as academic scholarship. Nor is the phenomenon surprising when one considers that Shakespeare is "the most quoted English author of all time" (Maxwell and Rumbold 1), and that quoted Shakespeares "are imbued with the significance not just of their original source in Shakespeare, but of several centuries, and many layers, of subsequent borrowing" (Maxwell and Rumbold 22). There is a build-up of sentiment within a Shakespearean quotation. So, when Yanis Varoufakis, former Greek Finance Minister, asserts in an interview with BBC *Newsnight* that the EU Brexit negotiations "is like a Shakespearean tragedy where everyone is trying to do what is right. It is like watching *King Lear*. You wonder, how can these smart people be so deluded", we are in familiar territory. Shakespeare is used as recognizably English and also global cultural touchstone to express criticism that attributes blame not simply to the UK government but Europe's political leaders too. Later the same year, Fintan O'Toole (*In Humiliating May*) makes the analogy:

> It has never seemed more apt that perhaps the greatest work of English literature, William Shakespeare's *King Lear*, is about the consequences of a capricious loss of authority. Lear gives up his kingdom for no good reason and everything falls horribly apart. In his madness and despair he utters the most scathing lines every written about political power: "Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar? . . . There thou mightst behold the great image of authority."

Academics turn to Shakespeare in times of Brexit too: in an article on the Northern Ireland border, Cathy Gormley-Heenan and Arthur Aughey (508) conclude with a reference to *Julius Caesar*: "To paraphrase the Bard, Northern Ireland—like the rest of the United Kingdom—is afloat on a full sea and where the present tide of affairs takes it, we fear we cannot tell". What is noteworthy about these quotations is the positioning of Shakespeare as himself without politics, or as a site of common-sense liberal values, that risks producing a complacency about the politics of quoting him.

Survival / Bare Life

It will be clear by now that *Lear* as Brexit story has become proverbial or idiomatic, a symptom of Shakespeare's cultural currency, the search for a language to reflect on what Brexit is, and a desire to intervene, to have one's say. There is casual, repetitive and memetic quality to the forms of quotation here, as Lear is synecdochally reduced to a series of meme-like parts: blindness, foolishness, division, cliff edge. If the limits of analogy and even language itself are evident—a case perhaps of nothing coming from nothing—this is to encounter a very *Lear*-like state. This is a play that famously strives to examine human life at its extremity and that, as Craig Dionne (22) argues, turns to proverbs and idioms as a poetics of survival: "Men must endure | Their going hence even as their coming hither: | Ripeness is all" (5:3:9-11), Edgar reminds his suicidal father. Here, and in its final lines, the play reveals survival instincts; it is a lesson in how to go on (Dionne 35). In this regard, the social media uses, which signal a turn to Shakespeare, sometimes self-reflexively, sometimes ironically, sometimes with a call to the force of the Shakespearean quotation, ignite the play's own machine like generation of proverbs. Its characters go on—somehow—despite the weight of times.

To extend the analogy, *Lear* might become, in pro-Leave hands, an articulation of a defiant British hegemony and isolationism, as witnessed in the pronouncements of Daniel Hannan and, in pro-remain hands, an articulation of futurity, and the survival of the EU. However, such imagined uses of the play may ultimately be different sides of the same coin, each using it to reify an identity that risks being essentialized as either British or European. Instead, perhaps *Lear* can be used more productively as a disturbance, one that draws critical attention to the contemporary refugee crisis and EU migration policies responses?

Lear finds himself wandering his own kingdom. Before Dover, the play uses the heath as Lear's new found sense of place. In the company of Kent and the Fool, and feeling the "contentious storm" that "Invades us to the skin", they seek shelter. Lear demonstrates consideration for others, urging his companions to go in first. Alone on stage, and kneeling as if in prayer, Lear says:

> Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
> How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
> Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
> From seasons such as these? O I have ta'en
> Too little care of this. Take physic, pomp,
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
> That thou mayst shake the superflux to them
> And show the heavens more just (3:4:28-36).

In the BBC Amazon co-production for TV, Anthony Hopkins' Lear appeared as if living on the street—he pushed a shopping trolley loaded with boxes and old clothes in modern day London. Munby's production also suggested structural parallels between Lear's state of kingdom reflection and contemporary homelessness as a group of people in urban dress gathered behind McKellen to form a tableau that then functioned as a visual frame for the lines. While these production choices might be interpreted as a clunky literalization of Lear's language, I would rather see them as a disturbance or present interruption into the play. The attention to localized social inequities is continuous with the Brexit theme—highlighting how the economic consequences of the Leave vote will affect the already vulnerable. But to me as an audience member, it also invited an association with the contemporary refugee crisis that in turn prompts a re-reading of the status of Lear, Kent, the Fool and Poor Tom as themselves in search of refuge. This is not to say that the play maps neatly on to current issues, but that it may be made to speak to them in significant ways. The empathetic strain of Lear's thought continues when he sees Poor Tom: "Is man no more than this?" (3:4:97-97) he wonders, "thou art the thing itself. | Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art" (3:4:99-102). In Munby's production, McKellen's Lear piled coats on Poor Tom and, as one reviewer noted, absurdly proffered his sodden hanky as shelter against the elements (Taylor). Tom is not, of course, the genuine article, but rather the performance of a Bedlam vagrant by an exiled aristocrat Edgar, who himself is performed by an actor. Much too has been made of the spotlight that falls here on human exceptionalism and on Lear's emerging realization that such anthropocentrism is at the root of how he ended up where he is (see Shannon; Dionne).

Yet, in a present context, Lear's reflections might powerfully speak to the plight of those seeking refuge in Europe, and the figure of Poor Tom with the concept of bare life that, as Hannah Arendt (119) and, after her Giorgio Agamben, argued, exposes the limits of Europe as a collective or union. "The comity of European peoples went to pieces," Arendt argued in "We Refugees" (1943), "when and because it allowed its weakest member to be excluded and persecuted". As a Jewish person who escaped Nazi Germany, Arendt understood the fragility of human rights. and argued that the figure of the refugee was symbolically central and necessary to the European model of the nation state, a way to define its sovereign and exclusionary bounds, a form of discrimination that enables a definition and demarcation of the citizen. Agamben (117) presses this distinction further in his essay "We Refugees" (1995), where he argues that "the refugee should be considered for what he is, that is, nothing less than a border concept that radically calls into question the principles of the nation-state".

Agamben's (117) claim that "the refugee unhinges the old trinity of state/nation/territory" provocatively addresses itself to the humanitarian crisis of refuge to which the EU has being trying to respond for the last decade. That crisis highlights the contradiction between exclusionary national sovereignty and universal human rights that Agamben's work unpacks, as EU member states seek to restrict immigration, in part as a response to the rise of nationalist sentiment, in part because the problem is seen as external. This returns us to Dover, both in *Lear*'s sense of it as a site of desire and in as the impregnable bulwark against the sea and the boats containing those seeking refuge, who make the crossing in tiny vessels. In some media coverage they become people, to quote Stuart Hall (58), himself echoing C.L.R James, deemed "in but not of Europe", a distinction that, as Hall (69) argues, the "idea of Europe has always depended", feeds into discourse of fortress Britain and to Brexit as the necessary, logical move to control the free movement of people. Agamben (118) offers an alternative to this binary of us / them: "We could look to Europe […] as an aterritorial or extraterritorial space in which all the residents of the European states (citizens and noncitizens) would be in a position of exodus or refuge, and the status of European would mean the citizen's being-in-exodus". Might *Lear* suggest such a state in its topographical and geographic disruptions and divisions, in its motif of wandering and survival too? This might be to make too great a claim for Shakespeare, or to project on to the play European desires, a desire for a better Europe. But the question is worth the thinking and asking—to do so is, as Thomas Docherty (194) argues, echoing *Hamlet*, to counter the thoughtlessness of Brexit, because "the intellect—thinking—is what takes us beyond our own body, our own physical self. It is the intellect that opens us to foreignness, to things undreamt of in our philosophies".

To Horatio's Brexit, we can be Hamlet-like and pursue thinking, which is also, if in a more fragile iteration, to be Lear-like. One of the reasons Lear is so struck by the poor wretches and by Poor Tom is because he fears that this could become his own state, or that it has happened already, so that his fear of the other is fear for one's self. Lear's humanity—a phrase that seems like an embarrassing, recondite term from an older Shakespeare criticism—may have something for our present times: it can be reframed to an apprehension of human rights and their fragility, to fear for the other, fear that is, for a world in which another human being is unaccommodated, stateless, a refugee. Rather than a general analogy for Brexit, *Lear* could be used more progressively through its exploration of "unaccommodated" humans as a reminder of human rights in Europe. Future productions and critical readings have an important role here in imagining a *Lear* that is responsive to the humans behind generalized crises or history itself, whose very rights are put in danger through the demarcation of borders and political red lines. Productions might variously recover, amplify and introduce moments of disturbance into the experience of the play. Criticism

might orient itself toward figures of vulnerability or bare life rather than to the putative wholeness or sovereignty of the island nation. Such a *Lear* would be an anathema to Brexit. It would speak instead to a potential European value, taking us outside of national borders. It would tear up the map of exclusionary lines to *recognize*, not discriminate between, human life.

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"Making Things Look Disconcertingly Different": In Conversation with Declan Donnellan[1]

Abstract: In this interview acclaimed director Declan Donnellan, co-founder of the company Cheek by Jowl, discusses his experience of performing Shakespeare in Europe and the attendant themes of cultural difference, language and translation. Donnellan evokes his company's commitment to connecting with audiences globally. He keeps returning to Shakespeare, as his theatre enables the sharing of our common humanity. It allows a flesh-and-blood carnal interchange between the actors and the audience which directly affects individuals. This interchange has significant consequences in terms of translation and direction.

Keywords: Declan Donnellan; Cheek by Jowl; Shakespeare in Europe; Translation; Direction; Archetypes; Brexit.

I

Declan Donnellan is well-known as "one of the most original directors working in theatre today" (Le Figaro). He co-founded the company Cheek by Jowl in 1981 and is its joint Artistic Director with his life partner and the company designer, Nick Ormerod. Both artists are renowned for staging innovative productions focused on the skills of the actors and have been repeatedly acclaimed as "responsible for some of the most imaginative and revelatory classical performances [seen over the past] decades" (New York Times). They produce work in English, French and Russian and have performed in about 400 cities in fifty countries over six continents (Cheek by Jowl).

Donnellan has to date directed over thirty productions, with half from the Shakespearean repertoire, such as the world-acclaimed *As You Like It* (1991) with Adrian Lester, performed with an all-male cast, *The Winter's Tale* (Maly

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[1] Nicole Fayard wishes to thank the University of Leicester for a period of study leave during which this article was written.

Drama Theatre of Saint-Petersburg, 1999), *Romeo and Juliet* (2004) and *Hamlet* (2015) for the Bolshoi Ballet, and in 2018 *Pericles Prince of Tyr* (Maison des Arts de Créteil). The company is also dedicated to the staging of the European classics in their source language and in translation. Acclaimed performances include *Le Cid* (Avignon Festival, 1998), *Boris Godunov* (Moscow, 2006), *Andromaque* (Théâtre du Nord, Lille, 2009), *Hayfever* (Savoy Theatre, 1999), *Antigone* (The Old Vic, 1999), Verdi's *Falstaff* (Salzburg Festival, 2001).

Cheek by Jowl is one of the Arts Council England's National Portfolio Companies and since 2005 has been an Artistic Associate at the Barbican in London where it has an office. Donnellan also formed a company in Moscow at the Chekhov International Theatre Festival in 2000 and has affiliations with Lev Dodin's Maly Theatre in Saint-Petersburg and the Bolshoi Ballet. In France, they were invited by Peter Brook to work at the Bouffes du Nord in Paris in 1995 and are now associated with the Théâtre des Gémeaux near Paris. Donnellan is also the author of the play *Lady Betty* (1989), adapts plays for his companies, and his first feature film *Bel Ami*, co-directed with Nick Ormerod, was released in 2012. He wrote *The Author and the Target*, first published in Russian in 2001 and subsequently translated into fifteen languages, including English, French and Mandarin. The volume is an influential guide for actors providing invaluable insight into the director's and actors' craft as well as their relationship with the audience. In recognition for his ground-breaking work and services for the arts, Donnellan has received multiple awards in the UK and internationally, including in France, Russia, the US, and Italy.[2] He and Nick Ormerod both received OBEs in 2017.

Cheek by Jowl's unique association with theatrical partnerships across Europe reflects the company's commitment to connecting with audiences globally, making its work emblematic of the theme of this special issue. This interview with Declan Donnellan took place in October 2017. It took the form of a semi-guided exchange structured around his experience of performing Shakespeare in Europe as well as matters pertaining to language and translation. Whilst these themes relate to both the company's achievements and the subject matter developed in this volume, they are especially relevant to the new challenges brought about by Britain's likely imminent departure from the European Union. At times our exchange went into unexpected directions,

[2] Donnellan was the first non-Russian director to receive the prestigious Golden Mask award at the Moscow Festival in 1997. In 2003 he was made Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres—a prestigious award in recognition of significant contribution to the arts and literature—for his work in France. In 2013 he shared the highest award of the Sibiu International Festival in Romania with Ariane Mnouchkine and Eugenio Barba in recognition of their contribution to international culture and the arts.

providing truly fascinating insights. However, for reasons of space, not all material was able to be included in the transcript.

Declan Donnellan's view that the theatre reveals "what is eternal in the way our species is made" and helps us "share our empathy" takes us back to the very roots of Greek tragedy, with its realistic recognition of the commonalities and predictability of the human experience across time and space. The assumption in Greek theatre that all humans are imperfect is especially reflected in Donnellan's interest in the themes of unexplained violence and mental illness. These are topics which, for instance, haunt *The Winter's Tale*, which Donnellan first directed in Russian in 1997 and produced again in English in 2016-17, as well as Pericles (2018). What he sees as the destruction that human beings mete out on the people they love relates to the often-unarticulated anger suffusing contemporary societies. Thus, his fascination with people's inherent capacity for violence led us to discuss the 2017 terrorist attacks in Manchester and Las Vegas, UK politics, Brexit, and the pernicious impact of consumerism on our lives. The pivotal theme bringing these acutely germane topics together is, of course, Shakespeare. What makes both the theatre and Shakespeare unique for Donnellan is their ability to reveal our own hidden primitive forces by showing us people saying what we do not dare say or do. This is what makes it profoundly political. Shakespeare especially provides an antidote to the general sense of depression breeding the anger that tears our societies apart.

Envisioning the theatre as the sharing of one's common humanity is a profoundly political act, especially in the ways in which it helps to clarify Donnellan's production choices. It entails that seeking to communicate *specific* ideas via a production could be seen as inauthentic.[3] Thus, Donnellan emphatically believes that a play is about *de*conceptualization and defends his own directorial right to "shar[e] with the audience my incomprehension with their incomprehension." Incomprehension and the mystery of things here provide compelling forms of communication, which directly correlate to the need of human beings to connect with each other and to probe, as suggested above, the complexities—and vulnerabilities—of human nature. By performing Shakespeare's plays, Donnellan's aim is to demonstrate that the human need to share also includes our failure to communicate with each other, as well as our capacity for self-deception. This has significant linguistic as well as psychological resonances: Donnellan's analysis of Shakespeare's drama illustrates the extent to which "we also use words to *un*-communicate". Donnellan's forensic analysis of Shakespeare's texts and characterization thus focuses on the ways in which words can be used to obscure or distort meaning. This analysis is based on two overarching principles. The first is that "the important thing about Shakespeare

[3] Authenticity is to be understood in the existentialist sense of personal responsibility (the opposite of alienation).

is what he leaves out": for Donnellan, the purpose of Shakespeare's soliloquies, especially, is not necessarily to reveal the characters' true thoughts or motivations. Rather—this is the second overarching principle of his analysis—in their speeches, Shakespeare's characters lay bare their own lack of self-awareness. For Donnellan, "Shakespeare is all about self-deception. And you *see* the deception."

Such language analysis has strong critical and dramatic potential. Arguing that Macbeth, Othello or Richard III exemplify the dislocation governing human paradoxical behaviours, Donnellan offers us a compelling reading of the plays as a theatre director. Equally importantly, his awareness of the human psyche both in Jungian terms and through the language of transactional analysis[4] presents the theatre as a potentially healing tool for individual spectators. In *The Structure of the Psyche* (342), Jung claimed that "all the most powerful ideas in history go back to archetype", defining archetypes as universal patterns and images based on primitive and ancient myths that are part of the collective unconscious and from which we inherit patterns of behaviour. The significant implication for Jung is that, as a locus of projection and identification, the theatre is a psychotherapeutic space where human nature can be staged and understood, leading to self-realization. This is because encountering the less desirable aspects of the self rather than keeping them repressed is more likely to encourage a sense of authenticity (Jung). It is therefore unsurprising that Donnellan keeps returning to Shakespeare. For him, Shakespeare's plays are about people "really *doing* things" rather than abstract considerations: "Shakespeare keeps reasserting what it is to be a human being." This is also likely to explain, according to Donnellan, why Shakespeare endures globally as one of the greatest playwrights: like Greek tragedy, his theatre portrays a well-defined range of human life. It is concerned with how humans interact with each other and the belief that analyzing unproductive or counterproductive transactions might enable individuals to understand and change their own problematic behavior (*Games People Play*).

Such insights open important areas of enquiry where working in another language is concerned. In this interview, Donnellan states that Shakespeare's plays demonstrate the ways in which language—any language—fails to communicate. His reflections on incomprehension reminds us that all texts are inhabited by undecidability—understood as Derrida's term for the condition of not belonging to dichotomies, but also the nature of what is neither possible or impossible (Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*). Undecidability also draws attention to

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[4] "You hope that there'll be a good pair of parents actually in place." Created in the 1950s by Eric Berne, Transactional Analysis is a psychoanalytical theory which departs from Freud's theories. It seeks to analyze social interactions to uncover the client's ego states (*Games People Play*).

the paradoxical nature of translation which, as a palimpsest simultaneously seeking to preserve its source and to rewrite it, is both a possible and impossible entreprise (Derrida, *Critical Inquiry* 179). It is now well recognized that the process of translating generates a proliferation of meanings, and is therefore a performative activity (Derrida, *Critical Inquiry* 198) with manifold social and political consequences. If theatre, as Donnellan puts it, is "the idea […] made flesh" before an audience, then theatrical translation also plays multiple performative roles as its target text is embodied by both actors and viewers. The survival, suppression or modification of the source message, including when it involves confusion and incomprehension, are therefore of considerable significance. This is, again, a matter of authenticity:[5] Donnellan argues that the need to decode, recode or clarify in translation can deprive Shakespeare's drama of its mystery, when its role should be to preserve the haunting quality of the theatrical enigma.

Donnellan's fascination with enigma may well be what, ultimately, fuels the appeal of working abroad for him. He insists that cultural differences are no barriers to communication, and he is again strongly motivated by the belief that we are not so much defined by our differences than by our common humanity. This is why, for Donnellan, defining Shakespeare or his theatre as "European" makes little sense: "we are all human beings on a planet, and it's very strange that we should suddenly identify with a small crop of earth that we actually live on." This also explains why he believes that there is not just one Shakespeare. He speaks instead of each country creating its own Shakespeare, and this multiplicity of Bards, all different from each other where their language and cultural traditions are concerned, is made possible because Shakespeare is about what both unites and divides human beings. Far from restricting Shakespeare to any real or symbolic "blessed plot",[6] therefore, Donnellan's theatre is likewise intended for anyone who takes an active interest in people, whatever their location. As indicated by its name, Cheek by Jowl's theatre is about connecting people and restoring intimacy. This is achieved, as Donovan puts it, through the flesh and blood "carnal interchange" between the actors and the audience. It is this physical interchange that makes the audience an active participant in the act of theatre, and that enables art to change us.[7] This experience alone makes

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[5] Authenticity here is not to be confused with the notion of "correspondence" in Translation Studies.

[6] Shakespeare 3:1:50.

[7] This theme led to a discussion on current debates around live streaming, including the true democratizing potential of the exercise, the nature of the entertainment being offered (is it theatre or something else?), the aesthetic choices necessitated by the need to frame the action and the absence of interactivity between house and stage. Donnellan's main priority is to ensure that his live-streamed shows should not become substitutes for the real thing.

Shakespeare transgressive. It is from this perspective, Donnellan concludes, that translating and performing Shakespeare's plays "has to give you a way of looking at things in a way that's disconcertingly different from how you thought things looked before."

II

Nicole Fayard (later as NF): The European network of companies and affiliations that supports Cheek by Jowl makes your company unique, as is the multilingual nature of your work. In many ways, your theatre is distinctly emblematic of what working both in *and* with Europe represents. What is the attraction of performing Shakespeare and other classics in Europe with European actors and collaborators?

Declan Donnellan (later as DD): One reason that theatre is very important is because it helps us to share our humanity and develop our empathy. And what's always interested me of course cross-culturally is the thing underneath, "the things that remain the same", that gives us more of a sense of what is transcendentally human. In other words, cultural differences wear away to a certain degree, at least that aspect that presents as a wall, and you start to see what is eternal in the way our species is made. So, it's always very interesting to see that very similar things make people laugh. I remember once rehearsing at the Maly in St Petersburg doing *The Winter's Tale* with Lev Dodin's company, and we were demonstrating some kind of musical shtick to the actors. It was about the comedy in the rhythm of three and how you fall over not on the second beat, not on the fourth beat, but on the third. And the actors were saying: "How do you know so much about the Russian sense of humour?" It had nothing to do with the Russian sense of humour, but with humans always laughing on three: dududum–dududum–dum–boom! These examples are like archetypes or pre-cultural in a way, but I find those simple things moving and important. Rampant consumerism has confused us so much now about what it is to be a proper human being. Adverts tell us that to have human values you need to bank at one bank rather than another. It's quite interesting to think: what happened before, what are those things that we have which are inbred into us. It's not all that we're about, but it's just something that I notice.

It is better to look at things in three dimensions. To look at the great themes of loss, love, self-deception, from slightly different places, you really find you need to see the same thing from slightly different angles. And so, you get a more rounded vision of it. With one eye you only get two dimensions. From more than one culture.

Is it a lie? No, it's not a lie. Is it the truth? No, it's not the truth. If you look at it with two eyes you get more of a sense of distance and depth. Is that a lie no it's not a lie, but it's not the truth either. You get a slightly more rounded view of things. No one has a full view of the truth and the camera lies.

NF: And working abroad strengthens this sense of perspective.

DD: Yes, exactly. Everything is absolutely the same and absolutely different. And that's what's extraordinary. So, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Beatrice says to Benedick in English: "I know you of old". These wonderful Saxon words. And in French it's: "Je vous connais depuis longtemps". Which is the exact translation, and it's completely different. So, it's like the same thing and yet is completely different. And that's fascinating.

NF: And it's not just about meaning: the French translation communicates a radically different perspective of the past, doesn't it? You say in *The Actor and the Target* that history is subjective, that "history has got nothing to do with the past".[8] And of course, history is always reconstructed and re-elaborated. The example you've given above is a very apposite example of that.

DD: And also, in *Macbeth* Lady Macbeth says, "Is Banquo gone from court?" It comes up in French as: "Banquo, est-il parti de la Cour" [laughs]. "The court" equals "la Cour"??!! Again, it's the exact translation and it's completely different, all the different references and associations. "Court" and "la Cour"... I can't even begin to put it into words.

Well most words are controlled by the left part of the brain which cannot compute mystery, so must always pretend it doesn't exist. What's interesting is that it's a mystery really. Some things you can explain, some things you can't explain. The bit that you can't explain is the interesting bit, and the bit you can't explain that is interesting is of course also the bit that frightens people. We often get scared by what we cannot pigeon hole. Some of us more than others. So much so that sometimes we may say that ultimately it is all understandable, it's just a matter of time. But I think it is more interesting to see them both as a mystery, and to accept that we will die not knowing that much about ourselves.

NF: I'd like to dwell on the notions of archetypes and mystery you have introduced. It is my belief that Shakespeare's use of archetypes in his drama is one of the major causes of its enduring popularity. How does the archetypal nature of his plays combine with the mystery to make Shakespeare's theatre so popular throughout Europe and most of the world?

[8] "History has nothing to do with the past. History is how we perceive previous events now. History is only a sequence of reinventions." (Donnellan 123)

DD: I think the important thing about Shakespeare is what he leaves out. And the important thing is that he gets straight to the point, he does not let his vision get cloudy. It's the complete opposite of the media which confuses us with far too much detail. What you need is an expert and adult (where are they now that we need them so badly?) to say: "That's not important, *this* is important. *That's* not very important, *this* is important."

The mystery of things is really important, we shouldn't become indignant about the mystery. What worries me sometimes is the loss of awe in the face of the mystery of things. No-one likes to think and talk about darknesses, like the enormous rage within. And we need to tell stories not because they are trying to communicate a hidden meaning. It is because we don't understand them, because those stories haunt us. Why for example is it we destroy the people we love? And it's really important to be present with that, and part of being present with it is paying our respect to the enormity of the situation.

Understanding can be a defence against accepting. These are archetypes or similarities in these appalling things that Shakespeare can put his finger on. Human beings have intimacy problems. We don't like to get too close to other people, or we like to be in control of it.

I often talk about movement and space on stage, to determine whether we are too close or not too far, so that effectively we are never still, we are always caught in this "unstable treaty" as I say, not too close not too far, so there's always slight movement—it's a process, it's not a state. And if some actor will ask: "Where do I stand?" And I say, "Well, you need to find a good position to be, not too close not too far". "And where is that?" And you continue, "well that would change from second to second". In fact, you've kind of lost when you're giving somebody a position, because you're taking your coordinates from the living life that's around you.

NF: Has that ever become a problem when working across Europe? Research shows that people's perception of their personal space and their interactions with others are influenced by their geographical environment.[9] So, I wonder whether the concept of "where do I stand" in relation to the other person changes according to the physical location of the company you work with, and to the actors' nationality.

DD: Although there are cultural differences, that's not the problem. A problem for example may be in getting somebody to accept the fact that you're not too close not too far, and everybody will understand that.

But yes, there are differences between cultures. For example, some people talk very loudly, and you don't know if they're angry or not, and there

[9] See Eisler *et al.* and Rapoport for further information.

are funny things that you don't know about. But that's really not a big problem. It's like not understanding the words of a language, that's a tiny problem in a rehearsal. That's like half of a percent. The main battle is actually accepting the fact that where you are is open. So, they can be speaking any language, and that's the main battle. The problem isn't "Which language?" The problem is that the play is written in any language!

We say and believe that we use words to communicate, but actually they are also the best possible defence against communication. In a great text a character often speaks to you with words, but you have also to listen to the gentle tap-tapping behind them. It's like the tap-tapping of two prisoners trying to communicate through a cell wall. That is the crucial communication. Ironically the words are often the wall!

NF: In your opinion, has Brexit got the ring of a Shakespearean tragedy?

DD: Well I could find it in that. Some of the elements are there. There's the vanity of David Cameron, who thought he could charm his way out of it. He was plausible too. But politicians become very unpopular when they communicate a sense of superiority. There's also the fact that they didn't understand how angry people are. They've foolishly allowed the country to vote, they've given them an anger protest vote on a matter of a major constitutional issue. So, it's that kind of arrogance, and the complete misreading of the mood of the country that leads to tragedy. When we ignore the rage, you get into terrible, terrible trouble. And now we know that a disaster is going to happen. What depresses me is how so many arguments were exclusively economic. To change the Bush quote—"It ISN'T the economy, stupid!" One of the central pillars of the EU was to protect us against war and it is frightening how many people will scoff at that now as if European war were impossible.

In July 1914 there were many people scoffing that war was impossible because the global economy was too interconnected. Too many rich companies would lose money, so they wouldn't let there be a war. The big baddy global corporations suddenly get co-opted as a protective parent. And then they were proved quite phenomenally wrong.

NF: What is your understanding of the recurrent claims that Shakespeare's theatre is inherently European?

DD: Well, most of his plays are set in Europe. He loved the Italian Ovid. He had read the great Frenchman, Montaigne. England was very conscious and frightened of rich Catholic Spain, rich Catholic Italy, all were illegal to visit and so extremely glamorous. Many of Shakespeare's plays are set up in Europe, and that would give them a sense of glamour to the audience. Courtesans could be more glamorous, and cardinals could be evil. You also ran into much less censorship if the plays were set in the enemy states, so tyrannical things could be

done by Spanish, French and Italian kings rather than English ones. I also think the word “king” is only used in *Macbeth* once or twice about Macbeth, because he [Shakespeare] would have been worried about kings being killed onstage. So, he obviously knows about Europe. I just find the suggestion [that Shakespeare’s theatre is inherently European] a bit strange, actually, as far as we are all human beings on a planet, and it’s very strange that we should all of a sudden identify with a small crop of earth that we actually live on. Shakespeare always refuses to poke fun at the Catholic church and he probably lost a lot of box office by not pandering to the anti-Catholic, anti-European mood.

NF: Who goes to see Shakespeare in Russia, in Poland, or France? Who would you say makes up your audiences, on the whole?

DD: I don’t know, I always see quite a young audience out there when we’re there. Different people go at different times to see different Shakespeares. And of course, there’s no such thing as *one* Shakespeare.

And then there’s this other one that comes from school, saying that Shakespeare writes these wonderful exciting thrillers. But I find that very dangerous really in the end. If you want just a thrill you might as well watch *Double Indemnity* because *Double Indemnity* is really good, and you don’t have that much spiritual complexity. But in *Macbeth* it’s not a genre, it’s its own thing, but it’s all about self-deception. It’s not about two people wanting to kill a king. It’s all about two people convincing themselves to do something that they don’t want to do. So, they don’t want to do it, they do it, and then they realize not only that they wish they hadn’t done it, but also, they had never wanted to do it in the first place. And it’s about the rubbish that we talk to ourselves into doing things that we know we shouldn’t be doing. And when we do it, it’s so clear in *Macbeth* that he does it out of fear of *not* doing it. Which is so true—by true, I mean that it’s such a human thing to do. To leave it undone would be somehow terrible. And Macbeth does it the way we do a lot of things, to keep away our black dogs. But they’ll come back. No matter how much you drink or how many drugs you take or which reckless behaviour you indulge in, the black dogs are only gone for a bit. So, it’s about a very complex thing. It is a mystery.

The reason we go to see Shakespeare is because he’s better than other things. I don’t want to say that he’s better because he’s very “complex” because that word makes it sounds like you have to be clever. I don’t think you have to be clever or sophisticated to appreciate Shakespeare, sometimes that sense of sophistication will make you have a problem seeing Shakespeare. But what you need to see it with is common sense, and you need to understand that when Othello says “put up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them” he is a bit fake. And then, he talks about the pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war? With a little bit of common sense, you realize that’s not how soldiers talk about war! It’s how a journalist or a politician talks about war.

And the wonderful thing about Othello is that he is the real thing, he is black, he is a warrior, he is a very brave warrior, and he is an extraordinary man, he's done extraordinary things, but he feels fake. And Desdemona too is another one, she cautions Emelia when she starts talking about men, men, any men, who wouldn't accept another man outside marriage? They would become very rich and so on. And we don't notice the line, it's very creepy, it's: "Do you think there are women who have sex outside marriage?" And that's not innocent or naïve, that's creepy. Has she read the Bible? Of course, she has! And she was the one who fancied Othello because he's scary.

NF: And fundamentally different because he embodies the Other.

DD: Yes. And they're not what they seem. We are so romantic now, we see characters as heroic rebels, so as a woman against a man, youth against age, individuals against the state, we have all these fine romantic late-eighteenth century notions—the Enlightenment's got a lot to answer for. But that's not what the plays are about. The main point is that you need common sense, you need to pull back and you need to think: Do I believe this? And very often when the characters are talking to us they're talking rubbish! And what's wonderful at the end of *Othello* is when Othello says, "I have done the state some service, and they know't." It's the first time he starts to talk like a human being. So, when critics tell me about the nobility of the Moor, it's like he's read the critics and he's now behaving like Othello ought to behave! And when he kills himself, he kills himself in the third person. And Shakespeare fully understands this dislocation we have from ourselves, and he understands this right from the beginning of *Richard III*. At the beginning of *Richard III*, Richard comes on and says: "Look, I'm a man playing an actor playing a man playing an actor playing a king." He's going through all these different things. So, he's saying: "You and me, we are both puppets, but the advantage I have is that I know that I am, actually I know that I can play this part and this part and this part. Are *you* that intelligent? Because *I* know I can do anything." Then he goes to the audience: "Do you think I played that well?" So, then the self-deceiving attitude towards that is that he's such an awful person, he sounds authentic.

And what you need to say is: While you think you're authentic, you're really, really vulnerable. Because until you admit you are a puppet, somebody else is going to be pulling your strings. And I think, in a way, in order to appreciate that you have to empty things from your head. Otherwise, cleverness gets in the way and we can't see the simple, brutal things. Think about *Three Sisters* when Olga says in the first line: "Father died just a year ago, on this very day". There's a reunion and they're having a party. This should make you think: it's very odd having a party on the anniversary of your father's death. And again, they are totally dislocated from their feelings. And the big cry at the end is: Don't cry don't cry, we'll live. And I believe the great, great writers are quite obsessed people, performing being themselves.

NF: From your observations and conversations, would you say that Shakespeare is considered as a key cultural text abroad, in Russia or France, for example?

DD: Of course, yes. He's just adopted by the Russians as one of their own, from the early translations. So, he inspired Pushkin, so he is seen as being Russian. There are always all sorts of surprises when we do it. When we do it in Czech or Russian, they know what not to say, they know what's not interesting and they know what's really large. What's so terrible about listening to the news is that they don't know what news not to tell you. I've listened to twenty-five minutes on the World at One about people complaining about their flight being cancelled in Luton. Twenty-five minutes' worth of that. And think what they're *not* telling us for that twenty-five minutes. What's amazing in Shakespeare is what he does not tell you. So, he just doesn't get confused by detail, and he doesn't confuse you with details.

NF: Sometimes there is an awful lot of details, in some of the soliloquies for example, and their purpose seems to be to obfuscate.

DD: Yes, and sometimes the soliloquies are rubbish. So, you're thinking, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait! And "If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well It were done quickly". You want to say: "What's *it*, exactly?" It's all about something that really is worth to communicate, and we also use words to *un*-communicate. Most of the soliloquies are people trying not to tell you something. The big thing to ask about Shakespeare's soliloquies is, why is he saying this to me? Why does he want me to think this about him? Why does he want everyone to think he's so warm and emotional? Why does Orsino want us to think that he has feelings? Because the only people showing they have feelings are the people afraid that they don't. So, with each soliloquy you have to ask yourself, why is he telling me this? It's not that it's necessarily *lying*. We don't like to talk for other people, but we want them to see us in a certain way.

NF: And is that part of our self-deceptions?

DD: Yes, I think Shakespeare is all about self-deception. And you *see* the deception. So, in *Macbeth* in a way, you should watch them [Macbeth and Lady Macbeth] on the stage and say: "Don't do this, you don't want to do this, this is all rubbish". When she comes on and says, "unsex me here", it's all nonsense, she's doing this evil talking, but she's not like that, she's really a boring housewife, and she doesn't want to *be* evil, as it were, but she's afraid she's going to be a failure. And he's afraid he's going to be a failure. And like many couples they're afraid, or she's afraid, that they'll end up as the crazy lady and the loser.

And in the end, he *is* going to be a loser! Everything gets predicted right at the beginning, and the more they try to worry about fate, the more they bring

it on. We know it all, from the start, we just don't know where to put it in order of priority. "Who would have thought the old man has so much blood in him": she always knew, that line is about showing you how much blood came out. And about what they needed thinking about. When you think about blood, then you get more sympathy, far more sympathy from the blood than from thinking about life and death. Life and death are rather abstract. Blood's real. That's also why theatre's very important. You're actually going on the carnal presence of the actors and you hear them. You can sometimes hear them breathing. You see the imperfections. It reaffirms you in your life because you're sharing something in the living breathing space with people. And then it's very dangerous compared to what I can see from the close-up in live streaming. You're really thinking about what you're losing.[10]

NF: This year your production of *The Winter's Tale* has been made available internationally via live streaming with French and Spanish subtitles. How does one reconcile trying to capture new and more diverse audiences with giving them an experience that does not compare with the real thing?

DD: I am delighted with our shows being live streamed as long as they don't become substitutes for the real thing. It's good to give people a taste, but with live stream it's very very clear that the people who are watching the live stream are second class citizens compared to the people watching the play. This elitism is very useful, it helps to defend that actually if you were there at the real thing it would be better. Streaming is not the same as the carnal presence, and the carnal presence is very healing. It's really extraordinary that people think that the real thing might not be different from the fake.

NF: I'd like to come back to what you said about Shakespeare being Russian in Russia. It's a bit like "unser Shakespeare" in Germany.

DD: It's completely like that.

NF: What are the consequences of that? Are there any major differences in the way Shakespeare's plots and language are understood by actors, or critics, compared to the UK? Do you find that Shakespeare tends to be perceived from the perspective of the history and the geography of the Russian culture, for instance?

DD: I don't really think like that. I just know that they take it quite for what it is. They have a very intimate connection with it. I can't possibly generalize about how all Russians would see it, I just know many Russians love it. Shakespeare is

[10] Recently actors have also commented on the detrimental effect of the capturing of theatrical performances for digital broadcast on their acting and engagement with audiences in real time (Sanderson).

only popular in countries where people are interested in people, and most Russian theatre goers want their theatre to be alive and human. One of the great Russians pieces is *Hamlet*, it's absolutely central to their repertoire, they generally get to do the well-known Shakespeares over and over again. And the lesser known Shakespeares they don't tend to perform. So, you might find *The Tempest* and they perform that not quite so often and the tragedies are done all the time.

NF: Political appropriations of Shakespeare's theatre have been widespread in Eastern Europe, especially as a way of criticizing the regime.

DD: Well yes, it depends on what you mean by the politics of Shakespeare. I did the politics of *Richard III*, about self-deception and so on. But I don't think a coup d'état is very political. Saying that a character's good and another one's bad is not political. Politics is about negotiation, and it's about mediation between one thing and another. It depends on how you define the word political. But somebody that wants to make me more politically aware of how power shifts work, or how people see from their point of view, of how people manipulate, then it becomes political. Just because it is about the state, it does not necessarily mean to say it's political. In all Shakespeare's plays somehow, it's going to be about how you connect to your family, to yourself, to the birth politics in your family, and then how you connect to the state.

But I think theatre is very simple. It is about people. If it's not about people, it is boring. Shakespeare's got a lot to say, he's got a lot of ideas and they are all about people. Otherwise it's not theatre at all. And it's so simple: whether it's about being at the theatre, whether it's about putting on a play, you simply have to remember, it's always about people. That doesn't mean to say it can be clumsy or old-fashioned. Because then it's not about people, it's about some weird concept of national heroes and, you know, "le patrimoine", national heritage and so on. And that's another kind of weird idea.

The thing has actually got to be about actual people, carnally sharing blood in the presence of each other, really *doing* things. And avoiding things and lying about the things that they're doing. That's the important thing about Shakespeare. Shakespeare really reasserts our carnality. He has Prospero putting all his enemies together, and he basically says: I've put all my enemies together, and I don't know what I'm going to do to them. He says, well basically they're only human beings and I forgive them. He *explicitly* states that a spirit is no better than a human being, that a human being is better because a human being shits, bleeds, eats, copulates, and also as another function, can forgive. If you're a spirit you can't forgive. You have to be carnal in order to forgive. And that's the most beautiful part of being Shakespeare: he keeps reasserting what it is to be a human being. And if we lose sight of that, we just don't know what we're talking about in Shakespeare. It's all about humans being together and participating and sharing.

NF: In *The Actor and the Target* you explain that people go to see great plays in order to see people whose lives are going to change.[11] From what you are saying here, it is also a two-way process: the characters' lives change, but I think the spectators' lives are also deeply affected through this carnal exchange.

DD: Yes. I'm not saying theatre is not about ideas, but if it's about ideas it *must* be mediated through people. You can't just present an idea. The inauthentic thing to do is just to write a good programme note when people have a good idea and talk to the critics and so on. Then everything can take place without the inconvenient intimacy of humanity happening in the middle. But for me that's not the theatre, that's something else.

The important thing is that theatre is felt through human interchange. So, the audience have to be implicated in the act of theatre. Because they contribute to the event, they co-own it with us. You can't go into any art or cultural study as a retreat from humanity. If you read history, it's supposed to put you back into the predicaments and the terrible sufferings, terrible corners in which people found themselves. You can't escape it. I don't understand the expression 'decorative art', to me it's an oxymoron. Art is not decorative, it's there to change you. On one level it can be about flowers, but somehow, it's going to connect you with humanity in a *carnal* way.

NF: Is this what is needed for a great play to reflect our current realities?

DD: We [Declan Donnellan and Nick Ormerod] choose plays because we get a smell and a sniff that it will be interesting. But if you try to *make* it about now, then you might as well write a new play. Actually, you're using an old play to syncopate with now, you're juxtaposing it with now. You do it in modern dress as we often do, but these two will sort of sing together, and that's the important thing.

NF: What makes a play—especially a play by Shakespeare—interesting to you in the here and now at a given moment?

DD: It makes Nick and me miserable looking for plays, because certain actors are anxious to know what the play's for, and it's got to be a great play for everyone to do. We also need to feel it's somehow connected in a special way to the world that we're in, and audiences will want to see the play. That we'll be able to tour with it and develop it. With Shakespeare, he always automatically connects it himself, you know, it's always timely. There is hardly anything that's

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[11] "One of the chief reasons we go to see a great play is to see someone making a choice that will change their lives. What happens in the balcony scene? Juliet makes an extraordinary choice to defy her family and marry Romeo. And that choice moves us." (Donnellan 64)

not to do with now. Shakespeare teaches us about ourselves because he wrote plays that are about human beings and can resonate in any time or culture. Shakespeare understands that it's our carnality that makes us human—he's full of love and loss, tenderness and violence, shit and spit.

NF: And you're working on *Pericles* at the moment.

DD: Well that's not what it's about. Yes, *Pericles* is about some search that goes on, somebody escaping from home and coming back home. So, it's about that great kind of Peer Gynt theme when he leaves home and gathers a lot of strength and comes back and it's very very moving. That's completely carnal. This old man who's got very lost…

NF: And there's also the theme of incest in it, which also relates to carnality in other, but very specific ways.

DD: Well, that's interesting in terms of when somebody might run away from himself. If he feels that he's got to escape, from a vague but violent fear, a paranoia.

NF: A prevalent theme in your book is that of conflict. Does this correlate to your interest in Shakespeare and some of the reasons why you keep returning to his plays? The centrality of conflict in Shakespeare's work provides another archetype to explain its ever-increasing presence onstage and its popularity with all kinds of audiences.

DD: There's only conflict. I think that we need a correction to the psychosis of everyday life that results from our denying the invisible. People are driven insane by the society we live in and by the consumer values. And there's a kind of psychosis of the rational that we forgive, a kind of disassociation, so that people don't want to talk about the rage that's obviously present. I've noticed increasingly the way that people will de-psychologize politics. And the news also is de-psychologized. I think Shakespeare acts as an enormous antidote to this. Not just Shakespeare but all forms of art.

But first of all, theatre and art must never provide "answers". If you provide an "answer" you become a politician, a prince. It's their business to tell the truth. It's not our job to tell the truth, it's our job to create illusions. It's our job not to *lie*, that's very important, that's a very solemn undertaking. But you can't tell the truth. As soon as you start telling the truth you're really going to start lying. You've got this illusion you're going to start examining things that way and think a little bit about this illusion. But it always, always, always has to be digested with your sense of judgment and your common sense. Nothing overrides that. It's when principles start clouding our common sense that things start going really, really, really wrong. Common sense is slightly different from conscience. It's much more to do with prudence and to do with practicality.

For me one of the most moving lines in Shakespeare is Emelia's. They all talk such rubbish in Othello! Desdemona is so dull... From Othello's first lines right to the moment when he kills her, Othello is a disaster waiting to happen, he doesn't need Iago. He's so constructed he's fake. And then Emelia shouts and she's so sensitive at Iago: "What place, what form, what time, what *likelihood*?" And the way the word "likelihood" falls always make me cry, because Emelia has this ordinary common sense. "What *likelihood*"—yes, it's possible, yes, it makes sense, etc. But is it *likely*? And in some way, yes, it's true, unlikely things happen, but every now and then you need somebody, you hope that there'll be a good pair of parents actually in place. For instance, the asteroid *could* land on the earth. And a real neurotic *will* convince you that it could land any moment. If you've got bad values, you'll really believe the asteroid will land on earth. So, you need Emelia there asking about the likelihood.

NF: And another character similar to this is Paulina, in *The Winter's Tale*?

DD: Paulina's more obvious. Yes, she's good. She looks down, she looks at what death is doing.

NF: And she's angry. She's very angry.

DD: (Laughs) Ah, she's a nightmare! In some respect you can play it another way, so she creates disaster in a way, because she handles him [Leontes] when they wake her [Hermione], because how do you handle a mad person? You're borderline—you can't really handle borderline. And if she did, Paulina would end up in jail.

NF: She also does what she has to do in protecting the victim of domestic violence.

DD: She does, but she manages to get the child isolated or alone. And you can say, in certain situations it is better to stand by and do nothing. Montaigne, who I am in love with, would say: It depends. Because sometimes, when Paulina intervened, she managed to make things worse. And she says a couple of things that light a fire. I prefer Emelia. She tries to say "what likelihood" to Othello, but he is actually mad. And it's impossible to deal with somebody who's in the grip of that sort of delusion. And sometimes you have to say: This is a terrible situation and you don't have an adult to see your solution. Not daring to say: "We can't protect you from that" makes you weak.

NF: And that's the adult position.

DD: Yes. But that's very unpopular because it involves judgement and it involves having to drag yourself, and you'd rather have railway lines to run on rather than meadows that criss-cross one way to another.

NF: Translation is at the very heart of your work, since you direct Shakespeare both in English and in translation. Have you ever found translation, rather than language, to be a barrier to communication and/ or directing? And if so, in what ways?

DD: Translation is always a problem. The main problem in general is you can't translate. But you need to make sure that the translation is as accurate as possible. What's particularly difficult in Shakespearean translation is things that are simple. A classic example is when we were doing *Macbeth* in Finland thirty years ago and in the scene "why have you left the chamber? Hath he ask'd for me? Know you not he has?" They call each other "you". And then the great supreme moment is when Macbeth says, "But if we fail?", she says: "We fail. But screw your courage to the sticking-place, And we'll not fail." It's the first time they've said "we". And the translation turned out to be: "What happens if it doesn't work".

In *The Winter's Tale*, Paulina's line to Leontes "Look down and see what death is doing" was translated in Russian as: "Look, he's turned quite cold". It doesn't work. In Hedda Gabler, when she says: "This house smells of death", in Russian the translation says: "The house has a rather posthumous air about it". And that doesn't work.

Translating is a little bit like making a speech over a friend that's died at their funeral. You have to keep yourself out of it but keeping yourself out of the picture is *so* hard. And I've noticed it's the simple things translators can't translate—it's got nothing to do with the big complexities.

So, another thing in Finland was "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow", "Huomenna ja, huomenna, huomenna" with only one "ja". I said "does "ja" mean "and"? they said yes, and "huomenna" means "tomorrow". I said it has to be "Huomenna ja, huomenna ja, huomenna". They complained that in Finnish you can't really have "and" twice in the sentence. And I said it's bad English too, but Shakespeare's quite happy to write bad English, and he makes up words. The repetition of those "ands" is crucial for the whole meaning of the line. That's really difficult for people to understand.

NF: And this is where individual cultures comes into play. This takes us back to our earlier discussion: making Shakespeare "ours" in each of our individual cultures is likely to entail that our cultural habitus seeps out to modify our understanding of Shakespeare, as we conceptualize the world according to our culture, in slightly different ways.

DD: Yes, but I wouldn't want you to think that different cultures have different ways of approaching translation. It always pans out to the same thing, it's always to soften it. It's never to make it harder. I've never come across a translation

that was more edgy. It's always slightly more "embourgeoisé".[12] My worst experiences were with interpreters, when many times I've had to get cross. Because the interpreter's in your head. I was teaching students in Spain and I said: "The idea must have blood in it". And the interpreter went on and on and on and on. And I did want to hear the word "sangre", and I said what are you saying? She said I'm trying to explain what you said. I said no, "the idea must have blood in it", just use my words in Spanish. I knew in my Spanish that she hadn't said that. Then she said: "That's not a concept my students would understand." And I said I don't actually think that's your choice. I don't understand it, it's my right to speak in metaphor, it's my right not to be understood. I think you'll find if you have even the most basic reading of Lorca that you'd understand "the idea must have blood in it", you'd understand that! So, the danger is that the interpreter will think that their job is to make something comprehensible, and that's not necessarily true. It's your job, in a way, to try and reproduce the original.

NF: To transmit meaning, to transmit the message. I can see where she was coming from, but of course her job was to check with you what you meant first before intervening.

DD: Which I required, and I am haunted by enigma. So, I'm giving them enigma. The idea must have blood in it. I don't understand it, but I know it's very important. And the thing that means that the enigma works is that it must have that haunting quality. But the interpreter got herself in the way. And she made it all about her. And we're not interested in her idea of working. I mean, it's not that different languages have a need to conceptualize in different ways, because of course they do, the problem is the *need* to conceptualize, because in a way, a play or a piece of poetry is about a *de*conceptualization. So, in other words, the idea is made flesh and dwells among us,[13] it's like a Christian sacrament, the thing that's theoretical and abstract is being made carnal in front of you. So, it's the other way round. I find the problem is fascinatingly international, and a problem is that always the concrete will be made slightly more abstract, and everything will be put slightly into the past tense. So, translations will be slightly blunted, and they'll be masticated too. It's like some bird that chews the food for its chicks, that it's not going to be chewed in the way the person wants it to be chewed. So, translators and interpreters are doing too much, really.

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[12] Derogatory French term referring to the championing of a conservative lifestyle or beliefs.

[13] See the *Bible*, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14).

NF: That's a really important and useful insight. Would you go as far as saying that some translators are unconsciously trying to improve Shakespeare in the way translators did explicitly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries?

DD: Yes, they're sort of patronizing the audience. Because they think that people can't deal with not understanding things. The problem is because *they* can't deal with not understanding things. So, it's my job to say: I'm going to share. If I put on *King Lear*, I'm sharing with the audience my incomprehension with their incomprehension. It shouldn't be totally incomprehensible, but the essential mystery here that is always centrally, something *must* be incomprehensible.

That's why it's so challenging when people ask me to explain my work. If you could say what your work means you'd write an essay, that's not how it works, it's not about *meaning*, and it's very, very hard to say that to people. It's very different with an interpreter because they want to make something comprehensible.

NF: Yes, they have to make sense of what was said and then reproduce it. On the subject of communication, would you say that performing Shakespeare in different European countries helps to connect people's voices throughout Europe and beyond its borders?

DD: Yes, and I'll put it much more simply than that, it's a way of sharing our common humanity, and that's very important that we understand that we share a common humanity. Something I should say, though, some years ago I was invited to a Shakespeare conference and I was quite appalled by a lot of the things that were being said. I think that need to conceptualize can lead to one person boring 150 people, in five languages, talking rubbish. Boring someone is not harmless. It's a political act that changes them and it's very dangerous. So, one has to be a little bit careful about cultural exchanges, that they don't become virally infected by people who want safe jobs saying nothing, because they do a lot of harm.

I think that Shakespeare is always transgressive, is always surprising. And if it's not transgressive then it's not Shakespeare. You know you've gone wrong if what he says is dreary, it's not Shakespeare because he's very vital. So, you need to know that the translation actually does that. It must have some surprise element. Or the production must have somehow. It has to give you a way of looking at things in a way that's disconcertingly different from how you thought things looked before.

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Book Reviews

Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney and Grzegorz Zinkiewicz, eds., *Shakespeare: His Infinite Variety* (Łódź: Łódź University Press, 2017. Pp. 204).

Reviewed by ***Yarong Wu***[*]

2016 marked the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death, and various movies, exhibitions, theatrical performances, academic treatises in relation to the Bard were springing up in venues ranging from his hometown and London to America and Asia. *Shakespeare: His Infinite Variety* edited by Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney and Grzegorz Zinkiewicz was one of the tributes to the "citizen of the world" (9). Inspired by questions such as why Shakespeare "still evoke[s] international interest" (12), the editors gather the essays with the aim of finding out the manifestations of and reasons for his everlasting appeal to later generations, especially to those from non-Anglophone countries.

In the Introduction titled "Living Daily with Shakespeare Worldwide," editor Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney hints that the "multi-national encounters with Shakespeare" (12) are reinventions of his works that precipitate Shakespeare's "infinite variety" (12) and enable him never to be "stale" (12) all around the world.

Shakespeare's works are deeply invested in the Judeo-Christian tradition, which has intimate connections with Greek and Roman culture. In the first section "Revisiting Texts and Contexts," what is interesting is that, the two contributors, from Italy and Greece respectively, interpret Shakespeare's texts through the lens of their cultural experiences. Mario Domenichelli from the University of Florence lays emphasis on the power of rhetoric in Shakespeare's Roman plays, and the political interactions behind the rhetorical battles. He starts with a reference to Machiavelli, the famous, or rather the notorious Florentine, who is often labeled as "the Evil Tutor." The contributor presents a striking contrast between the languages spoken by the political figures in Roman "imperial diptych" (18), namely *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Brutus's Roman and aristocratic discourse is defeated by Antony's Asian and rhetoric demagogy, who is overwhelmed later by Octavian's laconic and rational speech. What occurs among them is not merely rhetoric battles, but

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also a confrontation between East and West, between an unqualified politician and Machiavelli's outstanding disciple.

Xenia Georgopoulou from Greece concerns about human affairs in the political community. The contributor provides examples of bullying at great length, beginning with Shakespeare himself as a victim of bullying when he is a fledgling dramatist, together with various bullying by kings or usurpers, between family members, and towards servants and strangers depicted in the plays. The origin of bullying has been illustrated in the key word of her title "difference," being different, or in other words, "power imbalance" (48). The differences between social hierarchy, language, appearance, morality, physical ability, and even clothing can lead to bullying. Bullying will remain, as long as there is imbalance of power.

It is appropriate to put the two contributions in the first section of this book, as critical interpretation is the foundation of later discussions of translations, appropriations, and productions of Shakespeare's works. Moreover, the deep political concern and underlying humanistic sentiments the two contributions convey set the keynote for the whole collection of essays.

What do Shakespeare's works mean today to non-Anglophone countries? The next two sections "Practices and Appropriations" and "National and Cultural Diversity in Theatre" show the geographical ubiquity of Shakespeare more clearly by analyzing diverse appropriations, adaptations, screen and stage productions in Europe including Poland, Russia, England, and Slovakia, and Asia including Bengal and Japan. People with different cultural backgrounds reinvent Shakespeare in accordance with their own national interests and political reality, so translations and appropriations of Shakespeare's works become vehicles of political issues, which also exert tremendous impacts on the productions.

What is representative is that, among the eight contributions in the two sections, three of them are by Polish scholars who unanimously choose *Hamlet* as a case in point to illustrate the political and social predicament of Poland. Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney argues that, the changes introduced by Wojciech Boguslawski in his translation / adaptation of *Hamlet* (1798) is the result of his patriotism and political involvement. The most obvious modification in Boguslawski's version is that Hamlet became Danish King without the interference of Fortinbras in the denouement, which reflects Poles' expectation of being liberated from the foreign forces. Unfortunately, Poland as a country was perished in the 19th century due to the partitions, and the former optimistic expectations turned into negative emotions. In his "The one gentleman from Poland: Polonius and 19th century Polish translation," Budrewicz demonstrates that, during this period, the pro-Polish and patriotic attitudes of many translators and critics of *Hamlet* were manifested in their dealing with the character Polonius. They either reduced the Polish elements in their translations of the

original text, or portrayed Polonius as a negative example of betrayal and disloyalty. In the new era, the political fate of Poland is demonstrated by Monika Sosnowska in her introduction of a Polish art quarter "Supergroup Azorro" and its seven-minute video, an avant-garde production of *Hamlet* (2002). One of its innovations is that, the human voices in the video are not articulated by the actors themselves, but from the soundtrack of an old version of BBC *Hamlet*. The strange mixture not only produces a fascinating artistic effect, but also demonstrates the cultural and political predicament that Poland confronts before joining the EU and the identity problem of Poles as civilized EU newcomers.

The two Polish editors of this book do not limit themselves only to the Polish history of Shakespeare reception and reinvention; they also gather essays exploring circumstances in other European countries such as Russia, England, and Slovakia.

Two distinguished literary geniuses: Pushkin from Russia and English novelist Angela Carter illustrate Shakespeare's influence with their own literary practices. In his article, Mark Sokolyansky points out that Pushkin's appropriations of Shakespeare are manifested in his own composition of sonnets, his epic poem *Count Nulin*, and the dramatic works *Angelo* and *Boris Godunov*. Likewise, Anna Pietrzykowska-Motyka uses Angela Carter's novel *Wise Children* as a case study. Apart from many obvious references to Shakespeare, this novel is full of polarities and oppositions. Almost all the binaries in Shakespeare can be found in Carter's, such as binaries between the legitimate and illegitimate, male and female, high culture and low culture. As a "postmodernist writer" (119), Carter cares more about the fragility of identity and the possibility of subverting or deconstructing those binaries.

In the book *Four Hundred Years of Shakespeare in Europe,* a collection of essays exploring the long history of Shakespearean reception on the Continent, one of the contributors Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine claims that "it would occur to no one at present to turn to the English stage as a model and a source of inspiration, or to consider English companies and directors as the sole heirs to the Shakespearean heritage" (p. 238), and Shakespeare "can be explored by directors, according to their whims, tastes, and interests" (p. 238). In this book being reviewed, the academic tradaptations of Shakespeare in Bengal, the Japanese version of *Hamlet* (2015) directed by Yukio Ninagawa, and the *Hamlet* (2004) in the Rusyn language staging in Slovakia are three telling instances of Schwartz-Gastine's view.

Sarbani Chaudhury is probably the most belligerent one among all the contributors. By quoting Mao Zedong's "Bombarding the Headquarters," he appeals students and teachers to bombard the institutionalized education in India. By analyzing a little known act of academic tradaptations of Shakespeare undertaken by the Department of English, University of Kalyani, Chaudhury criticizes the "Anglo-American stranglehold" (109) and hopes Shakespeare to be

reconfigured as “a supplementary component of a hybrid product” (118). Unlike India, in another Asian country Japan, Shakespeare’s works are read without colonial influences. Emi Hamana starts off by looking at the success of Yukio Ninagawa’s Japanese version of *Hamlet* (2015). The talented director takes advantage of the power of theatre, such as the Japanese visualization, stage design, costumes, and lighting to break the boundaries between different cultures, and fuses Shakespeare with local tradition and creativity. Jana Wild focuses on another version of *Hamlet* (2004) in the Rusyn language. Its departure from stage tradition as an “Other” is manifested in its choice of *First Quarto Hamlet* version and the “de-heroization of the main character” (147).

Grace Ioppolo’s “Shakespeare and digital and social media” in the last section provides a fitting closing statement to the whole collection, for it touches upon the possibilities of the Net for further cultural transmission and exchanges. Ioppolo enumerates several authoritative websites offering educational resources for the study of Shakespeare, and especially mentions her own experience of using Twitter as a tool to share her love and understanding of Shakespeare with far more people. The timely issue of Shakespeare in the digital information era broadens the research field of Shakespearean scholarship.

One of the book’s greatest virtues is the wide subject coverage which has been manifested in the subtitle “infinite variety,” though the borrowed epithet is initially meant to praise Shakespeare’s dramatic talents. To those who work on questions related to the history of Shakespeare reception in Poland and other non-Anglophone countries, to the political implications in critical interpretations, translations, appropriations, and productions, and to the new research filed of Shakespearean scholarship in Internet era, this collection of essays is informative and worth-reading.

While it is understandable that no book can live up to the comprehensiveness promised in its title, I personally expect to read more contributions about Asian encounters with Shakespeare, especially about China, a country which is abundant of excellent appropriations and productions of the Bard’s works. But this is only a nitpicking to this rich array of essays.

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Michael Thomas Hudgens, *The Shakespeare Films of Grigori Kozintsev* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017. Pp. xi+146).

Reviewed by ***Eleonora Ringler-Pascu***[*]

Michael Thomas Hudgens, reporter, editor and professor of philosophy explores in his book *The Shakespeare Films of Grigori Kozintsev* the world of theatre and film. He presents a detailed study of the directorial achievement of Grigori Kozintsev, a Soviet filmmaker, whose *Hamlet* (1964) and *Lear* (1970) adaptations became an "international treasure" (ix).

Structured in two parts, the book puts into foreground detailed information about the two film productions and the context of their genesis, comparing them with other productions and also mentioning important directors who influenced Kozintev's work—among them being Akira Kurosawa and Peter Brook. The influence of the Noh Theatre with its philosophy of extreme restraint, bringing together emotions, poetry and music in a powerful lyrical concentration is also to be noticed. This explains the directorial precision as the historical details are reduced to a minimum and the focus is put on human existence, like a mathematical equation, present in his statement: "an arithmetic of life and an algebra of existence" (qtd. in Hudgens 21).

The author of the study even brings arguments of how Shakespeare's plays had been interpreted in the Elizabethan era, taking into account the Renaissance theatre aesthetic, so as to underline the innovative elements present in Kozintev's vision. As a representative of the Russian avant-garde artist group the Factory of the Eccentric Actor (FEKS), closely related to Dadaism and Futurism, he was interested to proclaim the power of the people and of the democratic revolution. Thus he illustrates in his productions the tragedy of an entire people rather than just of one single person. He focuses on the subject of the kingdoms, the subject of Claudius and Lear, showing how the actions of the few rich and powerful impact on the many, namely the poor. The film versions of *Hamlet* and *King Lear* depict the world of these plays against the context of society and culture, bringing to light the hidden political context from Shakespeare's works.

Both film productions reflect a lifelong engagement with Shakespeare's work, committed to fidelity with the original as well as with the idea of modernizing them through distinct interpretation. Thus the study includes quotations from Kozintsev's books on Shakespeare—*Shakespeare: Time and Conscience* (1966) and *King Lear: The Space of Tragedy – The Diary of a Film Director* (1977), both allowing the reader to follow the questions of a filmmaker during the planning stages and the accomplishment of the production. The

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author of the study works with the comments of the film director and with quotations from Shakespeare's plays, explaining all the completion stages of the two film productions. Thus he describes the film techniques, the settings, portrays the dramatis personae and the special atmosphere. He is impressed by the simplicity of the making, but at the same time by the power of the filmic message.

Grigori Kozintsev was filming Shakespeare's plays in Boris Pasternak's outstanding translation, as the Russian verses have a "natural prosaic quality" (4) that achieves the visual comprehensibility within a real area, with the specific fluency and smoothness on the screen. Dimitri Shostakovich's music score adds to the visual part the special sound effects, amplifies the force of emotional impact and creates a unique atmosphere, corresponding to the aesthetic position of the filmmaker.

The first unit of the book focuses on *King Lear*, shot in various places throughout the Soviet Union, underlining the common aspect of all of these locations as desolate nature, fitting with Kozintsev's goal of providing a dark traceless environment to his film. The skillful use of outdoor scenes transformed nature into something similar to the chorus of the Greek tragedy. This masterpiece is a black-and-white production, as the intention was to bring it close to life, without any coloured "beautiful effects."

Hudgens insists on the text of the drama and on the filmic language, taking into account all sequences while presenting the dramatis personae and their dialogues—comparing Pasternak's translation with the original. A special accent is laid on Lear and the Fool, on the special atmosphere of the film, dominated by darkness, devastating winds and storm. Thus the director's statement points out his own mindset: "*Lear* has its own arithmetic and it also has algebra. There is as well, and I am not afraid to say it, a magic in numbers. The work is devoted to the turbulence of the elements, to the chaos of the universe, but all the same it imitates the universe in that it divides, subtracts, and multiplies" (qtd. in Hudgens 22).

Kozintsev's film is faithful to the architecture of the play, but the text is optimized, drastically shortened, with major cuts to the original play in order to adapt it to an acceptable running time for a movie audience. The production is concentrating on the key dialogues of the characters and the main action, as there persists the idea to present the content of the play in visual terms, often with sequences which are constructed without the use of dialogue. Even silence creates a magic filmic atmosphere. The camera is continually mobile and extends shots, enabling the physical exploration of the space, and even of the inner lives of the characters, insisting on their facial expressions, fixing especially the glimpse of the eyes. Acting like an actor, the camera concentrates on attractive objects and thus underlines the statements of the acting characters in a specific atmosphere.

The second unit of the book covers Kozintsev's *Hamlet* project, which does not open with the initial Ghost appearing, but with the image of the sea that surrounds Elsinore—a noticeable aspect of opening through the prominent role of location shooting. Capturing the sublimity of the tormented landscape represents one of the primary means through which the filmmaker tried to stick to his position, that emphasizes the fact that the screen must be charged with the "electricity" of tragedy. The turbulence of the elemental forces of nature functions as a mirror of the tormented world, focusing on Hamlet's tormented soul and mind. Taking into account this context Sokolyansky explains that Kozintsev's approach to emphasize the northern setting of *Hamlet* determined the use of black and white film with the aim to "capture the cool greys of the north," in opposition to the colours used for the "warm south" in his earlier film production *Don Quixote* (1957) (Sokolyansky 201).

In the *Hamlet* film a superb rendition of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy is given, which, although much reduced from the stage version, is a masterpiece of cinematic compression. Even the final devastating scene with the famous soliloquy is reduced to "The rest is silence" (5.2.337). The adaptation is praised for its cinematic excellence, again a wide-screen black-and-white production with the score done by composer Dimitri Shostakovich, whose music fortifies action and emotions—becoming the voice of Shakespeare. Kozintsev is interested in Hamlet as the protagonist who discovers the world in which he lives, as his experiences lead him to discover the souls of his mother, the conscience of his friends, the moral philosophy of the courtiers and finally himself. The best description of the aesthetic position is given by the director himself: "It is quite possible and permissible, to make an academic production of the play, but I think at the same time Shakespeare needs a kind of new, individual interpretation. Every new effort of every generation creates a new aspect of this character. A new aspect of history, the spirit of poetry, the sense of humanity, should be modern and absolutely lifelike for audiences today… I shall try to show the general feelings, the general philosophy of the poetry, but I shall not use the medium of traditional theatre staging. I want to go the way of the cinema" (qtd. in Sokolyansky 204).

There are two key elements for understanding Kozintsev's Shakespeare films: first, the advantage of filming that allows him to show men in close-up, so that one could "see" them think. Secondly, he considers Shakespeare to be a great poet, describing the world of nature that is almost forgotten by 20th-century urban people, a reason to film his plays in nature, creating fascinating cinematic "Shakespeare-worlds."

Peter Brook regarded both film productions as being of special interest and expressed his admiration (posthumously) towards his old friend. "I remember with gratitude your joy and excitement and your deep seriousness. I remember in your *Hamlet* and in your *Lear*, your searching for truths about

man's condition and your wish to speak through your art about one subject only: about humanity—no more, no less" (qtd. in Hudgens 141).

It would have been helpful to underline the most important aspects, but sometimes it is quite difficult to follow the ideas of the author, as he works with many quotations creating a labyrinth of information. On the other hand, it is interesting to know a lot about the work of Kozintsev, especially through his diary notes; the director's aesthetic view becomes a valuable guide through the discussion of the cinematic work of the two described productions.

As a conclusion the book of Hudgens offers a well-informed and wide-ranging introduction to the Shakespeare cinematic adaptations of *Hamlet* and *King Lear* as masterpieces of Grigori Kozintsev, representing a unique exploration of the universe of theatre and film, that we should keep in mind.

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Yoshiko Kawachi, *Shakespeare: A World Traveler* (Chuokoron Jigyoshuppan, 2018. Pp. 196).

Reviewed by ***Hisao Oshima***[*]

Yoshiko Kawachi's *Shakespeare: A World Traveler*, written in Japanese with the Japanese title of *Sekai o Tabisuru Shakespeare*, is the outcome of her life-long research on global Shakespeare. As readers of this journal might know well, the author is an internationally active Japanese Shakespearean scholar, herself travelling abroad to attend Shakespearean conferences all over the world. Fortunately, I shared precious Shakespearean moments with her in the VIII World Shakespeare Congress: "Shakespeare's World / World Shakespeares" at Brisbane in 2006 and the Inaugural Conference of the Asian Shakespeare Association: "Shakespearean Journeys" at Taipei in 2014, with both of which this book surely has much in common in approaching global Shakespeare. In the latter conference, she gave a very impressive keynote speech "Shakespeare's Long Journey to Japan and His Presence in Asia," and this book is a much enlarged version about Shakespeare's world travel. As Shakespeare has now spread all over the world, it is a very vast topic, but, as the co-editor of *Shakespeare Worldwide: Translation and Adaptation*, 4 vols (1986-95) and this journal, *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance* (2004-), no doubt she is one of the best qualified scholars to attempt this formidable task.

It is a great paradox that there is no historical record about Shakespeare's travel abroad; we can only imagine he traveled back and forth between Stratford-upon-Avon and London, but his imagination flew to anywhere in the world in his plays. After his death, however, the universal power of his drama has made him transcend boundaries in space and time. As Kawachi wrote in the introduction, Shakespeare's mirror up to nature reflects the universe as it is, and unless essential human nature change, his dramatic messages prove valid everywhere even in the modern world. The great malleability of his works has made them possible to adapt to various cultures in the world with different theatrical traditions, just as Shakespeare's great popularity all over the world well testifies. In the first chapter, she traces it to its root, Shakespeare in his age, analyzing his portraits and stages. His portraits often tell much about Shakespeare the man; New portraits such as Cobbe's and Sanders's are new visual documents about the dramatist. The modern study on Shakespeare's public and private theatres has led to new understandings about his dramatic style and so-called historical stage productions of his works at London Globe Theatre and its indoor theatre "Sam Wanamaker Theatre."

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In the second chapter "Shakespeare's Transformation in England," the author divides it into four sections (1. 17th Century, 2. 18th Century, 3. 19th Century and 4. 20th Century and After) and describes the historical outline of Shakespeare's reception and afterlife in his country. Shakespeare's afterlife journey was much hindered and stopped by the Puritan Revolution when theatres were closed and Shakespeare's plays were almost forgotten. After the restoration in 1660, the 17th century witnessed the introduction of classical drama theory, female actors and proscenium stages: King's and Duke's Theatres competed and staged his heavily cut plays and much musicalized adaptations. Starting from this much transformed Shakespeare, she concisely describes the process of authentic Shakespeare's recovery and attainment of his status as a national icon in his country, introducing the great English tradition of Shakespearean actors and actresses (David Garrick, John Philip Kemble, Sara Siddons, Edmund Kean, Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, and so on) and another English tradition of bardolatry supported by Romanticism against classicists' attacks, and these traditions are certainly behind many unique modern stage productions inaugurated by Peter Brooks and Shakespearean films by Orson Wells, Peter Greenaway and others.

After these preliminary chapters, the author offers readers a very useful map of Shakespeare's global receptions in the third chapter, divided into 32 sections: 1. The United States, 2. Canada, 3. France, 4. Spain, 5. Portugal, 6. Italy, 7. Greece, 8. Israel, 9. Germany, 10. Switzerland, 11. Austria, 12. Low Countries, 13. Russia, 14. Kyrgyzstan, 15. Czechoslovakia, 16. Poland, 17. Hungary, 18. Romania, 19. Bulgaria, 20. Denmark, 21. Norway, 22. Sweden, 23. Finland, 24. Africa (East, South and West), 25. Arab countries, 26. Latin American Countries (Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico and others), 27. Australia, 28. New Zealand, 29. India, 30. China (Mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan), 31. Korea, and 32. Japan. After a brief historical description about the country or region, the author describes its local reception of Shakespeare: how he has been translated, staged, studied, and celebrated, influencing and influenced by its history, culture, literature, art, politics and so on. In other words, she treats all aspects of Shakespeare's reception: translations, stage productions, films, academic organizations, festivals, and various kinds of influence, literary, theatrical, political, etc., dotting episodes from her own world journey to search for Shakespeare.

In the United States, for example, many English companies toured the brave new world in its colonial days and *Richard III* in New York in 1752 is the earliest recorded Shakespearean stage production in America. Shakespeare's dramatic literature has influenced many American thinkers, writers, and politicians. The author offers us an interesting episode about the second and third American presidents, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson who often quoted Shakespeare in their political speeches; they visited Shakespeare's birthplace together, and the former deplored much to see Shakespeare's dilapidated houses, noting in his diary that the citizens of the town were not interested in their historical

significance. In the United States, famous English actors were much respected; they served as bridges bringing Shakespeare's drama to the new world. As she notes in the last section on the Japanese reception, Otojiro Kawakami and his wife Sadayakko watched *The Merchant of Venice* featuring Henry Irving and Ellen Terry in an American city. Kawakami later adapted its court scene and played the role of Shylock before Irving, who gave a letter of recommendation to Kawakami and contributed much to the success of the company of Otojiro and Sadayakko in England. Shakespeare seems to have a unique power to have people move around the world. American actors also became successful through Shakespeare and some of them crossed the Atlantic: the black actor Ira Aldridge in the role of Othello, Edwin Forest and Edwin Booth who competed with English actors such as Macready and Irving in London.

The old world was not behind in welcoming Shakespeare into its countries. In France where Shakespeare was first castigated for his violation of classical drama rules, Berlioz and Victor Hugo became his advocates in the Romantic movement. The author asserts it's in France that Shakespearean stages were much simplified, shifting the focus more to actors, though influenced by Granville-Barker's dramatic theory, citing Jacques Copeau's *Twelfth Night* (1914), George Pitoev's *Hamlet* (1926) on its steel-paneled stage, and René-Louis Piachaud's political *Coriolanus*, which are some of the forerunners of modern Shakespearean stages ushered in by Peter Brooks: *Timon of Athens* (1974), *Measure for Measure* (1978), and *The Tempest* (1990). Kawachi watched his stage production of *Hamlet* (2000) with a black actor as Hamlet and an Indian actress as Gertrude. In the process of Shakespeare's globalization, she argues, international casting like this has been becoming more and more common, and translation of Shakespeare also has been changing accordingly, oriented more toward the body language of actors, which started in the modernizing process of Shakespeare's stages in the 1980s.

In Germany, too, Shakespeare was first criticized for his violation of classical drama rules, but Lessing, Herder, and Goethe highly valued Shakespeare's genius in their Romantic Movement, often called "Sturm und Drang." Famous Japanese novelist Ogai Mori who studied in Germany in the Meiji period had five different German editions of Shakespeare such as those by Johan Heinrich Voss and Schlegel. Kawachi argues Mori later translated *Macbeth*, using Voss's edition, because she found Mori's personal jottings on its pages in the collection of Mori's books preserved at Tokyo University Library. In 1911, Friedrich Gundolf published *Shakespeare and the German Spirit*. Thanks to this book, the author claims, Shakespeare continued to be staged even in the First and Second World Wars when most literatures of enemy countries were banned. In 1905, Max Reinhardt directed *Midsummer Night's Dream* while Leopold Jessner staged *Richard III* in the style of German Expressionism in 1920, but political productions of Shakespeare were totally banned in the Third Reich.

After World War II, Germany was divided into the west and east, and the conflict of ideology much influenced the reception of Shakespeare in the two countries. The author duly emphasizes the importance of Brecht who formed the company of Berliner Ensemble and wrote his unfinished version about Coriolanus, making him an anti-hero. In 1941, Brecht used the alienation effect again in his adaptation of *Richard III* which set Hitler's political success story in the world of Chicago gangs. Kawachi argues Brecht much influenced modern directors such as Peter Hall, founder of RSC, and others. When she served as the leader of a special conference on Shakespearean translation in the 1986 Shakespeare Congress held in West Germany, she visited East Germany through Checkpoint Charlie and witnessed the desolate (completely far from dream) stage production of Berliner Ensemble's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Heiner Müller's *Hamlet / Machine*, published in 1977 and staged in Berlin in 1979, became a seven-hour-and-half stage production in 1990, which she watched in Tokyo: "In October 1990, West and East Germanies were united. It's no wonder that this adaptation was understood as an epitaph for East Germany" (*Shakespeare: A World Traveler*, 79).

Thus, political upheavals and changes in the last century all over the world have left clear marks on Shakespeare's global reception, and its political aspects have been more and more important and hotly debated. Shakespeare's works are intertextually and interculturally linked with political situations of countries or regions where they are staged. In Israel, *The Merchant of Venice* cannot be staged without some political repercussions as Shylock is an iconic character of Jewish people victimized in the Christian world. In Russia, too, the author argues, Shakespeare's receptions in the age of Tsars and after the revolution are completely different. In the age of Tsars, Shakespeare's plays in which kings are murdered, like *Macbeth*, were banned, though Shakespeare much influenced Russian poets, writers, and composers such as Pushkin, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Tchaikovsky, and so on. Tolstoy, often compared with Shakespeare, criticized the dramatist, writing *Shakespeare and Drama* in 1904. Stanislavsky introduced the new style of realistic acting in Shakespearean productions, though he was criticized for neglecting the original text. After the revolution, the communist ideology completely changed the direction of Shakespeare's reception in which the sense of class and hierarchy of power were much emphasized; Shakespearean characters of lower classes were often regarded as the representative of proletarians in socialist productions: *The Taming of the Shrew,* directed by Aleksei Popov, was a Shakespearean comedy performed most often in the USSR, applauding love for its promotion of socialism. After Stalin's death, however, the dictator was satirized in Nikolai Okhlopkov's *Hamlet* (1954). In Czechoslovakia (Czech Republic now) and Poland, which were for some time under the shadow of the Soviet communist regime, Shakespeare was politically appropriated for and against the totalitarian

regime. The author argues Jan Kott's *Shakespeare, Our Contemporary* and Polanski's *Macbeth* are rooted in its dark oppressed days.

In Africa, India, Australia and Asian countries, Shakespeare frequently served as a colonial missionary of the Western culture. In some countries such as South Africa and India, Shakespeare became an important part of curriculums of schools and universities while Shakespeare was often uniquely transformed, or united with traditional theatres in Asian countries: Peking Opera in China, Pansori in Korea, Noh, Kyogen and Kabuki in Japan. Kawachi reminds Japanese readers that it is not only the British Empire which used and spread Shakespeare in its colonial expansionism. Japan also played a role in Korea's reception of Shakespeare, for Shakespeare, an important part of Japanese theatrical culture, was introduced there when the Japanese empire colonized the country.

Kawachi notes the reception of Shakespeare in South Africa cannot be separated from its political problems. In 1994 Nelson Mandela who read Shakespeare in prison became the president and Apartheid was abolished with the result that the white minorities returned the control of the country to the black majority. It might not be irrelevant to add an episode of mine about an international conference of the Shakespeare Association of South Africa which she mentions in her book. In "Shakespeare Congress: The International Spread of Shakespeare" held in 2007 at Rhodes University in Grahamstown where I read my paper on *Ninagawa Tempest*, the delegates were advised to remain in the campus for security; I felt the mainly white academic community of Shakespeare was only possible in the protected campus while African people's real life was going on outside. As its finale, the association's drama company "Shakespeare SA" staged *Hamlet*, based on the first recorded Shakespearean production in the continent 400 years ago in which the English captain invited the native king and lords, staging the play on his ship "Red Dragon" in 1607. Then I witnessed the moment of the political power balance delicately shaping a Shakespeare performance. In its last scene, dying Hamlet, played by a white actor, handed his crown to a black actor personating Fortinbras, who graciously returns it to the white actor in the curtain call.

In this age of globalization, Shakespeare is spreading all over the world, and it is urgently necessary to understand various local Shakespeares from the global perspective. Therefore, *Shakespeare: A World Traveler* is a much welcome book for Japanese readers, for this kind of book on global Shakespeare for general readers is still rare in Japan. Notes are much missed as they are important signs for serious followers of the bard's afterlife. As his world journey is daily expanding on the planet, great respectful thanks are due to the author who has accomplished such a tour de force to create its concise map. This book will surely serve as a useful guide for would-be researchers on global Shakespeare when they embark on their own journeys following the great dramatist's steps.

Lu Gusun, *Ten Lectures on Shakespeare Studies*; *Shashibiya Yanjiu Shijiang* 莎士比亚研究十讲 (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2017. Pp. 230).

Reviewed by ***Mengtian Cui***[*]

Originally published in 2005, *Ten Lectures on Shakespeare Studies* incorporates two speeches, seven papers and six short essays written from 1982 to 2004. No obvious alteration is made in this new edition. Professor Lu's reputation in the field of lexicography has been so firmly established that his achievements in Shakespeare studies are somewhat overshadowed. Actually, Lu, according to this book, was the first scholar from Mainland China to publish Shakespearean criticism in an international journal (p. 149), and he had been teaching "Shakespeare In-Depth" at Fudan for more than two decades. Moreover, as a theatre lover, Lu not only took part in the First Shakespeare Festival (1986) but wrote his reflections and suggestions at length afterwards (pp. 71, 174). Hence, in encompassing Shakespearean criticism, teaching and staging Shakespeare, Lu's book will remain a must-read for anyone interested in the reception history of the Bard in China.

Lu's contribution to Shakespeare studies in this book is characterized by three qualities. Firstly, as an omnivorous reader in Western Shakespeare criticism, Lu is ready to acquaint readers with the critical heritage from Jonson to Greenblatt and inform us of the latest interpretations, even a deconstructive one as Updike's adaptation, *Gertrude and Claudius* (pp. 13-14). Next, not only is Lu familiar with transatlantic Shakespeare in performance in Britain, the U.S. and Canada, but fully cognizant of traditional styles of Chinese Opera. Thus, his intellectual acuity and cultural attainments make him well-qualified to give suggestions on such intractable questions as how to bring Chinese and Western national essences together (pp. 98-99). Last but not least, Lu is fortunate enough to receive personal instructions from outstanding predecessors at Fudan, including Lin Tongji, Xu Yanmou, Ge Chuangui, Liu Dezhong, and Yang Bi (*Collection*, 159-171). Lin, for instance, highly acclaimed by Stanley Wells and Cyril Birch, was the one to kindle Lu's interest in both Shakespeare and Roman history. According to Lu, it was also Lin that started the tradition of close reading Shakespeare in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Fudan (*Collection*, 167). The paper on *Coriolanus* in the book, for instance, evolves from a book report written for Lin's class during 1964-1965 (p. 184). Lu's book, on this account, covers the reception history of Shakespeare in China spanning 40 years, which deserves more attention from Shakespearean scholars, both at home and abroad.

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Shakespearean criticism has undergone so many changes during the past 400 years. Is it possible to discern a sort of pattern amongst the dramatic changes? What new trends are emerging in the beginning of the 21st century? Lu responds to these questions in his first speech, a welcome address delivered at "Shakespeare in China" Colloquium, held at Fudan in 2004. His answer to the former question could be summarized as "whirligig," and the latter "throwback." "Whirligig" is explained as follows: Shakespearean criticism over the four centuries has changed "from a historical approach with the playwright at the center to the New Critical approach with the text as a point of departure and thence to deconstructionism with whoever is at the receiving end free to 'appropriate' Shakespeare" (p. 4). In the beginning of the new century, there is "a resurgent robust interest in a historical approach to the Bard" (pp. 2-3), which is a "throw-back" to the past indeed. Why could Shakespeare recurrently arouse interests among readers and scholars? Lu attributes the Bard's success to open-endedness and great capacity of his works. In a long speech entitled "Open-endedness of Shakespeare," Lu, with his elegant English and British sense of humor, makes a comprehensive introduction to Shakespeare in front of all graduates at Fudan. In Lu's opinion, owing to their open-endedness, Shakespeare's plays could admit "an abundance of varied information," lead to "doubts and uncertainties," and make "an invitation to deconstruct" (p. 13). His illustration of the first point is particularly impressive, in which Shakespeare's characters, scenes, plots and language are touched upon in sequence. To his mind, there is "a rich assortment of characters" in Shakespearean *dramatis personae* which almost cover every walk of life in Elizabethan England (p. 19). Scenes are also various in Shakespeare's works, from elaborate ones of state to those in the lower strata of society (pp. 20-21). What impresses Lu most, however, is Shakespeare's versatile language, since the Bard seems to be endowed with a rare talent in having both sublime and bawdy languages at his disposal. Lu's familiarity with Shakespeare's complete works makes him an excellent guide in an overview like this, but regrettably his discussion of plots is somehow omitted in this speech. The loss is not irretrievable, though. In the second paper of the book, plot is referred to again as one aspect to illustrate Shakespeare's capacity. Other aspects include genres, characters, time and space, and stage performance (p. 103). To avoid redundancy, I will focus on plots and genres in this paper. Lu holds that Shakespeare often devises several plots in one single play and he is good at paralleling historical events with private lives, the former being the main storyline and the latter the subplot (p. 107). When genres are concerned, Lu contends that comedies, tragedies, histories and romances are classifications too mechanical for Shakespearean plays. Rather, he considers plays of English monarchs to be more appropriate than histories (p. 104). He continues to point out that there are tragic elements in

such a comedy as *Merchant of Venice* whereas so-called tragedies like *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Romeo and Juliet* all contain comic elements (p. 105). The combination of different elements in one play, obviously, helps to enhance its capacity.

There has long been a debate on whether Shakespeare is a literary dramatist or a playwright writing theatrical texts for the stage. Lu, in his article "On Shakespeare's Performability and Readability," explains to readers when and why critics' opinions polarize on this issue and suggests a neutral stand in the end (pp. 204-208). Besides, as a Chinese critic, Lu seems to be haunted by the compatibility between Shakespearean plays and traditional Chinese operas. In "Reflections after the Curtainfall," he composes a detailed exposition on this issue and extends it to much larger spheres as Chinese and Western cultures. Being optimistic about the compatibility of Shakespearean plays and Chinese operas, Lu, however, opposes the so-called sinicization of Shakespeare. To make the argument clear, he then points out the deep-rooted differences between Western and Chinese cultures, enumerating radical conflicts between Hebraism and Hellenism in the former versus eclecticism and the golden mean in the latter. Bearing these distinctions in mind, Lu warns against the reduction or oversimplification of either culture and makes such a concluding remark: "Compatibility of two cultures is the most complicated and subtle work. One's national culture should never be corroded and swallowed by foreign cultures. Nonetheless, neither should the nation itself exert such unbounded aggrandizement that it dissolves all characteristics of other cultures." (pp. 98-99) Lu's words might serve as an antidote to the resurgent nationalism in the contemporary world.

The strength of this book not only lies in macroscopic discussions, though. Equally impressive are the four papers analyzing specific plays of Shakespeare's, which are *Henry V*, *Hamlet*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Coriolanus* respectively. In each paper, Lu performs an in-depth textual analysis, while attaching importance to the plays' historical backgrounds and critical heritage at the same time. While demonstrating *Henry V* as a typical history play, Lu informs readers of the concept of ideal monarchy in Renaissance humanism, public enthusiasm about lessons of history in Elizabethan England, Shakespeare's optimistic view towards the world in his early and middle works (pp. 124-130), etc. In the paper on *Taming of the Shrew*, Lu embeds the motif of "taming" in the contemporary social background and elicits customs of Elizabethan marriages and weddings (pp. 166-170). Lu's approach is best represented in "Dysfunction: The Root Cause of Tragedy in *Coriolanus*." In this paper originally written in 1964, Lu analyzes the chaotic states of both the characters and the body politic in *Coriolanus*. With regard to the latter, Lu initially recounts the reception history of the play, amongst which completely

different interpretations of the play from the left to right wings in the political spectrum are specified in particular (p. 189). Meanwhile, Lu is not oblivious of the prevalent political ideas during the Tudor Dynasty, which, in his opinion, could be summarized as the divinely-ordered body politic. The best illustration of these political ideas in the play is Menenius' fable of the belly (p. 191). In explaining this analogy, Lu makes full allowances for Shakespeare's gradual change towards the idea of "people," yet he rejects the assertion that the Bard's sympathy completely lies with the populace. To elucidate this point, Lu even alludes to Gu Zhun's commentary on Roman democracy and French Revolution (pp. 192-193), through which perceptive readers could unequivocally identify the direct bearing the play has on China. Of the four papers, "*Hamlet* across Space and Time" is the only one targeted at a foreign audience, so it begins with the translation and reception history of *Hamlet* in China. Then Lu suggests Shakespearean scholars in the world to "break new ground" and focus on Hamlet's "relationship" and "inability to identify." Lu claims, Hamlet, compared with other characters, "having something of everything, is not quite anything all over," hence finds "identification virtually impossible" (p. 146). This paper was originally published in 1982, and it somewhat prophesized the crisis of identity today.

Professor Lu's book is not flawless, of course. Being a collection of papers, speeches, and essays written at different times, its most obvious defect is redundancy. The general pattern of Shakespearean criticism is referred to at least four times (p. 4, pp. 42-45, p. 204, p. 213). Two articles incorporate the diversity of Shakespeare's characters, scenes, and language, the first time in English, then in Chinese (p. 15, p. 102). Moreover, a few points in the book are in some way incoherent. As has been pointed out already, the discussion of plots is unexpectedly omitted in "Open-endedness of Shakespeare." In the last paragraph of the paper on *Henry V*, the turning to comparison between Chinese and Shakespearean plays seems to be too abrupt due to a lack of transition (p. 132). Finally, certain improvement in editing work would surely rectify some minor errors in this otherwise brilliant book. For example, it would be more appropriate to change "17th century" on page 3 to "16th century;" "Protegenates" on page 28 should be replaced by "Plantagenets."

However, these flaws mentioned above are trifling compared with the outstanding merits of Professor Lu's book. I will spare the last paragraph for one rare quality this book is possessed of. Lu seems to have an acute awareness of carrying forward traditions. In "The Letter on Teaching Shakespeare" (one of the six short essays), he makes it plain that young scholars, with various academic strengths, lack patience and perseverance in reading first-hand texts intensively, which is what Lu will teach students in his class (p. 210). Obviously, close reading Shakespeare is what he has learned from predecessors like Lin

Tongji, and what he would like to bequeath to his students. Only a few lucky ones could attend "Shakespeare In-Depth," but we readers are fortunate enough to have this book before us. As long as we read Shakespearean plays and books like Lu's, we are continuing a tradition "which may be invisible and untouchable but will be passed on, from generation to generation." (*Collection*, 170)

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Paul Franssen, *Shakespeare's Literary Lives. The Author as Character in Fiction and Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. 276).

Reviewed by ***Coen Heijes***[*]

"This book is not about Shakespeare [….] nor does it deal with his works". In the first few sentences, Franssen sets out very clearly that he does not intend to discuss essential Shakespeare, but wants to zoom in on Shakespeare's fictional afterlives, in other words how Shakespeare appears in fictional stories by creative writers throughout the centuries. In his book, Franssen shows the almost infinite variety of lives that Shakespeare takes on in fiction, ranging from regal ghosts to an android or even a dog. His intention in doing so, however, is not to provide an overview of these fictional stories as such, but to study the ideologies and the cultural constructions of Shakespeare that inform these stories. As so little is known of Shakespeare's life, fiction writers, Franssen argues, can take more liberty with Shakespeare than would be possible in adapting or staging his plays. It is precisely in this fictional genre that the way Shakespeare is appropriated for various specific discourses can be made more manifest. What is of special interest, is that most research in this area has focused on the Anglophone world, and Franssen clearly sets out to move beyond that, studying these fictions in a more international context, and analysing the ideologies, in (mainly) Europe and North America, that inform the fictional stories in which Shakespeare appears as a character.

Rather than opting for a chronological approach, Franssen chooses a structure in which each chapter discusses a specific motif or factoid that occurs in several fictional stories as a basis for comparison within and across countries and time periods, using these stories as case studies to support his argument. In the first chapter, Franssen focuses on Shakespeare´s ghosts. The portrayal of Shakespeare before 1800 was mainly as a ghost, and while his roles were many, the character was generally installed with a sense of dignity, portrayed as a regal figure of authority. This figure was appropriated by the fiction writers, however, for a variety of purposes. In England, he was used for example to legitimise authors, such as Dryden, or as a character in theatrical disputes between rival companies. In Germany, Shakespeare's ghost was used by Lenz in 1775 to support the Germanic school of Nature against French neoclassicism, while in the Netherlands Shakespeare's ghost supported neoclassical principles, in line with the existing French cultural influence. Only in Spain, Shakespeare's ghost was less dignified, but here he had to contend with that other great writer, Cervantes. More modern examples of Shakespeare as a ghost, show his stature to be diminished, as he turned more into a character of fun, but mainly so in

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Britain. Franssen argues this might be due to the British respect for the text since Edward Malone, which would need a compensatory outlet by ridiculing the ghost. As Continental Europe, forced to translate Shakespeare, would not need this outlet, the ghost could generally maintain its prestige. What makes for pleasant reading, is that Franssen does not try to shove this, or any other theory, down the reader's throat, but generally argues in a more tentative manner, while clearly presenting his evidence.

The second chapter focuses on the development of Shakespeare in fiction as a man of flesh and blood, which can be dated to the beginning of the nineteenth century. A large part of the chapter is about Duval's short play *Shakespeare Amoureux* (1804), in which Shakespeare triumphs over Lord Wilson, in the battle for a woman. Supposedly based on Manningham's 1601 diary, Lord Wilson takes the place of the actor Burbage, thereby introducing Shakespeare not only as a lover but also pitting him as a bourgeois, a commoner, in a successful battle against the aristocrat Lord Wilson. It is a theme which would have been popular in France and vassal states in a timeframe that saw Napoleon's rise to power. Franssen outlines how the play, with Shakespeare as a man of flesh and blood, became a hit, not only in France, but also in Spain, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Italy, and the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. He goes on to argue how this French play, with all the status of French culture and language of the time behind it, might have worked in the early nineteenth century as an accelerator in the process of setting off Shakespearomania across Continental Europe. At the same time, Franssen demonstrates how specific national conditions, particularly in Germany, would tend to play down the class conflict and rather focus on Shakespeare as a Romantic character, possessing an inner moral worth that would be the true mark of nobility.

In the third and fourth chapter Franssen demonstrates how changes in Shakespeare's character reflect changing historical contexts. In the third chapter, he focuses on the difference between country (Stratford) and city (London). For example, the factoid of Shakespeare's poaching a deer is shown to evolve hand in hand with discourses of authority. As class divisions came to be questioned, Shakespeare would gradually move from an innocent, youthful transgressor to one who would firmly and rightly stand up against the aristocracy. In the fourth chapter, the centre of attention is Shakespeare's sexual orientation. Franssen traces the erosion of Shakespeare as a moral beacon in the twentieth century and zooms in on Oscar Wilde's 'The Portrait of Mr. W.H.'. The homoerotic preferences of Shakespeare, which are suggested, proved to be influential in later decades, for example in stories involving boy actors playing women's roles and the ensuing gender confusion. Perhaps even more noteworthy is the attention Franssen draws to Wilde's story as demonstrating the opacity of Shakespeare's life. Wilde, he argues, was ahead of his time and would have seen that stories,

including his own, about Shakespeare are constructions, and more a reflection of the story's author than of Shakespeare, thereby paving the way for further deconstruction, as in Joyce or Holderness. In a separate section on the Dark Lady, Franssen uses an impressive range of sources and indicates how the idea of Shakespeare's involvement with a non-Caucasian Dark Lady became another construction, used for example to highlight racial exploitation and inequality in multicultural societies. With Shakespeare often cast in the role of scapegoat.

Franssen takes up the topical theme of religion in chapter five, where he argues that the religious constructions of Shakespeare generally reflect on secular issues. In an interesting case study, he demonstrates how the Anglo-Irish conflict appropriated varying religious Shakespeares on both sides of the conflict: an impeccable Protestant, a convert on his deathbed, and a crypto-Catholic. Gregg's appropriation of Shakespeare as a Protestant, for example, is reconstructed as a plea from this Anglican author and clergyman, working in Catholic Ireland, for Queen Victoria to follow in Queen Elizabeth's footsteps and protect Protestant interests. Her reward would be a period to match the Elizabethan age. As she did not, Franssen remarks on a personal note, "it is hardly surprising that, instead of another Shakespeare and Bacon, she got Charles Darwin, Thomas Hardy and Oscar Wilde." In chapter six Franssen moves to Continental Europe and America once more, as he discusses the theme of Shakespeare's travels as a character, in particular to Italy, Spain, and the New World. Where stories involving Italy were constructed around cooperation and indebtedness to the Italian cultural heritage, stories of Spain were informed by the rivalry between these two countries in Shakespeare´s time and between their two national writers. A supposed meeting in the early seventeenth century between a young Shakespeare and a more mature Cervantes is the theme of many of these stories, as in for example the Spanish movie, *Miguel y William* (2007). Although both authors learned from each other in the movie, Cervantes turned out to be the moral winner of the two, as, Franssen argues, would befit a movie which was subsidised by the regional government and meant to celebrate the quatercentenary of Don Quixote.

In his final chapter, Franssen comes full circle, as he returns to the topic he started with, Shakespeare's ghosts, the early representations of direct contact with Shakespeare in fiction. Now, however, he analyses the modern equivalent of the regal apparition of the eighteenth century: time travel stories, which allow characters to travel back to Shakespeare's time and meet him, or, vice versa, place Shakespeare in the twentieth century. Franssen situates these stories in the discourse between high brow and low brow culture. He agrees with Lanier's theory that many of these popular stories, which often include a very fallible Shakespeare, are not so much concerned with attacking Shakespeare, as with attacking bardolatry as such and the elitist appreciation of Shakespeare, that never really understood him. When the scientist Dr Welch transported

Shakespeare to the twentieth century (in Asimov's 1957 'The Immortal Bard'), his colleague in the English department, Robertson, unknowingly flunked Shakespeare for failing to understand his own works. Franssen, however, also diverges somewhat from Lanier's approach, in his analysis of Burgess's 'The Muse', where he argues how Burgess, in presenting an over-the-top monstrous Shakespeare, was ridiculing theories on the death of Shakespeare and the debunking of Shakespeare, instead of endorsing any of them. At the end of this last chapter, Franssen has half a page left in which he touches upon another variant of time travel, —by magical instead of technological means—, and explores how these popular stories present a more pleasant Shakespeare. However, the book has come to a close, and the analysis is necessarily brief and tentative. Although Franssen himself readily recognizes at the end that his study has only been able to explore part of the field, nevertheless his book covers a wide terrain, provides invaluable insights into the appropriations of Shakespeare and the underlying ideological assumptions, not just in the Anglophone world, but also in Continental Europe. The thematic and case-study based approach is not only useful for this topic but also allows for a very readable book. It is telling that I felt myself wanting to read on at the end, a tribute not just to the topic of the book, but also to the accessible style it was written in.

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Theatre Reviews

Richard III. Dir. Paris Erotokritou. Cyprus Theatre Organization, Nicosia, Cyprus.

Reviewed by ***Eleni Pilla***[*]

Richard III, directed by Paris Erotokritou for the Main Stage of the Cyprus Theatrical Organization (THOC) in Nicosia, was fully packed on both evenings that I went to see it. The production offered a unique Shakespeare experience. Being the second longest play in the Shakespearean canon, *Richard III* is undoubtedly a difficult play to make accessible to an audience with no prior knowledge of Shakespeare's language, the specific play and genre, or British history. The Cypriot audience is familiar with plays such as *Othello*, with four acts taking place in Cyprus, *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Erotokritou's spectacular production was ingenious and captivating, thus rising formidably to the challenge of staging Shakespeare's history play for the first time in Cyprus. The Greek translation that was used for the production was by Nikos Hatzopoulos.

The stage design for *Richard III* deftly brought the audience close to the characters of the play. A central aisle was constructed in the middle of the auditorium, so that the audience sat on both sides of it, and at the back of the aisle there were also several rows of seats. High walls on the stage opened and shut, in certain instances very quickly, creating a sense of urgency. At one point Richard was right in between the walls as they shut and his walking stick touched the closing wall. The use of light and shadow was particularly astute. Richard appeared in spotlight during parts of his soliloquies. The shadow of Clarence on the wall magnified his stature when his murderers arrived, functioning as an ironic contrast to the diminution he would undergo once murdered.

From the outset, Richard, played by Prokopis Agathocleous, was a very remarkable presence on stage. Richard began the "Now is the winter of our discontent" speech in Greek from the back of the aisle and progressed towards the stage facing the audience. (A similar strategy was employed in

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Charalambous's 2012 *Othello*, where Iago made his first entrance from the back of the auditorium, suggesting that one had to watch one's back when Iago was around.) Richard's heinous villainy was at once condemnable but irresistibly attractive. The audience almost ended up being the staunchest supporters of Agathocleous's incandescent Richard. The variety and depth of Richard's characterization was brought to the fore as he manipulated those around him. His charisma radiated, whether he was presented nearly devouring a red rose and leaving petals strewn on the aisle, or drinking from Tyrrell's cocktail glass, puffing from Radcliffe's cigarette, tapping his walking stick on the medals of honor of those whose ambitions he wished to energize. A morbid sense of humour characterized Richard, as it was also crystallized in the image of him bending to determine if the lifeless body of Edward, ready for burial, was alive, when Lady Anne exclaimed "He is alive." This production did not present a simple caricature of villainy, but brought to the foreground Richard's extreme agility and inventiveness. The entire production was marked by a restlessness which forged a sense of immediacy and captivated the audience.

The audience was inevitably sucked into the world of the production. The boundary between the stage world and the auditorium collapsed, as the spectators were not exempt from the danger portrayed on stage and became engaged in the events they witnessed. Richard was not the only one to see ghosts. In one instance black sinister figures, ghostlike apparitions, appeared in the auditorium hovering over audience members, creating a strong sense of an omnipresent threat and prefiguring doom. When the spectators became aware of their surreptitious presence, they were perplexed about how long they had been lingering around for. I noticed the ominous figure several rows in front of me but was very surprised to find out that there was one right next to me as well!

At the heart of the production was the theme of corruption. At the beginning of the play, amidst thunder, it was announced that it is 2019 AD, and a historian asked if the Middle Ages had ended. Underscoring the contemporary resonance of Shakespeare's early modern play, Erotokritou's rendition of *Richard III* intimated that modern society still lives in the Middle Ages because corruption plagues it. The audience was asked to evaluate critically what happened before them and to oppose corruption actively, as was also indicated immediately before the interval when confetti was thrown in the auditorium and large backcloths were hung up stretching from the second gallery with statements such as "King Richard III of England, Legitimate, Natural Succession" [Βασιλιάς Ριχάρδος ΙΙΙ της Αγγλίας Νόμιμη Γνήσια Διαδοχή] and "King Richard III Rightful Successor by Blood" [Βασιλιάς Ριχάρδος ΙΙΙ Γνήσιος Διάδοχος Εξ Αίματος]. Two-sided fliers were thrown into the auditorium, with one side paradoxically celebrating the reign of Richard ("Long Live King Richard III of England" [Ζήτω ο Βασιλιάς Ριχάρδος ΙΙΙ της Αγγλίας]) and the other side urging the audience to "put an end to decadence, disgrace, and

corruption" [Βάλε Τέρμα στην Σήψη το Αίσχος τη Διαφθορά]. Richard was also associated with bestiality, in a hilarious and comic way, as a cartoonish sort of wild boar appeared to stand for Richard and his reign. In the Shakespearean play, Queen Margaret describes Richard as an "abortive, rooting hog" (1:3:227). Historically, the boar was Richard's personal heraldic symbol.

The music by Marios Takoushis very effectively enhanced the mood of the play, while also amplifying the action and the psychology of the characters. As Richard was crowned, the very vivid music signalled supreme pompousness, even hilariousness. Discussing the play with a friend who attended the production, she remarked "I can still hear the music." The music and the portrayal of Richard towering above everyone when he climbed and sat on a flight of three steps when crowned functioned as a critique of Richard. He appeared contradictory: an exceptionally strong and alluring villain but also a pretty vain man. The music also made topical allusions to the history of Cyprus. The echo of sirens in certain instances could be evocative of the sirens that were heard on the island in the early morning hours of the 20th of July 1974, the day when the Turkish invasion of Cyprus took place.

Erotokritou's *Richard III* called attention to the complex relationship between history and theatrical representation, and the extent to which theatrical representation can serve as the mouthpiece for propaganda. A historian at the beginning and at the end of the play directly asked questions such as: "Which methods are used to promote propaganda in the theatre?", "What does historical truth mean?", "How is history written and how is it read?", "Can myth be stronger than historical truth?". Since the historian was silenced by a figure who closed his mouth and dragged him back, the audience was encouraged to ponder on these issues. The character of Richard engaged in a dialogue with his representation in history and the theatre as he asked "Who spoke about disability?". In puzzlement he asked "Shakespeare?" and was informed "author of *Richard III*."

The deployment of intertextuality concerning the discovery of the remains of Richard III in August 2012 had the effect of creating ambiguity and a multiplicity of meanings. The extensive and detailed display of injuries being inflicted on Richard on stage, while eliciting sympathy towards him, also signalled that one cannot escape punishment for his evildoings. Also, Richard's tormentors were portrayed as not very dissimilar to him. Richard's body was fetishized while an element of piety was attributed to him, and he might even be likened to a tortured saint. Richard's affirmation in the Shakespearean original: "And thus I clothe my naked villainy/With old odd ends stol'n forth of holy writ,/And seem a saint, when most I play the devil" (1:3:335-337) also related to the depiction of Richard on stage. Nearly naked, in white underwear, Richard contradictorily appeared as a bleeding saint, whose naked villainy had been exposed and avenged by the souls of those he had killed. The prolonged display

of Richard being injured could negotiate issues of political theology. By entailing that sovereignty apart from glory and power involves pain and suffering, the production demonstrated Ernst H. Kantorowicz's concept of the king's two bodies: the body politic and the body natural. The body natural suffered before our eyes. The spectator was overwhelmed with different meanings.

A magnificent production, THOC's *Richard III* was exemplary in its approach to a difficult Shakespearean play that had never been staged in Cyprus before. This spectacular production was highly acclaimed in Cyprus and, having seen it twice, I have no doubt that it would have won the accolade of the audience in any of the Shakespeare theatres in Stratford-upon-Avon had it been staged there.

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Photograph by Clicks n' Films

Othello. Dir. Charis Fragoulis. Art Theatre Karolos Koun, Athens, Greece.

Reviewed by ***Xenia Georgopoulou***[*]

A Tragicomical *Othello* with a White Moor and a Basket of Lemons

The word 'tragicomedy', at least regarding Shakespeare's works, has mostly been used for his romances (Danson 20), a group of plays that culminate in a happy ending after a series of serious events in the lives of most of their major characters. The way I am using the word here, however, is different: Charis Fragoulis's *Othello* at the Art Theatre Karolos Koun in the Greek capital was enriched with a great deal of comical elements, and nevertheless retained its tragic character.

The addition of comical details here and there definitely made it easier for the audience to watch a two-and-a-half-hour production with no interval. Interestingly, these comical 'amendments' in one of Shakespeare's major tragedies did not seem out of place—with a few exceptions. On the contrary, they even seemed to the point on many occasions.

Brabanzio's hysterical reaction to his daughter's elopement with the Moor in the beginning of the play could well be on the verge of the comical. It seems that the director did not even care if the text was heard properly: Angelos Papadimitriou's Brabanzio lacked in proper enunciation in his panic to locate his daughter and verify Iago's story; however, his hysterical mumbling and his interaction with the audience had exactly the same effect with the text had it been uttered properly. Additions were also made to the original here, such as "My little girl is cheating on me!", as if Desdemona were her father's mistress (Aivaliotou), once more exaggerating on Brabanzio's feelings for his daughter.

And yet Desdemona's portrayal by Fragoulis had something of daddy's baby girl, which was perfectly performed by Sofia Kokkali. Her costume (especially her short skirt, short socks and flat shoes in light colours—a light beige, mostly) and her ponytail alluded to childhood and innocence. Even her hugging and kissing with her husband seemed particularly clumsy (another token of the heroine's lack of experience in such matters), and this clumsiness was underscored by the music (played on a piano by the composer Cornilios Selamsis), which seemed to interact with the couple's entangled bodies.

Cassio (played by the restless Andreas Konstantinou, who took Polaroids throughout the play) also behaved childishly, and was portrayed as Othello's faithful dog, making the longing sounds dogs make when they see their masters etc. He was also given more comical touches here and there, also

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involving particular linguistic mistakes—as opposed to Andreas Kontopoulos's Iago, who seemed to be his foil in eloquence. Wordplay was also used elsewhere, as in the nicknames chosen by Iago for Cassio or by Roderigo (played by Michalis Titopoulos) for himself. Roderigo's stupidity, already present in the play itself, was stressed even more in this production, with more grotesque and ridiculous behaviour on the part of the character, which was also underlined by the way other characters treated him, as in the moment when he was given a tiny bell to summon the citizens of Venice. Elsewhere the comical references were related to the performance itself, with actors commenting on the problems they encountered while trying to move on the set and among the props etc. (Othello, for example, squeezed himself between the wall and the piano and stumbled on lemons lying on the floor.)

On the other hand, Fragoulis avoided what would probably result in a comical effect: painting black the actor playing Othello. Black actors in Greece are still rather scarce, and Fragoulis chose Giannis Papadopoulos, a white, "blond and blue-eyed" (Aivaliotou) actor to play the Moor. So far, the actors that played the Moor in Greece were painted black. However, this was of little importance, really. The white actor was alluded to as "the Moor", and the spectators just had to use their imagination to paint him black. In any case, Othello is treated like a white man by everyone in the play with the exception of Brabanzio. However, a possible reference to Othello's exotic past was some kind of song he sang in moments of crisis (as, for example, when he is tortured by the thought of Desdemona's infidelity, or when he vows to kill her), which alluded to an Arabic or African background. Apart from Othello's whiteness, another matter that was discussed was his nudity. For some spectators it seemed irrelevant; however, the moment the director chose for that could easily justify it. The Moor started undressing himself when he was persuaded that Desdemona was unfaithful, and while murmuring "Love is gone", and then "Blood, revenge". It seemed that, by taking off his clothes, he removed his identity of husband and lover, to take up the role of the avenger.

In spite of Fragoulis's comical additions, the tragical scenes of the play did not lose their strength. After Desdemona's murder, for example, when Emilia (played by Katerina Louvari-Fassoi) came to seek her mistress at her bedchamber, Othello was seized by a rather comical panic: he held his wife's body trying to figure out how to dispose of it in order to hide it from Emilia, and eventually put it on the piano. However, this did not seem to undermine his tragical act.

An interesting idea in the production was the use of barking and dog behaviour at large. Othello barked at Iago asking for proof; Desdemona barked at Othello to persuade him to take Cassio back; and Cassio, who behaved like Othello's faithful dog from the beginning of the show, as was mentioned above, gave an impressive performance of a dog mourning for his master at the end of the play.

As for the lemons mentioned in the title of this review (another idea of the director that was present throughout the production), with their golden colour, they represented money on some occasions—without this metaphor being consistent, though. It is of note that they were brought to the stage in the beginning of the production, in a large wire fishing basket, by Roderigo, from whom Iago extracts expensive jewels, supposedly for Desdemona. In the scene where Othello treats Emilia like a bawd, Fragoulis's Moor threw lemons at Desdemona's confidante for her pains. In other cases lemons were used to illustrate the feelings of a character, who bit into them, chewed them and spat them out. Othello, for example, bit hard into lemons when he asked Iago for proof of Desdemona's infidelity or while talking of killing Cassio; Desdemona bit into a lemon while pleading for Cassio; and both the Moor and his wife threw lemons at each other when the former accused the latter of adultery.

Like the lemons, another prop that was on stage almost throughout the show was a fountain that was moved around and was lit in different colours. The fountain was brought on stage to illustrate the tempest that annihilated the Turkish fleet. In other moments, however, it was given different connotations. At some point Desdemona moved the fountain (which was waterless at that particular moment) from one side of the stage to the other; she tried to turn it on, and when the water finally spouted, she exclaimed "I knew I could do it!" with childish satisfaction, which gave the impression of a sexual innuendo. Perhaps it is relevant that, immediately after that, Othello used his hands to form horns on his head, and Desdemona did the same playfully, probably having no clue of what he meant. In the next scene Iago did the same with Emilia after she gave him the handkerchief, which apparently turned him on. The horns here could also symbolize sexual activity; however, Iago also refers to Emilia's supposed adultery in the play, so it might as well signify cuckoldry, as usual. The colours of the light in the fountain could also be seen symbolically: for example, when Iago talked to Roderigo of his plan to ruin Othello, the fountain was green, which is the colour of jealousy, the "green-eyed monster" described by Iago in 3:3:170 (Shakespeare), but also of envy (Biedermann 159).

As for the prop-par-excellence of the play, namely Desdemona's handkerchief, it was also used cleverly, with several handkerchiefs appearing on stage. When Iago put the handkerchief in his pocket, another one appeared in Cassio's hands, and when the latter shared his intention to give it to Bianca (played by Aspassia-Maria Alexiou), another handkerchief appeared in her hands when he put his away. Desdemona was also seen playing with the handkerchief right before Iago and Othello talked about Cassio. Another interesting touch was that Desdemona saw the handkerchief falling, but did not pick it up, and left it there, as if she was accepting the fate that would ensue for her.

The music by Selamsis was played live on stage on the piano throughout the production by the composer himself, who also played secondary parts, like

the Duke or Montano. The music shifted according to the mood of the scene, and occasionally there was also a kind of dialogue between the pianist and the actors, as in a scene where Cassio drank wine making grotesque noises imitating the sounds Selamsis made on the piano. Elsewhere Cassio spent some time trying to decide on the right music to appease Othello, choosing from a variety of genres played on the piano by the composer.

Until the end of the play, it seemed that the director tried to undermine the dramatic scenes. Right before Othello's suicide, the actor playing Roderigo appeared with a sack on his head with Shakespeare's portrait on, and said (playing the Bard himself) that he had to finish the play somehow, to get the money and buy himself wine. However, Othello's suicide did not become less moving after this parenthesis (which seemed totally irrelevant, given that *Othello*'s ending is far from clumsy or abrupt).

In fact, Othello's suicide was particularly interesting. The protagonist did not use a knife; instead, he used a belt, an accessory that appeared in all (or, at least, most of) the costumes of the production (designed by Maria Panourgia). The Moor also used a belt on other occasions: he used one to strangle Desdemona, and right afterwards he attempted to strangle Iago, too, after realising his part in Desdemona's death. (A belt was also used in other ways during the production; for example, Cassio used one to beat Roderigo, who insulted him.) At the end of the production Othello took all the belts from the characters' costumes, tied them together while delivering his last monologue, and created a kind of rope, which he used to commit suicide.

Fragoulis's feelings about his staging of *Othello* seemed to correspond to what was seen on stage. The director felt, as he confided to Giorgos Mylonas, "absolutely terrified and absolutely at home" with the play (Mylonas). However, in the interview he gave to Mylonas it was not made clear what exactly he tried to do with the play. The director also tried to get the audience involved in the production by placing his actors among the spectators, with whom they interacted. As Panagiota remarks in the online audience reviews section of *Athinorama*, "the characters [are] accessible and direct, without undermining the infinite, intact nature of what they talk about". Panagiota adds that the production showed respect to Shakespeare "as a human and not as a god" ("Audience reviews").

It seems that Fragoulis's production was a hate-it-or-love-it staging of Shakespeare's tragedy, which was made obvious by the audience's online reviews in *Athinorama*, which were divided into two extremes. On the one hand, the director's work was seen as "unacceptably exaggerated and tiring" (Iro), "amateur" (Anneza L., Stamatis), "disappointing", a "pointless adaptation" (stargazer), a "superficial [. . .] dissonance" (Katerina Karamanoli), a "trampling upon the text", an "immoderate parody" (Eleftheria), a "stage mediocrity" (Eleni Anyfanti), a "very bad attempt" (Takis), with Polykarpos seeing in Fragoulis

a “catastrophic [. . .] arrogance”, also traced in the whole group by Eleftheria (“Audience reviews”). On the other hand, the production was regarded as “an interesting approach” (Eva), “very interesting” (Mairi), “excellent” (Despina, Ioanna, Giota), “Subversive, Enjoyable, Refreshing, Amusing, Moving” (Anna). However, Anna admitted that “[i]f you want to watch a classical Shakespeare, you’d better not go there” (“Audience reviews”). Vassilis, another online reviewer of *Athinorama*, probably describes more accurately than any other the feeling left at the end of the production:

> Complete, consistent, with a common code, staging tricks and reversals, absolute communication, a sense of humour, but also hard, provocative, dangerous, strangely offensive. It surely had a world that the actors knew well. You get out of the theatre and think, which is great, but I don’t know whether you think positively or negatively… which is also great? (“Audience reviews”)

Personally, I would disagree with Stergios Pouleres, who argues that Fragoulis’s production of *Othello* “abolished” Shakespeare. However, I would agree with Anna: it would probably be a bad idea for a spectator who has never seen *Othello* to start with this one.

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Fot. 1. From left to right: Andreas Kondopoulos as Iago and Giannis Papadopoulos as Othello. Photograph from the rehearsals by Evita Skourleti

Fot. 2. From left to right: Katerina Louvari-Fassoi as Emilia and Sofia Kokkali as Desdemona. Photograph from the rehearsals by Evita Skourleti