Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance

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Editors: Yoshiko Kawachi
Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney

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Martin Simonson received his PhD from the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) with a dissertation on the narrative dynamics of *The Lord of the Rings*. He is the author three monographs on the literature of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S Lewis and Stephen King respectively. He has also edited several volumes on Western American Literature and German Romanticism, and he is the translator of several works by J.R.R. Tolkien into Spanish, among others *Beowulf* (2014), *The Story of Kullervo* (2015), *Beren and Lúthien* (2018), and *The Fall of Gondolin* (2019). He currently teaches 19th and 20th century English literature in the BA program of English Studies, and an introductory course on fantasy, horror and science fiction at the MA program of comparative literature offered by the University of the Basque Country.

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From the Editor

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Krystyna Kujawinska Courtney

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Emi Hamana*

A Cognitive Approach to Shakespeare Plays in Immersive Theatre: With a Special Focus on Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More* in New York (2011-) and Shanghai (2016-)

Abstract: Although cognitive science is an interdisciplinary field, its central questions are 'what is humanity?' and 'what is emotion?' Since the field of theatre and performing arts is deeply concerned with humans and emotions, we expect that it will contribute to the understanding of these concepts. Immersive theatre is an experimental performance form that emphasizes site, space and design while immersing spectators in a play. The number of immersive theatre companies or productions has been growing worldwide. This paper discusses Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More*, directed by Felix Barrett and performed in London (2003), New York (2011-) and Shanghai (2016-). While elucidating the cognitive impact of immersive Shakespeare performances on spectators, this paper aims to uncover new artistic and cultural value in Shakespeare plays performed in an experimental form in order to advance their contemporary relevance.

Keywords: Cognitive science, 4E cognition, immersive theatre, *Sleep No More*.

Introduction

Cognitive Approaches to Theatre and Performance Studies

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the phenomenal popularity of *Sleep No More*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* performed by Punchdrunk, one of the most famous international immersive theatre companies, using an emergent cognitive approach. When applicable, this paper refers to the concept of 4E cognition, which will be explained more in detail below, since it is an insightful and thought-provoking way to explore a work of theatre/performing arts today. Although any work of theatre is a cognitive event, an experimental work, especially in immersive theatre, seems to have greater effects on the audience's 4E cognition. This paper presents not only a cognitive approach to *Sleep No More* but also the emergent approach through a significant case study, with some suggestions.

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In the first chapter of *The Oxford Handbook of 4E Cognition*, the editors discuss the historical roots of the debate between behaviourists and cognitivists regarding key concepts or claims and central issues (Newman et al. 3-15). Addressing the central issue of embodied cognition, they write that there 'is general agreement that a priori definitions or models of cognition are not helpful, and that we need to conduct experiments and consult the empirical literature' (9), and they further admit that they 'are obviously in need of an improved theory of cognition' (13). In her chapter on 4E cognition and the humanities in the same handbook, Amy Cook reminds us of the true necessity of the 'cognitive turn in the humanities' (890).

Since the concept of 4E cognition is unstable, as suggested above, it is unlikely that we will obtain a conclusive definition of 4E cognition at present. Yet, we need a working definition for our investigation. The key concepts or claims of 4E cognition in the field of cognitive sciences are too complicated to be discussed in this paper, and therefore I would like to introduce a simple set of working definitions. In her chapter on 4E cognition for directing in *The Routledge Companion to Theatre, Performance and Cognitive Science*, edited by Rick Kemp and Bruce McConachie, Rhonda Blair gives a brief reminder of the 4E terms:

> Embodied: Cognition isn't separable from our physical being, but rather occurs throughout our physical being. One of many proofs of the interconnectedness of these different aspects of cognition is the inseparability of language production, language comprehension and perception of intent in the brain….
>
> Embedded: Cognition depends heavily on off-loading cognitive work and taking advantage of potentials, or affordances, in the environment, for example, the handle on a cup of hot coffee allows us to pick it up, we stand on a chair to reach a high shelf; a fundamental aspect of cognition derives from the individual's interactions with the environment….
>
> Extended: Cognition can be understood as extending beyond the boundaries of the individual to encompass aspects of our material environment as well as our social, interpersonal environment. The ecology in which we live and to which we react includes other people….
>
> Enacted: Cognition is inseparable from action and is an outgrowth and even an attribute of action. A particularly valuable insight for actors is Alva Noë's that perception is 'something we do … *What we perceive* is determined by *what we do* (or what we know how to do); it is determined by what we are *ready* to do … we *enact* our perceptual experience; we act it out'…. (91-92)

The concepts of 4E cognition are not always clear, and they obviously overlap and connect. The point is, however, that they open up a new way of thinking about theatre and performance.

Immersive Theatre

Immersive theatre has in all probability existed from ancient times, since most theatre and rituals made audiences participate in the play or event by immersing them in it.[1] In her book *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance,* published in 2013, however, Josephine Machon rightly points out a danger that 'immersive' is becoming a catch-all term or an umbrella term 'for any work that occurs outside of the conventional, spectatorial theatre set-up' (66) and concludes:

> In brief, the [immersive] event must establish a unique '**in-its-own-world**'-ness, which is created through a dexterous use of **space, scenography, sound, duration** within **interdisciplinary** (or hybridised) **practice**. **Bodies** are prioritised in this world; performing and perceiving bodies; the latter belonging to the individuals who make up the audience—a pivotal feature of this practice—whose direct insertion in and interaction with the world shapes the outcomes of the event. (278)

Although the site, environment, bodies and senses are emphasized, this brief summary of immersive theatre reminds us of the importance of 4E cognition as well. More recently, Stephen M. Eckert says of immersive theatre and its audience's changing desire:

> Immersive theater is a performance form emphasizing the importance of space and design; curating tangible, sensual environments; and focusing on personal, individual audience experience. The form has emerged over the past two decades as a major movement in performance and finds itself today within a mainstream moment. As a form which subverts much of the established relationships of conventional theater, its success can be seen as reflecting a larger need in today's audiences. With much of contemporary life taking place in ungrounded, digital spaces, audiences long to exist as physical bodies in actual locations; presented with a culture that is two-dimensional, today's audiences seek expansive, visceral stimuli; within a society lacking privacy, audiences find the prospect of an intimate, personal experience alluring. (1)

Against the background of socio-cultural change and technological developments, certainly, immersive theatre has become mainstream now in the West End, Broadway and many other large cities around the globe, resulting in

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[1] It is of great interest that Biggin writes that immersion 'is rooted in the ritual of baptism … Leaving a state of immersion is a distinct and deliberate as going in. You go in; and you come out, *changed*' (27). The ritual of baptism as a religious event has a decisive impact on a recipient's embodied cognition.

a significant change in the relationship between a play and the audience. Immersive theatre gives audience members participatory experiences, since they are invited to join the performance not as passive spectators but as active agents deciding which action or story they will choose from a variety of options and negotiating the process. In other words, immersive theatre is cognitively demanding. However, while living in a digital society where it is growing harder for people to get in contact with the real or the vital due to the digital filter, they want to experience the real or the vital and are attracted to immersive theatre.

Despite its popularity, widespread critical acclaim or attention and commercial success, immersive theatre is controversial for several reasons, ranging from its appreciation or narcissistic exploitation of the audience members' individual experiences to its immediate interaction between performers and the audience, which can collapse the boundary between professional acting and non-professional acting, to neo-liberalist attitudes or its entire absence of political purpose (Alston 11-17, 113-20; Drees 101-105; Gordon 43-50; O'Hara 481-96; Papaioannou 160-74; Prince 255; Purcell 294-95). Although some criticism might be legitimate, immersive theatre gives spectators, digital natives, Instagram narcissists or the like intense cognitive impact. The purpose of this paper is, mainly, not to criticize immersive theatres but to rethink the effects that immersive theatre works have continued to have on spectators' cognition.

Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More* in New York (2011-) and Shanghai (2016-)

British experimental theatre company Punchdrunk produced the original version of *Sleep No More* (*SNM* hereafter), an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* inspired by Hitchcock's films, directed by Felix Barrett and Maxime Doyle and choreographed by Doyle in London in 2003. After having collaborated with Boston's American Repertory Theatre, the company reinvented *SNM* as an immersive theatre installation in a co-production with EMURSIVE. It began performance at the McKittrick Hotel, which shares a name with the hotel in Hitchcock's movie *Vertigo*, in Manhattan in 2011. *SNM* was a phenomenal success and has been performed in New York since 2011. The company began to produce *SNM* at the McKinnon Hotel in Shanghai in December 2016, and it is still running there. Retaining the main narrative of the New York version, *SNM* in Shanghai is the reimagined version. As Barrett was keen to attract the Shanghai audience, he worked closely with Chinese performers and designers to make it feel as if it was created and owned by the city. In *The Punchdrunk Encyclopaedia*, written and prepared by Josephine Machon with Punchdrunk, Machon writes:

> Transposing the world from 1930s Scotland to 1930s Shanghai naturally shifted its aesthetic. While the setting, seeded in Boston, of the colonial hotel remains, new stories traverse six storeys of the McKinnon Hotel. An entirely new sub-plot, the Chinese legend of 'The White Snake', now serves as the narrative anchor. (260)

Despite this significant difference, both versions of *SNM* are much the same, as they situate the audience as an epicentre at which all elements of the production converge. Although a cultural difference in audience behaviour between the two cities appears (drinkthehalo), the company's dramaturgy is basically true of its production of *SNM* in New York and later in Shanghai. *SNM*'s audience members roam about more than 100 rooms of the purpose-built hotel, ranging from the hotel lobby to the chapel, Hecate's Apothecary and the Ballroom, following characters such as Macbeth, Lady Macbeth and Witches or the White Snake, who play or embody some scenes without speech in many rooms. Since the auditorium is not separated from the stage in a proscenium theatre, there is no boundary between the audience and the performers in the site. Wearing masks, spectators participate in the play anonymously or like ghosts. The distance between spectators and performers is close to the extent that the production is involved in haptics between them, bringing out blockbuster one-on-one relationships at times (in English in New York and in Mandarin in Shanghai). Following a different character to learn his or her secrets, each spectator has his or her own experience and weaves his or her own narrative.

Although Punchdrunk seems to enter a post-*SNM* or post-immersive theatre stage,[2] this paper will examine several elements of the production—verbal/non-verbal semiotic resources, game and attention and memory and loop—by exploring the production's impact on the audience's cognition.

A Wordless Production with Rich Semiotic Resources

SNM is wordless, with a cast of actors, dancers and dance-trained performers with a physical dramaturgy, apparently prioritizing body and space. Equally significant, in the beginning, Barrett collected fragments of film noir soundtracks and created 'a sonic palette for the show': 'It was an easy leap from film noir to *Macbeth*' (Interview 21) since the play contains all the classic noir motifs of passion, a femme fatale and a power-obsessed man. As a result,

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[2] In a recent interview, Barrett says, 'That crazy space between video games and theatre, I reckon is the next frontier … In the same way as there are 15 different genres of games, we'll soon have 15 different genres of shows. I actually don't think there's a vocabulary for it yet. For a while, "immersive theatre" was bandied about, but whatever this new thing is called, playable shows are the future'(Judge 4).

although, to be strict, Alfred Hitchcock is not a film noir director, *SNM* is overwhelmingly influenced by his soundtracks and thriller films, such as *Rebecca*, *Vertigo* and *Birds*. Significantly, Hitchcock loved silent films and did not appreciate talkies, since he wanted to make spectators understand or imagine everything about his film not by characters' words but by brilliant images. The film director's fundamental desire reminds us of Gibson's 'direct perception', 'ecological affordance' (Hamana 91) and embedded cognition in particular. From the start, Shakespeare's play was robbed of its poetic words in *SNM*, and instead it was reimagined and recreated for a new immersive experiment with highly emotive body language or embodied cognition; obviously, it does not aim at a new critical interpretation of the original play but attempts to produce it in a new way that extends spectators' cognition.

For all its wordless production, *SNM* is abundant with a variety of unspoken semiotic resources: written or typed messages, letters, newspapers used in set design, costumes (or naked or half-naked bodies), sound and musical design (effects), lighting design, props, acting and dancing. All these resources the spectators can watch in close and intimate spaces, and they have a variety of effects on the audience's cognition. Although *SNM* seems to be extremely complicated, as it is performed in more than 100 rooms, its synopsis is rather simple: a one-hour version of Macbeth's regicide with a climax of the banquet scene is looped three times with variations for three hours. Although the spectators do not follow the plot linearly, they are led to come together to watch the bloody, mad and queer banquet, performed with a slow-motion cinematic technique as well as other effects, in the underground ballroom at the end of three loops. The spectators are quite busy cognizing what they have watched or are watching.

Both the McKittrick Hotel in New York and the slightly smaller McKinnon Hotel in Shanghai are divided into many rooms, where a variety of actions and installations are performed and presented. There is no strict division between spectators and the play world in an immersive space (or environment or ecology). Once they join the show, the masked spectators keep moving around, up and down, observing the show and installations in their own ways for three hours. This is really a physical theatre for the participants themselves, thrilling with the murders, blood, insomnia, madness and death and going into the darkest depth of human desires and criminal psychology. Understanding each scene, each character and the whole show depends on each spectator. In this uncanny and unusual environment, their cognition does not function like in their ordinary lives. Their cognition is likely to be suspended between the theatrical reality and the theatrical non-reality (mystery), since they are not sure how they understand, know and respond to the situation. It seems hard to explain here exactly how cognition is embodied, embedded, extended and enacted, although their cognition must function actively to take part in the show. Evidently, however,

this uncanny situation thrills the spectators with wonder. In the borderless space between the spectators and performers, the spectators move freely by their own wills; have extended and intimate relationships with the performers, including one-on-one; and experience the dramatic world with their own bodies. Sharing the same space and event, their ideas could influence each other and at times be blended. An immersive theatre such as *SNM* moves out of the proscenium stage and comes to have an embodied and extended relationship with the audience in the same flow of time that the body experiences. The spectators also influence the show, and it blends itself with them (extended cognition). The spectators wander into a theatrical world with their own bodies, and the world is changed by their existence. The spectators immerse themselves with other members all together with their bodies and cognition and are going to change the border between the spectators and performers into a borderless and extended relationship. An immersive theatre explores the show's impact on the spectators' cognition.

SNM as a Reimagined Game Version of *Macbeth*

It is well-known that Punchdrunk employs game mechanics in its productions. It should be remembered that the stage performance in Shakespeare's age was 'immersive' in its own way, as possibly represented in today's theatres, such as the Globe. When we play Shakespeare games or take part in a gamified Shakespeare performance, we might be having an experience similar to that of Shakespeare's contemporary spectator.

Biggin considers the relationship between an immersive gaming atmosphere and narrative association in the context of adaptation such as *SNM*; in this case, performers enact narrative events, within a space that has story events embedded within its mise-en-scene and overall design (164). Mentioning game elements in the show, she further writes:

> Evoked or enacted narratives reveal themselves as an audience member crosses the space: events in the plot become events in space, which they seek out, stumble upon or enact themselves. An embedded narrative implies a quest or goal that could lead to immersive gameplay experience in an audience member/player…. (164-65)[3]

[3] An interesting experiment was conducted between Punchdrunk and MIT Media Lab in 2012. It involved turning *SNM* into a computer game that could be experienced at a distance from the show itself: *SNM* 'was adapted into a hybrid form of theatre and game' (Biggin 160; Torpey et al.).

In *SNM*, the main events (or narratives) are embedded in the environment and are enacted by the performers. In fact, both the performer's cognition and the spectator's cognition are enacted in the sense that they involve active engagements.

No one seems to have discussed the effect of sustained attention in *SNM*. While it is rather usual for us to find some audience members asleep in the middle of a play or film, in *SNM* no spectator falls asleep, although some might be tired. It is hard for spectators to sleep in an immersive theatre, as they are not seated but are walking and engaging in many cognitive and motor sensory activities. This said, it is a great contemporary problem, especially in schools, that many children and students are unable to sustain attention; educators are exploring how to sustain their attention by implementing digital games, interaction and other teaching methods and tools.

Attention is fundamental to learning processes (or cognitive processes). Digital games improve students' attention spans and working memory. The proper functioning of attention is vital because of its involvement in the regulation of thoughts and emotions. Games have features like increasing challenges, rules and involvement of the player in the quest to gain skills or to be 'enskilled' (Bloom 115) and win the game, which require the exercise of cognitive functions, especially working memory, attention and problem-solving capacity.

In *SNM*, the reimagined game version of *Macbeth*, spectators' attention is sustained, as they have to decide which character they follow, which room they observe and how to solve other 'problems' on the spot. They have little time to waste. It is usually hard for a director and for players to sustain the audience's attention for a long time. When we find *SNM* to be a gamification of Shakespeare's play, we can understand why it is very popular, especially among younger people of game generations, and why it has continued long-run performances in New York and Shanghai. Employing diverse methods of the game and entertainment industry, ranging from amazing but apparently superficial fun and pleasure to more profound impact on the spectators' cognition, attention and learning, *SNM* succeeds in maintaining younger audience members' attention, curiosity and exploration for three hours.

One of the most vital elements in creating a computer game is sound design. Sound is a unique feature compared to other designs, such as visual design, since it solely comes out from the display and immerses the player in the space of the game. The sonic effect is so overwhelming that the player is invited to participate in the game in a moment. The sound staff creates the music and sound effects for a game and makes them perform at the right moment for the player to enjoy the game with maximum excitement and thrill.

In creating *SNM*, Barrett first collected film noir soundtracks and then chose *Macbeth* to adapt since it fit the collected sounds. While *SNM* employs many elements of game mechanics, sound design is indeed essential, as it 'is the

central device, closely followed by the installation and costume, that sets the era in a masked show' (Machon, *Punchdrunk Encyclopaedia* 194). The company employs the device of 'sampling: a collage of sound effects, musical refrains and references to establish the atmosphere and era of the world' (Machon, *Punchdrunk Encyclopaedia* 244). Machon writes:

> For Dobbie [Stephen Dobbie, creative director of the Punchdrunk International], sampling creates a musical environment that is 'defamiliarised' because 'the audience sort of knows it but it's reworked, a blending of upbeat, downbeat, orchestral snatches of era-defining, 1930s pop music, creating, as Barrett puts it, 'an emotional immediacy' … The sampling technique itself can subvert expectation, creating an aural rug-pull when it suddenly mixes in a jarring musical style, to turn an emotional or narrative corner or to disorient and defamiliarise at moments of high impacts, as illustrated by the 'Witches Rave' in *Sleep No More*, Boston and NYC. (244)

More importantly, the company has its own concept of sound design called 'soundscore' that controls the loop structure. Soundscore is defined as 'the full aural composition for any Punchdrunk project whatever its format and composite elements, such as music, abstract sound or narration' (Machon, *Punchdrunk Encyclopaedia* 262). Employing the complicated threefold layering of soundscore, the company has produced unique sound effects in *SNM*. Dobbie says:

> It wasn't soundtrack as background accompaniment but as the overt manipulator of audience. Despite it being abstracted the sound held them back, stifled them, made them nervous, or run to something. What was impactful was the sheer control that came from the sound. (263)

While grabbed by and enveloped in the unforgettably thrilling and uncanny soundscore, including the Hitchcock suite, the audience experiences a strong effect on their embodied cognition and their extended cognition, which will be discussed in the next section.

Memory, Loops and Extended Cognition

It is vital to consider the original device of the loop structure employed in *SNM* as one of the keys to its popularity. Machon writes:

> A 'loop' defines the unit of time that completes one full narrative cycle to the penultimate sequence before the crescendo … The loop itself is broken down into twelve scenes for each character, which plot each stage of that character's

> narrative, fluidly resetting itself from scene twelve back to scene one as the cycle plays out … Multiple loops for all characters will repeat, many intersect, before the final crescendo of the third loop, which leads to the finale … The duration is typically a fifty-minute loop repeated three times before the finale, creating a three-hour run. (*Punchdrunk Encyclopaedia* 173)

In *SNM*, a loop formed by multiple mini-loops is the matrix in which all events, narratives, scenes and acts are embedded. However, no spectator can watch all the elements of the matrix that are performed simultaneously in many rooms. Each spectator experiences the show individually; some might be invited to an empty room by a character to have a one-on-one in which he or she might listen to a character's secret or, to their surprise, Rebecca's mystery. Loops are repeated with subtle differences; performers are also trained to improvise appropriately on the spot, if necessary, according to the spectators' response. The spectators are invited or challenged to follow and watch different characters or scenes in the next loop and the third loop, which leads to the finale of the cinematic slow-motion banquet and Macbeth's hanging in the dark and dusty ballroom of the basement floor, with all the performers and the spectators. The finale is a kind of collaborative and collective experience. Although regarding this loop structure of *SNM*, Machon mentions that 'Sam Booth [Punchdrunk performer] identifies a palpable "sense of fatalism" that can be felt through this looping repetition of narrative' (*Punchdrunk Encyclopaedia* 173), I do not wholly agree with Booth's view. The spectators fully expect from the beginning that the play is destined to have a tragic ending; while having a sense of ending and 'liberation' from the three-hour thrilling show, they look forward to watching how it will end with awe and wonder.

The loop structure of *SNM* is not only the unit of time but also, seen from computing and technology, a method of control flow. Narratives, history and memory can flow endlessly. In this show, they are bounded in the loop structure, and in this controlled condition, they develop in a variety of ways, having strong effects on the spectators' cognition or producing cognitive feedback loops, as discussed below.

Memory is a fundamental narrative in *SNM*. We usually think that memory is the encoding storage and retrieval in the human mind of past experiences, having recourse to information theory. However, from a radical cognitive position, Daniel D. Hutto and Erik Myin criticize:

> [I]t becomes clear that the 'storage' metaphor is not the only, or even the most, problematic card in the cognitivist deck … All of the familiar metaphors relating to the way cognitivists talk about the processing of information—certainly, any that rely on picturing information as some kind of commodity or abstract contentful message—generate equally deep and serious scientific

> mysteries. Such mysteries need dispelling, one way or another—they want explaining or explaining away. (102)

Hutto and Myin thus tackle 'the hard problem of content' (101, 106-112). Bearing this problem in mind, we discuss here the element of memory, metaphoric or not, in *SNM*. Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are tormented by their guilty memories, just as in Shakespeare's play: the former by the murder of Duncan and blood, the murder of Banquo and his ghost and the murder of the 'pregnant' Lady Macduff and the latter by the sight of the regicide and blood. They were unable to sleep, horror-stricken and losing mental health; in fact, Lady Macbeth is driven mad and rambles and sleepwalks through the building in a crazed and guilty manner.

As is well-known, *SNM* is a show or event in which spectators can immerse themselves and enjoy different individual experiences. Fans appreciate this aspect, although some scholars have criticized it on the grounds of individualism, neoliberalism and commercialism, as mentioned earlier. The critics' discourses are misleading, since an individual experience is not wholly closed. While responding to the site and narrative in their own ways, members of *SNM* superfan community and Punchdrunk lovers are, in fact, interconnected and interactive online after the show, sharing, exchanging and expanding their experiential layers and cognitive feedback loops between the performers and the spectators and among fans. The accumulated sum of the participants' individual experiences is stored on the website and forms collective memory—one common experience. The audiences in New York and Shanghai not only enjoy *SNM* individually but also share their responses via digital media. There are *SNM* fan communities in the USA and China (Lack; Qian; Ritter 59-77), and the fans as the post-Internet generation contribute to creating collective feedback loops using digital preservation and web archiving technologies. While on the one hand this creates stronger individualism and isolation, on the other, young people tend to be connected by digital means, sharing something in common, even if it is a virtual reality or illusion of collective memory.

Regarding the relationship between feedback loops, which are cause-and-effect processes within organisms and systems, and extended cognition, I would like to mention Olga Markič's paper, 'Extended Cognition: Feedback Loops and Coupled Systems'. While discussing two main obstacles threatening the extended cognition hypothesis, causal-constitution fallacy and cognitive bloat, Markič supports a complementary view:

> The most important feature of cognitive system being genuinely extended is … continuous reciprocal causation … We have to bear in mind that the system is individuated on the bases of the process one is interested in and would be intuitively called cognitive. Such system will be called extended, if the task will

> be accomplished on the basis of continuous mutual interactions between the agent and his artifact … In a way, analogous processes happen in the brain where there are different feedback loops between different neural components. (277)

Discussing the most common objections to active externalism and the extended mind, she suggests that 'there are better criteria … namely continuous reciprocal causation and ongoing feedback loops' (277). She thinks that the extended cognition hypothesis 'opens up the need for new interdisciplinary collaborations between biological, humanistic, social and technical approaches' (277); she mentions a good example of investigating 'the role of language as a tool of extending cognition' (278). I would like to add that it will be useful to investigate the role of theatre/performing arts as a tool of extending cognition, since a play performed in an immersive theatre, such as *SNM*, is produced by continuous feedback loops.

Conclusion

While contemporary cognitive sciences, including 4E cognition, have been developing or even flourishing, basic concepts themselves have been unstable amid controversies, experiments and research. Although this paper has attempted a cognitive approach to a popular adapted play of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in immersive theatre, its outcome is limited, leaving several issues to future development of cognitive approaches to theatre and performing arts. Yet, as this paper has suggested, considering the question of cognition in Shakespeare performances in immersive theatre such as *SNM* is vital. Both theatre people and audiences tend to be concerned with senses, but they also should reconsider the function of cognition.

It is irrelevant to try to find any fixed interpretation or meaning in *SNM,* which has a strong affinity with computer games, as conventional theatre scholarship and criticism have been trying to do. Both performers and spectators, who might at times be co-performers, do not hope to explore a new interpretation or meaning of this play but to explore some exciting experience or try to solve mysteries. Furthermore, they find it pleasurable to re-construct or re-imagine their own narrative (loop) out of fragmented characters and scenes; their work can be both entertaining and intellectual. When we consider cognitive approaches and 4E cognition, we must liberate ourselves from conventional theatre criticism and literary critical discourses; otherwise, we cannot comprehend what event is occurring or presenting itself on the spot. To put it simply, the historically accumulated meanings or interpretations of the original text of *Macbeth* do not matter much. What matters most is to understand or,

better, experience how Punchdrunk presents the visceral desire in the original text in our age and how performers and audience experience the show. We should be reminded that today's audience wants to play the show by means of their cognition, which awaits further exploration.[4]

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[4] This paper was written before the COVID-19 pandemic and the unfortunate closure of theatres around the world.

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Being European: *Hamlet* on the Israeli Stage

Abstract: One of the most prolific fields of Shakespeare studies in the past two decades has been the exploration of local appropriations of Shakespeare's plays around the world. This article, however, foregrounds a peculiar case of an *avoidance* of local appropriation. For almost 60 years, repertory Israeli theaters mostly refused to let *Hamlet* reflect the "age and body of the time". They repeatedly invited Europeans to direct *Hamlet* in Israel and offered local audiences locally-irrelevant productions of the play. They did so even though local productions of canonical plays in Israel tend to be more financially successful than those directed by non-Israelis, and even when local national and political circumstances bore a striking resemblance to the plot of the play. Conversely, when one Israeli production of *Hamlet* (originating in an experimental theatre) did try to hold a mirror up to Israeli society—and was indeed understood abroad as doing so—Israeli audiences and theatre critics failed to recognize their reflection in this mirror. The article explores the various functions that *Hamlet* has served for the Israeli theatre: a rite of passage, an educational tool, an indication of belonging to the European cultural tradition, a means of boosting the prestige of Israeli theatres, and—only finally—a mirror reflecting Israel's "age and body." The article also shows how, precisely because *Hamlet* was not allowed to reflect local concerns, the play mirrors instead the evolution of the Israeli theatre, its conflicted relation to the Western theatrical tradition, and its growing self-confidence.

Keywords: Theatre, appropriation, Zvi Friedland, Konrad Swinarski, Dinu Cernescu, Rina Yerushalmi, Steven Berkoff, Habima Theatre, The Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv, Itim Ensemble, Haifa Municipal Theatre.

Hamlet famously argues that "the purpose of playing" is to hold the "mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure" (3:2:17, 18-20). Yet throughout the twentieth century, Israeli institutional repertory theatres repeatedly refused to appropriate *Hamlet* so as to let it reflect or comment on local concerns.[1] Even

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[1] There are five government-subsidized repertory theatres in Israel: Habima (the Israeli National Theatre), The Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv, the Haifa Municipal Theatre, the Jerusalem Khan Theatre and the Beersheba Theatre. The only Arabic-speaking

when Israel's political circumstances at the time of the play's production bore a striking resemblance to its plot, local theatres offered their audiences Marxist, Romanian or universal inflections of *Hamlet* with no local relevance. Conversely, when one production of *Hamlet* (staged by the experimental Itim Ensemble) did attempt to hold a mirror up to Israeli society, and indeed was understood abroad as an allegory on militarist Israel, local audiences and critics failed to recognize their own reflection. It was only in 2005, in its sixth Israeli production, that *Hamlet* was staged in a manner that both commented on local reality and was received as such.

This study reviews the history of *Hamlet* on the Israeli stage, from its first production in 1946 to the present day. It offers a short account of each production, the major trends in Israeli theatre at the time of its staging and the concurrent national and political circumstances. It then discusses the reception of each production, based on contemporary newspaper coverage, published interviews with actors and directors and scholarly analyses.[2]

Israeli productions of *Hamlet* have been studied in the past, most notably by Sharon Aronson-Lehavi, Pnina Porter in an unpublished dissertation and Avraham Oz in several studies of Shakespeare productions in Israel. This paper differs significantly from previous work in that its main interest lies in the relationship between *Hamlet,* Israeli theatre and Israeli society. Rather than an analysis of the performances themselves, the study explores the various functions that *Hamlet* has served in Israeli theatre. The first part focuses on the five productions of the play in the twentieth century, showing how Israeli theatre perceived *Hamlet* as a rite of passage, an educational tool, a sign of belonging to the European cultural tradition or a means of boosting the prestige of the theaters themselves. The second part focuses mainly on the play's 2005 production, which effectively and successfully staged *Hamlet* as a mirror reflecting contemporary local concerns.

The study foregrounds and explains the prolonged reluctance of Israeli theatre to engage with *Hamlet* and appropriate it in a locally relevant way. It shows how—precisely because the play was not allowed to comment on "the age and body of the time"—its productions instead reflect the evolution of Israeli theatre, its conflicted relationship with the Western theatrical tradition and its growing self-confidence.

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repertory theatre in Israel is Haifa's Al-Midan Theatre. To the best of my knowledge there has been no production of *Hamlet* in Arabic in Israel to this day. This study, therefore, outlines the history of *Hamlet* in Hebrew-speaking repertory theatres, which appeal mainly to a Jewish-Israeli audience.

[2] I am grateful to The Israeli Center for the Documentation of the Performing Arts for granting me access to its valuable collection of newspaper coverage of Israeli theatre productions.

Part I: Twentieth-Century Israeli *Hamlets*

Zvi Friedland, Habima Theatre, 1946

The first production of *Hamlet* in Tel Aviv preceded the birth of the state of Israel by two years. It premiered on 26 May 1946 at Habima Theatre and was directed by Zvi Friedland. *Hamlet* was the first Shakespearean tragedy staged by Habima, and the play's premiere, wrote a contemporary critic, "was more eagerly awaited than any first night in Palestine for many years" (F. M.).[3]

Unlike its successors, Habima's decision to produce *Hamlet* was motivated, at least in part, by national concerns. Friedland set out to "protect the theatre's honour" and prove to the British rulers of Palestine that Habima could successfully cope with an English masterpiece, after hearing from British officers that Habima was merely a limited, local Jewish theatre (Finkel 194). *Hamlet* served other national goals as well. Hebrew theatre in Palestine at the time, especially Habima, was committed to promoting the Hebrew language and educating the local Jewish population. Friedland's *Hamlet*, according to contemporary reviews, succeeded in both. The Hebrew translation of the play, commissioned for this production from the poet Avraham Shlonsky, was immediately recognized as a momentous cultural achievement. Critics also agreed that "such a play is appropriate for educating an audience, and especially youth, to appreciate theatre and thought" (Sussman).

The production of an English masterpiece under British rule invites a post-colonial analysis, but the case of Hebrew theatre in Mandatory Palestine differs from the post-colonial paradigm of colonizing (British) and colonized (native) cultures, in which "[c]olonial masters imposed their value system through Shakespeare, and in response colonized peoples often answered back in Shakespearean accents" (Loomba and Orkin 7). Shakespeare's plays, and *Hamlet* specifically, were not performed in Mandatory Palestine with the intention of inculcating the English language in the local populace, as was the case in other British colonies. On the contrary, *Hamlet* served the Zionist agenda by enriching and helping promote the revival of the *Hebrew* language in a population with a high proportion of immigrants.

Another important difference is that Habima was not exactly "native". The theatre was founded in Russia in 1918 and operated under the auspices of the Moscow Art Theatre, where Konstantin Stanislavski was one of its main patrons. It relocated to Palestine in 1931, after extensive tours in Europe and the United States, including performances of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* in Germany and England. Habima considered itself a European theatre, albeit

[3] The English translation of sources in Hebrew throughout the article is mine.

a Jewish one.[4] It did not owe its Shakespeare to the British Mandate. Nevertheless, its mission to educate the Jewish population in Palestine in the Western tradition marks it as an agent of Western culture in a non-Western region. In fact, Israeli theatre's function as an agent of the West was to prove central in shaping the history of *Hamlet* on the Israeli stage in the twentieth century.

To a large extent, Habima's national goals—promoting Hebrew, educating the local population and proving to the British that Hebrew theatre could successfully stage *Hamlet*—precluded a thoroughgoing local appropriation of the play. Rather, these goals necessitated a rendition that would be both faithful to Shakespeare's "original", as it was perceived at the time, and consistent with its representation in Western theatres. Indeed, Friedland mostly emulated contemporary European and American production styles. His three-and-a-half-hour *Hamlet* featured monumental palace scenography and lavish regal costumes, both of which situated the play in the distant past, possibly in its medieval origin. The production even included a live orchestra in the Russian tradition.

Friedland's *Hamlet* was a deliberately grand production befitting an important cultural moment, in which a world masterpiece became available for the first time to the Hebrew culture emerging in Palestine. However, translating *Hamlet* into Hebrew was not its only aim; it also sought to offer audiences the first uniquely Jewish *Hamlet.* This was achieved mainly through Friedland's editing of the plot and Shimon Finkel's portrayal of the protagonist.

Even for a three-and-a-half-hour performance, Friedland was obliged to edit the text. He cut Hamlet's speech to the players and eliminated Fortinbras entirely, ending the play with Horatio's "Good night sweet prince / And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest" (5:2:338-39). Yet Fortinbras was not cut solely due to time constraints. In her review of the production, Margot Klausner, one of the founders of the Israeli theater and film industry, interpreted this directorial decision as Friedland's response to the glorification of Fortinbras as a resolute, brave military leader in the (then recent) productions of *Hamlet* in Nazi Germany (6). The first Hebrew *Hamlet* thus excised the Nazi hero from the Jewish stage.

Although Friedland never explained his decision to cut Fortinbras, Finkel did write about the profound sense of responsibility he felt in "being the first Hamlet in Israel" and his efforts to create a distinctly *Jewish* protagonist, a Hamlet with a redemptive "messianic mission" (198). Finkel's Hamlet has been described as "a pure sacrificial figure, unrelentingly fighting for justice" (Aronson-Lehavi 317). The production as a whole, writes Sharon Aronson-Lehavi, conveyed a "sense of self-justice and victimization in the midst of a cruel world" which was related to the "feelings of the Jewish people" shortly

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[4] A more appropriate paradigm would therefore be Homi Bhabha's model of hybridity.

after the Holocaust (317). Indeed, the portrayal of Hamlet as a redemptive sacrificial figure and the production's ending in death embodied this moment in Jewish history—after the Holocaust and before the establishment of the Jewish state.

The first Hebrew *Hamlet* was thus a synthesis of two conflicting impulses. On the one hand, it was designed to prove—both to the British and to local audiences—that the emergent Hebrew theatre in Palestine was good enough to stage a production of the world-famous English masterpiece on a par with its productions in established European and Russian theatres. On the other hand, its creators sought to offer audiences a Hebrew *Hamlet* with a distinctly Jewish inflection, indeed reflecting "the age and body" of their time.

For decades after Friedland's daring production, Israeli theatres shied away from illuminating *Hamlet* in a local light, focusing instead on proving, like Habima did, that they could stage the play just as well as more established Western theatres. To this end they commissioned European directors to stage *Hamlet*s with no local relevance. It would be 40 years before an Israeli would direct *Hamlet* again; the next two Israeli *Hamlet*s were directed by Eastern Europeans and engaged with issues that were only of concern in the directors' countries of origin. These were dis-located local appropriations.

Konrad Swinarski, The Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv, 1966: To Be or Not to Be—European?

The second production of *Hamlet* in Israel was staged by the Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv 20 years after Habima's production. The Cameri had previously staged only one Shakespearean tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet* (1957), directed by Israeli director Yosef Milo. For its first *Hamlet* the theatre commissioned Konrad Swinarski, an esteemed Polish director who had previously worked with Bertolt Brecht at the Berliner Ensemble. At this time Swinarski had just finished directing Tadeusz Różewicz's *The Card Index* at another Israeli playhouse.

Unlike the grandeur of Friedland's monumental palace, Swinarski's stage, which he designed himself, featured the seaport of a dilapidated Elsinore, where sacks (of grain?) were continually being unloaded, counted, registered and carried away. The stage was dominated by a grey, prison-like structure surrounded by a stone wall, which inspired, according to press reviews, a general atmosphere of dread and violence. Claudius (Yosef Yadin) was so convincingly portrayed as a kind-hearted uncle and a benevolent monarch that Hamlet's intense dislike of him seemed puzzling. Horatio was an opportunist, or a traitor, who transferred his service and allegiance to Fortinbras immediately after Hamlet's death. Fortinbras himself was a thug in a shiny white suit that contrasted sharply with the dark, shabby background.

Swinarski's production took an ideological socio-political stance, influenced by Marxist theory and Jan Kott's recently published *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. Yeshayahu Weinberg, the Cameri's managing director at the time, explained that Swinarski saw the play as a clash between the old (the armed feudal lords, represented by Hamlet's father) and the new (the generation of commerce and diplomacy, represented by Hamlet and Claudius) (Weinberg). Swinarski, like Kott, believed that "the new" can never fully break away from the "negative tradition of the past" and must eventually appear as a defective, debased version of itself (Weinberg 6-7). In this production, Fortinbras, an impeccably dressed capitalist bully, personified the debasement of the promising ideal of free commerce and diplomacy.

Critics noted the production's shift away from the romantic view of the "philosophizing, contemplative Hamlet" and its focus on politics rather than philosophy (Feingold). Yet the nature of Swinarski's political message remained largely obscure for the actors and critics alike. "It was obvious that there was some new interpretative attempt", wrote one critic; it "was not made explicit in the production, but […] it sufficed to ruin all the relationships in the play" (Evron, "Death and Commerce"). Actor Oded Kotler, who gave up the leading role during the play's rehearsals, described this production as "Konrad Swinarski, fuelled by Tel Aviv booze, directing Shakespeare's *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* in Shlonsky's Hebrew, with a Marxist orientation" (196). It was a recipe for failure.

The international mix that Kotler notes was hardly accidental. Whereas before the foundation of the State of Israel local theatres relied mainly on local directors and original plays, in the 1950s and '60s Israeli theatres tended to invite foreigners to stage world masterpieces (Levy 140). Israeli theatre historian Shosh Avigal points out Israel's deep "sense of isolation and enclosure" in those years, "surrounded by seven enemy Arab countries and without even television broadcasting to connect it to the Western world" (31). Israeli artists, "who were mainly the product of Western culture", she writes, "found themselves virtually imprisoned in an ambivalent island of Western culture within the Middle East, physically rooted in the East while spiritually focused on the West" (Avigal 31).[5]

[5] In the 1950s Israel absorbed a mass immigration of Jews from Arab countries such as Morocco, Yemen, Iran, Iraq and Libya. It was thus not only surrounded by Arab countries but also *contained* a large Jewish-Arab population, in addition to its marginalized Muslim and Christian Arab populations. Ella Shohat describes the cultural anxiety aroused in the European-Jewish population by the arrival of these Oriental Jews. She quotes David Ben-Gurion, Israel's prime minister at the time, who said: "We do not want Israelis to become Arabs. We are in duty bound to fight against the spirit of the Levant", and the Israeli diplomat Abba Eban, who argued that the "object should be to infuse [the Oriental Jews] with an Occidental spirit, rather than allow them to drag us into an unnatural Orientalism" (Shohat 4). The state settled

Interestingly, in an interview for *Al HaMishmar* the Cameri's administrative director, Yitzhak Kolker (more commonly known as Itzik Kol), presented the theatre's decision to commission Swinarski with a different emphasis:

> Like every theatre, the Cameri has long aspired to stage a Shakespearean tragedy [...] [However, we] failed to find a director who could [do so]. Our directors claimed that they had nothing to say through *Hamlet*. Now we have an "optimal cast" for staging the play and a director who wants to direct it, Konrad Swinarski. He thinks he knows what the Danish Prince can say today to an Israeli audience.[6] (Meron)

By claiming that "every theatre" stages Shakespearean tragedies, Kolker implicitly identifies "theatre" with "Western theatre". Moreover, by implying that the Cameri's aspiration to be like every Western theatre is hindered by the incompetence of Israeli directors, Kolker draws attention to the tension between being Western and being Israeli (living in the Middle East but aspiring to be part of the West). The Cameri's ambition to consider itself equal to "every" Western theatre, on this view, necessitated commissioning non-Israelis with proven records in Western theatres to direct Shakespearean tragedies. Thus, whereas Friedland directed *Hamlet* to prove to the British that Habima was more than a limited local theatre, Swinarski was commissioned to direct *Hamlet* because the local theatre considered itself limited.

The tension between Europeanness and provincialism was particularly evident in the heated debate about Israeli theatre—its repertory, its aims and its status in relation to established European theatres—ignited by Swinraski's production. Even critics who deemed the production a complete failure applauded the Cameri for daring to stage *Hamlet*, considering the production an important step in the development of Israeli theatre. The controversy was about *how* a world masterpiece should be staged in Israel, or, more specifically, what degree of adaptation or appropriation should Israeli theatre allow itself.

Critics espousing the more traditional view insisted that if "one of our theatres finally dares to stage *Hamlet*, it would do well to avoid 'revolutionary' attempts at interpretation" (Evron, "Death and Commerce"). "Only a country where this play is a regular part of the theatrical repertory can allow itself to

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many of the immigrants in *ma'abarot*—transit camps not much better than tent cities, constructed on the Israeli periphery. As early as 1953, the State of Israel, although in dire financial straits, initiated a project called "Theatre for the Ma'abarot", which brought theatrical productions to these temporary settlements in order to improve the Hebrew of Oriental Jews and expose them to Western culture and values.

[6] Kolker disregards the Cameri's 1957 production of *Romeo and Juliet* and erroneously presents *Hamlet* as the Cameri's first production of a Shakespearean tragedy.

experiment occasionally with unusual interpretations"; Israeli audiences, by contrast, needed "first get to know the play as it is" (ibid.).

Critics holding the opposing view denounced the demand for "an unchanging, conventional, univocal and literary" representation of *Hamlet* that lacks "life and adaptability" (Feingold). Critic Ben-Ami Feingold, for example, protested the demand that the play should be staged "as it is", arguing that Israeli audiences expect only the "*Hamlet* that exists in their […]closed and retarded minds", and are therefore averse to "new and different attempts". The only way to overcome Israeli theatre's "depressing provincialism", he asserted, was to continue staging innovative and challenging interpretations of canonical plays, even if such productions fail (Feingold).

Whereas critics who took the traditional view blamed the director's radical interpretation and its baffled execution by the actors for the failure of Swinarski's *Hamlet,* progressive critics blamed their tradionalist colleagues, the Israeli theatrical tradition and the audiences for the production's poor reception. Feingold argued that Israeli theatre suffered from a "severe case of fear of heights" when confronted with Shakespeare, consequently failing to challenge its audience with novel productions of his plays (Feingold). The unflattering reception of the Cameri's *Hamlet,* he contended, "does not attest to a failure on the part of Swinarski and his actors but to the failure of our very mediocre critics, whose narrow-mindedness rules out anything that is beyond convention-bound aesthetic mediocrity" (Feingold). Prominent Israeli author Shulamit Har-Even likewise insisted, "We have been presented with *a top-notch European production*, despite the insecurities on stage and in the audience" (8; my emphasis). Swinarski's European production was not at fault; the problem was that the local actors, critics and audience were regrettably not European enough to appreciate it.

The question underlying the passionate debate regarding Swinarski's production was thus "to be or not to be—European". The next two productions of *Hamlet* in Israel also suffered from an identity crisis, as detailed below.

Dinu Cernescu, Habima 1983-84:
To Be or Not to Be—Romanian?

The third Israeli production of *Hamlet* premiereed at Habima in December 1983, less than two years after the 1982 Lebanon War, a tumultuous period for Israeli theatre and society. The conflict now known in Israel as The First Lebanon War was initially presented as "Operation Peace for Galilee", a 48-hour limited military operation in Lebanon intended to stop the continual bombarding of northern Israeli towns from across the border. The operation, however, deteriorated into a prolonged, bloody and unpopular war. The Israeli public

protested against the death toll of what was perceived—for the first time in Israeli history—as an unnecessary or unjustified military conflict. Many were also outraged by the IDF's silent consent to the massacre of hundreds of Palestinians in the Lebanese refugee camps Sabra and Shatila, an outcome of the Israeli incursion.

Israeli theatre at the time "was a theatre of protest", both in "original drama and in local interpretations of translated classics" (Avigal 37). Thus, in 1983 Habima also staged *The Trojan Women*, Euripides's anti-war play. *Hamlet* —featuring "the imminent death of twenty thousand men" led by Fortinbras on a futile military campaign—was not allowed to reverberate the Israeli public's outrage at the devastating death toll of an unnecessary war. Instead, Habima presented its audience with a *Hamlet* about Communist Romania.

The production was staged by leading Romanian director Dinu Cernescu. Cernescu's *Hamlet* opened with "Denmark's a prison", a line that was repeated twice more during the performance (Weitz). Scenic designer Lidia Pinkus-Gani accordingly planned the stage as a box constructed of high black walls, bare interiors, barred windows and narrow slits through which the characters spied on each other. It was dominated by a transforming apparatus that alternately represented Old Hamlet's tomb, Claudius's throne and Ophelia's grave.

Cernescu made significant changes to the plot, rearranging scenes, omitting existing ones, adding new ones and redistributing some of the lines. His Ophelia was an astute politician who aspired to become queen, feigned madness and was eventually murdered by Gertrude. Horatio was a traitor in Fortinbras's service and masqueraded as the Ghost of Hamlet's father, intending to turn the prince against Claudius and thereby pave Fortinbras's path to the Danish throne. At his coronation, however, Fortinbras, dressed in a heavy Russian coat, murdered Horatio, laughed insanely, and ended the play by yelling: "And now, silence!"

If critics were baffled by Swinarski's interpretation, Cernescu's *Hamlet* was unanimously understood as a political play about Eastern Europe and the Russian forces controlling—and silencing—it. However, in interviews with the Israeli press Cernescu repeatedly insisted that the issues he stressed "in the play [were] just as relevant to Poland, Israel or France" (Nagid).[7] Ironically enough, Cernescu even tried to emphasize his production's specific relevance to Israel, claiming that his Horatio "tries to serve the foreign invaders", while "Fortinbras

[7] It is no accident that Romania, Cernescu's homeland, is absent from this list of countries to which *Hamlet* is relevant. Sarit Fuchs, who interviewed Cernescu, writes that when she doubted his insistence on the universality of his production, Cernescu's interpreter whispered to her: "He cannot tell you anything else. He has to go back to Romania" (Fuchs, "We're All Spies").

embodies the external danger, which is very timely for many nations—particularly Israel" (Pomerantz). Cernescu obviously did not realize that for the first time since its inception, Israel was preoccupied not with foreign invasion but with the implications of its own invasion of another country.

Israeli theatre critics were not convinced by the director's claims regarding the production's local relevance. "The main problem of Cernescu's *Hamlet* is that it responds to a political reality that is very real and pressing in Romania or Poland but is no more than an academic problem in Israel", wrote one critic, adding that this *Hamlet* inspires "yearning for […] a political production rooted in the here and now" (Weitz). Another critic asserted that while in dictatorships "one has no choice but to (ab)use sacred texts" in order to express a political opinion, "in a relatively free society it would be better to avoid such tricks, for which the only excuse is censorship" (Evron, "Castrated *Hamlet*").

When critic Sarit Fuchs declared in *Ma'ariv* that "Cernescu's *Hamlet*, even if he denies it, is an Eastern European one", she presumably did not know how valid her assertion was. Cernescu's production of *Hamlet* in Tel Aviv was in fact a re-production of a *Hamlet* he had directed at Bucharest's Nottara theatre in 1974.[8] This production, of which the Israeli press was apparently unaware and which Cernescu himself neglected to mention, is now recognized as a milestone of political adaptations of Shakespeare, in the spirit of Jan Kott, in the Eastern European Communist Bloc.[9] It was described as "the most daring Romanian representation of Kott's notion of the Grand Mechanism" (Nicolaescu 150), and the "first time in the history of *Hamlet* productions" that a Shakespearean performance "involved a subversive dimension intended to challenge the structures of authority in the Communist state" (Matei-Chesnoiu 205). This groundbreaking political production was in fact identical to the one Cernescu directed in Hebrew in Tel Aviv, from its unique stage design to the changes in the plot. Contrary to Cernescu's claims, the third Israeli *Hamlet* was Romanian after all.

In a study of the reception of canonical plays in Israel Bilha Blum notes that Habima's 1983 *The Trojan Women* is the only twentieth-century Israeli

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[8] In the earlier production (with which Cernescu toured Bulgaria), Denmark was likewise "visually literalized as a prison" and "Old Hamlet's coffin morphed into Claudius's throne, then into the wedding table and into Gertrude's bed, to end with its recycling of Ophelia's tomb" (Nicolaescu 150–51). The Bucharest production also featured the same alterations to the plot: Horatio as the arch-schemer of the play, serving Fortinbras and masquerading as the Ghost, and Fortinbras ending the play by "silencing … his new subjects" (Nicolaescu 151).

[9] In the 25 newspaper articles, of varying lengths, that I was able to retrieve, only one short and anonymous piece noted in passing that "Cernescu has already directed *Hamlet* in his homeland" ("Being Hamlet").

production of a Greek tragedy (albeit in Jean-Paul Sartre's version) that was performed over 100 times (49). Blum attributes the production's unique success to its accurate reflection of the public (anti-war) atmosphere in Israel at the time of its staging. Whereas *The Trojan Women* was performed 123 times, Cernescu's locally-irrelevant *Hamlet* was performed only 86 times.

It seems that Israeli theatregoers, like the progressive critics cited above, now began to seek out theatre that reflected their own concerns. The next production of *Hamlet* in Israel, which premiered only five years after Cernescu's, indeed tried to "hold a mirror" up to contemporary Israel and engage with its major socio-political issues. Unfortunately, Israeli critics and audiences failed to recognize their own reflection in this mirror.

Rina Yerushalmi, Itim Ensemble / The Cameri, 1988–92: To Be or Not to Be—Israeli?

Some 42 years after Friedland's production, the fourth Israeli *Hamlet* was the first to be directed by an Israeli, and, to this date, remains the only Israeli production of the play to be directed by a woman. Since Israeli repertory theatres did not entrust locals with *Hamlet,* Rina Yerushalmi, who had previously directed *Macbeth* at the Haifa Municipal Theatre (1986), staged her *Hamlet* at Matan: The Centre for Experimental Theatre, and later founded the experimental theatre group Itim Ensemble. The production, which won the 1990 Margalit Award for Best Director and Best Production, premiered at the Akko Festival of Alternative Theatre and was later adopted by the Cameri, where it ran for three years. It was also performed at the International Shakespeare Festival in Braunschweig, Germany, 1990; the BAM, New York, 1992; and the International Holland Festival, Amsterdam, 1992.

At the Cameri Yerushalmi's *Hamlet* was staged in an old rehearsal studio renovated to look like a black box. The dominant colors were brown and black, creating a deliberate "effect of something out of a 1930s film intrigue" (Ben-Zvi 375). There was no stage, and the "minimalist setting allowed Yerushalmi to focus her production on physical, choreographic, and psychological imagery produced by her group of young actors", led by Shuli Rand as Hamlet (Oz 845).

Yerushalmi restricted the number of spectators to 80, kept the lights on throughout the performance to ensure that the audience was clearly visible, and deliberately transgressed spatial boundaries between play and audience. In order to inspire a "feeling of direct connection and participation with the action", she explained, the audience's seats were "in single rows so that the spectators are not protected by people in front or behind them" (Ben-Zvi 374). The actors sat on chairs adjacent to the audience's seats, coming forward to perform their roles

in a circle of light at the center of the hall and then returning to “their chairs in the audience, from which they watch the action until they are to appear again” (Ben-Zvi 374).

Yerushalmi thus removed the spatial and visual distinctions between actors and spectators, with Hamlet emerging from the audience and coming back to die among its members. What was the rationale behind this ploy—was *Hamlet* indistinguishable from its Israeli audience because it was an Israeli *Hamlet*, or because its events could play out anywhere? The answer to this question appears to be contingent on time and place: Yerushalmi answered it differently while the play was still running and in interviews held in retrospect, and the production was understood differently when performed in Israel and abroad.

In the play’s program at the Akko Festival, Yerushalmi explained that she deliberately avoided an interpretation and localization of *Hamlet* and had instead deconstructed the play into its various components in order to emphasize its universal moral aspects, especially those related to revenge (Porter 159–60). In a 1995 interview with Linda Ben-Zvi, Yerushalmi reiterated her belief that “*Hamlet* arouses in us a need to examine the way we relate to existential issues of our lives” (Ben-Zvi 377). She also explained that at the heart of the play were two interrelated existential questions: “to be or not to be” and “to kill or not to kill” (Ben-Zvi 377). For Yerushalmi, the social demand “to kill” entails a personal loss of the will “to be”; as the Itim Ensemble website states, she “subversively found in Hamlet’s death wish a reasonable reaction to the murder/revenge that he should execute” (“Itim Ensemble *Hamlet*”).

The difficulty of reconciling “social morality” with personally motivated actions, Yerushalmi argued, exists in *every* society, allowing any audience to see itself reflected in the play (Porter 159). But although presented in universal terms, these conflicts—“to be or not to be” and “to kill or not to kill”—were especially pertinent in Israel. At this time the country was coping both with the first Intifada (the Palestinian uprising against Israeli military rule in Gaza and the West Bank, 1987–1993) and with the weekly death toll exacted by the South Lebanon Security Belt, imposed following the Israeli occupation of Lebanon in the First Lebanon War.

In a 1996 interview with Ben-Zvi Yerushalmi stated that she chose *Hamlet* because of its local (rather than universal) relevance: “I needed to do the play. If I were sitting in London, I would not need to address such questions. I chose the play because it is debating the morality behind killing … This is the most painful issue facing Israel today” (Ben-Zvi 377–78). “I don’t change the play to fit our situation”, she continued; “Hamlet offers insights into who we are and why we are. The real issue for Hamlet is should he or should he not kill” (Ben-Zvi 378). For Yerushalmi, *Hamlet* and Israel engage with the same issues: the morality behind killing another person and the impact of the need to kill on the will to live.

Yerushalmi was disappointed by the failure of Israeli audiences and critics to understand her production's local relevance. In fact, one of the most remarkable aspects of this production was the contrast between its reception in Israel and abroad. Whereas critics abroad "tended to see in this production an allegory on Israel as a belligerent society" (Kaynar 75), local audiences and theatre critics failed to recognize themselves in the mirror that Yerushalmi held up to them.[10]

Yerushalmi attributed this failure to contemporary Israeli audiences' poor understanding of the theatrical language. "Education about theatre by the critics has been very poor," she argued, "limited to 'I like the play, I don't like the play,' instead of allowing the audience to understand how to see a play's language so that the audience can make up its own mind" (Ben-Zvi 378). I would like to suggest that Yerushalmi's theatrical language, which preceded its time, was not clear enough. In fact, in addition to her explicit presentation of this production as universally rather than locally oriented, Yerushalmi consistently weakened the local message that she was trying to convey.

As an example of the poor understanding of theatrical language in Israel, Yerushalmi describes the misunderstanding of the play's opening:

> [At] the beginning of the performance, the company stands in silence [….] In Israel you stand still once a year for the commemoration of the dead soldiers in all our wars. Audience and critics didn't see the connection (probably because we didn't have the sirens that mark the moment). (Ben-Zvi 378)

The sirens, as Yerushalmi acknowledges in a parenthetical remark, are the absolute signifiers of Israel's Memorial Day; without them, the opening of the performance was no more than a moment of silence, disconnected from the national context she wished to suggest.

Another example of the unrealized local potential of Yerushalmi's production is its portrayal of the Gravedigger. The production's page on the Itim Ensemble website exemplifies Yerushalmi's "political interpretation" of *Hamlet* through "the Gravedigger, who was dressed in military uniform [and] invited Hamlet into the grave while singing a lullaby" ("Itim Ensemble *Hamlet*"). The powerful connection between the young generation, the military and its invitation into the grave was lost on local critics, but through no fault of their own. The Gravedigger was dressed in a long military coat of the kind that the IDF does *not* use. Since he was also barefoot and seemed to be naked underneath the coat that reached down to his knees, the Gravedigger looked nothing like an Israeli soldier.

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[10] Only one critic noted in passing that "Yerushalmi [did] not ignore the political aspects" of the play, but did not specify what these aspects were (Yaron).

“For the political potential of Shakespeare’s plays to be released”, writes Wilhelm Hortmann, “three things must come together: a political or social situation crying out for critical comment; a director and ensemble willing, able (and also ruthless enough) to use the plays for this purpose; and audiences alive to the sociopolitical climate and therefore primed to catch allusions” (213–14). Yerushalmi, it seems, was not ruthless enough. Breaking the association of Shakespeare’s classic with other contexts—a medieval European monarchy, Marxist Poland, or Communist Romania—required a more explicit theatrical language.

Yerushalmi’s production thus failed to realize its potential as political commentary. An effective, indeed a *first,* localization of *Hamlet* required a stronger and clearer message. The stage, it seems, was not yet set for a truly Israeli *Hamlet*. This was still the case seven years later: for the play’s next Israeli production a foreign director was again invited to recycle a European production of *Hamlet*.

Steven Berkoff, Haifa Municipal Theatre, 1999–2000: Being European (Again)

For its first production of *Hamlet*, the Haifa Municipal Theatre commissioned British director Steven Berkoff to recreate a *Hamlet* he had directed and starred in 20 years earlier with the London Theatre Group. Except for its Hebrew translation and Israeli actors, there was nothing new in this production. Not only did Berkoff publish a scene-by-scene description of it in his book *I Am Hamlet* (1989), but as part of its prolonged European tour, his *Hamlet* had already been performed—in Haifa and elsewhere in Israel—in 1980.[11]

Berkoff’s 1999 production of *Hamlet*, which also travelled to the Autumn Festival in Rome, was nevertheless well received by both audience and critics. Berkoff did not remain in Israel to enjoy the production’s success; he spent a month (January 1999) working with the local actors in Haifa and left Israel before the premiere. The production, like Berkoff’s original one, was minimalist, lacking props and scenery (even without swords for the final duel) and relying heavily on the actors’ physicality and movement. Being a recreation of a 20-year-old European production, Berkoff’s *Hamlet* did not engage with local affairs. This was unfortunate because, as was the case with Cernescu’s 1983 production, in 1999 there was an obvious analogy between *Hamlet* and the state of affairs in Israel.

The 1990s were an especially turbulent decade in Israeli history. The peace treaty between Israel and Jordan (1994) and the Oslo Accords between

[11] For Berkoff’s account of this tour see Berkoff (“Hamlet at Passover in Israel, 1980”).

Israel and the Palestinians (1993–95) brought with them tangible hope for the end of the bloody conflict between Israel and its neighbors. Some Israeli Jews, however, perceived the Oslo agreements as a threat to the survival and wholeness of the Jewish state, and the radical right-wing opposition to the peace process eventually led to the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995, and to Benjamin Netanyahu's rise to power in the ensuing elections. Meanwhile, Israel was also coping with waves of terrorist attacks, in which suicide bombers set off explosions in buses, cafés and shopping malls, killing dozens.

In an interview with Sarit Fuchs, Berkoff, a British Jew, referred to Israel's contemporary political circumstances and maintained that Netanyahu, then at the end of his first term, jeopardized the future of the Jewish State "by alienating millions of Arabs" (Fuchs, "Some Character"). Fuchs astutely criticized the absence of these views from Berkoff's production, pointing out the obvious parallel between *Hamlet* and contemporary Israeli politics and implicitly suggesting that it was cowardly to complain about politics in newspaper interviews and disregard it in one's art:

> Strange. If Berkoff had decided to make committed theatre, risky theatre, he would have easily and obviously […] presented this triple analogy: Claudius, the King of Denmark, who is responsible for the murder of the previous king, as Bibi [Netanyahu]; the murdered king—the Ghost—as Rabin; and Hamlet as an Israeli Everyman. (Fuchs, "Some Character")

Asserting that "*Hamlet* is a political play", Fuchs also stressed the political resonance inadvertently created by the casting of actor Doron Tavory—an activist for peace between Israel and the Palestinians—in the leading role. "[W]hoever is familiar with Tavory's history," she noted, "knows what he is saying when he shoots out […] in sarcastic desperation" Hamlet's speech about Fortinbras (Fuchs, "Some Character"):

> … to my shame, I see
> The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
> That for a fantasy and trick of fame
> Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
> Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
> Which is not tomb enough and continent
> To hide the slain. (*Hamlet*, 4:4:59-65)

Tavory himself, however, denied that the production offered a "political interpretation", and insisted that it intended "to tell the story in the most naïve way" (Amir).

Unlike Cernescu in 1983, Berkoff was aware of the parallels between contemporary Israel and *Hamlet's* Denmark, and even acknowledged these similarities and their perception by Israeli audiences, in a piece he published in *The Independent* ("Finding a Ready Market for a Hebrew *Hamlet*", n.p). Yet he, too, merely recreated in Israel a production he had directed in another place at another time. The fifth Israeli *Hamlet,* was thus, once again, directed by a foreigner with no attempt at a local appropriation, despite the obvious similarities between its plot and Israel's national circumstances at the time of its staging.

Berkoff's production, created in the late 1970s with a European audience in mind, was certainly not meant to be "about" Israeli politics. However, as Hortmann notes, sometimes "extraneous events and conditions […] can suddenly charge plays with contemporary meaning. In such cases it is not even necessary to alter the text; it is the act of performing a particular play at a particular historical juncture that constitutes the political significance" (216). Why should the production's obvious local relevance, once it had surfaced, be actively denied by the director and the leading actor? The answer may lie in the history of the Haifa Municipal Theatre, which for many years was at the forefront of political theatre in Israel, staging controversial original plays (most notably by Yehoshua Sobol) and groundbreaking political productions of canonical plays (such as a Hebrew/Arabic production of *Waiting for Godot* in 1984). Such provocative political productions are often not profitable, and the theatre may have been trying to reassure prospective playgoers that its treatment of *Hamlet* was "safe". Such caution may have been unnecessary. The next Israeli production of *Hamlet,* which alluded both to the Rabin assassination and to Israel's military rule in the Occupied Territories, was the most successful production of *Hamlet* in the history of Israeli theatre.

Twentieth-Century Israeli *Hamlets* in Context

In her study of the reception of canonical plays in Israel Bilha Blum shows the tendency of Israeli repertory theatres, beginning in the 1970s and especially in the 1980s and 1990s, to adapt canonical plays to local circumstances rather than emphasize their universal aspects (62). "Israeli productions of Shakespeare's plays", she notes, likewise "shifted from documenting and recreating the plays' original plot and era to making relevant contemporary statements that apply to the spectators' present reality" (165). Israeli theatre's prolonged reluctance to locally appropriate *Hamlet* thus stands in sharp contrast with its growing tendency to adapt other canonical plays to the Israeli contexts in which they were staged.

The absence of a local contemporary statement in *Hamlet* productions is closely associated with Israeli theatre's unwillingness to entrust local directors with this play. Whereas *Hamlet* was repeatedly directed by foreigners, other Shakespearean plays were directed by Israelis, with varying degrees of adaptation to local circumstances. Thus, all four Israeli productions of *Richard III* (1966–1992), five out of the eight productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1949–2001) and three out of the six productions of *Romeo and Juliet* (1957–2000) were directed by locals, including a co-production of the latter in which Jewish actors from the Khan Theatre played the Capulets in Hebrew and Arab actors from the Al-Qasba Theatre played the Montagues in Arabic (1994).[12]

How can *Hamlet*'s unusual staging history in Israel be explained? Was it fear of heights, as Feingold diagnosed in 1966? Did Israeli theatre managers indeed believe that Israeli directors could not handle *Hamlet*? Or did they assume that this was the belief of their audiences? This seems unlikely. Blum shows that productions of canonical plays directed by Israelis are consistently better received and more financially successful than those directed by foreigners (61). Financially—and Israeli theatres have been struggling with budgetary problems for decades—it pays off to offer locally relevant productions of world masterpieces. Why, then, did Israeli repertory theatres repeatedly commission foreigners to direct locally irrelevant *Hamlet*s for almost 60 years?

It seems that, due to its unique status in the Western canon, Israeli repertory theatres used *Hamlet* not to reflect the "age and body of the time" but to project their own image of themselves as belonging to the European theatrical culture. Friedland emulated American and European styles to show the British that Hebrew theatre was on a par with Western ones; Swinarski, a rising star in the European theatrical arena, would, it was hoped, sprinkle some stardust on the Israeli scene; and both Cernescu and Berkoff reproduced in Israel *Hamlet*s they had directed in Europe. What could be a better way to mark the Israeli theatre as a European one than to have the most famous Western play directed by famous Europeans?

This state of affairs changed with Omri Nitzan's production of *Hamlet,* which premiered at the Cameri Theatre in January 2005. Nitzan both fleshed out the unrealized political potential of Yerushalmi's production and emphasized the obvious similarity between Israeli politics at the turn of the twenty-first century and the plot of *Hamlet*—a similarity that was ignored in Berkoff's production. His riveting locally-relevant rendition of the play was so enthusiastically received that it ran for more than six years and a thousand performances.

[12] The production was co-directed by Eran Baniel (Khan) and Fouad Awad (Al-Kasba).

Part II: Israeli *Hamlet*s in the Twenty-First Century

Omri Nitzan, The Cameri Theatre, 2005: Being Israeli

Omri Nitzan has been a leading figure in the Israeli theatre scene since the 1970s. In addition to directing plays by prominent Israeli playwrights, as well as by Brecht, Becket, Ibsen, Strindberg and others, Nitzan served as the artistic director of several leading Israeli repertory theatres from 1980 to 2017 (Yerushalmi 482–83). He is also the Israeli who has directed the largest number of Shakespeare's plays in Israeli history ("Omri Nitzan—Artistic Director"). Before tackling *Hamlet* in 2005, he had already directed eight Shakespearean plays and even Verdi's *Othello* (2001). Nitzan added a local dimension to most of his Shakespearean productions, often through the scenography, designed mostly by Ruth Dar, and the casting. His *Twelfth Night* (Habima, 1980), for example, was situated on an Israeli beach, and his *Much Ado about Nothing* (Haifa, 1983) was set in Mandatory Palestine (Yerushalmi 498).

Nitzan's *Hamlet*, which premiered on 2 January 2005, won all the major Israel Theatre Awards for 2006 and participated in international Shakespeare festivals in Gdansk (2005), Bucharest (2006), Washington (2007), Moscow (2009) and Shanghai (2009), to great critical acclaim. Reviews in the Israeli press lauded it as "undoubtedly the best thing the Israeli theatre has seen in many years;" Nitzan, wrote one critic, "takes a classic [and] turns it into a meaningful contemporary play without stripping it of its true […] meaning" (Ajzenstadt, 42). If Israeli theatre has moved from faithfully reproducing canonical plays to updating them and adapting them, Nitzan's *Hamlet,* which alludes to twenty-first-century Israel while avoiding historical exactitude, achieved both. It was perceived as doing justice to Shakespeare's text while effectively holding up a mirror to Israeli society, as both "timeless and contemporary" (Handelsaltz, "*Hamlet*").

The feature that made Nitzan's *Hamlet* relevant to both time and place was mainly its dissolution of spatial, temporal, functional and linguistic boundaries between the play and the audience. Ruth Dar's anti-naturalistic scenography collapsed the distinction between audience space and performance space. The production transgressed temporal boundaries by continuing during the intermission. In addition, Nitzan effectively cast the audience as the Danish court and invited the spectators to participate in the performance. Most importantly, Nitzan inserted allusions to contemporary Israel into the text and used IDF-like uniforms to make a clear statement about Israel's belligerence.

Nitzan's *Hamlet*, like Yerushalmi's, was performed in one of the Cameri's rehearsal studios (the Cameri 3, seating 165). This small auditorium

had no stage, and the action took place mainly in five performing spaces: four of them encircled the audience, and the fifth, an aisle resembling a catwalk, divided the audience in two. Since the lighting design ensured that the audience remained visible throughout the performance, Nitzan effectively enabled the spectators to see themselves—literally and symbolically—from the minute they took their seats.

The seats were swivel chairs that allowed a view of the entire auditorium, but also created a slight sense of dizziness and disorientation. Spectators occasionally had to turn their chairs 180 degrees to watch scenes that took place behind them, and when the auditorium was dimmed between scenes, the audience had no idea where the actors would appear next. The spectators were thus literally kept on the edge of their seats.

The lighting design projected a pattern of windows on the auditorium walls, suggesting that the audience was in the Danish palace with the characters. In this production, the spectators were cast as the Danish courtiers; they were, in Hamlet's words, "mutes"—actors without speaking roles—rather than "audience to this act" (5:2:314).

The performance opened with the royal procession (act 1 scene 2) entering through the audience door. Claudius (Gil Frank) marched through the auditorium to a podium with a microphone, began with "Though yet of Hamlet, our dear brother's death, the memory be green", then gestured to the audience to rise for a minute's silence in memory of the late king (1:2:1).[13] Following the moment of silence, during which the spectators played along with his show of mourning for his brother, Claudius continued his speech.[14] Upon the reference to his recent marriage to the Queen, the actors started clapping and signaled to the spectators to join in. Having thus cheered Claudius's marriage to Gertrude, the audience became the referent for his "Nor have we herein barr'd / *Your* better

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[13] Since the text of the play was adapted to a contemporary linguistic register, when quoting from the production I shall supply the Hebrew original and an English translation of it. The corresponding lines in the play are cited in the body text or referenced in the notes. Here the text of Nitzan's production reads:
"זכרו של המלך המנוח / אחינו / טרי עדיין בלב כולנו."
"The memory of the late king, our brother, is still fresh in our hearts."

[14] Although audience involvement is a relatively standard feature of experimental or fringe theatre, the Cameri is a mainstream repertory theatre with productions normally performed on proscenium stages in auditoria seating hundreds. The expectation that the audience participate in the performance, especially at such an early stage, was a startling (if pleasant) surprise. Those spectators who had previous knowledge of the play may have felt uncomfortable fulfilling Claudius's orders. Those who tried to defy him by remaining seated (as I did when I watched this production for the first time), found that the cast continued gesturing towards them to rise until, embarrassed by the gazes of the entire cast and audience, they eventually complied, thereby learning a painful lesson about the difficulty of resistance.

wisdoms, which have *freely* gone / With this affair along. For all, our thanks" (1:2:14-16; my emphasis).[15] Thus, less than five minutes into the performance the spectators became Claudius's accomplices in the usurpation of the crown, the incestuous marriage to Gertrude and the disappointment of Hamlet's ambition.

This active, though silent, complicity, which was crucial for the local political dimension of the play, was not without consequence. Laertes (Amir Krief) later stormed into the auditorium (through the main door) with a semi-automatic rifle, shot in the air, then aimed his weapon at Claudius. With the armed rebel at one end of the auditorium and the King at the other, the audience—Claudius's court—remained in the line of fire until the king managed to placate the rebel.

Nitzan's production also subverted temporal boundaries, most notably by continuing during the intermission—happening, as it were, in *real* time. The most important way in which Nitzan localized his *Hamlet*, however, was by inserting into the text direct allusions to Israel of the twenty-first century.

The performance text was based on T. Carmi's translation of *Hamlet,* which Nitzan edited and adapted with the help of poet and literary scholar Dan Almagor. The result was a fluent and lively modern Hebrew text, which contributed to the production's here-and-now quality by making the characters sound local and contemporary, and, even more so, by inserting allusions to Israeli reality, such as rendering Shakespeare's "certain convocation of politic worms" as "a glorious *Knesset* of worms" (4:3:19-20).[16]

A subtle, though crucial, allusion to Israeli reality was inserted in the closet scene. Among the many abusive epithets Hamlet hurls at Claudius during this scene, Nitzan and Almagor inserted "עשב שוטה" (*essev shoteh*), meaning "a stray weed" or a "wild weed". This phrase, originating in the idiom "every garden may have some weeds", does not appear either in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or in Carmi's translation. While it would not capture the attention of foreign audiences, Israelis—certainly in 2005—would immediately recognize the term as an allusion to the assassin of Prime Minister Rabin in 1995, not far from the Cameri Theatre building.

The Rabin assassination was a shock for Israelis of all political affiliations. Until 4 November 1995 it was almost unimaginable that an Israeli prime minister could be assassinated by an Israeli Jew—metaphorically, by his brother (the Hebrew term for "civil war" literally means "war of brothers"). Two phrases were repeated again and again in the ensuing social upheaval: "stray

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[15] "ובעשותנו כך לא התעלמנו מעצתכם הנבונה, שקראה 'אמן' לכל מעשינו. ועל כך – תודה."
"And in so doing we have not overlooked your wise counsel, which said 'Amen' to all we have done. For this – our thanks."

[16] "כנסת מפוארת של תולעים"

weed" and "silent majority". Leaders of the religious right were quick to dissociate themselves from the assassin by condemning him as a "stray weed" in their garden. Leftist Israelis attacked leaders of the right (among them Netanyahu) for their acquiescence in the face of escalating calls for violence against Rabin in the months before the assassination. Rabin's followers also openly berated themselves for their own silence, repeatedly referring to the "silent majority" of Israelis who, until the night of the assassination, did nothing to show Rabin their support.[17]

The association of the traumatic assassination of Rabin with Claudius's act of fratricide and regicide added a powerful local dimension to the audience's role as the Danish court. Nitzan's casting of the audience as the silent accomplices of a man who murders his brother and then takes over the state was not just a way of bringing the audience closer to the world of *Hamlet*; it was a political act that underlined the parallels between Elsinore and Tel Aviv.

Another politically charged Hebrew term employed in this production although it does not appear in the English version is כיבוש (*kibbush*), occupation, which designates Israeli military rule over the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories in the West Bank. Nitzan employed this term four times, always in relation to Fortinbras (who wore an IDF-like uniform) and his pointless military campaign against Poland.

Fortinbras (Aviv Zemer) and his Captain (Morris Cohen) carried weapons and were dressed in khaki uniforms that highly resembled those of the IDF. The Captain's description of their campaign included two occurrences of *kibbush* (occupation), none of which originated in Shakespeare's text:

> Truly to speak, and with no addition,
> We go to **occupy** a little patch of ground
> That is not worth much.
> [Only for the glory of the **occupation.**][18]

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[17] H. Shmuel Erlich documents "the widespread public reaction of remorse and guilt" after the assassination, which often manifested itself in utterances such as "'we did not do enough' and 'we are all guilty'". He also notes Leah Rabin's anguished cry "Where have you been?" to "those who came to express their support after the murder" (Shmuel Erlich 196).

[18] These lines correspond to act 4, scene 4, lines 17-19. In Hebrew (my emphasis):
למען האמת,
ובלי קישוטים מיותרים: אנחנו
מתכוונים **לכבוש** חלקה קטנה
של אדמה, שאינה שווה הרבה.
רק לתפארת **הכיבוש**.

Hamlet himself then reiterated *kibbush*/occupation twice in his subsequent soliloquy, which Nitzan cut and rearranged to shift its emphasis from Hamlet's self-reproach to a discussion of death and occupation, and which was delivered from Claudius's podium to highlight its political nature. "Only for the glory of the occupation", Hamlet says,

> I see how death swoops down on tens of thousands,
> Who for a dream of occupation and a trick of fame,
> Go to their inexorable burial like beds.
> To fight for a piece of dirt so small
> That cannot contain them living,
> and will not contain them in their death.[19]

The plot of land that Fortinbras and his army went to occupy in their IDF-like uniform, and for which so many are to die a futile death, thus became not just an occupied territory, but the Occupied Territories.

Fortinbras appeared again in the play's last scene. He entered immediately after Hamlet's death, marched through the auditorium in his khaki uniform, asked no questions and sat on the King's empty throne. The dialogue died with Hamlet; barely a quarter remained of the play's last 42 lines, and only Fortinbras spoke. Nitzan left no trace of Fortinbras's request to hear the story, of his orders to "bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage", or of the reverent sincerity that can be read into his lines (5:2:375). Claiming the kingdom on the grounds of "fathers' rights" (another allusion to right-wing Israeli political discourse, which stresses the ancestral rights of Jews to the Holy Land), Fortinbras kicked Hamlet's body away from the podium to lie at the horrified audience's feet.[20] Now began the reign of Fortinbras, the rule of death and occupation, with the spectators, for the last few minutes of the performance, becoming his subjects.

Soon, however, the play was over, to the sound of deafening music. The actors took their bows, the spectators cheered them enthusiastically and then exited to the streets of Tel Aviv. It was up to each of them to decide whether the rule of death and occupation ended when they left the auditorium, or whether the story (again) continued in real time.

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[19] These lines correspond to act 4, scene 4, lines 32-66. In Hebrew:
בשביל תפארת הכיבוש
אני רואה כיצד המוות עט על רבבות אדם,
אשר בגלל חלום כיבוש ושטות של תהילה
הולכים אל קבורתם הבלתי נמנעת כאל שנתם.
להילחם על פיסת עפר כל כך קטנה,
שאין בה מקום לכולם בחייהם, והיא לא תכיל אותם גם במותם.

[20] "יש לי זכות אבות בממלכה הזאת"

Maor Zagouri, Kibbuzim College of Education / Habima, 2015

The seventh Israeli production of *Hamlet* was directed in 2015 by Maor Zagouri, a young and highly successful Israeli playwright, screenwriter, and director, at the Theatre Department of the Kibbutzim College of Education, and was later adopted by Habima, where it ran until 2017. Zagouri departed significantly from Shakespeare's text: he added a chorus of nine women who delivered Hamlet's monologues as well as the Ghost's lines (which were consequently understood as voices inside mad Hamlet's head); cut several characters (e.g., Fortinbras, the actors); replaced "The Mousetrap" with an allusion to Disney's *The Lion King* (itself loosely based on *Hamlet*); redistributed some of the lines, and even changed the play's ending. In its final scene, Hamlet does not die, but rather takes his dead mother's crown and wears it; it is Horatio, a traitor who cooperates with Claudius, who dies instead. The play ends not with Hamlet's "the rest is silence", Horatio's "good night sweet prince" or Fortinbras's "bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage", but with Hamlet's "Who calls me coward?" (5:2:337, 338, 375; 2:2:523-24).[21]

As Margaret Jane Kidnie argues, the "criteria that are sufficient to mark out 'the work'—and so to separate it from adaptation, or what is 'not the work'—constantly shift over time […] in response to textual and theatrical production" (7). Adaptation, she shows, is defined at a specific time by "communities of users who accept, reject, or, more often, debate as genuine a new print edition or a particular theatrical enactment" (Kidnie 7). Zagouri's production, described in local reviews as a "fascinating improvisation on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*" (Handelsaltz, "Jam Session") and "*Hamlet* by William Zagouri" (Slonim), was indeed perceived as an improvisation on the play rather than as a rendition of it. Nevertheless, it was well-received by both audience and critics.

The seventh—and so far, last—production of *Hamlet* in a mainstream Israeli repertory theatre was thus a fearless, innovative, radical improvisation on Shakespeare's classic. Israeli theatre, it seems, has finally overcome its fear of heights. *Hamlet* is not sacred—or necessarily foreign—anymore.

Conclusion

"The act of representing a Shakespearian play," notes Alexander Huang, "is not simply a process of representing that play itself but rather the dynamics between the locality Shakespeare represents and the locality the performers and audience

[21] "מי קורא לי פחדן?"
This line is based on Hamlet's "Am I a coward? / Who calls me villain…." (2.2.523–24)

represent" (190). When an early modern English play about medieval Denmark is staged in twentieth-century Israel by Polish, Romanian and English directors who ignore the locality of the actors and the audience, the dynamic Huang indicates becomes especially complex.

As Eli Rozik-Rosen notes, the production of world masterpieces in repertory Israeli theatres serves two purposes: on the one hand, it marks Israeli theatre's self-inclusion in Western culture; on the other hand, it serves the spectators' need to see themselves, their culture and their society reflected in these plays (41). Except for Friedland's early interpretation, Israeli productions of *Hamlet* in the twentieth century served mainly the first purpose—to mark Israeli theatre as part of Western culture. This purpose, which motivated the repeated commissioning of non-Israelis to direct the play, shaped the complex dynamic of localities (Shakespearean, Israeli, Eastern European, Western European) described above. This dynamic, in turn, reflected Israeli theatre's conflicted sense of locality: geographically in the East while aspiring to belong culturally to the West.

Although some of the reviews quoted in this paper treat Shakespeare's text as "sacred", and although what Feingold identified as Israeli theatre's fear of heights is undeniable, productions of *Hamlet* on the Israeli stage were *not* traditional or straightforward ones, as might have been expected. In fact, except for the first in 1946, Israeli productions of the play tended to be radical adaptations, in terms of either plot or theatrical form. Swinarski's and Cernescu's productions were both dis-located local adaptations of the play; they were mirrors reflecting other places. In addition, since Yerushalmi's 1989 production, all the performances of *Hamlet* in mainstream repertory Israeli theatres integrated elements from experimental theatre, such as the transgression of traditional spatial boundaries between the audience and the play. It was not a sense of reverence or fear of heights that underlay the history of *Hamlet* on the Israeli stage, but a strong desire to be considered European.

The second purpose that Rozik-Rosen identifies—reflecting local audiences' concerns—was achieved only in 2005, almost 60 years after *Hamlet's* first Israeli production. This was the first time since Friedland's groundbreaking work that a local director (Omri Nitzan) was commissioned by a repertory Israeli theatre to stage a politically relevant production of *Hamlet*. Nitzan was a perfect match for this almost unprecedented role, for two reasons. One is that he had a proven record of (successfully) staging more Shakespearean plays than any other Israeli director. The other is that as the artistic director of the Cameri at the time, Nitzan was uniquely positioned to commission *himself*.

Nitzan's production—an effective *glocal* rendition of the play, a palimpsest of global and local meanings— served both purposes identified by Rozik-Rosen. It was an easily identifiable Western masterpiece, celebrated by an American critic as "*Hamlet* as Shakespeare would have Wanted It" (Ritchey),

while at the same time reflecting Israeli concerns (such as the fleeting reference to Rabin's assassination).

The glocal success of Nitzan's *Hamlet* paved the way for Habima's adoption, a decade later, of Maor Zagouri's radical appropriation of the play. For the first time in the history of Israeli repertory theatre, a *local* director made drastic changes to *Hamlet.* This production, like Yerushalmi's, originated outside of mainstream Israeli theatre, yet ran at Habima—Israel's National Theatre—for two years. No trace, it seems, is now left of Israeli theatre's fear of heights.

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When *Macbeth* Meets Chinese Opera: A Crossroad of Humanity

Abstract: As one of the four Shakespeare's great tragedies, *Macbeth*, with its thrilling story line and profound exploration of human nature, has been adapted for plays and movies worldwide. Though *Macbeth* was introduced to China just before the May 4th Movement in 1919, its characters and plot have attracted the world in the past 100 years. *Macbeth* was firstly adapted into a folk play *Theft of a Nation* during the modern play period, to mock Yuan Shikai's restoration of the monarchy, who was considered as a usurper of Qing dynasty, followed by Li Jianwu's adaptation *Wang Deming*, Kun opera *Bloody Hands*, Taiwanese version of Beijing opera *Lust and the City*, Hong Kong version of Cantonese opera *The Traitor*, Macao version of small theater play *If I were the King*, Anhui opera *Psycho*, Shaoxing opera *General Ma Long*, Wu opera *Bloody Sword*, a monodrama of Sichuan opera *Lady Macbeth*, and an experimental Kun opera *Lady.* Therefore, this essay aims to comb the relations among various adaptations of *Macbeth*, to discover the advantages and disadvantages of different methodologies by examining the spiritual transformations of the main character Macbeth and reinvention of Lady Macbeth, and ultimately to observe acceptance of Chinese public, which might give thoughts to communications of overseas literature in China.

Keywords: Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Chinese Opera, Intercultural Theater, Sinolization.

It is undeniable that Shakespearean plays were highly welcomed by Chinese audience. Dozens of genres of dramas including Beijing opera, Kun opera, Shaoxing opera, Shanghai opera, Cantonese opera, Sichuan opera, song-and-dance duet, Chaozhou opera, Yu opera, Huangmei opera, Anhui opera and Wu opera have tried to reinterpret famous classics of Shakespeare such as *Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, Othello, The Twelfth Night, The Merry Wives of Windsor, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Winter's Tale, The Merchant of Venice*. Distinctive features hence come into the picture, drawing a booming scene. As one of the most popular adaptations, *Macbeth* becomes the source of inspiration of several outstanding Chinese operas such as Kun opera *Bloody Hands*, *Lady*

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Macbeth, Beijing opera *Lust and the City,* Cantonese opera *The Traitor*, Wu opera *Bloody Sword,* Anhui opera *Psycho*, Shaoxing opera *General Ma Long and* Sichuan opera *Lady Macbeth.*

Researches on adaptations and performance of intercultural theaters are key academic topics for global theater institutes and scholars in latest ten years, making great progress in both practice and theory. A number of scholars such as Patrice Pavis, Erika Fischer-Licht, Julie Holledge, Richard Schechner and Rustom Bharucha had been discussing the issues related to intercultural theater from different aspects in their works. Basing on works of Western playwrights such as Shakespeare, Ibsen and O'Neill, Chinese adaptations and performances are generally considered by the international theater institutes and scholars as intercultural dialogues which are not only copies of translation, but also recreations combining styles of Chinese performers and aesthetic experience of Chinese audience. Therefore, we can reach an agreement of intercultural adaptation of Chinese traditional theaters that is a practice of recreation based on the foreign theaters. Needless to say, it's an arduous task as adaptors have to deal with cultural shocks while retaining its own characteristics of traditional opera and the original spirit of work. In this case, Chinese operas, which speak for loyalty and righteousness, might be hard to express all the profound depictions of humanity in Shakespearean plays. For this reason, every adaptation often comes with criticism. In this essay, the most adapted play *Macbeth* and some Chinese adaptations will be an example for investigation and exploration for Shakespearean plays' Sinolization.

Macbeth in China

It was in 1916 when *Macbeth* for the very first time appeared on China's stage. At that time modern play was a hit. So, Zheng Zhengqiu, director and scriptwriter of Yaofeng Theater directed this improvisational performance, *Theft of a Nation*, aiming at mocking Yuan Shikai's restoration of the monarchy, who was considered a usurper of Qing dynasty. It won a big applause when the performer was cursing fiercely the emperor and making fun of the usurper. "The public was very touched by the opera; each sentence was highly appraised" (X.Q. Meng 139). Ill news flies apace. Yuan Shikai put the main performer Gu Wuwei in jail, accusing Gu of disturbing public order and peace, and sentenced him to death. Until the collapse of his regime, this notable unjust grievance was finally redressed.

Li Jianwu, a famous dramatist and writer, adapted *Macbeth* into a play named *Champions of Chaos*, which was firstly debuted at Lafayette cinema in Shanghai, 1945, performed by several opera troupes. The dramatist chose to transform the original work into a Chinese historical story in the Five Dynasties.

He also borrowed the scenario when Shaohu, a courtier in Zhou dynasty, gave away his own son in exchange for the life of the prince. Though it is even much more touching than the scenario when Macbeth assaults Mr.&Mrs. Macduff, the key delivering message has been far from the humanistic spirit during the Renaissance.

Likewise, the Kun opera *Bloody Hands* was firstly launched on the 1st Shakespeare Festival in the April of 1986. It was at that time only an episode until it gave its full performance in Shanghai Children's Art Theater in the June of 1987, performed by the local troupe. Then after more than half a year of revision, Shanghai Theater Academy repeated the performance. The same year, invited by The Edinburgh International Festival, *Bloody Hands* gave touring performances in 23 cities in Britain including Edinburgh, awarded as Show of the Year. However, compared with comments in China, it was facing two very different views: one is rather positive on its revolution on music, singing and formula; the other is somehow negative on its bold adaptation to the original with the loss of the Shakespearean spirit (Cao and Sun 166).

Just in the same year, Beijing opera *Lust and the City* was performed by Taiwanese Contemporary Legend Theater. It represented the highest level of production from costumes, set dressing, lighting, characterization and emotion performance, holding the record of performances at home and abroad. Despite many disputes, major scholars and audience admitted its success in adaptation. However, when it went to London in 1990, uproarious response did not come twice as audience found the singing and ideological contents were far from pleasant.[1]

In 1999, Sichuan Youth Opera Troupe performed Sichuan opera *Lady Macbeth.* In this condensed thirty-minute one-man show, it went straight to the flashback of Lady Macbeth, depicting her psychological development, criminal motive and thus revealing the evil of human nature. Later *Lady Macbeth* was successively invited to the 2nd International Shakespeare Festival in Bremen, German, Chinese Opera Tour Performance in Munich, German and Holland National Stage Art Awards in 2000. It was highly praised for its poetic and modern expression, pursuing the perfect harmony between tradition and Shakespearean esthetics. Again in 2010, Chengdu Sichuan Theater performed this play on the 22nd Cairo International Experimental Theater Festival. Again, it received high marks for its insight into foreign drama and Chinese opera.[2]

In addition, various adaptations illustrated a modern personal tragedy through characterization and emotional conflicts, including Wu opera *Bloody*

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[1] For further discussion, see: Dai, Yawen. *Crazy Opera, Innocent Audience: Ten Years of Audience and Performance in Taiwan Theater (1988-1998).* Translated by Lv Jianzhong. Shulin Press, 2000, p. 56-60.

[2] https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceegy/chn/zggk/t762118.htm

Sword performed by Zhejiang Baihua Dongyang Troupe in 1985, Cantonese opera *The Traitor* by Hong Kong Jinyinghua Troupe in 1996, small theater play *If I were the King* performed by Macao Xiaojue Theater in 1997, Shaoxing opera *General Malong* performed by Shaoxing Baihua Troupe in 2001 and Anhui opera *Psycho* by Anhui Opera Theater in 2013. Until 2015, experimental Kun opera *Lady* tried for the very first time to build the story from a feminine angle of view.

A straw shows which way the wind blows. From these different characteristics, styles, regions and audience composition of adapted performances, we could see a whole picture of Shakespearean plays on Chinese opera stage.

Shakespearean Plays in China

Cultural shock is the gulf between original work and its adaptation. The adapted work could be facing the rough situation where domestic and overseas audience both will not buy it, given the opposite views between *Bloody Hands* and *Lust and the City*, *Lady Macbeth* and *Lady*. Therefore, playwrights have to consider public acceptance, and more importantly, the spirit of original work. In this case, Chinese playwrights find two ways to solve the problem: one is to sinicize the original work by fully or mainly localizing the character, period, location and custom; the other is to keep its western figures. As Sun Qiang, scriptwriter of Shaoxing opera *General Malong* said, "We choose to stick to the original spirit of Shakespeare while making it completely a Chinese story" (Sun 48). Obviously, Sinolization has become the best choice of Chinese playwrights.

Various adaptations of *Macbeth* all respond to the socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics, namely, story background, period, territory, character, custom, clothing and tongue. But that is just the coat of Sinolization; narration transformation is the core. As Chinese opera is grown within the context of Chinese narration, which emphasizes the integrity of story, full of winding scenario and legendary tales from a hero's perspective.

Macbeth is certainly the first choice for Chinese playwrights, as this character Macbeth links to all scattered scenes and thus stands out in the whole storyline, which perfectly accords with Chinese narrative methods. Huang Zuolin, art director of *Bloody Hands* once pointed out that "there are a lot of similarities between the stage in Shakespeare's time and the traditional stage of Chinese opera, both constantly highlight the major characters instead of setting" (Huang 4). Therefore, he has made great efforts to add traditional singing and dancing to *Macbeth*, making it a complete typical Kun opera (Huang 4). Wu Xingguo, director of *Lust and the City*, also found the similarities between *Macbeth* and Beijing opera. "Both stress the function of languages, the

application of poetry, narrative usage, character sequence, various sessions and interaction between actors and audience" (Wu 50). "An indispensable lubricant of all the scattered scenes" (Wu 50).

Thus, the Kun opera *Bloody Hands* only keeps the major scene when Mr. & Mrs. Macbeth murder the king. It consists of eight sessions such as *Knighted, Scheme, Framed, The Assassin, Banquet Troubler, Witch, Insanity and Blood*. In this play, the leading role Macbeth was changed into Mapei, who believed in the witch's words and murdered the king and his wife. The couple framed someone else for the sin, but the wife soon lost her mind under too much pressure. In the end, the real prince had his revenge with his soldiers, while Mapei fell at Waterloo. *Bloody Hands* basically follows the framework of the original story, as well as Chinese narrative features, revealing an individual transformation from hero to tyrant. Similarly, *Lust and the City* featuring the basic structure of drama – act and scene cut the original number to 4 acts with 14 scenes, in order to highlight the definite plot line of regicide. In addition, such as *Wang Deming*, adapted by Li Jianwu, Cantonese opera *Traitor*, Wu opera *Bloody Sword*, Anhui opera *Psycho*, Shaoxing opera *General Malong*, all local theaters have, without exception, adopted the same strategy by transplanting the story to ancient China and Chinese personages. Most importantly, the strategy is meant to abandon subsidiary storylines giving place to its core – the regicide. By doing so, all characters, including Macbeth, got simplified yet strengthened.

French scholar Daniel-Henri Pageaux once stated in his article *Imagologie* that the image of comparative literature is not duplicate of reality, yet it is regrouped and rewritten by observers according to the mode and formula routed in his own culture (H. Meng 157). Both preexist in image (H. Meng 157). This so-called exotic image refers to a reproduction of overall understanding of the other's culture in its own cultural context. This definition consists of two dimensions: first, a prototype of an exotic image truly exists; second, a chemical reaction with the local culture in the process of translation, resulted in the birth of a new image. This cognitive bias based on cultural differences, known as "misreading", includes individual differences in image-makers, historical differences in cultural development, and information-dissolving in the process of cross-cultural communication. In the process of Chinese opera's adaptation of *Macbeth*, the "misreading" of the character's "image" is very obvious.

Firstly, the two kings are very different. Duncan in *Macbeth* "hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been so clear in his great office, that his virtues will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd against the deep damnation of his taking-off" (Shakespeare 19). However, the king in *Bloody Hands* is afraid of Mapei's glorious achievements and becomes extremely suspicious. In *Lust and the City*, the king is even weaker, considered as a nose of wax. In the scene of Three Retributions, he even, to some extent, agreed with Mrs. Ao Shuzheng, namely, the Mrs. Macbeth, that a weak king should be replaced by a strong hero.

In addition, Banquo in *Macbeth* has always been considered by researchers as an important reference in sharp contrast to Macbeth. His noble character is not only praised by Macbeth, but also makes Macbeth feel inferior. But Chinese version of *Macbeth* simplified this character. Further, after "Macbeth" killed "Banquo", the battle with its ghost can be considered bluffing. In the original work, Macbeth fears the ghost of Banquo because, in his view, the latter is the embodiment of justice. "If it's not all, at least part of the ghost is Macbeth's inner illusion" (Nicoll 130). Banquo is here questioning Macbeth's soul. But in the Chinese adaptation, Banquo's ghost, in addition to adding a shady and terrible atmosphere, does not have too much sublime and tragic color, nor does it play a role in deterring Macbeth's mind.

This could lead to the third point that the ghost in the Chinese traditional context is symbolizing revenge. The same goes to the Chinese adaptation of *Macbeth*. As a piece of commentary says that, "the supernatural power not only makes the play more exciting, but also makes audience to ignore the moral responsibility of the couple" (Lei 288); "Replaced by superstition, the play is no longer in the pursuit of humane and ethical value" (Hu 79). All the characters, and even parrots, who were killed by the couple, became physical ghost figures, chasing Mrs. Macbeth, using the traditional stunt of "Spitfire". The Shakespearean ghost is thus interpreted from form to connotation into a Chinese ghost who, according to the tradition, chases the sinners out of revenge.

Witch prophecies in the original and adapted works also reflect the different attitudes of Chinese and Western cultures towards fate. The witch's prophecy in *Macbeth* is subtle, hinting at his thriving ambition. Yet the Chinese opera adaptation strengthens the mysterious power of fairy and ghosts, so that their prophecies are considered by Mrs. Macbeth as the will of Heaven. It thus becomes a powerful basis for the wife to persuade her husband. Shakespeare took advantage of the common notion of fate in ancient Greek tragedies, but he "never allowed God to intervene directly in human affairs, nor did he intend to articulate his belief in supernatural power" (Nicoll 134). So, it is not hard to understand that instead of letting the witch decisively influence on Macbeth, Shakespeare allowed Macbeth to make his own decision. At the same time, "Christian morality" (Nicoll 205) has also affected Shakespeare to create a character with both ambition and self-consciousness. However, the Chinese version has made the "attempt at political ambition subtly transformed into a submissive act to the will of God" (Lei 301).

As Professor Zhang Longxi stated in his paper *The Metamorphosis of Shakespeare: From Text to Performance*, "The spirit of the typical Oriental civilization that stresses the moral purpose and highly stylized performance technique of shaping the characters, is very different from Shakespeare's play. This simple symbolic technique not only greatly affects the performance of Chinese opera, but also affects the acceptance of Chinese audiences, making us

accustomed to dividing all the characters into good and bad people. This simplified model is not different from the multi-angled approach of Shakespeare's characters, and it creates some obstacles in understanding Shakespeare's works in China" (Zhang 69). In the process of the Sinolization of Shakespeare's plays, "Some of the traditional mode of Chinese opera are actually very similar to those of the Elizabeth anthological era in Britain: simple props and scenes, a few rhymes before the characters come off the court, common monologues and narrations, and so on—all of which are commonly used in local operas in China. It may have played a positive role in the successful production of Shakespearean adaptations on the Chinese stage" (Zhang 69). However, it still needs to be further explored and perfected to not only truly achieve a successful adaptation, considering the spirit of the original and local culture while maintaining the depth of the original, but also take fully advantage of the opera, avoiding ideological contradictions.

Mental Deformation of *Macbeth*

Lounsbury once said: "In *Macbeth*, the punishment eventually goes back to the evil husband and wife. But that is only a side effect. It does not play an important role in the progress of the whole play. However, it is worth noticing the power of evil, as once it has mastered a man's soul, it will gradually spoil and produce different tragic effects in different personalities."[3] The success and value of *Macbeth* lies in its mastery of universal human nature and its delicate portrayal of psychology. If it is significant in indoctrination, the audience will have to experience it in their own way, rather than adhering to the author's advice and guidance.

Supplemented by a number of sidelines, Shakespeare's play presents a rich development from beginning till the end. But this structure is difficult from Chinese opera, especially when it comes to concrete performances. As mentioned earlier, the various "Macbeth" adaptations have focused on Macbeth and his wife. Unrelated plots have either been deleted, reassembled, or skimmed over. If contradiction between Macbeth and morality, justice is regarded as multiple vortexes, then the adapted structure of "Macbeth" is indeed compact, but the vortexes get smaller and fewer. Therefore, due to alleviation of the moral contradiction, the embattled tension is released, the complex emotion such as hesitation, terror, resistance is replaced by simplified violence and fear, thus the desperate spirit with a certain heroism of the Chinese "Macbeth" is not well demonstrated. Compared with the original, the Chinese Macbeth is no longer a tragic figure in the numerous contradictions, but a king slayer and ambitious

[3] Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. Translated by Liang Shiqiu. Fareast Books, 1989, p. 8.

schemer, resulting in softening intrapsychic conflicts. Despite a creative development in represented operas such as *Bloody Hand*, *Lust and the City* and *Psycho*, which all depicted a clear outline of the original and present a logical and consistent storyline, the character shaping and the overall spirit in adaptations are still weakened, showing Macbeth's mental deformation due to a lack of description on the clash of his desires.

Macbeth is undoubtedly ambitious. Otherwise he will not be encouraged by the witch's prophecy and his wife's persuasion, leading him to death. Alongside Hamlet, Othello and King Lear, the reason why Macbeth shares the glory is not to reveal through Macbeth how a heinous man is retried, but yet to point out, "it is too full o'th'milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way" (Shakespeare 14). His nature is not evil, but when the darkness in his heart is provoked, the evil gradually grows like a snowball, allowing him to move step by step towards the end of destruction. In spite of choosing a road that cannot be turned back, Macbeth still has a sense of guilt. It is this sense of guilt and unyielding spirit that has made him a tragic hero. As one commentator said: "In spite of his sense of guilt, he has never changed course. In his view, the path of life is chosen only by stepping forward. His wife failed the game under mental burden, but he will never lose the dignity of a king and soldier, even under the worst situation... His courage reminds people of Xiangyu, the tragic hero in Chinese history" (Hu 83). Even in the hopeless situation when he finally finds himself bewildered by witch's lie, he insists on fighting until the last minute: "From this moment, the very firstlings of my heart shall be the firstlings of my hand" (Shakespeare 68). His spirit is indeed breathtaking.

If looking back on Chinese Macbeth, we can find out that witch's prophecy is here considered as Confucianism's "destiny" theory. Once they get hesitant and afraid, they immediately come up with the idea of Buddhism such as "Life is a dream in man's world", "He who is worn out lives by mental perplexity; he who works in vain lives by physical labor." Once encountered with difficulties, they immediately ask the fairies to "eliminate the disaster", or complain about the "arrangement of heaven", showing a sense of Taoism and fatalism instead of ethics. As Mr. Liang Shuming pointed out: "Although China has a long history, its religion is still out of avoiding misfortune and seeking blessing, long-lived and immortal pursuit, without any idea of confess or fraternity" (Liang 95). Hegel once said: "Orientals believe that there is only one force of physicality, which governs all the characters created in the world, and determines the fate of all characters in a relentlessly fickle way. Thus, subjective initiative of self-examination and self-defense is constantly absent in Oriental awareness" (Hegel 297). Wu Xingguo, director of *Lust and the City*, also mentioned that "Chinese have never created a role, who is vicious but gains in the end appreciation or even sympathy from public, because of confession to a crime" (Dai 52). Thus, the Chinese Macbeths, covered by the God's will, never

dare to admit their intentions, wandering among ambition, conscience and the charge of sin. The Chinese Macbeths do not lack psychological conflicts, but the content has been distorted. They lack the "sublime" (Nicoll 159) that can move the audience, namely the self-condemnation of conscience. Or it should be said that such "Macbeth" is a typical character in Chinese history and on the opera's stages, that is, "King killers are not rare given corruption of political ethics" (Dai 42).

The different approaches to death also show Macbeth's mental deformation in Chinese versions. In the original, Macbeth understands well the justice of sentence, calm in the face of death. This "acknowledgment of his own crimes is just the glory of the great man" (Hegel 309). Yet the Chinese Macbeth is not only unwilling to face his death at a loss, but also ends up with swords and arrows. To some extent, Chinese belief in karma and fatalism just corresponds to the original storyline that Mr. & Mrs. Macbeth, who have made all the efforts in vain, eventually lead themselves to fatal ending. For this reason, every adaptor underlines this concept and virtually diverts audience's attention away from the original idea. In fact, karma, which indeed refers to the original, is only covered by the character's psychological activity. Once it meets the Chinese opera, which values traditional moral enlightenment, it is reinterpreted and strengthened. So, some people regard the Beijing opera *Lust and the City* as a success, "there is a very sly reason: Shakespeare's original play is actually about how people's desire devours themselves step by step, but the story framework and ending match perfectly with the traditional Chinese concept – karma, which is able to satisfy audience's needs of flushing soul and moral enlightenment" (A.Q. Wang 148). This view can successfully apply to several other adaptations.

Reinvention of Mrs. Macbeth

Several representative works such as Kun opera *Bloody Hand*s, Taiwanese version of Beijing opera *Lust and the City*, Hong Kong version of Cantonese opera *Traitor*, Macao small theater play *If I were the King*, Wu opera *Bloody Sword*, Shaoxing opera *General Malong*, Anhui opera *Psycho* are all following the main storyline of the original, focusing on the tragic fate of Macbeth himself; Nevertheless, other two seek for alternative path, from the perspective of Mrs. Macbeth, presenting an enriched role of party, participant, promoter and bystander as a whole. These are Sichuan opera *Lady Macbeth* and experimental Kun opera *Lady*; both have endowed brand-new interpretation of an eternal classic.

Lady Macbeth is a Sichuan opera with a strong expressive style. It has condensed the original of 5 acts and 27 scenes into a thirty-minute one-man show. Smart playwright is always loyal to the overall spirit of the original. So, in

this show, it directly enters into Mrs. Macbeth's "sleepwalking" memory. Focusing on her psychological descriptions, it reveals the evil of human nature in continuous "flash-forwards and flashbacks". It's not Macbeth who was awakened by the mysterious knock, but lady Macbeth, the drowsy night dreamer. With a sneer on her face, this "knock" shattered her evil heart, but also whipped the soul. In this way, the context of events, character relation, psychology and background could all be presented in Mrs. Macbeth's frightened soul.

It is invaluable that *Lady Macbeth* does not attribute the break out of ambition to the prophecy of Three Witches; nor arrange a peaceful death in her sleepwalking, or by dementors, which are symbolic of traditional Sichuan opera. From the script structure to the performance, psychological dynamics in this play are all presented through stream of consciousness. This structure of performance is based on the flow of the character consciousness. Macbeth's silent appearance is shadow in her mind of the "shadow", indicating her complex mental state. In particular, the maids' grotesque and strange dance performances enlarged the subjective spirit of Mrs. Macbeth into a concrete stage image, which played an important role in foiling atmosphere, strengthening the rendering power and causing the expressive art effect. Even in feminist literary criticism, *Lady Macbeth* can still be regarded as one of the most successful Chinese opera adaptations of Shakespeare's play.

Lady, greatly cut and condensed into one act, is a small theater experimental Kun opera performed in 2015. It focused on lady Macbeth's psychology, exploring the whole course of her participation in the events of regicide. Each "wife" and "husband" in different periods has a rival play, interspersed with "witch" and other characters, who become the pusher, or atmosphere foil. It is the husband's capriciousness that has made the wife full of worry. Each wife communicates with the husband not about her desire but fear for power, her panic for the act of regicide, the disappointment and affection for the husband. A regicide which should be the theme has now become a background of a game between a couple. The exploration of human nature is there to scratch the surface. "Love" has become an important guide to the wife's self-awareness, and the most important point of conflict between her and her husband. Lady Macbeth is mentioned more than once in the play: "I married a valiant warrior, the greatest hero at the age of 28. I am a wife of my man."[4] Her self-awareness is built on the concept that she belongs to one noble man, far from the modern philosophy of feminism. Therefore, if Shakespeare portrays Lady Macbeth as the most vicious bad woman, Kun opera *Lady* portrays her as an abandoned woman instead.

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[4] https://www.bilibili.com/video/av18142444/

"Wife is only an identity, but this play tries to express an emotion attitude."[5] Director of *Lady*, Yu Manwen agreed with that "it is a small theater Kun opera, but also a female psychological drama" but disagreed with that Mrs. Macbeth was described by Goethe as a "super witch" and a top conspirator. He thought this kind of positioning is unfair and it is important to explore the most fundamental motive for Mrs. Macbeth's actions: "It should carry the feminine values that are common in China and the West. Can women eventually gain a sense of respect? How is a woman's social status?" [6] He added: "Nowadays people still relate a woman's social status to her husband, but the outward honor and glory will be easy to lose. Kun opera *Lady* arranges a process of self-rescue, which should be a contemporary universal value."[7] However, from the actual results, the interpretation of the theme did not meet the expectations of the creators and was even criticized because of the destruction of the unique beauty of Kun opera, especially failing in the expression of modernity.

Conclusion

On the basis of various examples above on Chinese adaptations of *Macbeth*, this essay gives a glimpse of the dilemmas faced by cross-cultural adaptation. Due to the limitations of cultural barriers, cross-cultural adaptation will certainly change the features of the original. The crucial challenge is how to make the local audience to understand and accept, while taking into account the spirit of the original, and how to strike a balance between tradition and innovation, conservatism and reform. In fact, adaptation to some extent has an independent literary and artistic life. If the playwright has clear ideas and can really grasp the characteristics of the play, fully understand the original thought and cultural differences, the adaptation is even possible to have a dialogue with the original. As Patrice Pavis stated, a strategic feature of intercultural theater is productive misinterpretation which will transform the misinterpretation into a positive driving force. In his opinions, the original intention of adapting foreign theaters is not to introduce foreign countries, but to solve problems in their own culture. What stimulates adaptations and performances is often the awareness towards the problems rooted in their own culture (Pavis 12). Hence, the intention of borrowing foreign stories is to transform it into our own versions which can help the local audience to restructure self-perception. On this point, the exotic stories inspire the audience from a new perspective and help them to develop critical thinking towards their own culture. From the gain or loss of Chinese adaptations,

[5] https://www.bilibili.com/video/av18142444/
[6] https://www.bilibili.com/video/av18142444/
[7] https://www.bilibili.com/video/av18142444/

we can see the influence of deep-rooted Oriental traditional thought on the theme of the play, and the interpretation of the character's behavior and psychological aspects, which are more directly related to the tension and depth of the play. Each version of *Macbeth* adaptation has its own success and controversies, but their attempts and efforts have undoubtedly injected a new vitality into Chinese operas, and provided more possibilities for traditional themes, contents and performances.

Compared with Chinese adaptations of *Macbeth* in recent years, the immersive drama *SLEEP NO MORE*, produced by the Punchdrunk Theater Company and the American Theater Company, is a very subversive and representative adaptation paradigm. The play completely changed the traditional theatrical form. The performers and the audience are all banned, allowing the silent play and dance alone to control the whole scene. The show takes place at the McKittrick Hotel, a place specially created for the play, with rooms of excellent workmanship on 5 different floors. All the audience wearing unified white masks, thus are able to freely walk with 21 actors who are playing different roles. Once released in March 2011, the show unfolded a vigorous mass campaign in New York and performed for thousands of times. So, when *SLEEP NO MORE* for the first time came to Shanghai, Asia's first stop, Chinese audience responded enthusiastically. Limited to space, this article would not in-depth analyze the reasons for the worldwide popularity of the play, but what we can see from this phenomenon, is that the vitality of classic works would not fade with time. Its artistic spirit can be preserved and also be integrated with the general public.

In China, there are always different voices and opinions on the future of operas. The conservatives believe that the tradition of opera has to be completely preserved and the performance must be authentic while the liberals believe that the opera should be creative by absorbing the latest and exotic culture. In the modern context of globalization, one can't help but wonder if every national opera will inevitably be diversified or mixed. In my opinion, the traditional and modern ones should coexist and thrive. Both have their own responsibilities to take either from a perspective of cultural identity or aesthetics. In every region, ordinary people will witness this process as playwriters and artists do. In this process, some traditions will be preserved, and some will be integrated with new elements. However, neither of them will stay unchanged at all as audiences are changing as well. Chinese scholar Zhang Longxi proposed in the end of his paper *The Metamorphosis of Shakespeare: From Text to Performance*: "... Because nowadays the main task of the directors and the actors is not only to show the original framework of Shakespeare, but also to enrich their own cultural traditions by integrating Shakespeare's play art. As traditional Chinese opera generally presents simplified characters with distinguished good and evil, it is necessary to make the Chinese audience understand more complicated roles

by performing Shakespeare on the Chinese stage" (Zhang 70). Obviously, it turns out that the complexity of Shakespearean characters can be greatly welcomed by the Chinese audience. Hence, great difficulties for contemporary art workers to motivate the audience and deliver the spirit of Shakespeare is yet to be overcome.

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The Shifting Appreciation of *Hamlet* in Its Japanese Novelizations: Hideo Kobayashi's *Ophelia's Will* and Its Revisions

Abstract: Hideo Kobayashi, who is today known as one of the most prominent literary critics of the Showa era in Japan, published *Ophelia's Will* in 1931 when he was still an aspiring novelist. This novella was an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, composed as a letter written by Ophelia to Hamlet before her enigmatic death in the original play. While the novel has previously been considered as a psychological novel that sought to illustrate the inner life of the Shakespearean heroine, this paper examines the process by which Kobayashi rediscovered *Hamlet* as a drama that foregrounds the impenetrability of the characters' inwardness and highlighted in *Ophelia's Will* his diversion from the psychological rendition of Ophelia. In so doing, the paper analyses the revisions Kobayashi continued to make to the novel even until the post-war era, especially when it was republished in 1933 and 1949. Though these revisions have rarely been discussed by the researchers, they demonstrate the essential changes made to the novel, mainly to its literary style, which corroborates Kobayashi's shifting interest and his developing interpretation of Shakespeare's works and *Hamlet*.

Keywords: Shakespeare reception, adaptation, novelization, Shakespeare in Japan, *Hamlet*, Hideo Kobayashi.

Introduction

Yoshiko Kawachi's article, published in the 2016 special issue of *Multicultural Shakespeare*, extensively and richly exemplifies how *Hamlet* has continued to inspire the creativity of Japanese artists since the Meiji era (1868-1912) until the 2000s. The novelization of *Hamlet* comprises a large part of Kawachi's article, as she reflects on the works by Naoya Shiga, Hideo Kobayashi, Osamu Dazai, Tsuneari Fukuda, Shohei Ooka, and Akio Miyazawa. According to Kawachi

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(133), many of these authors employed the form of diary novel and/or the method of I-novel[1] in their adaptations of *Hamlet*. This enabled the authors to explore the characters' psychology deeper than in its original drama form. Generally, a novel can engage with a more introspective mode of expression than drama, and such difference seems to have played a significant role in the introduction of Shakespeare to Japanese modern culture. Nevertheless, these Japanese novelists also developed varying ideas of literature and were not necessarily fond of novels that overly emphasize on a character's inner life. Hideo Kobayashi is unique in the context since he is arguably better-known as a literary critic than a novelist. In fact, his literary criticisms are disapproving of I-novels and psychological novels. Although this is a relatively well-known fact in Japanese literature, it has rarely been discussed within the context of Japanese adaptations of Shakespeare.

In this paper, Kobayashi's novel, *Ophelia's Will* [*Oferia Ibun*] (1931), is assessed to underline its importance as a literary work that encapsulates two differing modes of appreciating *Hamlet*—its attraction as a source for psychological novels and the contrasting appeal it also has as a dramatic work that may transcend psychological realism. As both these qualities found in the play are historically significant to the Japanese reception of Shakespeare, *Ophelia's Will* will be examined in connection with the other works associated with Kobayashi and his novel. In so doing, this paper primarily explores the novel's own history, namely the process of revisions Kobayashi made over time, which has rarely been critiqued. This paper is divided into four sections. First, in order to establish the context, the history of the Japanese reception of Shakespeare is discussed and the distinctive importance of the novel adaptations is explained. This will provide contrast to how *Hamlet* was perceived in theatres during 1912 to 1955. The second section examines the implication of *Ophelia's Will* when it was first published in 1931. Special focus is directed at Kobayashi's unique literary style to capture Ophelia's maddening inner voice. The third section, however, reveals the process wherein Kobayashi began to place greater emphasis on the literature's ineptitude to represent her inwardness. The revisions made in 1933 and 1949, especially in view of stylistic alterations, attest to Kobayashi's changing focus. Finally, the fourth section expounds on Kobayashi's unique interpretation of *Hamlet*, as expressed in his 1955 essay, as well as its relation to the revisions made to *Ophelia's Will*. What emerges from these analyses is how Kobayashi rediscovered *Hamlet* as a drama that foregrounds the impenetrability of the characters and sought to highlight in *Ophelia's Will* his renunciation of the psychological rendition of Ophelia.

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[1] I-novel is a Japanese literary genre that sought a full-fledged psychological realism in the form of confessional literature, often based on the author's real life.

The Appreciation of *Hamlet* in Drama and Novels: from 1912 to 1955

To contextually understand the significance *Hamlet* had as a source for novel adaptations in Japan, one needs to consider the opposite side of the coin—the comparative unpopularity of *Hamlet,* or Shakespeare's plays in general, on Japanese stages from around 1912 to 1955. *Ophelia's Will* is one of the novelizations created and revised during this period. When Shoyo Tsubouchi staged *Hamlet* in 1911 as the first full performance of a Shakespearean play in Japan, Shakespeare's popularity had already begun to decline (Anzai 6; Kawatake 298; Nakata 44). Kaoru Osanai, the leading director of *shingeki* (a Japanese form of modern and western theatre), was more inclined in psychological realism and favoured Ibsen, Chekov, Gorky, and Hauptmann, among others, over Shakespeare. In a book published in 1912, Osanai wrote about his fondness for "inner realism", explaining that "I enjoy reading Shakespeare, and have been reading his works, but I wouldn't dream of playing Shakespeare's heroines" because "my aim is to play an unostentatious person in a truly unostentatious way" (103).[2] Shakespeare continued to be snubbed from the mainstream of *shingeki*, and the outbreak of the Second World War added another blow (Anzai 7). Subsequently, a critical moment came in May 1955 when Tsuneari Fukuda staged *Hamlet*. Fukuda was a passionate advocate of Shakespearean works for *shingeki*. His 1955 production preceded, and to some extent provoked, what is known as "the Shakespeare Boom" in post-war Japan, whose effect seems to prevail to this day (Anzai 7-8; Kawatake 306).

In summary, Shakespeare became noticeably unpopular in theatres during the years between Shoyo and Fukuda. This period of over forty years is now considered an unfortunate time for Shakespeare in Japan, which Yoshiaki Nakata describes as "the winter of endurance" (44). However, this was also the era when Japan witnessed the flourish of translations (as closet drama), academic studies, and literary adaptations of his works (Anzai 7; Nakata 44-45). In 1912, a year after Shoyo's production of *Hamlet*, Shiga published *Claudius's Diary*, a novel adaptation of *Hamlet* written from the viewpoint of Claudius. Shiga is now known as the standard-bearer of I-novels. In his diary, Shiga's Claudius confesses his own suppressed and troubled state of mind. His moral dilemma between his love for Gertrude and his want of mutual understanding with Hamlet portrays Claudius as one with great emotional authenticity. Hideo Takahashi, a literary critic, describes *Claudius's Diary* as an epitome of Shiga's "laconic style", which exhibits "the layers of human psychology" (456) in its lucidity.

[2] He imagines of taking over a female character here likely because he begins the paragraph by mentioning Sarah Bernhardt, the French actress who was acclaimed for her cross-gendered role as Hamlet.

In the aforementioned article, Kawachi observes that the Japanese novelists "sought to fill in the gaps between drama and novel" (133) by exploring deeper into the psychology of *Hamlet*'s characters. This observation is manifest in the case of Shiga.[3] Commenting on his work, Shiga explains that after seeing Shoyo's production of *Hamlet* in 1912, he found Hamlet to be frivolous or superficial, while Claudius seemed more likable as well as innocent of his brother's murder. According to Shiga, critics at the time described his novel as one that "psychologically renders the behind the scenes at Shakespeare's *Hamlet*" and that gave Claudius "a modernized character" (*On Claudius's* 410). In response to such criticism, Shiga stresses that his further intention was to depict his own "psychological experiences" (*On Claudius's*, 410) through imagining himself in Claudius's shoes. Thus, *Claudius's Diary* shows that novelizations could provide an opportunity to modernize Shakespeare—who was considered "old fashioned" (Ashizu, "What's *Hamlet*"), and lacking "humanness" (103) as dubbed by Osanai—in psychologically realistic modes of expression. Tetsuo Kishi and Graham Bradshaw observes that "there is something unique about the appeal *Hamlet* had to Japanese intellectuals" in that many of its novel adaptations explored "the idea of self as their central theme" (98). It must be noted that, paradoxically, these novels also served as a means to appropriate *Hamlet* according to history's demand for more realistic portrayals of characters and their internality.

These circumstances have provided the context in which critics could be cognizant of Kobayashi's *Ophelia's Will* published in 1931. It also rewrote *Hamlet* from the viewpoint of one of the characters, in this case, Ophelia. In fact, the critique that *Ophelia's Will* was another psychological novel adapting *Hamlet* originates from the notion that young Kobayashi was "an ardent admirer of Shiga" (Kawachi 126). Kishi and Bradshaw opine that the work, together with Kobayashi's other short fictions, is "marked, rather like Shiga's stories, by the detailed analysis of the protagonist's psychology" (113) and that it "makes another contribution to the Japanese attempt at exploring the idea of self" (115) by using *Hamlet* as its source. From a feminist viewpoint, Kaori Ashizu ("A Document", 33-35) contends that *Ophelia's Will* empowers Ophelia, who is forced to be the suppressed object of patriarchal society in the original play, by bestowing her a new life as an independent subject who can speak for herself. As will be further discussed in the second section, Kobayashi also attempted

[3] However, while it is undeniable that Shiga was primarily concerned with the literary representation of human inwardness, the longstanding understanding of *Claudius's Diary* as a reinterpretation of *Hamlet* from the viewpoint of a unified selfhood needs a serious reconsideration. As such consideration would extend beyond the scope of my argument, suffice it to quote here from Kojin Karatani: "While many novelists who have adapted the theme of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* have interpreted it as a drama of self-consciousness, Shiga turned such interpretations inside-out" (Karatani 92).

to adapt Ophelia as a modern literary subject. Kobayashi utilized an unusual literary style to establish a "transparent" means to illustrate Ophelia's psychology.

Nevertheless, the principal aim of this paper is to elucidate on how Kobayashi also demonstrated in the same novel the inadequacy of literary fiction in representing human minds or the sense of "true" self. This can be observed through the revisions he continued to make to *Ophelia's Will* after its first publication in 1931 until the post-war period. These revisions reveal the interconnection between Kobayashi's novel and the post-war revival of Shakespeare marked by Fukuda's 1955 production of *Hamlet*. Fukuda ("Return to 81"), who was also an established literary critic, professed the need to overcome Japanese modern literature, or I-novels. In 1955, a few months after Fukuda's production of *Hamlet*, Kobayashi wrote a short essay on *Hamlet*, the only extensive piece he wrote on Shakespeare. His essay explains the inexplicable nature of Hamlet's motivations and esteems Shakespeare's play for its attention to the material aspect of expression rather than the realistic portrayals of the characters. As fully discussed in the third and fourth sections of this paper, such philosophy is evident in the revised versions of *Ophelia's Will*.

Ophelia's Will in 1931: "Transparency" of the Literary Style

Today, Hideo Kobayashi is recognized as one of the most prominent critics of the Showa era (1926-1989). It is fairly untold that Kobayashi published a few novels before and around the time he gained fame with his literary critical essays. *Ophelia's Will* was published in 1931 when Kobayashi was twenty-nine years old. It is composed as a letter written by Ophelia to Hamlet before her enigmatic death in the original play. Although Kobayashi's Ophelia states that she is to lose her life as soon as the sun rises and that she is merely dealing with the remaining time by writing the letter, it is undisclosed whether she intends to commit suicide. The novel's title is customarily translated as *Ophelia's Will* or *Ophelia's Testament*, but the original title in Japanese implies that the letter is simply a "posthumously-left writing" (*ibun*). Instead of accounting for her post-death wishes as would be in wills, her writing is solely focused on what is on her mind at that moment in a manner similar to the style of "stream of consciousness" (Ashizu, "A Document" 29).

In the novel, Kobayashi takes advantage of novelistic form in order to probe into Ophelia's psychology. Kobayashi's intent is evinced through the distinctive style of writing he employs, or rather, he invents. Throughout Ophelia's letter, the sentences are excessively segmented by the frequent use of commas. Whilst it is impossible to faithfully replicate the style and its effect in English, a passage may read like the following:

> In retrospect, I've kept seeing, only sad dreams, I also, may have had, happy dreams, of childhood, but then, what, it has to do, with me now. (1931: 39)[4]

Although the grammatical rules on punctuation are more flexible in Japanese as compared to English, Kobayashi's use of commas is disproportionate to the extent that its jarring effect permeates throughout the work. The commas dismember Ophelia's sentences into the phrasal units and at the same time, connect the sentences where periods should have been inserted instead. This style is effective in representing Ophelia's distracted psyche, portraying both the sporadic discontinuity and unceasing continuity of her wandering thoughts and feelings. At the same time, the literary style allows her writing to act as a direct representation of her consciousness. This is further conveyed by the occasional use of dashes. For instance, Ophelia writes: "The world is empty,—that doesn't change, how many times you say it", and "where, shall I, go,—if the day breaks" (1931: 44). These dashes are inserted to reflect the sudden change in topics, tones, and attitude, mimicking the rhythm and tempo of the shifting casts of her mind. Through the peculiar usage of both commas and dashes, the letter is intended not simply as a literary representation of her inner life but further as an immediate transcript of her inner voice.

Accordingly, the reader's experience of *Ophelia's Will* would be starkly different from that of the audience of *Hamlet* in theatre. In *Ophelia's Will*, the proximity of the reader to Ophelia's inner consciousness is extremely intimate. Even the most introspective monologues of Hamlet would still appear to be an outward performance of his internality in comparison to the experiences of intimacy attained in *Ophelia's Will*. Hamlet himself denounces the limitation of theatre to depict his inwardness, ironically by claiming its existence: "I have that within which passeth show; / These but the trappings and the suits of woe" (1:2:85-86). According to Francis Barker, Hamlet's display of his internality remains to be "gestural" (32) since theatrical physicality prevents him from becoming a fully-fledged modern subject with a sense of independent psychology. Barker contrasts Hamlet's situation with the new mode of writing exemplified in Samuel Pepys's diary written in 1660s. He asserts that in Jacobian theatre, including Shakespeare's *The Tempest*:

> […] we are clearly far from that occlusion of writing itself which is effected in the post-Pepysian world by the attribution to discourse of an instrumental transparency. (15)

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[4] As I shall be dealing with the different editions of the same novel, I refer to its quotes by indicating the year of publication followed by the page number within parenthesis. At the same time, as the 1933 and the 1949 editions have no page numbers indicated, I refer to the frame numbers given to the facsimiles archived on National Diet Library Digital Collections.

The essential difference Barker finds between Shakespearean plays and Pepys's writings offers a valid analogy for the contrast the said play has to its novel adaptations in Japan. Much like Shiga's *Claudius's Diary*, *Ophelia's Will* offers a new version of *Hamlet* with a supposedly more authentic representation of the characters' psychology. As Barker observes, modern writers are capable of attributing written language to transparency—the quality by which the readers can imagine to be listening to the character's inner voice in *Ophelia's Will*. In fact, the piece's essential feature is the unique female perspective it offers. All other works from Kobayashi's early career were written from male perspectives wherein they rationally and intellectually dissect their innermost self, arguably similar to Shiga's Claudius. *Ophelia's Will* however, being his only fiction with a female protagonist, devises a contrasting approach. In the latter, the readers are expected to vicariously experience the conditions of her distracted mind that oscillates between sanity and insanity, rather than to inspect and understand it. Consequently, by choosing Ophelia instead of Hamlet, Kobayashi's adaptation embodies the distinctive intimacy between the writing and its subject.

Throughout the letter, Ophelia stresses that writing is the only pursuit she can undertake. Her words confirm that it is her wish and need to be fully assimilated into her writing. The letter is imagined to be written in between Act 4 Scene 5 and Scene 7 in the original. Ophelia recollects that as soon as she woke up, presumably after her madness in Act 4 Scene 5, she ran through the corridors and locked herself up in the room she found herself in: "I came into the room, locked the door, and then……and then, like this, it's night, like this, I am writing although I am clueless." (1931: 41) The tense in this sentence is left ambiguous to the extent that the passing of time between the moment she entered the room and the very moment she writes the sentence is lapsed within an ellipsis. It is as though Ophelia merely exists through her act of writing. At the same time, she is depicted as someone lacking any sense of physicality. While she writes that she wishes to keep silent, sitting in a chair, and sometimes touching her ears when stressed, she states "but how I have a power to do such things now" (1931: 39). In other words, Kobayashi's Ophelia exists solely as a textual being. Accordingly, she repeats throughout the letter that she is constantly urged by the sheer need for writing and her being is reliant on such act: "It seems, I am, reliant on writing, like this. If I am not writing, to you, then I wouldn't know, what to do." (1931: 42)

The 1933 and 1949 Revisions: The Materiality of Ophelia's Writing

Paradoxically, Kobayashi's Ophelia also discredits her writing for failing to truly represent herself; that is to say, her writing only arrives at limited transparency.

> I write, I write, but the words, they all, avoid me, and on the paper, they stay. What, on the earth, are these, these, strange, something like bugs, why, would I ever think of them as my friends. (1931: 44)

To Ophelia, the written characters appear like strange “bugs” that alienate herself. The discord between her writing and herself continues to haunt the work as the alienation of her consciousness from her letter. There is an exceptional passage around the middle of the letter, highlighting her writing as something tangible rather than transparent:

> ………………………………………………………………………………
> ………………………………………………………………………………
> ……………well, well, what am I doing, writing all these dots? You must say, women’s letters, always, have such dots. Of course, even a dot is a character, too. (1931: 41)

The exaggerated use of dots demonstrates the lack of meaning and content. In the following sentence, Ophelia points towards the absence of herself from the writing and oddly affirms the presence of writing as “characters”. Consequently, by referring to these letters as a part of her manuscript, Ophelia indicates that the dots are employed at another level to commas and dashes. While the latter composes the rhythmic transcription of her inner voice, the former embodies her actual handwriting on the sheets of paper. Thus, the letter combines two contrary modes of writing: one of transparent and auditory nature and the other of visible materiality. It remains questionable whether the author intended it as part of the character’s contradiction. It may be presumed that the conflicting nature of the writing corresponds to Ophelia’s ambivalent claims since she manifests her reliance on the act of writing though suggesting her scepticism towards it.

Nevertheless, the revisions Kobayashi made in the later editions of the novel reveal a change of emphasis, if not his intent to resolve the confusion. For a period of over thirty years, from 1933 to 1968, Kobayashi continued to revise *Ophelia’s Will*. The piece was republished in book forms, in collected works, and in complete works. A substantial amount of alterations was made at two points, in 1933 and 1949, yet critics scarcely paid attention to them. Osamu Kashihara appears to be the only scholar who noted the presence of variants and its consequent effects. However, he briefly mentions the case in an endnote observing that the revisions merely had to “adjust the rhythm” and “refine phrases” (Kashihara 75). In spite of his view, the impact is no less essential to the work since the new usage of punctuation marks highlights the letter as what obscures, rather than renders, Ophelia’s inwardness.

Ophelia’s Will was first published in a magazine called *Kaizo*. Two years later, in 1933, the novel was converted into book form with luxurious

binding designed by a book designer named Jiro Aoyama. In the book edition, a significant change in literary style was made, along with over twenty emendations and omissions of sentences and phrases. Notably, the overall tone of the letter changed because the use of commas was significantly reduced. Instead of the commas, double three dots "……" (ellipses) were inserted sparingly. For instance, unlike in the 1931 version, the passage quoted at the beginning of this section newly reads:

> ……every word, avoids me, and stays on the paper. ……what, on the earth, are these, ……these strange, something like bugs, why would I ever think of them as my friends. (1933: 13)

The use of commas ceases to be excessive but more or less retained within the convention of Japanese grammar. The sentences are therefore read with greater ease without interrupting commas. Furthermore, almost all of the twenty instances of dashes were replaced by double three dots.[5] The examples quoted in the above section were altered respectively:

> The world is empty,—that doesn't change, how many times you say it. (1931: 44)
> The world is empty, ……that doesn't change how many times you say it. (1933: 13)
>
> […] where, shall I, go,—if the day breaks, (1931: 44)
> […] where shall I go, ……if the day breaks, (1933: 13)

The replacement of dashes with ellipses offers a decisive evidence that Ophelia's letter should no longer be experienced as an immediate transcript of her inner voice, but is now presented as the copy of her handwriting. Whereas dashes are unlikely to be used by someone writing a letter, the dots are written by her hand as Ophelia noted its presence. The dots' meaninglessness symbolizes the materiality of her writing and exposes the existence of the letter as independent from the writer.

Moreover, a change was made to its title in 1933. The title, *Ophelia's Will*, is the only indication that the letter is written by Ophelia since her name is not mentioned within the work. In 1931, the name "Ophelia" in the title was written in *katakana* characters—a conventional way to write foreign names in Japanese. In 1933 however, Kobayashi rectified the name to be written in *hiragana* characters as "Oferiya", thus adapting a Danish character into

[5] There is an exception: a dash used in the phrase "I am, writing, steadily. —I am, just, too sad, to put in words" (1931, 39) was retained in the 1933 and the 1949 editions and eventually deleted in the 1950 edition. The instance seems erratic and its intention remains unclear.

Japanese. Notwithstanding the suggestion that the alteration of the title signifies Kobayashi's "renunciation" (Negishi 81) of the novel as a failure, the change was possibly made as an attempt to reinforce the impression that the letter is written originally in Japanese. Certainly, Kobayashi's revisions confirm that he continued to be interested in the work long after *The Letter to X* (1932), as his last fiction, marked the end to his career as a novelist. Thus, it is more plausible to consider the change intentional to improve the work by highlighting the new-found essence of the piece—a first-hand experience of reading a letter instead of hearing her voice.

Further changes were made in 1949, which clarify and develop the intention of the revisions. The novel was republished for the second time in 1949 together with *The Letter to X*. In this edition, Kobayashi made over thirty changes of additions, emendation, and deletions. These changes included a substantial amount of deletion including a passage which had extended over thirty-one lines in the 1933 edition. Among them is the passage where Ophelia expressed her own view on language:

> I, don't believe, in language, at all. To be bothered, by what you don't believe, is a non-sense. Things like language, you can easily, mess with them, completely, it's same with human minds, if you want to belie them, you can belie them, however you want. (1933: 14)

The deletion of such explanatory prose shows Kobayashi's confidence that the work now embodies, rather than explains, the concept of linguistic limitations. Based on the analysis of the 1931 version, Ichiro Shiba (99) observes that, in *Ophelia's Will*, Kobayashi "lived" rather than "argued" his newly found scepticism in language. While there is no denying that such intention inheres in the first edition, it was certainly made explicit over the course of the revisions. Furthermore, as less emphasis was made on Ophelia's sceptic attitude towards language, more weight was given to the formal aspect of the letter as a positive feature of the work. While Ophelia, as the imagined writer, contends that her writing hinders the faithful representation of herself, the reader can, at the same time, enjoy such lack of transparency as the essential aspect of the piece. In other words, the novel not only urges the reader to question their desire to probe into Ophelia's psychology, but instead to recognize the presence of language embodied as a letter, as nothing more or nothing less.

The most symbolic alteration made during the process is a sentence added in 1933, followed by another in 1949. As the final paragraph of the novel unfolds, it is hinted that Ophelia is now making her way to the river where she will meet her end. Whether the scene is in reality or imagined by Ophelia is untold. In the paragraph preceding this climactic passage, Ophelia suggests something reminiscent of a disintegration of herself:

> ……well, well, someone just like me is there in a room downstairs, again writing something, just like, the desk being fully lighted by the sun, or so on. (1931: 50-51)

The next paragraph begins by "Maybe I was dreaming" (1931: 51), signifying a brief lapse of her consciousness as if she was daydreaming. Nevertheless, before this sentence, at the end of the second to the last paragraph, Kobayashi added in 1933 "……hold on, wait a minute." (1933: 22) and then in 1949, "Let me go see it." (1949: 21). In the 1931 edition, the blank space created by line breaks between the two paragraphs signified Ophelia's loss of consciousness. However, in the 1949 edition, although she seems consciously awake, her consciousness goes beyond the reach of the reader's accessibility as she physically leaves her letter and possibly her room. As fitting as it is to the implication of the title as a "posthumously-left writing", the letter now performs itself as a piece of writing detached from its subject, Ophelia, suggesting the impenetrability of her mind.

Therefore, the analysis on Kobayashi's revising process uncovers that two different ideas on the relationship between literary language and its subject contend each other in *Ophelia's Will*. The contradicting state of the first edition at least confirms that by 1931, Kobayashi already had an idea to incorporate in his work the concept of linguistic limitations. It should also be noted that the contradiction was never fully resolved but continued to inhere in the novel. After the two revisions made in 1933 and 1949, Kobayashi continued to revise his work until 1968 in the republications of the complete works and the collected works, which were also republished a few times. Nonetheless, the amendments made after 1949 were relatively minor. Most of them were alterations of commas with periods, and vice versa, refining the style he started to develop since 1933. The two short phrases deleted in 1956 mark the last instances of substantial changes made to the novel.

Kobayashi on *Hamlet* in 1955: Psychological Impenetrability of Novels

On one hand, the motivation behind the reworking of *Ophelia's Will* can be traced to the fact that around the early 1930s, Kobayashi was experiencing an important transition period, shifting his ideas on language and literature. According to Ichiro Sekiya (49), Kobayashi gradually diverted his attention away from Shiga to his later favourite, Dostoevsky, during the time he was writing *Ophelia's Will*. In 1935, Kobayashi published a series of essays which critically analysed Japanese I-novels. According to Kobayashi, the I-novel writers failed to understand "the contradiction between their own lives and the social lives, and the essential friction between their sensibility and their

expression" (*An Essay* 169). Certainly, the revisions made to *Ophelia's Will* foregrounds such "friction", namely the disagreement between Ophelia's writing and her sense of inner being. It is clear that *Ophelia's Will* to a great extent represents Kobayashi's renunciation of I-novels and psychological novels despite the common understanding of Shakespearean scholars that the piece made another contribution to the genre.

On the other hand, the reworking of the novel also resonates with Kobayashi's developing interpretation of *Hamlet*. Although Kobayashi as a critic is well known for many of his works written on foreign writers and artists including Dostoevsky, Mozart, Baudelaire and Bergson among others, Shakespeare is not a name commonly associated with his criticism. Indeed, there are only two works that primarily consider Shakespearean drama: *On Hamlet* (1933) and *Hamlet and Raskolnikov* (1955). Although the former incites much interest because of its year of publication coinciding with the novel's first revision, *On Hamlet* is a short piece that does not involve an extensive discussion of the play. It was written for a collection of essays published to accompany the revised edition of Shoyo's complete translated dramatic works of Shakespeare. In the essay, Kobayashi celebrates Shakespeare's genius for creating Hamlet as a multiplex, Janus-faced character who is "a misanthropist and at the same time an optimist", "a sceptic and also a single-minded man believing in justice" (24) and so forth. This is not too far to suggest from this short piece that as of 1933, Kobayashi found in *Hamlet* something that defied the psychological interpretation of a fictional character.

Published over twenty years later, *Hamlet and Raskolnikov* provides Kobayashi's more comprehensive view of the play. Quoting Hamlet's speech "O, that this too too sallied flesh would melt / Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!" (1:2:129-130), Kobayashi explains that Hamlet's deepest desire is to "live as a pure incarnation of consciousness" (117). Nevertheless, according to Kobayashi, such desire is hindered by his own "non-transparency" (118) since his dramatic actions take place only "impulsively and automatically" (117) without disclosing any clear motivation for the final revenge. Thus, Kobayashi infers that Shakespeare never intended "inner realism" but instead sought "to restore materiality which cannot be transparent, but which can be seen and heard like actions and speeches" (120). It is worth recalling Barker's argument that Hamlet's sense of his inwardness fails to be meaningful. Just like Barker, Kobayashi also negates the understanding that Hamlet embodies a modern sense of psychology; however, Kobayashi emphasizes that such impenetrability of his mind—referred to as "non-transparency" by Kobayashi—indeed is essential to the art of any genre. By comparing Dostoevsky to Shakespeare, Kobayashi concludes that not only drama but also novels are imbued with psychological impenetrability.

What is further significant here is that *Hamlet and Raskolnikov* was written in 1955 and was published in a literary magazine, *Shincho*. In May of that year, Fukuda staged his *Hamlet*, which marked the post-war revival of Shakespeare in Japanese theatres. Fukuda ("Return to" 81), whose thoughts show Kobayashi's influence, claims the importance of Shakespeare in transcending modern literature, or I-novels. According to Kawatake (306), Fukuda brought forth the post-war revival of Shakespeare by growing apart from realism. The same month Fukuda staged *Hamlet*, Shohei Ooka began to publish his novelization of Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet's Diary*, as a series in *Shincho*. Despite their opposing political stances, Ooka shared a similar view on *Hamlet* with Fukuda. In demonstrating the limitations of psychological descriptions in literature, Ooka (*The Etiquettes* 191) refers to *Hamlet* as an example, for which the modern notion of psychology is merely imposed by the later readers. Additionally, in July of the same year and in the same magazine, Fukuda started his own series titled *Human, the Dramatic Being*. This was an extensive essay discussing the nature of drama, based on his interpretation of *Hamlet* as a masterpiece of art that challenges modern individualism. It was in the following month, *Shincho* published Kobayashi's *Hamlet and Raskolnikov*. While Kobayashi was known to be in friendly terms with these younger writers, Fukuda and Ooka, their shared view on *Hamlet* reveals a particular significance the play had at that point in time in Japanese culture. Although their ideas differed in parts, Kobayashi, Fukuda and Ooka all appreciated *Hamlet* as a quintessence of art that transcends the modern notion of literature and drama and its obsession with psychological realism.

It follows from the above argument that despite the common view which considers *Ophelia's Will* as an adaptation of *Hamlet* into a psychological novel, the reworking of the novel reveals Kobayashi's diverting concept. It correlates with Kobayashi's unique interpretation of *Hamlet* explored in the 1955 essay, which also resonates with the revival of *Hamlet*'s popularity in post-war Japan. Kobayashi did not only interpret *Hamlet* as a dramatic work that defied psychological realism, but he also deduced from such observation that novels were also subject to psychological impenetrability. Correspondingly, although *Ophelia's Will* continued to offer Ophelia's unique female perspective, its reworking also highlighted the attribute shared by Kobayashi's Ophelia and Shakespeare's Hamlet. Although she longs to inhabit in her letter as "a pure incarnation of her consciousness", the material aspect of her writing emanates from itself, eventually alienating its subject, Ophelia. Such emphasis placed on language over its content echoes the words of Shakespeare's hero: when Polonius asks him "What do you read, my lord?", Hamlet answers "Words, words, words." (2:2:188-189).

Therefore, to conclude, *Ophelia's Will* and its history of revisions trace the course by which Kobayashi first created the novel as an adaptation of *Hamlet*

into a modern, psychological novel, reminiscent of Shiga's style, and by which he later rewrote the piece as one that critically reflected on his original approach and challenged the belief in psychological realism. What is particularly noteworthy in the context of the Japanese reception of Shakespeare is that the process mainly took place between 1931 and 1949, a period leading up to the revival of Shakespearean popularity in Japan. *Ophelia's Will* offers a window into this relatively undiscussed time in the history of Shakespeare in Japan. Seen under this light, the uniqueness of the novel lies in Kobayashi's keen critical gaze directed towards both Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and his own language, which sought to urge the Japanese readers of his time—and continues to urge us—to scrutinise the sense of modernity embodied through literature and drama.

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Arboreal Tradition and Subversion: An Ecocritical Reading of Shakespeare's Portrayal of Trees, Woods and Forests[1]

Abstract: This paper analyses from an ecocritical standpoint the role of trees, woods and forests and their symbolism in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard II* and *The Tempest*. The analysis begins with an outline of the representation of trees on stage to continue with a 'close reading' of the mentioned plays, clearly distinguishing individual trees from woods and forests. Individual types of trees may represent death, sadness, sorcery and premonitions, or serve as meeting places, while forests and woods are frequently portrayed as settings which create an atmosphere of confusion, false appearances, danger and magic. This reflects a long-standing historical connection between trees and forests and the supernatural in literature and culture. However, while individual trees largely reflect traditional symbology, conventional interpretations are often subverted in Shakespeare's treatment of forests and woods. From all this we may infer that Shakespeare was not only familiar with the traditions associated to individual tree species and forests in general, but also that he made conscious and active use of these in order to enhance the meaning of an action, reinforce character traits, further the plot and create a specific atmosphere. More subtly, the collective arboreal environments can also be interpreted as spaces in which superstitions and older societal models are questioned in favour of a more rational and reasonable understanding of the world.

Keywords: Shakespeare, trees, woods, forests, ecocriticism, tradition, subversion.

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Twenty years ago, Scott Slovic wrote that: "Ecocriticism […] is being re-defined daily by the actual practice of thousands of literary scholars around the world" (161). A few years later, Catrin Gersdorf and Sylvia Mayer endorsed ecocriticism "as a methodology that re-examines the history of ideologically, aesthetically, and ethically motivated conceptualisations of nature […] in literary and other cultural practices" (10). These statements are still valid in 2020, and ever since ecocriticism emerged as a distinctive critical tool for the analysis of literature and culture, a thorough re-examination of most of the canonical works of English literature has been undertaken by scholars from all over the world.

The portrayal of nature in William Shakespeare's works has obviously been addressed before, but it may come as a surprise that so far, the representation of trees and forests in his plays has yet to be properly analysed and assessed. Gabriel Egan's seminal work *Green Shakespeare: From Ecopolitics to Ecocriticism* (2006) offers an overview of the role of the natural world in the plays with an unprecedented and still unsurpassed rigour, but the attention paid to trees and forests is not the main focus, and very little discussion is devoted to their role and symbolism. Apart from Egan's book, no other specific study of the symbolism and role of trees in Shakespeare exists before 2006.[2] *Writing the Forest in Early Modern England: A Sylvan Pastoral Nation* (2009), by Jeffrey S. Theis, contains a first section wholly devoted to Shakespearean forests in *As You Like It* (1599-1600), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595) and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597-1598). Theis's analysis reveals historical and cultural realities of the age hidden in those forests, such as their conceptual indeterminacy, parallelism to the stage, poaching practices and migrations, but it does not touch upon the symbolic value of the trees in Shakespeare's plays. Other works devoted to the study of nature in Shakespeare, such as Charlotte Scott's *Shakespeare and Nature: From Cultivation to Culture* (2014), focus more broadly on the interrelations between characters of the plays and the natural world, and while *Shakespeare and Nature* (2015) by Randall Martin discusses several environmental aspects in Shakespeare, the only reference to trees is made to address the issue of deforestation in the plays. *Wooden Os: Shakespeare's Theatres and England's Trees* (2013), by Vin Nardizzi, is mainly about the unparalleled wood and timber shortage during

[2] In Robert Harrison's *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (1993) six pages are devoted to forests in Shakespeare (100-105). As a way of introducing the section, a hasty reference is made to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It,* where the forest is said to play the same role as other conventional settings for comedies including: "disguise, reversals, and a general confusion of the laws, categories, and principles of identity that govern ordinary reality" (100). Harrison devotes the rest of his commentary to *Macbeth*, with an outline of the relationship between Macbeth and Birnam Wood, and the overall effects of its misunderstood prophecy (103-105). Harrison's contentions are sweeping, and the specific role and symbolism of the forests and trees in these three plays remain unexplored.

Shakespeare's time, and the second edition of *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare* (2015), edited by Michael Dobson et al., provides some generally accepted references to the symbolic significance of some trees but dispenses with any in-depth analysis. Rune Tveitstul Jensen read in 2016 the MA thesis *The Role of Trees in Shakespeare, Tolkien, and Atwood* in which the first chapter is solely dedicated to Shakespeare. The analysis focuses mainly on *The Tempest* (1610-1611) and *As You Like It*, briefly mentioning *Macbeth* (1606) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The issue of timber and deforestation dominates the analysis, which leaves little to no room for other uses or symbols, highlighting only the connection of the oak with monarchy. Finally, Anne Barton's *The Shakespearean Forest* (2017) is the only serious study of forests in Shakespeare both on stage and in the texts. Although it sheds light on the use of trees as props in the Elizabethan stage and connects forests to the cultural background, the symbolism and specific uses of trees in the plots and characterizations remain untreated. Moreover, Barton's choice of plays (*As You Like It, Macbeth, The Two Gentlemen of Verona* [1589-1591], *Timon of Athens* [1606] and *Titus Andronicus* [1592]) only matches the present analysis in the scrutiny of *Macbeth*, and she adopts a different perspective.

Shakespeare's plays feature an ample catalogue of arboreal species, and this article does not attempt to provide a complete review of the role of every tree in all of Shakespeare's theatrical works. Instead, we have selected a few representative examples from the comedies, histories and tragedies, in order to see if the use of trees—on stage and in the texts—is incidental and random, or if special meanings are attached to them across the three subgenres. The selected plays range from 1595 to 1610, a time when most of his best-known works were created, irrespective of the connections among the plots and the natural world. After an outline of trees on stage, our analysis aims to distinguish the symbolism and role of trees both individually (specific species) and collectively (woods and forests), and to see if they conform to traditional roles and symbolism, or if the arboreal representations go beyond the conventional views on trees.

Trees on Stage

Concerning the presence of trees in stage directions, a short explanation is in order to clarify the intricacies of authorship and mise-en-scène in Shakespeare's plays. Laurie Maguire and Emma Smith explain that while it is true that a few stage directions appeared in the early quartos and the First Folio, most instructions regarding the setting were added by later editors such as Nicholas Rowe (1709), Alexander Pope (1725), Lewis Theobald (1726 and 1734), Thomas Hanmer (1743-1744) and William Warburton (1747), and that these remain in contemporary editions of Shakespeare (54). However, as George

F. Reynolds asserts, not all were later additions, as trees can also be found in the stage directions of the old quartos (153-154).[3]

Barton explains that although it is very difficult to ascertain exactly how Shakespeare's plays were staged in his time, it is known that a series of items were employed to set a scene ("Wild Man" 42).[4] Reynolds lists painted backcloths and props of great size such as rainbows and tombs (155), but also ersatz trees (160). We also know that trees were used as props in plays performed in Shakespeare's time through the inventory of all the properties belonging to the Admiral's Men theatrical company, as recorded in the diary of the contemporary theatrical entrepreneur Philip Henslowe (1845). On 10 March 1598, entries include "baye tree," "tree of gowlden Apelles," and "Tantelouse tre" (Henslowe 273). In some cases, in order to make the most of a limited budget, trees were rendered symbolically, and a small amount would represent a whole forest (Reynolds 162). In others, trees would be added merely for the viewer's delight: "Just as today properties not even required by the action were employed to make the scene more vivid and realistic" (Reynolds 159).

Contemporary accounts of trees on the Shakespearian stage, such as Simon Forman's, confirm these claims. Forman in his *Bocke of Plaies* (1610-1611) writes about a representation of *Macbeth* at the Globe on 20 April 1611: "ther was to be obserued, firste, howe, Mackbeth and Bancko, 2 noble men of Scotland, [were] Ridinge thorowe a wod" (qtd. in Chambers 337). Barton warns that though Forman, no doubt, saw *Macbeth* on stage, his spelling of 'Bancko' for Banquo, and the phrase 'Ridinge thorowe a wod' (Shakespeare does not mention a wood in that scene) may imply that he was embellishing the story from his reading of *Holinshed's Chronicles* (1577), the greatly popular history books also employed by Shakespeare (*Shakespearean Forest* 45). Assuming that Barton's claim is true (*Shakespearean Forest* 45), is it not sensible to expect Forman to comment or complain on the absence of the wood? The inclusion of the wooded area in his description must have been triggered by the remembrance of a physical manifestation of some kind. Forman's report proves that theatregoers paid attention to the portrayal of trees and forests, and alludes to the expectations concerning the adequacy of arboreal representations presented by the playwright. As we shall see, while satisfying such expectations formally on stage, Shakespeare occasionally subverted the received tradition in his use of trees in the texts.

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[3] The plays that feature few or none original stage directions were written mainly at the unrecorded time Shakespeare was a shareholder of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later renamed as the King's Men (1594-?). Maguire and Smith contend that in Shakespeare's early and late plays, given his additional duties, he included more stage directions as he would not have been at hand to organize the setting of the stage (55-56).

[4] For a detailed account, see Barton's chapter two "Staging the Forest" (*Shakespearean Forest* 21-47), and the first half of John Leland and Alan Baragona's chapter seven "'The wood began to move' (*Macbeth* 5.5.34): stage greenery" (82-89).

Individual Tree Species

In Shakespeare's plays, a wide range of meanings and functions are assigned to different tree species. Willows, for instance, are frequently associated to death and loss. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1600-1601) a willow tree is the cause of Ophelia's death. The willow intended by Shakespeare is not the now familiar weeping willow (originally *Salix babylonica* and nowadays *Salix x sepulcralis*[5]), which did not arrive in England until the eighteenth century (Laqueur 136), but probably the native *Salix fragilis* or 'crack willow.'[6] This subspecies always grows by the water and the branches break off easily. In fact, its popular name makes reference to the reproductive phenomenon that occurs when the fallen boughs are carried by the current and take root further downstream (Woodland Trust, "Willow, Crack [Salix Fragilis]"). It is one of the most common species of willows in Britain, and due to its twisted shape, deep fissures and dull colour, any specimen, regardless of its age, can be mistaken for an old tree approaching death (cf. Shakespeare's description of the willow in *Hamlet*: "aslant" and "hoar leaves" [4:7:138-139]). The fragility of the willow accounts for Ophelia's unlucky fate, and the appearance of the tree cunningly forebodes and reinforces the tragic episode.

Sadness is another related trait associated with willows in Shakespeare's plays, with a traceable cultural origin. Paul Kendall ("Willow") contends that willows may have started to convey grief under the influence of Psalm 137 in *The Bible*: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof" (Psalms 137:1-2).[7] Kendall further holds that the association became particular to grief suffered by forsaken lovers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ("Willow"; see also Thomas, "Plants" 116). This symbolism is overt in *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-1597), where Lorenzo echoes classical tradition by describing how a distressed Dido, abandoned by Aeneas, mourns his departure and keeps a twig of willow while imploring him to return:

> LORENZO. In such a night
> Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
> Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love
> To come again to Carthage. (5:1:10-12)

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[5] A hybrid between *Salix babylonica* and *Salix alba*.

[6] Although the action of *Hamlet* takes place in Denmark, Shakespeare is unlikely to have travelled outside of England, and the rest of the flora described in the play strongly resembles plants native to the British Isles, such as pansies (probably *Viola arvensis Murray*), fennels (*Foeniculum vulgare*) or daisies (Ox-eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*).

[7] Psalm 137 is the source of the error of naming the weeping willow *Salix babylonica* (Laqueur 136), since the tree is native to northern China.

Thus, Shakespeare strengthens and heightens a contemporary cultural reference that the audience could grasp by elevating it to the heroic realm of myth.

Della Hooke highlights the connection between death and the yew, an association which most likely derives from the poisonous nature of this tree (209). Slips of yew are used by the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth* (4:1:27) to concoct a magic brew which helps them predict the future death of Macbeth (4:1:96-97, 4:1:108-109), and formerly, perchance, Duncan's (1:3:48). Historically, the connection is observable in the "Ankerwycke yew," a tree with which Shakespeare and his contemporaries were in all probability familiar. It was the trysting place of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, whose marriage ended in bloodshed and death: "some reports suggest that he even proposed in its shadow" (National Trust, "Ankerwycke"). The toxicity of yew leaves for cattle and its associations with the tragic historical event could account for its specific inclusion in the fitting context of macabre black magic, supported by circulating superstitious beliefs regarding witchcraft.

A third association between individual tree species and death occurs in *Richard II* (1595), where the Welsh captain establishes a parallel between the withered bay trees and the dead king (Egan, *Shakespeare* 83): "'Tis thought the King is dead. We will not stay. / The bay trees in our country are all withered" (*R2* 2:4:7-8). Historically, bay leaves are known to have crowned the heads of Roman emperors, a period that haunted Shakespeare's imagination, as shown by the several plays he set in Roman times. The evergreen bay trees, with their shiny leaves as symbols for power, cannot have escaped Shakespeare. Hence, a withered bay tree can be taken as the ultimate symbol of defeat.

Further uses and symbolism of particular tree species in Shakespeare are found in *The Tempest*, when Prospero destroys and uproots a number of trees as a sign of his tremendous power:

> PROSPERO […] to the dread rattling thunder
> Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
> With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory
> Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up
> The pine and cedar […]. (5:1:44-48)

As implied by Egan, the contemporary audience would probably take these feats metaphorically (*Green* 167), yet the use of these specific species in a figurative way for Prospero's display of power is significant. The tree which is rifted is an oak, which is one of the strongest types of wood that can be found in England, and among the trees that are "plucked up" we find the cedar, which has very deep roots, and the pine, which can be enormous in size. These connections would not have been lost on the contemporary audience, which was more than familiar with the qualities of different types of trees and wood, a widely used

material for the construction of buildings, making of tools, and other everyday objects in the early seventeenth century.

Concerning the symbolic use of other individual species, oaks are common meeting places in Shakespeare. For instance, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the group of craftsmen who are to perform a play for Theseus meet specifically at the so-called "Duke's oak" (1:2:103). Herne's Oak in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is another meeting place, where Sir John is deceived. In English history trees and groves are common points of reference for gatherings, and among these, oaks have a special significance. According to Sylvie Nail, the Parliament Oak in Sherwood Forest, for instance, was said to be the place where Edward I held his Parliament in 1290 (317), and it is reasonable to assume that Shakespeare was familiar with this tradition.[8] However, as we shall see in the next section, in Shakespeare's works the solemn character of the gatherings is exchanged for informal encounters which ultimately yield comical situations.

Woods and Forests

Wooded areas have been subject to given traditional associations that, though mutable, have retained their core values. As a form of cultural memoir, literature has preserved those constructs. Beyond the walls of cities,[9] woods and forests have frequently evoked supernatural atmospheres. Harrison is of this opinion, claiming that "in the forest […] the ordinary gives way to the fabulous" (x), while Richard Hayman goes as far as to assert that the "woodlands were one type of wild place where the boundary between the natural and supernatural worlds could be crossed" (20). Forests have also acted as symbolic spaces for various trials. As Bruno Bettelheim explains, in literature all over the world and in all ages, the setting of the forest has provided an archetypal location for trials and obstacles that, once overcome, prompts a return to reason and order (94; see also Simonson 12, 21 and Cossio 415-416).

In Shakespeare, the most famous use of woods as a setting for supernatural events is, naturally, the forest where the fairies dwell in *A Midsummer Night's*

[8] The historical veracity of this event has been questioned by Rev. James Orange (179), yet it was (and still is) a widely accepted popular belief that the mentioned Parliament took place under an oak. This would have been Shakespeare's main concern, writing, as he was, to entertain rather than ascertain historical facts.

[9] Although ecocriticism advocates for Natureculture, which "suggests continual interpretation and mutual constitution of the human and non-human worlds" (Garrard 208), it is also important, as Timothy Morton points out, that this new uniformity does not erase the present otherness (244). The idea is to bestow equal importance upon each and value and understand their reciprocity.

Dream. In this play the forest is pictured as a place beyond the boundaries of a normal perception of reality, where imaginative possibilities are unleashed. Most of the action takes place in a wood outside of Athens, and merges magic with confusion as prosaic business considerations mingle with dreams. In act 2, when Lysander loses his sense of direction and goes astray with Hermia, both cross the boundary of the unknown (2:2:42). Coincidentally, after going to sleep and waking up, a border is also crossed in Lysander's mind, as his passion magically shifts from Hermia to Helena (2:2:119). Prior to this, turning the wood into a potentially dangerous place, violence and madness take hold of Demetrius, plainly seen in his threats to Helena: "I'll run from thee, and hide me in the brakes, / And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts" (2:1:227-228). Violence and madness escalate when Demetrius threatens Helena again: "[…] I shall do thee mischief in the wood" (2:1:237). This scene recalls canto XXII of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532), which was well-known to Shakespeare, when Orlando begins to lose his wits in the forest due to jealousy. The trope of madness in the forest has long associations, but Shakespeare, as with love, whimsically activates and deactivates this condition by means of fairy magic, resulting in a humorous device which guides the plot accordingly. While this is a narrative strategy, the intervention of the fairies also allows a reassessment of the capricious and often dangerous human nature which starkly contrasts with the ideal lover's good heart and steadfastness. This enchanted forest is thus both material and psychological, triggering a sudden change of heart in the male characters that could not have occurred believably elsewhere.

James Shapiro has discussed the presence of the paranormal in Shakespeare's most prominent tragedies such as *Julius Caesar* (1599), *Othello* (1603-1604), *King Lear* (1610), *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth* (96). However, in *Macbeth*, the supernatural and the notion of the forest as a magical place is used as a starting point only to be subverted and rationalized afterwards. First, the eponymous hero witnesses the apparition of a crowned child with a tree in its hand, who prophesies that "Macbeth shall never vanquished be until / Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill / Shall come against him" (4:1:108-109). This prophesy in isolation seems as ludicrous as "[…] none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth" (4:1:96-97). Later it is discovered that in both cases Shakespeare ostensibly naturalizes the supernatural, but without invalidating the visions. If caesarean delivery accounts for "none of woman born," so does Malcolm's strategic camouflage that his army adopts to explain the mobile wood:

> MALCOLM. Let every soldier hew him down a bough
> And bear't before him. Thereby shall we shadow
> The numbers of our host, and make discovery
> Err in report of us. (5:4:4-6)

It appears that the paranoiac Macbeth, having controlled all the worldly variables, believes that only the supernatural can defy his power, promptly accepting the predictions. For Robin Headlam Wells, fate is employed by Shakespeare to mock gullible characters in his tragical and historical plays (147). Macbeth is an epitome of this, marked as he is by tormenting and deep-seated insecurities, which he tries in vain to mitigate by resorting to supernatural sources of prediction. Paradoxically, although these prophesies seem encouraging at first because of their apparent impossibility, their fake realisation ultimately becomes Macbeth's doom. The seeming but, in actual fact, staged mobility of Birnam Wood is what marks the onset of his rapid mental deterioration; ultimately, it is Macbeth's credulity that prompts his downfall. Moreover, it might be asserted that Macbeth's simultaneous fear and worship of the forces of destiny are related to a fear of the female body and its capacity for procreation, perceived by this character as a mystical vehicle of his personal doom, since Banquo will sire a line of Kings and Macbeth nought (3:1:59-71). This is subsequently subverted by a much more prosaic reality, in which a Caesarean operation (5:10:15-16), a consequence of rational medical science, is what has caused the original survival of Macduff, who actually brings about Macbeth's demise.

Woods affect some of Shakespeare's characters in such ways by virtue of their inherently uncanny nature. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the supernatural is connected to Windsor Forest by means of an old tale:

> MISTRESS PAGE. There is an old tale goes that Herne the hunter,
> Sometimes a keeper here in Windsor Forest,
> Doth all the winter time at still midnight
> Walk round about an oak with great ragg'd horns;
> And there he blasts the trees, and takes the cattle,
> And makes milch-kine yield blood, and shakes a chain
> In a most hideous and dreadful manner.
> You have heard of such a spirit, and well you know
> The superstitious idle-headed eld
> Received, and did deliver to our age,
> This tale of Herne the hunter for a truth. (4:4:27-37)

The place bears some resemblance to the forest of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and although in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* the story is almost literally an old wives' tale, Sir John Falstaff believes it and later allows it to condition his response to the events taking place in the forest: "They are fairies. He that speaks to them shall die. / I'll wink and couch; no man their works must eye" (5:5:46-47). As in the case of Macbeth above, Falstaff takes the presence of the supernatural, fairies in this case, at face value because of the setting. In the popular and literary imagination, inherited both from folklore and from medieval

and contemporary romances such as the anonymous *Sir Orfeo* (c. 1330) and Edmund Spenser's *The Fairie Queene* (1590-96), woods and forests were places where ordinary reality was interrupted and in which supernatural creatures were liable to appear. The forest setting here is crucial to facilitate the correct development of the plot, as the conditions for the deceit could have hardly been possible in the crowded and mundane city, and Falstaff's credulity, scorned once more by Shakespeare as Macbeth's, plays again an essential role. It might be added that the way in which the woods in both plays blur the characters' distinction between love and hate turns them into a subtle reflection of the misogynistic worlds of both Athens and Windsor, in which relationships between men and women were seldom based on love only. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* this is not displayed by Falstaff solely but by most male characters, especially Ford and Page, at the end of the play (5:5:131-237). In this, too, Shakespeare's use of wooded environments subverts the received tradition; the forests mirror a painful and problematic reality through the apparently frivolous lens of humour, in which the 'magic' has a very direct bearing on the re-evaluation of contemporary reality.

Conclusion

In Shakespeare's plays, the presence of both individual species of trees and collective communities such as groves, woods and forests add important layers of meaning to the texts, that in some cases determine the development of the characters and even the overall outcome of the plot. By and large, the symbolic significance attached to particular trees or woods and forests in Shakespeare's plays show that both the playwright and the editors, who later added stage directions, were very much aware of the conventional cultural and literary associations given to the different tree species, and consciously used them with these specific functions in mind. A particular species may be used to represent death or melancholy (willow), sorcery and premonitions (yew) or serve as meeting places (oak). Plays such as *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* would hardly work if the wooded settings were removed from the lines and scenery, while *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II* and *The Tempest* would lose some essential imagery and meaning if the trees were not there to reinforce key scenes related to events and characterization, such as Ophelia's passing (willow), Macbeth's maddening superstitions (yew) and Prospero's powerful magical abilities (oak, pine and cedar). However, the analysis has shown significant differences between Shakespeare's depiction of specific trees, on the one hand, and collective arboreal environments on the other.

While Shakespeare remains largely bound to tradition in his portrayal of individual trees and species in the plays under study, the collective presence of trees seems to have provided him with an opportunity to break free from conventional imagery and symbolism, putting them to a more innovative and subversive use. Woods and forests are often portrayed as settings which create an atmosphere of confusion and danger (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) or magic and false appearances (*Macbeth* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*), and this certainly adheres to traditional interpretations, but Shakespeare frequently adapts these tropes to his own purposes, occasionally subverting them in the plays. These subversions enable the playwright to explore the contradictions of the fickle human disposition (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), or satirize the tendency of some individuals to gullibly believe the impossible (*Macbeth* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*), which irrevocably leads to catastrophe.

Thus, we may tentatively conclude that Shakespeare's portrayal of trees and forests not only reflects conventional symbolism and plays a fundamental role for characterization and plot, but that the occasional subversion of received tradition also reflects the well-known (and well-attested) tensions of the Elizabethan period. The inherited and long-standing religious certainties were vigorously questioned and subverted during the violent upheavals of the Reformation, and superstitious belief was gradually giving way to a new humanist understanding of the world based on reason. Nevertheless, a more exhaustive study of the portrayal of trees in the entire body of Shakespeare's dramatic output, which is beyond the scope of the present article, would be needed to confirm this.

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Dostoevsky in English and Shakespearean Universality: A Cautionary Tale

Abstract: This is the second of a pair of articles addressing the relationship between Dostoevsky's novella *Notes from the Underground* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The first article considered the similarities between the two texts, using David Magarshack's 1968 English translation of the *Notes*, before discussing the wider phenomenon of Hamletism in nineteenth-century Russia. In this article, the author focuses on the problem of translation, identifying a handful of instances in the Magarshack translation that directly 'insert' Shakespeare, and *Hamlet* in particular, into Dostoevsky's text. It is argued that these allusions or citations overdetermine the English reader's experience of Shakespeare-and-Dostoevsky, or Shakespeare-in-Dostoevsky. Returning to the question of Shakespeare's status in Europe in the nineteenth century, the article concludes with a critique of Shakespearean 'universality' as it manifests through the nuances of translation.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, Russia, Underground, Hamlet, translation, universality.

Afterlives in Translation

In a previous article ("Hamlet Underground: Revisiting Shakespeare and Dostoevsky", Thurman 2018), I explored the ways in which Shakespeare's *Hamlet* may be seen to hover—like Hamlet's father's ghost—over Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground*: that is, over the self-contained world of the text and over its narrator, as well as over the historical context in which it was written, over its author and over his contemporaries. Yet twenty-first century readers of both Shakespeare and Dostoevsky must also acknowledge that, to some extent at least, our experience of the former text (c.1600) is now also affected by the latter (1864). There is something of Derrida's supplementarity in this; alternatively, although we may be reluctant to invoke Harold Bloom and *The Anxiety of Influence*, it is not inappropriate to suggest that Dostoevsky 'kills

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off' his strong precursor, Shakespeare, by reformulating the Prince of Denmark into the irredeemable narrator-protagonist of his novella. If Dostoevsky was closer to this figure in more ways than he realised, or could admit, might this equally apply to the Underground Man's rejection of the banal claim that "Shakespeare is immortal"? (Dostoevsky/Magarshack 165)

Shakespeare's "immortal" plays are passed down not as autonomous works but as read, performed, interpreted and appropriated texts. They are always-already mediated when we encounter them. Both Shakespeare and his Hamlet, then, experience a kind of death-in-life: the author, through the appropriation and adaptation of his works; the character, through an 'afterlife' over which he has no control. "Report me and my cause aright," Hamlet enjoins Horatio—the Danish Prince is acutely aware of his legacy, of "what a wounded name/...shall live behind [him]" (*Hamlet* 5.2.339-45) if the story of his life and death is distorted. Hamlet cannot, however, control what history will make of him. His image can quite easily be twisted into, for instance, that of the loquacious, peevish, malicious, deluded Underground Man. Hamlet dies declaring, "The rest is silence" (5.2.358). But death does not necessarily result in silence, as the presence of Hamlet's father's ghost demonstrates. It is ultimately the motif of the ghost—of the father figure, of generations gone by, of spectral precursors—that defines Hamlet's afterlife. Shakespeare (as both author and 'authority'), *Hamlet* and Hamlet each call writers like Dostoevsky to follow them, as it were, up to the parapets of Elsinore. And sometimes it seems as if texts like *Notes from the Underground*, along with the characters within those texts, have themselves heeded such a call.

The complexities of these relationships are compounded by the creative act of interpretation that is translation. Hamlet and the Underground Man are both obsessed with "words, words, words" (2.2.189)—a repetition that is echoed in the *Notes* as "lies, lies, lies" (128)—because the ambiguity and often the opacity of language obscures their understanding of the world and others' understanding of them. Translation presents an opportunity to clarify, or simplify, but it also increases the risk of misrepresentation or miscommunication. In the previous article, I gave an account of my own first encounter with Dostoevsky's novella in David Magarshack's English translation: as a graduate student who had limited experience with studying texts in translation, I paid scant attention to the linguistic distance that Shakespeare's words had to travel for me to recognise them in the pages of a translation of Dostoevsky's text. My present undertaking provides an opportunity to reconsider this blind spot, or to render 'visible' those typically 'invisible' translating choices that can frame a reader's interpretation of a given text.

Dostoevsky was not familiar with *Hamlet* in its early modern English original (or originals, if we keep in mind the quarto and folio variants of the play). The majority of his readers were probably best acquainted with Nikolai

Polevoy's landmark 1837 translation, which was fairly free in its use of 'modernised' Russian. So, what happens when Dostoevsky is translated into English—when what may appear to be Shakespearean resonances in Dostoevsky get translated from Russian 'back' into a language that itself has changed substantially since the early modern period? Those resonances may be sublimated, hidden or even erased. Alternatively, the presence of *Hamlet* (and Shakespeare himself, like Hamlet's father's Ghost) can be foregrounded; this is in fact what results from Magarshack's decision to use phrases borrowed from Shakespeare in his translation of *Notes from the Underground*.

The Magarshack text was first published in 1968. Sporadically over the course of two decades following the Second World War, Anglophone critics had drawn connections between Hamlet and the Underground Man—from John Cowper Powys' casual association of the two figures in a throwaway remark in his 1946 book on Dostoevsky (I shall return to Powys later in this article) to Stanley Cooperman's sustained comparison in a 1968 essay. Throughout this period, the dominant English translation of the *Notes* remained that of Constance Garnett—a version since dismissed out of hand by the likes of Kornei Chukovsky:

> In reading the original, who does not feel the convulsions, the nervous trembling of Dostoevsky's style? It is expressed in convulsions of syntax, in a frenzied and somehow piercing diction where malicious irony is mixed with sorrow and despair. But with Constance Garnett it becomes a safe blandscript: not a volcano, but a smooth lawn mowed in the English manner—which is to say a complete distortion of the original. (Chukovsky 220-21)

Magarshack's translation of the *Notes* was thus a welcome departure; David Remnick is wrong, writing about the Russian "translation wars", to dismiss him as "one of Garnett's epigones" (n.p.). But in departing from Garnett's Victorian-Edwardian style—in 'modernising' the text—Magarshack also, paradoxically, had recourse to early modern English: that is, to Shakespeare's English. There are five instances of Magarshack inserting into his translation of *Notes from the Underground* phrases that function as allusions to, or direct citations of, passages in Shakespeare's plays. Chief among these is *Hamlet*.

The numbered extracts below are also listed in Appendix A / Table 1 along with the equivalent passages in Garnett's translation and the earlier version of C.J. Hogarth (1913), as well as two more recent translations by Pevear and Volokhonsky (1993) and Natasha Randall (2012). In none of the passages from the other translations are there any Shakespearean traces. Here it must be emphasised that a close reading of these passages in the original Russian, paired with the text of Polevoy's *Gamlet*—the Russian translation of *Hamlet* with which Dostoevsky was most familiar—confirms that there was no

explicit attempt on Dostoevsky's part to quote Shakespeare's play directly.[1] The Shakespearean echoes are thus Magarshack's invention.

1. "Yes, gentlemen, it is only among us that the most arrant knave can be perfectly and even sublimely honest at heart..."

(Dostoevsky/Magarshack 135)

Other translators have rendered the delightful Russian insult ПОДЛЕ́Ц [*podlets*] as "rascal", "rogue" or "scoundrel"; "scumbag" might be the closest colloquial term. Magarshack's choice, "arrant knave", has a decidedly early modern and Shakespearean ring. While Shakespeare uses variations on the phrase "arrant knave" in *2 Henry IV*, *Henry V* and *Much Ado About Nothing*—it would likely have been fairly common in his time—it has particular overtones connected to two well-known pronouncements in Hamlet.

> Hamlet: There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark
> But he's an arrant knave.
>
> (*Hamlet* 1.5.126-7)

> Hamlet: Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all. Believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?
>
> (*Hamlet*, 3.1.128-132)

"Arrant knaves" expresses Hamlet's simultaneous disgust at Claudius, his self-disgust and his disgust with all his fellow-men—which may be applied quite easily to the Underground Man. The context of the second use of the phrase is also significant in terms of the *Notes*: this is part of Hamlet's misogynistic rant at Ophelia, and when he instructs her to go to a "nunnery" (slang for a brothel) he is endorsing the angel/whore binary that also lies behind the Underground Man's treatment of the prostitute Liza, which is in turn a function of his self-loathing.

[1] I am indebted to Dmitry Shkatov for his analysis of Polevoy's *Gamlet* and Dostoevsky's *Zapiski iz Podpol'ya*.

2. "... I bore no resemblance to the gentleman who in his pigeon-livered confusion had sewed a piece of German beaver to the collar of his overcoat."

(Dostoevsky/Magarshack 143)

Here we may recall that the narrator of the *Notes* tells us at the outset that there is something wrong with his liver. Yet the direct translation of Dostoevsky's куринного сердца [*kurinnogo serdtsa*] is "chicken-hearted" (variations on this are chosen in all the other English texts cited in the Appendix). With Magarshack's "pigeon-livered" we are very firmly in Denmark; the first recorded use of the adjective is in *Hamlet*.

Hamlet: Am I a coward?
Who calls me "villain"? Breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? Gives me the lie i'th'throat
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha!
'Swounds, I should take it, for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
O vengeance!

(*Hamlet* 2.2.530-44)

This is a Hamlet / Underground Man who is aware of an audience—who plays up to that audience even as he berates himself—and who, conscious of being judged by others, works himself into a state of righteous vengeful anger.

3. "He would even risk his cakes and ale and deliberately set his heart on the most deadly trash..."

(Dostoevsky/Magarshack 120)

"Cakes and ale", one might argue, is purely idiomatic; surely, we are not expected to find some equivalence between the *Notes* and *Twelfth Night*?

Sir Toby Belch: (To Malvolio) ... Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?

(*Twelfth Night* 2.3.108)

Well, perhaps there is a thematic resonance between Malvolio's pious disdain for the hedonism of Sir Toby Belch and company and the Underground Man's bitterness towards the drunken jollity of the farewell party for his nemesis Zverkov (although he, too, gets very drunk; and he, too, goes to the brothel). But let's assume that Magarshack, while conscious of this as a specifically Shakespearean phrase, is not using it with any deliberate intertextual significance. Even then, its idiomatic use reinscribes the debt of the English language to Shakespeare, and therefore the debt of all English-speakers, native or otherwise, to Shakespeare. In other words, we might say, it entrenches the notion of Shakespearean universality—a subject to which I shall return.

4. "Quite right, but there's the rub! I'm sorry, gentlemen, to have gone on philosophising like this..."

(Dostoevsky/Magarshack 118)

"There's the rub" is arguably also idiomatic. But consider the context in *Hamlet*:

> Hamlet: To be or not to be – that is the question
> ...
> To die, to sleep –
> To sleep, perchance to dream. Aye, there's the rub,
> For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
> When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
> Must give us pause ...
>
> (*Hamlet* 3.1.57-69)

This is Hamlet's most famous speech, and certain phrases from it—including "there's the rub"—are attached to *Hamlet* even by those who haven't watched or read the play. Here the allusion serves to entrench the connection between two over-thinking, paralysed, 'cowardly' characters: Hamlet and the Underground Man.

5. "... I'm every bit as wretched as you are and wallow in filth on purpose – because I, too, am sick at heart."

(177)

"Sick at heart" is not specific to *Hamlet* (it is in *Macbeth* too), nor is it exclusively 'Shakespearean'. Moreover, while Hamlet refers to "how ill all's here about my heart" (5.2.197), it is Francisco who speaks the actual line in the opening scene. But as an early modern coinage—its use was first recorded in 1581—the phrase is still strongly associated by latter-day readers with Shakespeare.

Francisco: For this relief, much thanks; 'tis bitter cold
And I am sick at heart.
(*Hamlet* 1.1.8)

Macbeth: ... Seyton! – I am sick at heart,
When I behold – Seyton, I say! – This push
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough. My way of life
Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age,
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have ...
(*Macbeth* 5.3.16-30)

For readers of the *Notes* who know their Shakespeare, Macbeth calling for Seyton to bring his armour may also match the Underground Man: desperate, raging, somewhat incoherent, full of regret, isolated, but defiant to the last.

"The Fellow in the Cellarage" and "Stellified Shakespeare"

These quotations are, separately and collectively, effective in characterising the Underground Man. The Shakespearean allusions thus enrich a particular reading of the *Notes*—that is, a reading based on *Hamlet*. But they also introduce a potential pitfall. The problem with presenting the Underground Man as a Hamlet-figure in this way is that it can become the sole lens through which English readers familiar with Shakespeare's plays interpret *Notes from the Underground*. We may no longer be attuned to other literary and philosophical influences; indeed, worse, we may no longer be able to read Dostoevsky without hunting for such influences. A single-minded focus on Hamlet as antecedent of the Underground Man can also lead to overblown claims, clumsy literary criticism or—a particular risk for Shakespeare scholars—an emphasis on textual fragments removed from their dramatic or theatrical context.

Consider Yasuhiro Ogawa's proposal that "Hamlet's correlative to the Dostoevskian 'underground' is the 'nutshell in [which] I could be bounded, and count myself a king of infinite space—were it not that I have bad dreams'." (Ogawa 208n) Ogawa's interest is in the grotesque, and he suggests that "another name for both Hamlet's 'nutshell' and Dostoevsky's 'underground' is the 'grotto' in our diction: their claustrophile, reclusive way of living is 'grotto-esque', that is, grotesque." The comparison is intriguing, but framed in this way it is somewhat contrived and inappropriate. While both the "nutshell" and the "funk-hole" are private spaces, offering a retreat and protection from the world and its responsibilities, Hamlet uses the image to set the public "prison" of

Denmark in opposition to his internal life; for the Underground Man, by contrast, both the public and the domestic spheres are claustrophobic. Whereas the content of Hamlet's dreams has been the subject of much conjecture, the narrator of the *Notes* gives a fairly detailed account of the moods and events in his dreams—which are themselves not generic, for they veer from the idealistic and romantic to the nightmarish and grotesque.

In a similar instance of misdirected comparison John Cowper Powys fuses the two Hamlets, father and son, when he ropes together the Underground Man and "the ghost in *Hamlet*, 'the fellow i'the cellarage'" (Powys 82). This rather literal equivalence (they are both 'below the floor'), it is implied, is accompanied by a depressed spiritual and emotional state that may nonetheless be elevated: "a human soul ... who has it in him, or 'in his stars,' to rise to the sublimest height of redemption." Yet Powys ignores the performance context, and the fact that Hamlet's line cajoling Horatio and Marcellus to swear to secrecy ("Come on, you hear this fellow in the cellarage. Consent to swear..." 1.5.151) is clearly an in-joke, a chance for the actor playing Hamlet to break the fourth wall and to mock the device of the Ghost's 'voice' emerging from under the stage. Stanley Cooperman, by contrast, is aware of this dynamic and, in his more sustained comparison between play and novella, emphasises the meta-theatrical element; Konstantin Mochulsky, likewise, affirms the similarities between Hamlet and the Underground Man as self-conscious performers.[2] Powys' quotation of the phrase "in his stars" is also vague: as a generic intimation of fate, it could come from *Romeo and Juliet* or *King Lear*, but Powys is probably thinking of *Julius Caesar*—in which case it is a misquotation, for Cassius is actually trying to persuade Brutus against fatalism: "The fault ... is not in our stars/But in ourselves, that we are underlings" (*Julius Caesar* 1.2.141-42). This 'generic' Shakespeare, in which different plays and performance contexts are essentially fungible, is, I want to propose, one consequence of too readily celebrating Shakespeare's universality.

Powys' stellar misappropriation—"in his stars"—is serendipitous for my purposes here. In my previous article on "Hamlet Underground", I concluded the analysis with a discussion of 'Hamletism'—one of the more prominent manifestations of Shakespeare's apotheosis in the nineteenth century, both in Russia and in western Europe. Yet the discourse of Shakespearean universality that developed during this period is, as Todd Borlik has shown, inextricable from competition between European nations over imperial territories. Borlik provides a fascinating account of what he calls "the stellification of Shakespeare" (6) by investigating the nomenclature of Uranus and its moons,

[2] "The underground existence becomes fantasy; this is a game in front of a mirror. The man suffers, rejoices, is angry ... with complete sincerity. But each sensation is reflected in the mirror of consciousness; in the actor there sits a spectator who appreciates his art." (Mochulsky 248)

from the planet's discovery by William Herschel in 1781 to the naming of its moons after Shakespearean characters by Herschel's son John in 1852 (a practice that has since been extended to 25 Uranian satellites). Conflict in the eighteenth century over the naming of celestial bodies—particularly between French and British astronomers—was, Borlik affirms, a continuation of "Anglo-French rivalry in empire-building". In the nineteenth century, while this imperial competition intensified not only between Britain and France but between various European powers, Shakespeare's elevation to a "pan-European sensation" (with even the French eventually capitulating) made possible Herschel junior's patriotic gesture: "Continental astronomers would not allow England to extend its empire out to the stars. In consolation, John Herschel devised an ingenious sleight of hand: name the Uranian satellites after the English national poet par excellence." (Borlik 5)

This historical quirk presents us with a novel way of approaching the universalist discourse: the story of Shakespeare's stellification "reflects and confirms" his status in the nineteenth century as a "cosmopolitan" literary figure perceived as "transcend[ing] cultural-political boundaries" (Borlik 3), even as "English pride in Shakespeare as 'the national poet' remained undimmed. Naming the Uranian moons after his characters thus managed to conflate universality and Englishness." (7) Such a conflation was beneficial to John Herschel when he arrived in South Africa to establish an astronomical observatory in Cape Town as part of "the race between the European imperial powers to chart and label the cosmos in their own image" (9). And, Borlik argues, given that Herschel became involved in the development of the South African schooling system ("Herschel's views align with those of other colonial educators who advocated the study of Shakespeare for moral, utilitarian and nationalistic motives"), the fusion of his astronomical work and his Shakespearean interests "cannot be easily divorced from the 'civilising mission' of imperialism" (10).[3]

I provide this synopsis of Borlik's article to give readers some idea of why, as a South African scholar, I cannot engage with Dostoevsky, Shakespeare, the Underground Man, nineteenth-century Hamletism and twentieth-century translation without keeping in mind my own country's history. This demands an awareness of the ways in which Shakespeare's 'universality' has been created and is sustained, for the politics of Shakespeare studies in South Africa are inevitably linked to debates about 'universality' and 'particularity'.[4] Recent

[3] Borlik is here summarising a view elaborated upon by David Johnson in *Shakespeare and South Africa* (1996).

[4] See Chris Thurman (ed.), *South African Essays on 'Universal' Shakespeare* (2014) and Chris Thurman, "From Shakespearean Singularity to Singular Shakespeares: Finding New Names for Will-in-the-world". *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 30 (2017): 1-13.

interventions by scholars such as Kiernan Ryan and Ewan Fernie have boldly staked a claim for an egalitarian, progressive and even revolutionary understanding of universality as expressed in and through Shakespeare's plays; South African Shakespeareans David Schalkwyk, Natasha Distiller and Laurence Wright have also offered cogent alternative approaches to Shakespearean universality. Indeed, in an age of hyper-nationalism, of the retreat into isolationism and global discord rather than globalist cooperation (the era of Trump and Putin, Brexit, the rise of the populist right wing in Europe and South America), and in which South African politicians, too, still have recourse to racial or 'ethnic' essentialism—in such a geopolitical climate, the notion of universality has increasing appeal.

Undoubtedly, the discourse of Shakespearean universality can facilitate transnational interaction. But it can also elide some of the distinct facets of that transnationalism precisely because of Shakespeare's dominance and centrality. He can develop into a totalising presence. As we have seen, this has implications for the process of translation. One problem with translators and critics presenting Dostoevsky's texts and their characters in terms of Shakespeare's plays and their characters—whether implicitly or explicitly—is that this becomes a constrained and constraining interpretive lens.

I argued in "Hamlet Underground" that, if we are to read *Notes from the Underground* in terms of its Shakespearean echoes, we should also be aware of Hamlet and Hamletism as a broadly European phenomenon. In Germany, of course, the ground had been prepared for *Hamletomanie* even before it was entrenched through the popularity of Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774); the question of whether or not "*Deutschland ist Hamlet*" was, as Andreas Höfele (2016) shows, a national bone of contention throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In France, Hamletism developed very differently to the way it did in Russia: its coinage is often attributed to Mallarmé, although the prominence of Hamlet's 'image' in France dates back at least to Delacroix's famous lithographs of the 1830s and 40s, and arguably earlier (to performances of the play in Paris by Kemble, Kean and Macready that helped to redeem Shakespeare in the eyes of French neoclassicists). If Hamletism is also in Baudelaire and, later, in Laforgue, R.A. Foakes argues that it "remained a mordant presence in the consciousness of French intellectuals" (24). Foakes suggests that a line of continuity can be traced to Paul Valéry's depiction of "the figure of Hamlet brooding over millions of ghosts in the graveyard of Europe" in the wake of the First World War. Höfele writes that Valéry's Hamlet, "representing the European intellectual, is not merely unable to cope with an overwhelming task, he no longer knows what the task might be or even if there is a task at all" (Höfele 121-22).

Yet *Notes from the Underground* need not be connected to French literature via Shakespeare and Hamlet. On the contrary, there is a case to be

made that the Underground Man is more directly and obviously influenced by Diderot than by anything in Shakespeare. Diderot's eighteenth-century satire *Rameau's Nephew* offered Dostoevsky a model both in characterisation ("The nephew parades his cynicism, flaunts his flaws, delights in making outrageous challenges to common sense and conventional wisdom, is fond of aphorisms, and manages to express many painful truths"; Lantz 95) and in style (Diderot employs an unnamed narrator, "Moi", and the nephew, "Lui", speaks in lengthy monologues).[5] Kenneth Lantz notes that other "buffoons" in Dostoevsky's oeuvre that stem from Rameau's nephew include the eponymous hero of "Polzunkov" (1848) and Lebedev in *The Idiot* (1869).

As it happens, the French-Russian-German publishing history of Diderot's philosophical novel demonstrates how transnational literary circulation often undermines the 'national' distinctions drawn by Dostoevsky in *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*—a record of his journeys to France, England, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and Italy in 1862, published the following year in what Joseph Frank has suggested can be seen as "a first draft" of *Notes from the Underground*, which would appear in 1864 (Frank, "The Encounter with Europe" 237). *Rameau's Nephew* was composed in France between 1761 and 1774 but remained unpublished (probably because Diderot feared a repeat of the imprisonment or ban he had previously experienced) until 1805, a full two decades after the author died, when Goethe translated it into German. A copy of the manuscript had been retained in Diderot's collection of books and papers, which were protected by the patronage of Catherine the Great, and found its way from St Petersburg to Weimar via Schiller. Dostoevsky's own literary production—and subsequent reception—would likewise criss-cross the perceived or actual divide between Russia and 'the West'. Moreover, despite his insistence on the disagreeable characteristics of the British, French and German societies he encountered, this did not prevent him from enthusing over their great writers.

Indeed, Dostoevsky was enamoured of the idea of Shakespeare's universality; in his *Diary of a Writer* he celebrated "the *world understanding* and unquestionable profundity with which Shakespeare created universal human types" (in Levin, "Dostoevsky and Shakespeare" 57). Nevertheless, we cannot allow this view to guide our understanding of the relationship between the Underground Man and Hamlet. If we do, we run the risk of overdetermined readings that ignore important differences. This does a disservice to *Hamlet*—whose author, Levin notes, "emerges as a sort of abstraction" from Dostoevsky's universalist polemics (53)—by making the dialogic (quite literally) monologic. The Shakespearean template, moreover, delimits what can be made of *Notes from the Underground* by English readers.

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[5] An alternative French precursor was casually proposed by Northrop Frye, who felt that the "dreary paranoid whine" of Rousseau's *Confessions* (1782) is "certainly an ancestor" of Dostoevsky's *Notes* (in Denham 244).

Translators concur that Dostoevsky's stylistic experimentation in the *Notes*, particularly his use of colloquial language, can make translation "extraordinarily difficult" (Zinovieff and Hughes xi). As a result, translators "tend towards paraphrase rather than literal translation" and the various translations "differ from one another more widely than translations usually do" (xiii). My observations in this article, therefore, have not been made with the intention of privileging one approach to translating Dostoevsky over another. Instead, my analysis of Magarshack's 'Shakespearean' translation of *Notes from the Underground* has, I hope, provided an example of how readers and critics may exercise caution when it comes to the often invisible—and potentially reductive—impact of Shakespeare's universality.

Dostoevsky made universalist claims about other writers, of course, most famously in his paean to Pushkin delivered in 1880—the year before he died, and at the culmination of that period during which he wore "the mantle of the prophet" (Frank *passim*). The friction between universalist and nationalist discourses is evident in Dostoevsky's address about Pushkin, which is ultimately about what he perceives as the Russian national character. Paradoxically, for Dostoevsky, it is specifically in Russia that the capacity for universal "brotherhood" may best be fostered: "Our people do bear in their souls this aptitude for responding to the entire world and for universal reconciliation ... the Russian heart is most plainly destined, among all the peoples, for universally human and brotherly unity" (Dostoevsky/Lantz 1273 and 1295). After his death Dostoevsky, too, would become canonised in universalist terms; in 'his' Russia, as in 'Shakespeare's' England, authorial universality has been used to stoke and justify nationalist excess. It is both the task and the prerogative of the translator to complicate this fusion of universalism and nationalism—translation makes possible universalist claims, but it is also a fundamentally transnational and cosmopolitan activity. For scholars of Shakespeare as well as of Dostoevsky, the transnational and translational dynamics I have sketched in this article remain keenly important.

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Appendix A / Table 1

The table below highlights five instances of Shakespearean ‘insertions’ in David Magarshack’s translation of *Notes from the Underground* and compares them to equivalent passages in Constance Garnett, along with the earlier version of C.J. Hogarth and the subsequent translations of Pevear/Volokhonsky and Natasha Randall. One might perform the same exercise with other translations (including those of Serge Shishkoff, Ignat Avsey, David McDuff, Hugh Aplin, Michael Katz, Robert Chandler or Kyril Zinovieff and Jenny Hughes).

	***Letters from the Underworld*, trans. C.J. Hogarth (1913)**[a)]	***Notes from Underground*, trans. Constance Garnett (1918)**[b)]	***Notes from the Underground*, trans. David Magarshack (1968)**[c)]	***Notes from Underground*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (1993)**[d)]	***Notes from Underground*, trans. Natasha Randall (2012)**[e)]
Part 1, Chapter 8	“For me, however, all such matters are bagatelles. Pardon my philosophising like this, gentlemen...” (33)	“Yes, but here I come to a stop! Gentlemen, you must excuse me for being over-philosophical...” (147)	“Quite right, but **there’s the rub!** I’m sorry, gentlemen, to have gone on philosophising like this...” (118 / ***Hamlet* 3.1.66**)	“Yes, sirs, but for me that’s just where the hitch comes! You will forgive me, gentlemen, for philosophizing away...” (38)	“Yes, sirs, now here I come to a dead end! Gentlemen, please excuse me that I have been over-philosophising...” (29)
Part 1, Chapter 8	“He will imperil his comfort, and purposely desiderate for himself deleterious rubbish, some improvident trash...” (36)	“He would even risk his cakes and would deliberately desire the most fatal rubbish...” (149)	“He would even risk his **cakes and ale** and deliberately set his heart on the most deadly trash...” (120 / ***Twelfth Night* 2.3.108**)	“He will even risk his gingerbread, and wish on purpose for the most pernicious nonsense...” (41)	“He will even risk his gingerbread and will purposely want the most pernicious rubbish...” (31)

Part 2, Chapter 1	“Yes, it is only in Russia that the most abandoned of rascals can be wholly, even splendidly, honorable men...” (54)	“Yes, it is only among us that the most incorrigible rogue can be absolutely and loftily honest at heart...” (160)	“Yes, gentlemen, it is only among us that the most **arrant knave** can be perfectly and even sublimely honest at heart...” (135 / ***Hamlet* 1.5.127 and 3.1.130**)	“Yes, sirs, only among us can the most inveterate scoundrel be perfectly and even loftily honest in his soul...” (52)	“Yes, sirs, it is only here that the most inveterate scoundrel can be completely and even exaltedly honest in his soul...” (43)
Part 2, Chapter 2	“...there was nothing in common between myself and the individual who, in chickenish perturbation of heart, had sewed a piece of German beaver on to the collar of his overcoat.” (64)	“...I had no resemblance to the gentleman who, in the perturbation of his chicken heart, put a collar of German beaver on his greatcoat.” (167)	“...I bore no resemblance to the gentleman who in his **pigeon-livered** confusion had sewed a piece of German beaver to the collar of his overcoat.” (143 / ***Hamlet* 2.2.538**)	“...I bore no resemblance to that gentleman who, in the panic of his chicken heart, sat sewing a German beaver to the collar of his overcoat.” (59)	“...I didn’t resemble that gentleman who, in the confusion of his chicken heart, had sewn a German beaver to the collar of his coat.” (52)
Part 2, Chapter 6	“I, on the other hand, am an unfortunate who plunge[s] into the mire simply out of despondency. Some men drink out of despondency...” (105)	“...perhaps I, too, am just as unlucky – how do you know – and wallow in the mud on purpose, out of misery? You know, men take to drink from grief...” (194)	“... I’m every bit as wretched as you are and wallow in filth on purpose – because **I, too, am sick at heart**. People take to drink because they are unhappy...” (177, ***Hamlet* 1.1.8 and *Macbeth* 5.3.20**)	“...how do you know, maybe I’m just as unfortunate as you are, and so I get into the muck on purpose, from misery. People do drink from grief...” (85)	“Maybe I am just as unhappy, too, how would you know? And I crawled into this filth on purpose, also out of melancholy. Indeed, people drink out of woe...” (77)

[a] *Letters from the Underworld* (Everyman Edition). London: J.M. Dent, 1929.
[b] *The Short Novels of Dostoevsky*. New York: Dial Press, 1945.
[c] *The Best Short Stories of Fyodor Dostoevsky* (Modern Library Edition). New York: Random House, 2001.
[d] *Notes from Underground* (Vintage ebook edition). London: Vintage, 2006.
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Leaving Readers and Writers in Peace: Translation of Religious Terms of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* into Arabic considering Venuti's Invisibility

Abstract: This paper is an endeavour to examine the translation of religious terms (praying and oath words) in Shakespeare's Coriolanus pertaining to two translations by Muhammad al-Sibāʿī (1881-1931) and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1920-1994) into Arabic. This paper seeks to ascertain whether the translators opt for leaving readers in peace and bringing source text (ST) writers' home or leaving writers in peace and sending target text (TT) readers abroad. The study is based on the theoretical framework of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) and the pivotal role the translated literature as facts of the target culture in the poly-system of world literature. The study reveals that each of these translations represents a specific strategy in translation. Visible translator is mostly adopted by Jabra Ibrahim Jabra and invisible translator is mostly adopted by Muhammad al-Sibāʿī.

Keywords: DTS, Religious Terms' Translation, Translated Literature, Translator's invisibility, Translator's visibility.

Introduction

Highly setting the role of translation to bridge the gap between peoples, cultures and languages is to celebrate their diversity to think independently together. By giving a priority to the source text of a literary work as the engine that generates boundless number of readings and interpretations with an aim to enrich world literature, this paper brings to light the worth of considerate, mindful and tactful understanding of translated literature among utterly disparate nations by trying to leave both writers and readers in peace.

The route of this research firstly discusses the Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) approach that attempts to categorize the translations as they have been done, instead of, to prescribe them as how they should be done (Holmes

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1954:176). Secondly, it underpins the tacit role of "translated literature as an integral system within any literary poly-system" (Even-Zohar 1990:193) paving its way of being "facts of target cultures" (Toury qtd. in Munday 2012:170). Then the researcher highlights the concept of equivalence in translating religious terms.

Finally, the researcher explores the strategies utilized by two eminent Arabic translators Muhammad al-Sibāʻī (1881-1931) and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1920-1994) when translating religious terms (praying and oath words) in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* into Arabic. It seeks to determine whether the translators have had an inclination toward leaving readers in peace and bringing source text (ST) writers' home or leaving writers in peace and sending target text (TT) readers abroad or mingled both. To this aim, the researcher attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the religious terms (praying and oath words) in Shakespeare's Coriolanus?

2. How are these terms translated into Arabic by Muhammad al-Sibāʻī and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra?

3. What is/are the strategy/strategies utilized by Muhammad al-Sibāʻī and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra in translating these terms?

4. Have the translators used any religious terms (praying and oath words) in their target texts that have no direct equivalents in the source text?

Descriptive translation studies (DTS)

Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) emerged in the late 1970s and 1980s (Munday 2012:21). This approach marked translation departure from the normative prescriptive approach that portrayed translation of being correct and incorrect. The main objectives of DTS introduced by Holmes (1954:176) in his seminal paper "The Name and the Nature of Translation Studies" are: "(1) to describe the phenomena of translating and translation(s) as they manifest themselves in the world of our experience, and (2) to establish general principles by means of which these phenomena can be explained and predicted because DTS 'maintains the closest contact with the empirical phenomena under study.'"

Holmes (1954:176-177) identifies three major types of research under the umbrella of DTS. Although they might be interdependent, still each one embraces a research type of its own. Firstly, process-oriented DTS research pursues to describe what is happening in the translator's mind during the process of translation; it is the mental process of the translator's making-decision. It might fall within the domain of future studies of translation psychology. Function-oriented DTS research aims to describe the context, not the texts. So, it might be concerned with the future research of translation sociology. Finally,

product-oriented research attempts to provide comparative-contrastive analysis of the original literary work and its translation(s). Descriptive surveys of this approach might be synchronic or diachronic. However, the present study falls within the domain of the product-oriented branch, for it is a comparative/ contrastive descriptive analysis of *Coriolanus* and its two translations.

The pivotal role of translated literature in the poly-system of literary genres is explored thoroughly by Even-Zohar. Even-Zohar (1990:192-7) argues that translated literature could be examined by two ways. On the one hand, the criteria of selecting the source texts to be translated and whether they are compatible with "the home co-systems of the target literature" (1990:193). On the other hand, the way the source texts assume specific norms, or behaviours that reflect the source texts culture. Accordingly, the resulting translated literature may undertake 'a repertoire of its own' that makes it occupy a system within "the home co-systems of the target literature" (ibid.). Furthermore, translated literature does not only assume a position in the target culture whether primary or secondary, but also is considered as "facts of the target culture" (Toury qtd. in Munday 2012:170). Toury perceives translated activities and their products as facts in a target culture. Thus, they do cause changes in that culture, and these changes are meant to fill an existing gap in that culture.

The relationship between culture and language is stressed and deeply investigated by many writers and researchers. Translation is a process that deals with languages and language is a mirror of culture, as a result, translation from one language to another is a cross-cultural communication interaction. Newmark (1988:94) defines culture as "… the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expressions." Moreover, Casagrande (1954:338) states it clearly that "in effect, one doesn't translate LANGUAGES, one translates CULTURES." Bassnett (2002:6) portrays translation as "a process of negotiation between texts and between cultures." Lefeveré (2003:6) refers to the concept that translating from one language to another does not mean that all characteristics of original language, particularly culture-bound features, are acceptable by target language receiver. Therefore, if the translator provides intolerable equivalent, his/her translation will not leave the required effect on the target text audience. This rebuttal is mounted when dealing with translation of religious terms.

The concept of equivalence in translation of religious terms in literary texts has gained the interest of many researchers. Hatim and Mason's (1990:8) definition of equivalence implies that there is no equal equivalent in the target text (TT) element of the source text (ST) element. Newmark (1988:48) emphasizes the issue of equivalent effect as "it has sometimes been said that the overriding purpose of any translation should be to achieve "equivalent effect", i.e. to produce the same effect (or one as close as possible) on the readership of the translation as was obtained in the readership of the original." Dealing with

equivalence as the "closest possible approximation of ST meaning" (Hatim and Mason 1990:8) or with an aim to leave the same effect on target text reader as that of the source text reader is highlighted when translating culture-bound expressions.

Religious Terms Translation

Larsen believes that the translation of religious cultural terms is usually a complicated process "both in analysis of the source vocabulary and in finding the best receptor language equivalents" (1984:180). "The reason is that these words are intangible and many of the practices are so automatic that the speakers of the language are not as conscious of the various aspects of meaning involved" (Larsen 1984:180). Considering religion as one of the main forces that dominate any culture, especially the Arab culture. Amin-Zaki goes beyond and state that

> [I]n the Arab world, Islamic culture predominates. While there have always been significant numbers of Christian and Jewish Arabs, Islamic culture—in the use of language, for instance—has exerted a tremendous influence even on non-Muslims in the Arab world. Accordingly, translators usually eschew those references which might give offence to a Muslim audience (1995:223).

The implications of cultural religious terms are hard to attain. However, some of these terms are of specialized meanings that suggest many connotations rather than the exact meaning of the terms themselves like الصلاة (prayer) or الصيام (fasting) because they have equivalents in Christianity, but they do not have the same implications or emotive meaning as in Islam. The problem is further complicated in translating words that do not originally occur in the target language like (زكاة – alms[1]) [[1]https://www.almaany.com/] or جهاد (a holy war or a war waged in support of religious cause[2]) [[2]https://www.almaany.com/]. These themes and concepts, from the point of view of some Muslims, are untranslatable because of their implications, emotive meaning and above all their absence in any other religion, i.e. language. For instance, translating زكاةas 'alms' underestimates its meaning because it is an obligatory tax paid by rich Muslims whose money reached a certain amount. Accordingly, the religious themes and concepts of this paper will only be restricted to the words of "God", "gods", "heaven", and "oath and praying words"—provided that they are accompanied by "God" or "gods"—in the source text and the two target texts under investigation.

In Summary, the notion of equivalence becomes problematic when the translator deals with culture-bound expressions, particularly religious terms. According to Venuti, the translator has two binary antonyms, s/he either keeps

the source language values prominent by being visible to the reader or domesticates them to make them part of the target language and thus being invisible to the reader.

Visibility vs Invisibility

Friedrich Schleiermacher, who is considered "the founder of modern hermeneutics" and could be viewed as the initiator of "translational hermeneutics" (Cercel et al. 2015:18), is the pioneer who differentiates between two types of translators, namely, those who translate commercial texts and those who translate scholarly and artistic texts, and the latter breathe new life into the language (Munday 2012:45-46). Schleiermacher presented his theory in his prominent essay "On the Different Methods of Translating" in 1813. According to him, the translator either "leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (Schleiermacher 1813: 49). His approach to translation prepared the ground for modern translation studies that "Nida's formal and dynamic equivalence, Newmark's semantic and communicative translation, … Venuti's resistant and transparent translations are just a few examples of [his] tradition" (Al-Ali and Le'ibi 2018: 7-8). Such a notion has introduced the visible translator (leaving ST writers in peace) versus invisible translator (leaving TT readers in peace).

Considering that Schleiermacher main concern is to bring the writer of the ST and the reader of the TT together, he assigns a privileged respect to the ST culture, i.e. the visible translator who "leave[s] the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader towards him" (1813:49). In this way, the TT reader will be brought to "an understanding and enjoyment" of the ST reader "as correct and complete as possible without inviting [TT reader] to leave the sphere of his mother tongue" (Venuti 2004: 100). In their analysis of the above essay, Al-Ali and Le'ibi explain that the translator who leaves the author in peace "should preserve the art of the original, [its] touch, smell and music through the target text" (2018:23).

Furthermore, the TT readers of visible translation will have the sense that they are reading a translated foreign text. The translator will be attached to the ST as much as the TL tolerates. As a result, target languages will be flourished and enriched through their direct contact with source languages, and it will enable "languages to revive their antiquities and classical works" (Al-Ali and Le'ibi 2018: 9). Venuti introduces the visible translator as the one who preserves the ST and sends the reader abroad since "translation enlists the foreign text in… the revision of literary canons in the target-language culture" (2004:19). In other words, if the target language reader observes the task of the translator then it is a foreign text or a translated text.

On the other hand, if the translator is invisible, then the ST author is brought home (TL home). The translated text will appear as if it is an original text and thus it will have the same effect on its new readers. Although Schleiermacher (1813:44-45) might adopt this method in translating commercial texts, he is not in favour of applying it on literary texts because such a practice will not bring new life into the target language (Munday 2012: 45-46) which is one of the main functions of translating literary texts.

For Schleiermacher (1813:49), the translator who brings the author home (TL home), will not only make this author a TL native speaker, but will also portray him/her as if he/she has been born in the TL culture. This translator tries to show how the literary work of ST writer is prominent to its source language and culture by allowing the TT reader to reach that author as if the ST has been developed originally for the target reader (Al-Ali and Le'ibi (2018:23). However, it is not advisable for a translator to be both visible and invisible within the same text because "any attempt to combine them being certain to produce a highly unreliable result …. that the writer and the reader might miss each other completely" (Schleiermacher 1813:49). Although it is difficult to achieve, Schleiermacher explains that the translator might be invisible only if the two texts, i.e. ST and TT have been developed simultaneously (Al-Ali and Le'ibi 2018: 23).

Venuti has supported Schleiermacher's vision by trying to "make the translator visible to resist and change the conditions under which translation is theorized and practiced… in English speaking countries" (Venuti 2004: 17). According to Venuti (2004:1), the invisibility of a translated text is accepted when it is fluent and transparent due to the lack of "any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities." Such translator's invisibility is multifaceted. While focusing on translation from other languages into English, the selection of the material to be translated ought to be in harmony with Anglo-American cultures.

Literature Review

Several studies have been conducted to trace the difficulty of translating religious terms from Arabic into English / English into Arabic due to their sensitivity in the Arab World. The analysis of the translation of English literary works (novels, poems and plays) into Arabic has received much attention by scholars as well. More specifically, in addition to the literary criticism of the translations of Shakespeare's sonnets and plays, these works have been investigated thoroughly considering different facets; socially, politically, psychologically, linguistically ...etc. The current review, however, is restricted to some representative studies that attempt to portray Shakespeare for the Arab readers through thoughtful focus on translation studies.

The most relevant study is conducted by Amel Amin-Zaki (1995) in her article "Religious and Cultural Considerations in Translating Shakespeare into Arabic." She investigates the difficulties encountered by Arab translators in translating Shakespeare's plays. Since Shakespeare assumes that "his audience are familiar with classical and renaissance cultures and literatures" (1995:223), the translator's unfamiliarity with such background will bring about misinterpretations. Among many Arab translators of Shakespeare's, Amin-Zaki (1995:225) considered "serious translators" of late nineteenth and early twentieth century like Muhammad al-Sibāʻī, Muhammad al-Qadi, Ali Atieh, Khalil Mutran and Sami al-Juraydini. On the other hand, she has studied the translations of Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, Abd al-Qader al-Qitt and Abd al-Wahid Lu'luah as "well acquainted with the multifarious aspects of their self-appointed task ….[and are] aware of Elizabethan culture and have a sound grasp of Shakespearean language" (1995:225). In her study, she focuses on two aspects: translation of oaths and translation of ribaldry material in public. The second aspect of her study is irrelevant for the current study, and therefore only the findings of the first aspect will be discussed. The findings of her research reveal that some successful translators identify the worthiness to "choose an image which conveys to the Muslim audience the meaning of Shakespeare's original, rather than rendering literally Shakespeare's imagery" (1995:23). These translators assume that the literal rendering of these "blasphemous oaths might 'offend' the audience and 'drive them away'."

Consequently, these translators amend the oath to conform with Islamic beliefs or totally skip it to "avoid embarrassment." For instance, the oath by Caius Marcus talking to Menenius in *Coriolanus* 'Sdeath' (4:1:239) which means "By God's death" is "considered blasphemous" by Muslims because Islam rejects the divinity of the Christ. Whereas "this expression refers to the Christian belief that Christ … died on the cross" (1995:227). If the translator uses the literal translation, the Muslim audience will regard it as "an absurd utterance." Al-Sibāʻī has translated it as أقسم بالموت الزؤام (I swear by sudden death). Alternatively, the other type of translators tries to manage to remain close to the original without Islamizing the oath. The above example is translated by Jabra Ibrahim Jabra as ياللعنة (O, damnation). It is "a completely different, though less Islamic, interpretation" (1995:227) for these translators—Jabra Ibrahim Jabra is one of them—are well-familiarized with the Elizabethan culture (1995:225).

Tageldin (2011) portrays al-Sibāʻī's approach from different facet. She discusses the translation movement during al-nahda (renaissance) in Egypt in her article "Surrogate Seed, World Tree: Mubārak, al-Sibāʻī, and the Translations of "Islam" in British Egypt, 1882–1912." She states that Evelyn Baring, first Earl of Cromer, considered that "English literature would do, half by accident, what English colonial policy would not." Tageldin alludes that:

> Empire awaits the agency of the native translator to disseminate its power in native soil; nation hopes that that very soil, fertilized by the native translator, might regenerate the colonized as the colonizer's "likeness" and—through that slow translation—transform the colonial subordinate into the national sovereign (2011).

Tageldin detects several occurrences in al-Sibāʻī's translation of Thomas Carlyle's On Heroes into Arabic by using "Quran's tones" purposefully. He, for instance, translated the description of Prophet Muhammad as the "'life guidance' into 'al-sirāja al-munīra,' the 'light giving lamp,' echoing the Qur'ānic description of the Prophet as 'sirājan munīran' (Qur'ān 33:46)." Having al-Sibāʻī translating the English religious terms into Islamic Arabic terms will create a sort of harmony between the colonizer and the colonized. She argues that al-Sibāʻī aim is to imagine "a shared Islam" between the colonizer and the colonized. Thus al-Sibāʻī rejection of British authority is reversed through his "recognition of a religious impulse in English literature."

In summary, both Amin-Zaki (1990) and Tageldin (2011) provide a subtle innocent justification for al-Sibāʻī's intentions to Islamise the English source text. Amin-Zaki, ostensibly, is in line with the approach that the translator's aim is not to offend the target text reader and to enable him/her to evaluate the aesthetic values of the source text. Tageldin, on the other hand, stresses that al-Sibāʻī's literary achievement "was to make British thought so 'natural' to Egyptian soil that it seemed native to it," by a means of Carlyle's voice to "[revalidate] the possibility of at once embracing European modernity and recovering Islam."

Amin-Zaki (1995:239) discusses also the concept of the time in translation. While al-Siba'i was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, other translators like Jabra was in the mid and late twentieth century. According to her, "[the] success of Jabra's translations is an indication that audiences have become more sophisticated with time, and that they may be far more willing to tolerate" (Amin-Zaki 1995:239). According to Hanna (2007), this tolerance has two justifications in Egypt. The first one is the secularization of education by Mohammad Ali and his successors. The other one is the violence in Levant that led the Christians who were educated in French missionary schools to immigrate to Egypt and make it easy to break away from classical norms and aesthetics of Arabic-Islamic tradition. These factors set the ground for the emergence of "young Egyptians … who needed new forms of culture that would respond to their newly formed tastes" (29-30).

Hanna (2007:29) examines Shakespeare translations into Arabic during the second half of nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Egypt. According to him, there were three types of sociocultural groups of audience: namely the old intellectual elite like al-Azhar students, the new intellectual elite like

Christian Levantines in Egypt and the masses. The last group includes most Egyptians who are characterized of being peasants, small traders, urban workers, unemployed individuals with little or no education. The early stage of these translations was for theatregoers; the majority are the masses. Theatre for them is for entertainment and pastimes. The commercial success of drama culture at that time influenced the translators' choices to make compromises that are compatible with the views of the audience. Consequently, drama translations were dependent on the economic pressure. Hanna speculates that the emergence of the new elite of the Levantines shifted the commercially oriented translations to loyalty-oriented translations. As they do not face financial challenges, the new elite of intellectuals stick more to the source text, and Shakespeare translation—according to them—is 'for study and mediation through reading' (Hanna 2007:33). They have appealed to the support of highly respected intellectual figures to 'establish the legitimacy of the translation, based on criteria other than commercial success' (Hanna 2007:36). So, they have focused on 'a purported fidelity of the original text' (ibid.) and have made the minimum number of compromises.

Ghazoul (1998) studies the translation of Shakespeare's *Othello* into Arabic by different Arab translators and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra is one of them. Jabra follows certain measures such as providing an introduction to *Othello*, a textual history of the play and a preface to A. C. Bradley's famous study of *Othello* for his main concern is to "[contextualize] the work in its own historical and cultural situation, rather than appropriating it" (1998:5). Moreover, Jabra struggles to resettle the translated text in the target culture while preserving the identity of the source culture, i.e. "the other" since Shakespeare's translations for him are "sacred texts" and there is no room for tolerance (1998:5). Jabra, apparently, has a well-defined style in translating Shakespeare. Amin-Zaki, Hanna, and Ghazoul and many other scholars have emphasized his fidelity to the source text without jeopardizing the target text canons and culture.

Mattar's (2014) study is neither related to Shakespeare, nor to the Arabic language. He explores the foreignizing (visible translator) of *The Black Book* (a Turkish novel) for the world literature. Relying upon Bourdieu's consideration of translation as "socially situated phenomenon," (al-Mousawi, 2016), and upon "re-theorizing language as a repository of cultural values and meaning," Mattar endeavours to probe domestication/foreignization (translator's invisibility and visibility) as linguistic categories and to "repurpose them for a sociology of translation of wider value of literary studies" (44). His argument is based on the idea that the context of the translation content whether production, reception, or circulation, which are "assessed by literary sociology, pre-frame the appreciation of the foreign text and pre-determine the political effects of the language" (44). He attempts to preserve the values of the source

text and culture (Turkish culture in this case) in world literature (English language) since domesticating (translator's invisibility) the ST in accordance with "Western aesthetic criteria" obscures its contribution to the national history and culture (Turkish culture in this case), i.e. it conceals its foreignness (translator's visibility).

Translation of Religious Terms in *Coriolanus* into Arabic

As every reading of a text is a unique, unrepeatable act and thus a text is bound to evoke divergent responses in different receivers (Hatem and Mason 1990), both translators have approached the source text in different ways. Muhammad al-Sibāʻī (1881-1931) is one of the most famous reputable Arabic Egyptian translators and a teacher who was born to a Muslim family, renowned for religious knowledge . Although al-Sibāʻī' rejected the British authority in Egypt, his approach to translate the English literature is characterized by a liberal secular thought in a way that "his work ultimately reoriented literary translation in Egypt toward English" (Tageldin, 2011). Alternatively, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1920-1994), a Palestinian writer, painter, and translator, studied in Jerusalem and later at Cambridge and Harvard universities. Along with the translation of some Shakespearean works, he translated the works of other great Western authors like William Faulkner, Samuel Beckett and Oscar Wilde. The concept that his translation of *Coriolanus* mirrors the Elizabethan culture (Amin-Zaki 1995:225) signifies his visibility as a translator.

The researcher has examined the three texts for religious terms (praying and oath words) in the three texts. Then these terms have been categorized into two main groups. The first group includes the word god, with all its variations, and the names of the Roman gods that appeared in the source text (*Coriolanus*) along with their equivalents in the two target texts by Muhammad Al-Sibāʻī (1911) and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1974). The terms are god, gods, godded, goddess, Jove, Jupiter, Mars, Juno, Pluto, Neptune, and Diana's Temple. The word "heavens" has a special treatment. The second group includes all the religious terms that have appeared in the target texts by Muhammad Al-Sibāʻī (1911) and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1974) and do not have any religious equivalents in the source text. Yet there are terms that may not be regarded as praying or oath words in the target texts, but still they have religious connotations. More specifically are the terms that have 'Quranic tone'. Although they are very few, they still help in shaping the translator's strategy in processing translation. Terms that the first group have includes occurred 75 times and translated as follows (see Tables 1, 2, 3).

Table 1. The Word Gods in the ST and its Translations in the TTs

No.	*Coriolanus*	Al-Sibā‘ī ‘s Translation	Jabra’s Translation	No.	*Coriolanus*	Al-Sibā‘ī’s Translation	Jabra’s Translation
1	1:1:23	الله	الالهة	24	3:3:95	الآلهة	الآلهة
2	1:1:75	الله	الالهة	25	3:3:173	الله	الآلهة
3	1:1:199	----	الالهة	26	4:1:45	الله	للآلهة
4	1:1:225	----- لم تخلق	الالهة	27	4:1:66	----	الآلهة
5	1:1:292	الالهة	الالهة	28	4:2:16	الله	الآلهة
6	1:2:44	الله	الالهة	29	4:2:61	الآلهة	الآلهة
7	1:6:7	الهة الرومان	الهة روما	30	4:5:149	-----	الالهة
8	1:6:29	آلهة السموات	يا للآلهة	31	4:6:23	الله	الآلهة
9	1:8:7	الالهة	يا للآلهة	32	4:6:32	الله	الآلهة
10	1:9:9	الله	الآلهة	33	4:6:45	الله	الآلهة
11	1:9:87	الآلهة	الآلهة	34	4:6:193	الله	الآلهة
12	2:1:125	لله	آلآلهة	35	5:2:74	الآلهة	الآلهة
13	2:1:146	الله	آلآلهة	36	5:2:82	الله	الآلهة
14	2:1:177	آلآلهة	آلآلهة	37	5:3:31	الآلهة	الآلهة
15	2:1:190	الله	آلآلهة	38	5:3:55	الله	آلهة
16	2:3:59	----	يا للآلهة	39	5:3:123	لله	للآلهة
17	2:3:121	الله	الآلهة	40	5:3:172	----	الآلهة
18	2:3:146	الله	الآلهة	41	5:3:188	الله	الآلهة
19	2:3:173	الله	الآلهة	42	5:3:207	الآلهة	الآلهة
20	3:1:295	الله	الآلهة	43	5:4:32	الله	الآلهة
21	3:1:373	الله	الآلهة	44	5:4:33	الآلهة	الآلهة
22	3:2:49	للآلهة	لآلهة	45	5:4:63	الله	الآلهة
23	3:3:44	الله	الآلهة	46	5:5:2	الله	الآلهة

The word “gods” is literally translated into Arabic as (الآلهة – gods) – which is mainly adopted by Jabra (1974) as literal visible translation. al-Sibā‘ī however, used three strategies. The literal visible translation is used for 13 times only out of 46 times. In contrast, the invisible, non-offensive term of الله (literal translation of God)(Amin-Zaki 1995) is used 27 times which is almost twice the times. The words الآلهة(gods) and الله (God) are the two extremes: polytheism vs monotheism. The third strategy is avoidance or deletion, and it is used to the minimum, 6 times only. The tendency toward Islamization of polytheism terms as perceived by Amin-Zaki is quite evident in al-Sibā‘ī’s translation. Amin-Zaki (1995) justifies the Arab translator’s use of Islamic terms in translating Shakespearean plays into Arabic as not to offend the audience by “a character’s statements that its appreciation of the larger work might be compromised [and the literal translation of blasphemous oaths] would be highly offensive to any audience in the Islamic world.” (1995:224). This inclination has also been observed by Tageldin (2011) who regards it as an alignment between the “secular” English and Islam because al-Sibā‘ī’s aim is to reconcile Islam with European modernity.

Table 2. The Word God and its Variations in the ST and their Translations in the TTs

The Term	*Coriolanus*	Al-Sibā‘ī’s Translation	Jabra’s Translation	The Term	*Coriolanus*	Al-Sibā‘ī’s Translation	Jabra’s Translation
God	2:1:149	الله	الله	god	5:3:81	الاله	رب الجنود
god	2:1:239	إله	الاله	god	5:4:24	الالهة	الاله
God	2:3:148	الله	الله	god	5:6:120	الاله	الاله
god	3:1:107	كأنك آله	كأنك إله	godded	5:3:13	يعبدني	يؤلهني
god	4:6:115	آلهم المعبود	انه الههم	goddess	1:5:23	-----	ربة الدهر

This discrepancy in translating “gods” between the two translators has almost disappeared in translating the word “god”. The contextual occurrences of “god” in the source text reveals the one god among others and not the single god. In other words, the literal translation of “one god” or “a god” is إله or رب; the plural form of these two semantically indefinite noun phrases is “gods” which is literally translated as الآلهة. Nonetheless, the single God in Islam is the only God, and it does not have a plural form, thus, the Arabic term of God is الله which is semantically definite noun phrase. The two translators are almost congruent in their translations of the word “god”. They fluctuate between the one god/ a god as إله or رب and the single God as الله . Both translate “God” as الله when it is capitalized in English. Moreover, in the ST (5:3:81-2), Coriolanus is addressing young Martius: “The god of soldiers, With the consent of supreme Jove, inform Thy thoughts ....”, while al-Sibā‘ī’ has combined the two references to the religious terms—god and Jupiter—into one equivalent as حقق الاله اقوالك, Jabra—having total loyalty to the source text—is consistent in his visibility as a translator and fidelity to the source text in literally translating these two religious terms as ربٌ الجنود and العلي جوبيتر!.

Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1974) has not opted for the compromise of the other reverence by being a visible translator. Jabra’s loyalty to the original text deepens his visibility as a translator who is willing to leave the writer in peace and bring the reader towards him/her. al- Sibā‘ī, on the other hand, has chosen to leave the reader in peace and bring the writer toward him by utilizing different strategies. For example, he has provided a functional and dynamic equivalent to Martius’ praying words: “Pluto and hell!” (1:4:48) as اين انت يا مالك واين جهنم لتبتلعهم (Amin-Zaki, 1995:229-30), an Islamic equivalent to Valeria’s praying and sympathy words: “His bloody brow? O Jupiter, no blood!” (1:3:41) as اللهم رحمتك الدم يسيل من جبينه and sometimes literal equivalent to Martius praying words: “Now, Mars, I prithee,” (1:4:14) as واني ابتهل اليك ايها المريخ اله الحرب. Whereas Jabra has opted for the strategy of transliteration in translating almost all the names of the Roman gods as: (يا لبلوتو والجحيم!) (جبينه الدامي! آه جوبيتر، لا دم!) (والان، يا مارس، رجائي). This strategy is accompanied by a footnote (a strategy never used by al- Sibā‘ī) such as مثل جونو* and the footnote explains the connotation of the use of this god زوجة رب الآلهة جوبيتر وهي شديدة الحقد في غضبها* (see Table 3).

Table 3. The Roman Gods in the ST and their Translations in the TTs

The term	*Coriolanus*	al-Sibāʻī's translation	Jabra's translation	The term	Coriolanus	al-Sibāʻī's translation	Jabra's translation
Jove	2:1:298	الاله الاعظم	جوبيتر	Mars	4:5:131	اله الحروب	و حق مارس
Jove	3:1:114	-----	و حق جوبيتر	Mars	4:5:212	ابن المريخ (اله الحرب)	ابن الاله مارس
Jove	3:1:139	الالهة	قسما بجوبيتر	Mars	5:6:119	اله الحرب	مارس
Jove	3:1:328	-----	جوبيتر	Pluto	1:4:48	اين انت يا مالك واين جهنم لتبتلعهم	يا لبلوتو والجحيم
Jove	3:1:376	-----	جوبيتر	Juno	2:1:104	بحق الالهة	حبا بجونو
Jove	5:3:82	-----	جوبيتر	Juno	4:2:72	-----	مثل جونو*
Jupiter	1:3:41	اللهم رحمتك	آه جوبيتر		*زوجة رب الآلهة جوبيتر وهي شديدة الحقد في غضبها		
Jupiter	1:9:101	و الله	و حق جوبيتر	Queen of Heaven	5:3:53	الالهة	بملكة السماء* الغيرى الغضوب
Jupiter	2:1:108	لك اللهم	يا جوبيتر		* أي جونو، زوجة زيوس، حامية الزواج، والمنتقمة من أهل الخيانة الزوجية.		
Jupiter	4:5:115	الاله	جوبيتر				
Dian's	5:3:77	هيكل الالهة	هيكل ديانا	modest moon	I:1:293	الهة العفة	حشمة القمر * *ربة القمر- اله العفاف
Neptune	3:1:327	الالهة	نبتون				
Mars	1:4:14	ايها المريخ اله الحرب	يا مارس				

The second group includes all the praying and oath words that have appeared in the target texts by Muhammad Al-Sibāʻī (1911) and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1974) and do not have any direct religious equivalents in the source text Table 4 summarizes their presence in the five acts.

Table 4. Religious terms Frequency in the TTs that have no Equivalents the ST

Coriolanus	al-Sibāʻī's Translation	Jabra's Translation
Act 1	38	5
Act 2	17	----
Act 3	8	---
Act 4	14	1
Act 5	12	---
Total	89	6

The numbers per each translator are the occurrences of these religious terms: ربك، الالهة، اللهم ، اللهin their translations. Whilst Jabra has used them to the minimum, al-Sibāʻī has used them to the most especially, the word الله (single God) which has appeared almost 71 times out of 89 compared to 2 times out

of 6 in Jabra's translation. al-Sibā'ī, for instance, would prefer to translate: "I leave your honours (1:2:40) as استودعكم الله ايها السادة الاشراف while Jabra would say : اني اتركم ايها السادة. Furthermore, al-Sibā'ī would translate " Farewell" (1:2:46 – 47-48) as في رعاية الله وعنايته , في ذمة الله الكريم وحفاوته and نستودعك الله. Whereas Jabra would say مع السلامة, مع السلامة, وداعا مع السلامة. Repetition of الله only—though very high—is not enough unless it is accompanied by references from The Holy Quran, Sunna (statements by Prophet Muhammad—may peace be upon him) and religious books. These are fully demonstrated in Muhammad al-Sibā'ī's translation (1911). He does not spare any occasion where he could reverberate "the Qur'ānic tones" (Tageldin, 2001). The following are self-explanatory examples:

1.a. Coriolanus: Go, masters, get you home. Be not dismayed (4:6:189)
b. Jabra: هلموا يا سادة، الى بيوتكم. لا تفزعوا
c. al- Sibā'ī : اذهبوا يا سادة الى بيوتكم. و لا تقنطو من رحمة الله
d. Surat Al-Zumar (The Troops): 39:53
قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ لا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ (53)

Translation of meanings: Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

2.a. Coriolanus: I say to you, as I was said to, away! (5:2:113)
b. Jabra: ولكما أقول، ما قيل لي: انصرفا!
c. al- Sibā'ī : فاذهبا عليكما لعنة الله الى يوم الدين
d. Surat Al-Hijr (The Rocky Tract): :15:34-35
قَالَ فَاخْرُجْ مِنْهَا فَإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ(34) وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ(35)

Translation of meanings: [Allah] said, "Then get out of it, for indeed, you are expelled. (34) And indeed, upon you is the curse until the Day of Recompense. (35)

3.a. Coriolanus: And affecting one sole throne, without assistance. (4:6:41)
b. Jabra: عاقد االعزم على العرش بمفرده
c. al- Sibā'ī : وطامح الى الاستبداد بالسلطة والاستئثار بالملك يحكمه وحده لا شريك له
d. Surat Al-An'am (The Cattle): 6:163
لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۖ وَبِذَٰلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ(163)

Translation of meanings: No partner has He. And this I have been commanded, and I am the first (among you) of the Muslims.

4.a. Coriolanus: The rabble should have first unroofed the city. (1:1:240)
 b. Jabra: ان يطيحو بأعالي المدينة
 c. al- Sibāʻī : تركوها خاوية على عروشها
 d. Surat Al-Baqarah (The Cow) 2:259
أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا...(259)

Translation of meanings: Or [consider such an example] as the one who passed by a township which had fallen into ruin.

5.a. Coriolanus: For the dearth, Gods, not the patricians, make it, (1:1:74)
 b. Jabra: فالقحط من صنع الالهة لا الاشراف
 c. al- Sibāʻī : علمتم ان الجذب محنة الله يصيب بها من يشاء وما هو من فعل الحكام
 d. Surat Al-Ra'd (The Thunder) 13:13
وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ خِيفَتِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ الصَّوَاعِقَ فَيُصِيبُ بِهَا مَن يَشَاءُ...(13)

Translation of meanings: And the thunder exalts [Allah] with praise of Him - and the angels [as well] from fear of Him - and He sends thunderbolts and strikes there with whom He wills…. .

6.a. Coriolanus: Th' honored gods keep Rome in safety (3:3:43)
 b. Jabra: ألا حفظت الالهة الكريمة لروما أمنها
 c. al- Sibāʻī : صان الله دولة روما و أمنها من خوف
 d. Surat Quraysh (Quraysh) 106: 4
الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُم مِّن جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُم مِّنْ خَوْفٍ (4)

Translation of meanings: Who has fed them, [saving them] from hunger and made them safe, [saving them] from fear

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'Th' honored gods keep Rome in safety' is translated as ألا حفظت الالهة الكريمة لروما أمنها without making any allusion to any of Qur'ānic terms by preserving the polytheistic content 'gods' as Arabic plural الالهة .The expression in Arabic و أمنها من خوف translated literally as 'keep it safe from fear' does not exist in the English text (ST) but it has been rather used by al-Sibāʻī to draw

the TT audience attention to the verses of the Holy Quran. These Qura'nic expressions and many others like those highlighted by Amin-Zaki (1995:229,234) undoubtedly reveal the invisible translator that Muhammad al-Sibāʻī has in mind, while translating religious terms in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. Whether his aim is not to offend the audience as stated by Amin-Zaki, or to simply allow the reader to lavishly appreciate the aesthetic values and rhetoric of the source text to widen the room of interaction between the new text and the reader, Muhammad al-Sibāʻī left the readers in peace and brought the writer towards them. Such distortion of facts or manipulation of readers' thoughts may not serve the aim of translated literature to bridge the gap between cultures by mutual understanding and acceptance of the other. The invisibility of the translator in dealing with religious concepts is a sort of betrayal to one's doctrines and beliefs.

The invisibility of the translator in translating religious terms is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, religious terms echo the Pre-Islamic Period of polytheism, when people worship more than one god. By using monotheistic Islamic jargon to translate them, the translator will alienate the text, for the text will appear as if it has been written by a Muslim. Target text readers ought to consider this as an invasion to their beliefs and culture. On the other hand, the fluency of the text will reflect its transparency with an aim to make the readers identify with the text as if it has been written for them. As a result, they will be able to appreciate the aesthetic features of the masterpiece while emphasizing the sympathy and communality of mankind promoting Nida's dynamic equivalence that links the translator to the missionary (Venuti 2004:22) but this time, from different perspective leading to a total distortion of the religion and culture of the source text (English text).

Jabra, in contrast, "systematically sticks to the original key metaphors" (Ghazoul, 1998). Considering the above-mentioned examples, in Coriolanus' speech "away!" (5:2:113) is simply translated as "انصرفا" (literally "go away") and "without assistance" (4:6:41) as "بمفرده" (literally on his own). This is because his "translations were mostly attempting to open a window to the West and to modernism in Arabic letters and Arab arts," (Ballouta, 2001:222). The course of action of Jabra's visibility has positive and negative effects. By translating religious terms into polytheistic expressions, the translator will impose a sort of respect on some of the target culture readers who accept the other and accept the differences between religions and cultures. Hence, such a translation will provide them with an opportunity to interact and again sympathize with the other. By doing so, and as Schleiermacher states 'the translator leaves the author in peace and moves the reader towards him…. by sending [the reader] abroad'. Distinctly, Venuti's visibility strategy is formulated with an aim to scrutinize the translation of other languages and cultures texts

into English while considering some pro-examples of translation into German. By adopting the visibility of the translator, Venuti has defied the hegemony of Anglo-American canons on other languages and cultures. However, he did not pay much attention to the concept of visible translation as a rule to be applied to all texts regardless of the source and the target texts or cultures; although, his approach is ought to be drawn to all languages including Arabic.

Conclusion

Translation of religious terms in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* into Arabic has been examined pertaining to two translations. First of which has adopted invisible strategy by Muhammad al-Sibāʻī (1911) in the early twentieth century in a way that Islamized Shakespearean's oaths while the other by Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1974) has embraced the translator's visibility towards the end of the twentieth century.

Venuti considers the choice of the text to be translated as of a vital role in both strategies: invisibility and visibility. The writer and the translator are 'simpatico' if the translator is invisible. There should be an identity between them for fluent and transparent translation. As a result, translated texts are believed to enrich the target culture (English) by other cultures through the translation of elite literature; thus, it leads to global domination of Anglo-American culture. Conversely, the visibility of the translator is achieved if the writer and the translator are 'dissident'. The translator chooses a text that challenges the contemporary canons of foreign literature in the target language. Finally, the acceptability of the text transcends the languages and cultures to reach market. Publishers have their say in the choice of the source text, the strategy of translation and probably both the fluency and transparency of the target text.

Accordingly, if the translation role is to bridge the gap between cultures and not to widen it, both readers and writers ought to be left in peace. It is apparent that being visible to the text, the translator leaves writers in peace. Similarly, peacefulness of the readers' minds could also be obtained by the translator's visibility if it is perceived as an act of the free will that enables the reader to read, appreciate and evaluate the translated text without assuming any kind 'hegemony' from the culture of the source text. Therefore, the reader has the choice either to read "a visible translation" or "an invisible translation".

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Designing Goddesses: Shakespeare's *Othello* and Marian Nowiński's *Otello Desdemona*

Abstract: The article discusses the intertextual relationship between the poster by Marian Nowiński, Otello Desdemona, and the content of Shakespeare's play, while presenting the most important elements of the plot that are decisive for the portrayal of Desdemona. It also discusses the tradition of female nudes in Western art. This allows to usher out these characteristic features of elements of Desdemona that fashion her into Venus Caelestis and Venus Naturalis. The article focuses on the ambivalence of Nowiński's poster and discusses the significance of the paintings by Titian, Giorgione, and Fuseli in designing the figure of Desdemona as a goddess.

Keywords: Desdemona, William Shakespeare, Othello, Marian Nowiński, Shakespeare in visual arts.

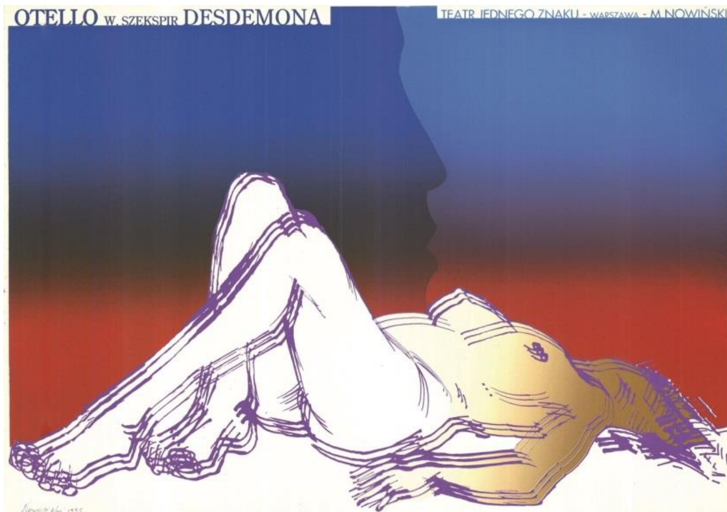

Figure 1. *Otello Desdemona* (1995), Marian Nowiński
Courtesy of Dydo Galeria Plakatu, http://www.dydopostergallery.com/

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> You men of Cyprus, let her have your knees!
> Hail to thee, lady, and the grace of heaven,
> Before, behind thee, and on every hand
> Enwheel thee round! (Othello, 2.1.84-87)[1]

Like the figure of Venus in Botticelli's masterpieces, the white, beautiful and sexually attractive figure of Desdemona emerges on the Cyprus coast in the second act of Shakespeare's *Othello*. The audience soon learns that this young woman is to be devoutly admired by her newlywed husband as well as by the officers in his command. Shakespeare designs Desdemona as if she were an embodiment of both the innocent love, *Venus Caelestis* and passionate love, *Venus Naturalis*: how her character is described in the first Act makes one share Othello's initial conviction that his wife is truly of divine nature. This conviction seems to be echoed in Marian Nowiński's 1995 poster *Otello Desdemona* [Figure 1] which features a female figure in a pose traditionally associated with the sleeping Venus. This paper offers an interpretation of the poster that links the iconographic analysis of Nowiński's work with the presentation of Desdemona as a goddess in Shakespeare's play.

An iconographic interpretation of a literary work generates significant consequences for its critical reception. Consequently, a literally-inspired work of art may be read as an example of artistic criticism regarding the text it refers to, independently of the designer's intentions. If we think of a poster as a cultural text that undertakes the task of interpretation, it will mean that we can treat it intertextually: an argument that might be traced to Roland Barthes's *The Death of the Author* (1977) and extended to the functioning of a work of art in its relationship with the viewer:

> a text [an image] consists of multiple writings [traces], issuing from several cultures and entering into dialogue with each other, into parody, into contestation; but there is one place where this multiplicity is collected, united, and this place is not the author [designer], as we have hitherto said it was, but the reader [viewer]: the reader [viewer] is the very space in which are inscribed, without any being lost, all the citations a writing [an image] consists of; the unity of a text [an image] is not in its origin, it is in its destination. (148)

Thus, a visual work of art offers an interpretation that is to be decoded by the poster viewers. A close study of an image reveals how it enters into a dialogue with a text, reacts to it and, finally, provokes or enhances various critical interpretations.

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[1] All quotes from William Shakespeare. *Othello*. Ed. E. A. J. Honigmann. London: Arden Shakespeare, 1996.

When discussing a poster as a text to be decoded, it is important to remember that it has a specific informative function to fulfil. The interpretation of a poster will be different when the viewers lose their chance to encounter the image in the street, once the poster is moved to art galleries or private collections. Such a change of the immediate spatial context means that the poster loses its advertising character, as there is no theatre performance to announce or to comment on any more.[2] A cultural artefact like a theatre poster constitutes a reciprocal/mutual relationship between the signifiers: visual and textual artworks. Marian Nowiński's *Otello Desdemona* was initially designed as Teatr Jednego Znaku (Theatre of a Single Sign) in Warsaw in 1995.[3] In usual circumstances, when the poster was removed from its original context, the intertextual web of references and allusions moved to the foreground: in the case of Nowiński's work it was the close connection between the image and the dramatic text that might have inspired it. Obviously, a literary work such as Shakespeare's drama is trapped in a web of historical, artistic, and cultural relationships. The poster only extends it further into the fields of the visual and the literary. As a result, these various interpretive resources help to construct and possibly reshape the critical interpretation of Shakespeare's drama.

Just like the paintings studied by Stuart Sillars in his *Painting Shakespeare. The Artist as Critic 1720-1820*, the poster becomes "an image that narrates the play's pivotal moment of action and mediates its larger movement of language and morality to offer a consistent and suggestive critical reading". (5) Thus, Nowiński's work constitutes a critical comment on *Othello* which potentially reshapes the readerly approach to Desdemona and her relationship with her husband.

The artistic convention of representing Venus asleep, employed in the poster to introduce the tragedy of Desdemona, generates a number of visual, cultural, historical and literary contexts. Through the added layer of iconographic references, the poster establishes an elaborate network of relationships impregnated with meanings.[4] Consequently, all allusions and visual quotations produce

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[2] This concerns especially theatrical performances which were neither recorded nor studied critically. The poster is said to be "a signal out in the street, informing of what is going to happen inside, in the theatre. It is a promise. In a way it is also an advertisement, but it is rather disinterested". (Kurpik 35) However, if we do not know what has really happened on the stage, the poster loses this particular feature only to acquire new ones.

[3] The idea of a poster taking place of a theater performance is especially significant in this case. Teatr Jednego Znaku (Theatre of a Single Sign) was Nowiński's invention where an entire performance was embraced by a single image.

[4] The article does not aim at establishing what visual inspirations might have governed Marian Nowiński's imagination, which is impossible to fathom on the basis of the visual analysis. However, I contend that when the poster is appreciated as an

a substantial input utilised to produce a visual comment or a critical interpretation of Othello's wife and her fate. To generate such connotations, however, the viewers should be acquainted with the visual and textual resources at least to a certain extent. The paintings discussed in this paper are described with reference to their cultural and historical contexts; the focus then moves to their iconographic analysis which establishes the existence of strong visual traditions replicated in other images depicting female figures. In this manner, the analysis of visual and literary references will allow for the emergence of additional attributes that might be associated with Shakespeare's characters, Desdemona and Othello as introduced through Nowiński's poster.

Marian Nowiński's *Otello Desdemona*

The composition of the poster refers to the Renaissance convention of sleeping Venuses observed by Cupid and that of resting beauties surprised by male predators. A trained eye acknowledges in Desdemona's positioning the sleeping Venus by Giorgione and the provocative goddess of Urbino by Titian. Yet, the composition of Nowiński's work echoes also the design of the eighteenth-century painter, Henry Fuseli. In *The Nightmare,* the latter depicts a woman suffering from the eponymous dream and being observed by a demon in a male form and a horse.[5] This motif reappears in various nineteenth- and twentieth-century paintings by male artists:

> [What] these representations of sleeping women [by Lovis Corinth, Amedeo Modigliani, Balthus Lucien Freud as well as Marian Nowiński] have in common [is the] male perspective; the male artist projects his view of the world and his priorities onto an image in which woman is an integral part, but by necessity a passive part, not actively collaborating. The fact is that woman is observed in a state over which the male artist [observer] has full control. However different in style, these works continue the traditional perspective of art since antiquity and the Renaissance. (Kultermann 149-50)[6]

independent work of art, it guides its recipients towards whatever they are able to identify and justify as their frame of reference in building its interpretation as an artwork.

[5] The selection of paintings is determined by the origin of the sleeping Venus pose in the Renaissance period, in the paintings by Giorgione and Titian, and its further transformations in the eighteenth century. Fuseli's painting seems to reflect the fatal atmosphere of the final scenes of the play. This choice, however, is governed by the individual frame of reference of the viewer and the familiarity with Western iconography.

[6] The second half of the twentieth century brings an appreciation for female artists' work, which causes a significant change in the perception of the sleeping woman as an

Such a spectrum of iconographic references presents the viewer with a complex set of visual cues that together build an image of Nowiński's Desdemona, whose figure acquires additional features through such intertextual readings and might be analysed as a personification or re-interpretation of all the aforementioned characters.

An awareness of iconographic references provides an additional layer to what can be described as a purely aesthetic pleasure derived from experiencing the poster, as well as a recognition of the primary intertextual reference, i.e. the text of the play, enriched by what can be deduced about *Othello* owing to the arrangement of the poster elements, the employment of the colours and the shapes.[7] Accordingly, the first step to decoding the poster is the interpretation of its design. Even a cursory glance reveals that the poster relies on creating a strong sexual overtone. A blurred triple line forming a female body seems to indicate a vibrating motion which accompanies the climax of a sexual experience. The blurry form and the tensed arrangement of legs, hands, head and closed eyes all suggest either masturbation or an erotic dream. At the same time, the background is dominated by a great shadow of a male profile suspended directly over the beasts of the female figure in the centre of the picture.

Approaching the female body from the left-hand side, the male face looms over the foreground, establishing an ominous, uncomfortable atmosphere. The shadow signals the overpowering presence of an intruder, encroaching brutally into the vulnerable intimacy of the sleeping, exposed woman. It is as if the face intended to capture and take control over the whole picture; this is a reading that can be introduced and explained in the light of *Othello*'s text. Othello is a mighty, omnipresent warrior, but also a "shadowy", weak figure that is positioned against the sensuous Desdemona going through her sexual awakening. The striking difference between the male face hidden within the blueish darkness and the uncovered white female body creates a sense of threat, or even of unavoidable violence.

The atmosphere of sexual tension and imminent danger is enhanced by the choice of colours. Dividing the image into two horizontal spheres, the meeting point between red and blue works to juxtapose the male cooling space

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art motif: "[s]leep, as a prehistory, here again has qualities connected with healing, social therapeutics, [fertility] and ritual. […]; the possibility that the function of sleep can lead to a new status of reality is reestablished." (Kultermann 151-52)

[7] The recipients of the poster do not have to possess specialised competence to enjoy it. Cf. Aristotle's statement,

> Thus, the reason why men enjoy seeing a likeness is, that in contemplating it they find themselves learning or inferring, and saying perhaps, 'Ah, that is he.' For if you happen not to have seen the original, the pleasure will be due not to the imitation as such, but to the execution, the colouring, or some such other cause. (36)

of Othello against the red-hot one belonging to Desdemona. However, one zone is penetrated by the other. The fragile balance between the spheres is upset by the intrusion of the blue profile line into the red space. The brownish hues of Desdemona's upper body suggest burned skin or bruises—probable signs of violence. Another colour adds to the overall feel, as Desdemona's body is stretched along a white surface, possibly signifying the bed covered with white wedding-sheets. The exposition of innocent whiteness under the sexually stimulated body bathed in red invites a highly ambivalent appreciation of the female. The design of the poster reveals Desdemona as defined by both the purity of the white and the eroticism invoked by the use of the red and seems to suggest Othello's dual perspective in this respect: the fact that "she is a satisfactory sexual partner" becomes more or less obvious for other characters, first of all Iago, and it is duly noted. "Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor. […] As with so many of Iago's remarks, this contains an important truth". (Hallstead 115)

In Nowiński's poster Othello's dark silhouette overshadows Desdemona's body, looming over her and threating to quench her libidinous, sexually-awoken self. The poster designer uses the visual language of eroticism, which seems to be appropriate for Shakespeare's play, as "sex is central to the plot of *Othello*". (Thompson 44) Initially, the newly married couple is able to employ sexual language and enjoys their new marital status. Although definitely appreciating his wife's inexperience, Othello "explicitly invites his wife to bed in language that blends scriptural and physical allusiveness: 'come, my dear love, / The purchase made, the fruits are to ensure; / The profit's yet to come 'twixt me and you.' (II. 3. 8)". (Kirsch 730) Othello and his wife are forthright regarding their intimate intentions, and speak openly about their sexual desire:

> DESDEMONA The heavens forbid
> But that our loves and comforts should increase,
> Even as our days do grow!
> OTHELLO Amen to that, sweet powers!
> I cannot speak enough of this content,
> It stops me here; it is too much of joy.
> And this, and this, the greatest discords be *They kiss.*
> That e'er our hearts shall make. (2.1.190-197)

Still, the early modern culture placed women within rigid social frames, both before and after marriage. Expected to accept an assigned spouse, young wives, married to establish social and financial protection for themselves and their families, were to give birth to male successors, be honourable, are not to dishonour their partners with passionate love. By choosing her husband on her own, Desdemona not only rebels against her father's will but also violates the

social conventions of the time. The innocence of a fifteen- or sixteen-year-old girl, which Othello expects from his wife, is supposed to be maintained after the marriage as well. However, when persuaded by Iago to recognise Desdemona's social independence and sexual appetite in terms of sin and corruption, Othello seems to be surprised, frightened and disgusted at the signs of her free will. When Desdemona starts to exercise her power over him, he retreats. The darkness embodied by Iago transforms their love into a curious combination of fear and desire, at least in Othello's mind. Othello's attitude changes and Desdemona's passion becomes not only unwelcome, but is also considered as something monstrous, stereotypically associated with blackness: "Her name, that was as fresh / As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black / As mine own face." (3.3.389-91) (Kirsch 734) Consequently, she loses her divine charm in his eyes and is condemned by her husband as a whore. Throughout the play Desdemona is considered as a divine creature but is also spoken of in highly sexual terms: "Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms, / Give renew'd fire to our extincted spirits, / And bring all Cyprus comfort! (II.i.77)". The assumption of her sexual self, achieved through her elopement and marriage without her father's consent, in the eyes of the male characters "destroys her divine nature imposed on her by Othello and puts her among the whores of Venice". (Hallstead 119)

An analysis of the play and the close study of the poster's composition and the applied colours, provide the poster viewers with a preliminary reflection on Shakespeare's text. However, the history of Western art allows for a further, in-depth analysis revealing other significant issues regarding *Othello*'s dramatic characters and their actions. The iconographic references evoked by Nowiński's work point at various female figures known from literature and mythology. The Western European tradition depicting a female nude in a sleeping or resting pose is preserved in numerous artworks and constitutes either an element of their composition as, for instance, in Titian's *Bacchanalia* (1523-24), where a girl is presented as a variation on the motif of Venus in the sleeping woman in the bottom right-hand foreground; (Wundram 66) or as a central trope, like in the paintings of the sleeping Venus, the provocative Venus of Urbino or the woman tormented by nightmares from Fuseli's painting.

"Hail to Thee, Lady": Renaissance Goddesses

Renaissance social conventions not only refused the female voice but also removed passion from the marital union. On the one hand, the sexual vacuum left in marriage is filled in by prostitutes and mistresses, sometimes officially delegated by their own families to secure their social status, or provided by wealthy and influential protectors. (Hagen and Hagen 244) On the other hand,

there are the nudes, usually indented to enrich private art collections contemplated behind the closed doors also as wedding portraits which often were hidden behind thick curtains from the unwelcome gaze of intruders. (Ziemba 161) Until the nineteenth century, creating, purchasing and displaying such paintings was tolerated by public opinion, but only under the condition that they presented mythological or biblical themes. (Arassel, *Detal. Historia Malarstwa w Zbliżeniu* 97) Accordingly, the portraits of prostitutes, mistresses or models exposing their private parts in highly erotic poses were accepted and appreciated by the male members of the society, but only when the women were introduced as Eves or Venuses. Consequently, the continuous demand for the nudes supported the establishment of such art conventions as that of sleeping Venus. (Arassel, *Nie Widać Nic. Opowiadanie Obrazów* 97)

One of the most famous painted Venuses is undoubtedly *Venus of Urbino* by Titian. The main figure is difficult to interpret, primarily due to the absence of Cupid. The goddess can, however, be identified by her other attributes such as the roses which she holds in her right hand. (Ronnberg 162) Venus is depicted with these flowers also when she emerges from the sea in Botticelli's painting. However, it is worth remembering that roses, usually associated with passion, desire, earthly pleasures and romance, (Dennis-Bryan et al. 126) function also as a Christian symbol of conjugal fidelity. (Kobielus 188) All in all, the painting sends a potent message about the value of marriage: Titian augments the reference to marital life not only through his choice of a highly domestic setting as a whole but also by adding such meaningful objects as white bedsheets and the underneath fabric spotted with *drops* of red roses[8]; "a port of myrtle on the window ledge to indicate constancy;". (Hagen and Hagen 247) the two chests which "may allude to cassone or marriage chest for clothes of the bride", (Kennedy 48) a lapdog (a crucial element of another painting associated with marriage, *The Arnolfini Marriage* by Jan von Eyck, 1434) standing for faithfulness and devotion but, at the same time, for carnal desire. Because of these details, it seems that this painting suggests a different approach to the traditional divide between saintly wives and sinful whores, whereby desire is possible in marriage. (Hagen and Hagen 247) The painting might be considered as revolutionary, as Venus is designed not only as a goddess but also as a young girl: "the goddess is transformed: a young woman meets the spectator's gaze, conscious of her appeal revealing her body and expecting,

[8] The wedding bedsheets, white but stained with virgin blood, constitute a symbolic element in Shakespeare's *Othello,* conveying a sense of purity when kept in private, and of sexual provocation when displayed in public: "In her innocence, Desdemona believes that the sheets reveal her steadfastness, love and purity. […] But the play reveals how easily private and personal objects can be endowed with pornographic meaning when trafficked in public discourse." (Thompson 51-53)

if not caresses, then admiration, [Titian not only introduces sensual love into marriage but also] liberat[es] the nude from the constraints of the mythical stereotypes, seeing a real woman in the female figure," (Hagen and Hagen 247) linking the divine with the mortal.

When Guidobaldo, the son of the Duke of Urbino, purchased the painting of *Venus of Urbino*, he did so either to embellish his private collection[9] or to decorate the bedroom to honour his marriage. His fourteen-year-old wife might have required some pointers on how to behave in bed to titillate her spouse: it seems that the self-stimulation, just like the one performed by Titian's Venus, was justified at the time, because female masturbation was advised by doctors, as in the sixteenth century women were believed to conceive just at the moment of the climax, and therefore were supposed to be adequately prepared for the intercourse, to avoid sinful carnality as much as possible. (Arassel, *Nie Widać Nic. Opowiadanie Obrazów* 99) Thus, Venus's pose might be seen as immoral and provocative, though it seems to be appropriate for a young wife, obedient to her husband and willing to conceive. Titian's painting suggests a seductive atmosphere reinforced with at least two arrangements: the curtain and the positioning of the body. The idea of the curtain in Western art is to convey ambiguity. Thus, it indicates that something should be concealed, either because the view to-be-hidden is shameful, or because its shameless: erotic art that is intended only for a selected group of connoisseurs. (Ziemba 161, 167)[10] Here, the provocative body arrangement of the painting's main subject enhances the ambiguous role of the curtain. Venus's "expression and self-stimulation are an open statement of friendly sexual invitation [though quite] innocent of any of the voyeurism". (Kennedy 50) As Kennedy adds, however, "[i]t is more probably a generalised invitation to connubial sex and the procreation of beautiful children, which it was believed the contemplation of beauty could influence". (50) Explored by prominent artists such as Giorgione, Titian, and, in the contemporary mode, by Nowiński, the traditional nude composition approaches the idea of sleep in an ambiguous manner, especially in modern art. Legs apart, a hand resting on the intimate body parts, face expressing erotic

[9] Guidobaldo was well acquainted with Titian's works included in his father's collection: it is especially *La Bella* that made a great impression of him. Although he did not have enough financial means, he acquired a portrait of the same model but without clothes and called it the *Naked woman.* (Hagen and Hagen 243)

[10] The idea of covering and uncovering is deeply rooted in the European way of thinking as an indication of something spiritual, divine and saint-like. (Ziemba 158) According to Honigmann, this saint-like creature in the drama is Desdemona: "Welcoming the 'divine Desdemona' to Cyprus, Cassio kneels and salutes her, 'Hail to thee, lady, and the grace of heaven … Enwheel thee round!' (2.1.85-7). This, I have said, comes close to being a 'Hail Mary', and her identification with heaven continues to the end of the play". (Honigmann 107)

passion, the elongated body, all indicate the state of climax rather than peaceful rest. However, the Western European modern culture deprives the naked beauty of her independence: the exposition of pubic hair is recognised by John Berger as a signifier of female power over the male society. In the Western European art tradition, the nude usually lacks such pubescence markers. (Berger 55) The goddess is painted to be observed; she ultimately loses her agency and becomes an object of male pleasure. (Berger 46)

Following in the footsteps of Titian, Nowiński's poster allows Desdemona to be both a wife and a lover; *Venus Caelestis* and *Venus Naturalis*. The sleeping Venus composition of Nowiński's poster might find its justification in Shakespeare's drama, albeit indirectly. For instance, it is surprising that the goddess of love is not mentioned in the play, even though one of its settings is Cyprus. Shakespeare "must have known […] that according to legend Aphrodite (or Venus) rose from the sea near Paphos, on the west coast of Cyprus. Poets celebrated Cyprus as the island of Venus". (Honigmann 11) Moreover, both Venus, as in Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*, and Shakespeare's Desdemona (2.1.85-87), are welcomed there as divine creatures, but for the latter this is not the end of her journey.

Desdemona's living space is dynamic, as it is gradually being narrowed down from the very beginning of the play: she moves from Venice to Cyprus, where she is confined to her new house, later to the bedchamber and finally to her bed. The bed constitutes an essential element weighing on the depiction of both Titian's goddess and Othello's wife. The bedchamber smothering "scene is dominated in many productions by a curtained four-poster, a thing of pomp and circumstance that becomes something like a cage from which Desdemona cannot escape (like her marriage)". (Honigmann 86) Analogous to the immature, but exceedingly beautiful Venus, [11] depicted on a similar partly curtained bed, Shakespeare's innocent but passionate Desdemona awaits her beloved to consummate their marriage and conceive his heir.

As it was already mentioned, Desdemona leaves Venice, the city of dubious nature but still "a true *police*, a civilizing and ordered place where calm and rational interventions of ducal authority are an effective check against the storms of" a young woman's rebellion. (Neill 117) The transfer to a new location is marked by a cleansing storm that, on the one hand, destroys Turkish ships and washes away all Venetian remains of Desdemona's defiance on the other. Thus, she moves to Cyprus, the island associated with love and erotic atmosphere, "where the goddess [Venus] renewed her virginity after her adulterous liaison with Mars" which in fact is a home for "the shut-in society of

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[11] In the painting, young age and beauty are highlighted, for instance, by such details as breasts, which "were considered beautiful only if small, round and firm, lacking the fullness of maturity." (Hagen and Hagen 245)

a garrison town, the sort of place that feeds on rumour and festers with suspicion". (Neill 117) Consecutive locations reflect the development of the play, whereby Desdemona gets transformed from a young, rebellious, brave newly-wed into an attractive alluring wife and, finally, into a woman who becomes passive and defenceless against the military and masculine world, as if losing faith in her power over the male characters appearing in her presence.[12]

Indeed, her transformation is the outcome of her being treated as an object: of Roderigo's and Cassio's admiration, of Iago's obsession, of Othello's passion: "Desdemona is to her husband—an object whose capacity to arouse wonder in the beholder is seen to underwrite the beholder's selfhood." (Yachnin 201) Once on the island, she is deprived of any guidance or support: "a stranger to [the corrupt social order of Cyprus]; cut off from her family, effectually removed from those 'Of her own clime, complexion and degree', a woman almost alone in a conspicuously masculine realm." (Neill 118) In the end, she is a naked and exposed body, becoming only marginally conscious of the male world governed by defamation and slander.

Nowiński's Desdemona takes on the features characterising Titian's goddess and her mythical predecessors. The poster-Desdemona might be regarded as the love goddess of exceptional beauty, the patroness of desire, sex, fertility and prosperity. These associations support the image of Desdemona as a young woman who is aware of different shades of passion by combining at least two of them: "Sensuality and affection are inseparable in Desdemona's consciousness […] she wants to consummate the marriage, she is subdued to Othello's […] 'utmost pleasure' […] At the same time, she consecrates her soul to his honour and valiancy, and says that she 'saw Othello's visage in his mind." (Kirsch 724) In contrast to Titian's Venus, Nowiński allows his female figure to close her eyes and dream. Thus, the poster evokes not only the associations with Titian's *Venus of Urbino* but also her predecessor i.e. *Sleeping Venus* by Giorgione, Titian's older colleague from Bellini's workshop (after his death, Titian is said to be the one who finished *Sleeping Venus*).

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[12] Fortunately, like Titian's Venus, Desdemona is accompanied by her maid, Emilia. Their interactions reveal the tension and frustration caused and constantly enhanced by the masculine environment around them. The women defend themselves against the male world with a "frank, generous and nurturing" feminine friendship seen as "[t]he counter-universe of women [which] provides us with an alternative reality," (McKwin 129) based on truth, loyalty and sacrifice. For a more elaborate discussion regarding the characterisation of Desdemona see: Carol Thomas Neely's *Woman and Men in Othello* (Neely 133-58), Shirley N. Garner's *Shakespeare's Desdemona* (Garner 233-52), Joan Ozark Holmer's *Desdemona, Woman Warrior: "O, these men, these men!" (4.3.59)* (Holmer 132-64) and Lisa Hopkins's *Love and War on Venus' Island: Othello and The Lover's Melancholy* (Hopkins 51-63). Hopkins's article also includes references to parallels between Desdemona and Venus.

The goddess depicted in this painting gives an impression of someone who dreams of love and self-pleases herself in the act. Still, even in this erotic gesture, she remains innocent. Although it is impossible to regard her as an allegory of sexual intercourse, this Venus might embody the very recollection of it. Giorgione's goddess is designed as an image lost in reverie, pure and un-provoking: the features which echo the presentation of Shakespeare's Desdemona and emerge through Nowiński's design as well.

Desdemona's *Nightmare*

The Nightmare painted by Henry Fuseli in 1781 and exhibited one year later, led to increased interest in the artist and bestowed upon him the status of "an icon of irrational eroticism". (Myrone 6) The painter introduces in the painting a limited number of objects: a red-curtained bed, a footrest and a simple dressing table, a closed book, a barely visible mirror, an empty black bottle and a covered box. These items constitute a dark background for three figures: a black horse, a brownish creature and the female in the foreground. Clad in a white nightgown, and resting on white sheets, partly obscured by a red blanket and a yellow shawl, the woman becomes not only the brightest element of the composition, but she also divides it horizontally in two parts representative of two divergent realities. The lower part of the painting is the space where the resting woman's body is surrounded by ordinary objects, usually found in a female bedchamber. Her closed eyes and right hand hidden behind her head indicate sleep. However, her lips are slightly apart, cheeks rosy, the upper body is falling, with the left hand almost touching the floor—all of these elements indicate a drowsy, possibly erotic, but also death-like state.

Most importantly, the upper part of the picture is dominated by a dark, small creature sitting on the woman's chest. It is half-turned towards the viewers and casts a demonic, horned shadow onto the red curtain behind it. The lecherous demon[13] is possibly an inspiration from Germanic legends, where evil spirits visit women in their sleep to have sex with them. However, here, the creature is not involved in any actual wrongdoing, but its intense gaze is a harbinger of some horrid fate: the viewer and the demon both look at the body,

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[13] The very word *incubus* holds an erotic meaning and might be translated from Latin as:

> a demon that 'lies/sleeps upon' the dreamer. […] The first meaning of 'incubus' was simply 'nightmare' and it may have been a straightforward attempt to translate the Greek *ephjaltes*. In rendering the idea of 'jumping upon' into Latin, however, the translators enmeshed it in a matrix of words that contained clear sexual connotations—for example *concumbere,* to sleep (with) and *concubinus*, concubine. (Stewart 286)

and both become complicit in the act of visual violence. The creature is accompanied by a black horse, whose head emerges from behind the red curtain.[14] The animal has pointed ears, a raised mane and white, blind-like bulging eyes directed towards the woman. Its blind excitement, the undisturbed patience and glee of the demonic creature, and the almost complete darkness engulfing the silhouette of the sleeping girl, make the scene ambiguous and disturbing.

The dark atmosphere is enhanced by the eroticism of the woman's pose. From the very beginning of his artistic career, Fuseli manifested a considerable interest in such an atmosphere which he found in Shakespeare's works. The artist's "visions of the supernatural, the uncanny made knowable, achieved wide-speared popularity: while the most extreme of this is the various versions of *The Nightmare*, many of his Shakespeare paintings adopt similarly sensational vocabularies to convey readings of the plays". (Sillars 220)[15] The sense of threat dominating the image can be traced back to Fuseli's own life and the story of his rejected love for Anna Landolt. His hurt feelings were transformed into a rape fantasy of obsession and possession, as he admitted in a letter to a friend:

> Last night I had her in bed with me—tossed my bedclothes huger-mugger-wound my hot and tight-clasped hands about her—fused her body and her soul together with my own—poured into her my spirit, breath and strength. Anyone who touches her now commits adultery and incest! She is mine, and I am hers. And have her I will. (Ward 23)

The demonic incubus sitting on the chest of a girl that goes through an erotic nightmare can be read as a visual marker of the male desire to control female sexuality. The compositional arrangement applied by Nowiński places his Shakespearean poster and its central character within the referential frames of

[14] The prevailing criticism of the painting discusses it as an internalized struggle: "A hairy demon perches atop a voluptuous woman laid out asleep on her bed as a wall-eyed horse pokes its head through the velvet drapes in the background." (Stewart 282) "The sleeper does not see either the incubus or the horse, although as a scene of a nightmare they are part of her thoughts." (Mishra 295)

[15] Sillars finds in the painting numerous traces of visual references to another Fuseli's painting directly devoted to Shakespeare's verbal imaginary. In his *Cobweb* (1785-86), we might recognize Mab, mentioned by Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*: "This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs, / That presses them and learns them first to bear" (1. 4. 92-3). Another literary equivalent of Fuseli's incubus is Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "since it is he who places the ass-head on Bottom's shoulders, it is he who is responsible for the dream, or 'Nightmare' Bottom undergoes, and Puck's presence as the 'Nightmare' incubus is a logical extension in visual form of the text's implications". (Sillars 253)

The Nightmare.[16] Though Fuseli's painting is deprived of any direct associations with *Othello*, it generates the gloomy mood omnipresent in the final bedchamber scene and provides a commentary on the male gaze that objectifies Desdemona in the play. The painting indirectly introduces the dramatic surroundings narrowed to the very space of Desdemona's bed. It constitutes the place of fatal tragedy, which gives the impression of something between sexual violence and orgasmic excitement. At this moment of the drama, still barely conscious of male desires and accusations, Desdemona seems to be constantly accompanied by the cunning figure of the devilish Iago, who, just like Fuseli's incubus, leads the ghostly image of Othello to look at Desdemona from his vantage point.

Jan Kott notes that the inner world of Othello constitutes a landscape of his dreams, erotic obsessions and fears; it is darkness deprived of stars or the moon, (147) and finally of his guiding star, Desdemona. Indeed, in Nowiński's poster these two nightmarish perspectives meet: Desdemona's fears and Othello's obsessions are tightly interwoven, and his nightmare becomes her reality. Nowiński's poster holds its viewers in suspense: its dreamy atmosphere enhances the absurdity of Iago's intrigues, the naivety of Othello and the powerlessness of Desdemona. On the one hand, the image conveys Othello's nightmare of female sexuality; on the other, the same mixture of terror, eroticism and morbidity found in Fuseli's work, might be experienced in the scene of Desdemona's death. It is as if her nightmare was pulling Othello in.

Conclusion

As a visual translation, adaptation or re-interpretation of Shakespeare's text, Nowiński's poster is overloaded with the iconographic and literary references, which constitute the poster's interpretation of Shakespeare's play. Although remarkably provocative and sensual, the poster manages to convey diverse roles others see Desdemona perform: that of a divine creature; one of "a fully sexual woman capable of 'downright violence' (I. iii. 249); and still another of 'A maiden, never bold' (I. iii. 94)" (Bartels 423):

> The first [Desdemona] escapes her father 'guardage' (I. ii. 70) to elope with a Moor and insists on accompanying her husband to Cyprus—a military outpost

[16] Keeping in mind the long tradition of the *sleeping Venus* composition, it is possible to assume that Fuseli's work alludes to the classical art as well: "The principal motifs in *The Nightmare* have been traced variously to sources in the antique and in the classicising works which Fuseli would have known [for example] the Bacchanalian scene on the marble sarcophagus," (Chappell 421) where one of the images presents Maenad who is lost in sleep; other influences are visible in Fuseli's painting as well, to mention only Titian.

> in the play and the locus of Venus and 'very wanton' women in classical and other contemporary accounts—a dangerous place for a new wife to be on both counts. […] The second, that 'perfect wife' and 'bodiless obedient silence' […] emerges primarily in the play's second half and stands passively by as her husband destroys her reputation and her life. (423-24)

It is Titian's painting of Venus that seems to evoke the images of Renaissance obedient wives who, at the same time, remain independent, sexual beings. The intertextual relationship between Titian's and Nowiński's works enables the audience to appreciate Desdemona's all too human nature. Supported by the visual references, viewers become aware of the Venus-like quality of that female body that combines the features of a humble saint, a passionate lover, and a naïve girl who is determined to be happy. At the same time, the analysis of Shakespeare's text reveals the way Desdemona is treated by the male characters in the play. Like Fuseli's sleeping woman, she becomes an object of the dark desire. Consequently, it is highlighted that Desdemona constitutes an object of violence, and her identity, so clear at the beginning, is arrested through the male gaze, forcing her to struggle till the very end, to her death.

All the female figures discussed here seem to share significant features which enhance the multi-faceted vision of Shakespeare's Desdemona. Firstly, they are willingly or unwillingly caged in a narrow space, either of a curtained bed or a small clearing surrounded by dense bushes. Secondly, their bright bodies constitute a point of light that plays various roles for the males approaching them: a promise of fertility, desirable virginity, unspoiled beauty, a source of enlightenment. Thirdly, because they sleep, which is indicated usually by the arrangement of hands and their closed eyes, the women become an embodiment of the two contrasting notions: purity (the whiteness) and eroticism (conveyed by nudity, face expressions, body arrangement, etc.). In each case, this ambiguous image is enhanced by the combination of white and red sheets they are resting on. Finally, despite their characteristics, the painted women become the objects of a controlling gaze that become exposed for various reasons. Such an approach seals Desdemona's fate as an object of the curious, desiring glance.[17]

In conclusion, it becomes clear that Nowiński's poster generates the allusions to the play through the composition and colours, which help to

[17] In his article *Woman Asleep and the Artist* (1990) Udo Kulterman mentions several male and female artists that might be studied as an alternative background for the analysis of Nowiński's *Otello Desdemona* poster: Lygia Clark, Yayoi Kusama, Colette, Rimma Gerlovina, Natalia Ll and Duane Michals. If Nowiński's poster is juxtaposed with works of art depicting sleeping women produced by artists from the second half of the twentieth century, Desdemona would be "liberated […] from the status of being an object of manipulation by the other". (Kultermann 157)

understand the characters of Shakespeare's figures and their damaged relationship. These are further supported by the reference to several iconographic, historical, cultural, and literary sources, which not only follow the text in interpreting Desdemona's character, but also indicate an additional, if not alternative, interpretation of her role as *Venus Caelestis* and *Naturalis*, as well as a victimised girl similar to the character from Fuseli's painting. Consequently, the characters appearing in their painted environments become an essential background for the further interpretation of Desdemona and her design as a human goddess.

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To *Hamlet* or Not to *Hamlet*: Notes on an Arts Secondary School Students' *Hamlet*

Abstract: This article discusses a 2018 theatrical production of *Hamlet* with Romanian teenage arts students, directed by one of the article's authors, actress and academic Dana Trifan Enache. As an artist, she believes that the art of theatre spectacle depends pre-eminently on the actors' enactment, and hones her students' acting skills and technique accordingly. The other voice in the article comes from an academic in a cognate discipline within the broad field of arts and humanities. As a feminist and medievalist, the latter has investigated the political underside of representations of the body in religious drama, amongst others. The analytic duo reflects as much the authors' different professional formation and academic interests as their asymmetrical positioning vis-à-vis the show as respectively the play's director and one of its spectators. Their shared occupational investment, teaching to form and hone highly specialized professional skills, and shared object of professional interest (broadly conceived), text interpretation, account nevertheless for the possibility of fruitful interdisciplinary reflection on the 2018 *Hamlet*. This in-depth analysis of the circumstances of the performance and technical solutions it sought challenges stereotyped dismissals of a students' *Hamlet* as superannuated, flimsy or gratuitously provocative. Furthermore, a gender-aware examination of the adaptation's original handling of characters and scenes indicates unexpected cross-cultural and diachronic commonalities between the dramatic world of the 2018 Romanian production of *Hamlet* and socio-cultural developments emergent in pre-Shakespearean England.

Keywords: *Hamlet* (Romanian theatrical production, 2018), student actors, role doubling, collective character, gender identity, cross-cultural echoes.

It is not unusual for consummate actors to start directing as well. We would go no further than mentioning a few of Romania's celebrated actors turned stage and/or film directors such as Horaţiu Mălăele, Ion Caramitru, Mihai Mălaimare,

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Nae Caranfil, Dan Puric and, last but not least, the late Liviu Ciulei. However, some others do so in response to professional contingency, as is the case of one of this article's authors, actress Dana Trifan Enache, in her capacity as an academic and also, however briefly, as an acting instructor in the Queen Mary Secondary School of Arts, Constanţa. This article analyzes the Queen Mary student actors' *Hamlet* she directed in 2018, which premiered on 3 April at the National Contest of Secondary School Student Actors, held that year in Constanţa. A brief overview of the circumstances leading to the decision to stage Shakespeare's tragedy with secondary school student actors will shed light on the aesthetic and practical solutions adopted on the stage, which this article discusses at length with respect to dramatic and theatrical precedents and attuned to gender issues.

The idea of mounting *Hamlet* presented itself on seeing the results of the early, local stage of the National Contest of Secondary School Student Actors, as decided by a jury formed of actors of the State Theatre of Constanţa, many of them also academics. Looking at the fifteen students elected to participate in the National Contest of Secondary School Student Actors, it dawned on the actress-academic that they could form the cast to mount Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Anyway, two of them were clearly to be cast as Hamlet (Ionuţ Roşu) and Ophelia (Nicoleta Zghibarţă[1]). Decision once made, Iulian Enache[2] started adapting Shakespeare's text: he used two recent Romanian translations of *Hamlet* to rewrite the script for a predominantly female cast, as the student actors mostly were, to perform in a sixty-minute show, as the national contest rules required.[3] Yet no one—director, script writer or cast—ever envisaged

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[2] An actor and stage director of the State Theatre of Constanţa, and Dana Trifan Enache's husband.

[3] Adaptation is notoriously difficult to define, let alone assess, non-controversially; see Hutcheon, Sanders, and Kidnie. We use the term adaptation with regard to the 2018 *Hamlet* to refer to the text's redaction—constrained primarily by production circumstances—through substantial line/character cutting, line rearrangement and character addition. This is Ruby Cohn's definition of adaptation in contradistinction to both "reduction/emendation" and innovative "transformation" (3-4; see also Kidnie 3; Sanders 22-23). Margaret Jane Kidnie (3) rightly wonders: "at what point does theatrical production become adaptive" and, moreover, how can one "distinguish[] between Shakespeare and new drama 'based on' Shakespeare"? One crucial difficulty arises from defining Shakespeare's plays, given both their collaborative writing and performance and their early redacted publication. For Kidnie, although a play "carries the rhetorical and ideological force of an enduring stability, [it] is not an object at all, but rather a dynamic process that evolves over time in response to the needs and sensibilities of its users" (2). Shakespeare's drama owes such dynamic, non-reified existence also to the retroactive effect of adaptations (Huang and Rivlin 8), with their

a *Hamlet* to speak pre-eminently to the interests and biases of twenty-first century teenagers. Everyone in the cast was thrilled to perform in a challenging play "for adults", not "for kids", whose characters, they were to discover, were haunted by dreams of power, love or revenge and occasionally by conscience pangs, and whose actions were awash with blood.

The rehearsal turned out to have two stages. In the first four days before the script adaptation had been completed, the cast practised assiduously speaking voice, improvisation on set topics and group improvisation for team-building.[4] Meanwhile, Bianca Manta was designing the choreography for the show and Adrian Mihai was adapting the music. The script proper, however, was rehearsed in the following ten days as two or three new scenes a day were being fed to the student actors by Iulian Enache. Yet barely within six days the crew realized their performance would last more than the sixty minutes required by contest regulations. Difficult and dispiriting though it was, in the following four days the student actors had, therefore, to un-memorize a little bit from each of the adaptation's eighteen scenes. No one in the audiences of *Hamlet*, whether at the premiere, when it earned standing ovations from the contestants filling half the auditorium (viz., the *Hamlet* actors' "rivals"), or at subsequent performances, would have envisaged the effort behind the show.

Hamlet struck many[5] as at once a consummate performance by very young actors working under the dual pressure of stage and competition, and theatre at its purest in terms of minimalism and visual/aural effectiveness. By minimalism we do not mean a literally "empty space": the director did not "take any *empty* space and call it a bare *stage*", in Peter Brook's (9) famous definition of the basics of theatre-making. The student actors had the stage of the State Theatre of Constanţa, with its paraphernalia, for the premiere (Figure 1), if not on a daily basis for the ten-day rehearsals, and the full support of the theatre crew during dress rehearsals.

"active potential" (2) and an openness of form which ranges from "discrete works" to "cultural deployments" (2). Accordingly, "Shakespeare can best be understood as the sum of the critical and creative responses elicited by his work" (Massai 6); furthermore, post-Cold War staging of Shakespeare has embarked on a "quest for cosmopolitanism" through "cross-media and cross-cultural citations" whereby adaptations "refer to one another across cultures and genres in addition to the Shakespearian pretext" (Joubin 144).

[4] The cast included ninth-, tenth- and eleventh-grade students, some of whom barely knew each other.

[5] Although *Hamlet* won only the Jury's Award at the time, subsequently it was awarded the first prize in the student competition affixed to the "Fortress' Myths" International Theatre Festival of Constanţa in the same year.

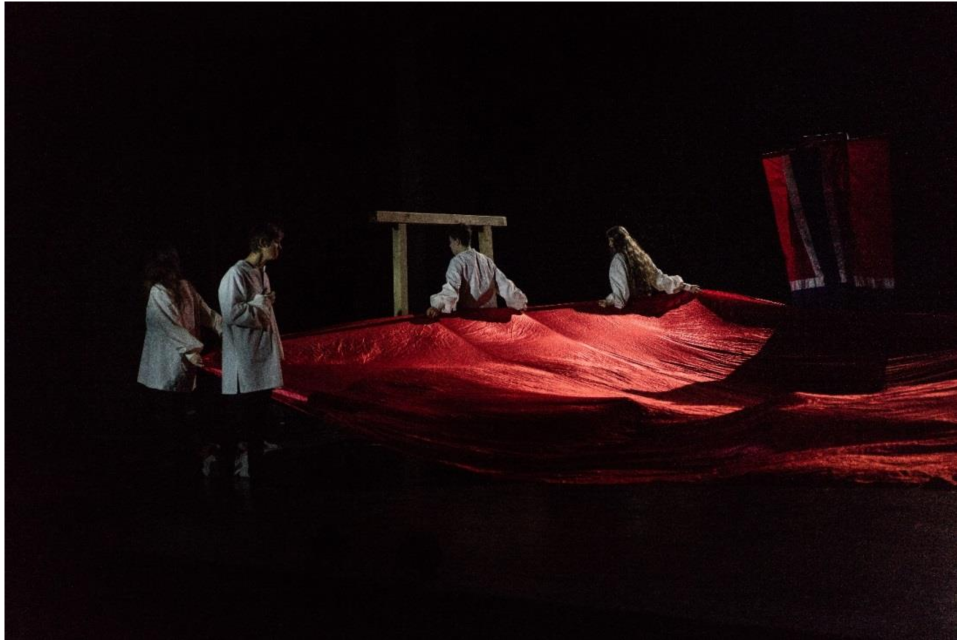

Figure 1. *Hamlet* (2018), directed by Dana Trifan Enache: final scene
Photo credits: Iulian Enache

Brook continues: "A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged" (9). Indeed, *Hamlet* fully met the etymological definition of *theatre*, which concerns the deliberate act of *seeing*. A *spectacle* (in a literal sense) for the eye, in terms of aesthetic pleasure, *Hamlet* also posed some of its intellectual challenges in visual terms. One particularly effective scene, in this connection, was the dumb play within the play. Under Hamlet's stage direction, as it were, the itinerant actors visiting Elsinore used stroboscopic lighting for the Gonzago play wherein Shakespeare's Hamlet planned to "catch the conscience of the king" (2:2:558). In doing so, however, they offered but freeze-frame highlights of the pantomime devised to expose Claudius. The deliberately intermittent light worked metatheatrically: by goading the actual spectators to regard (in both senses) the making of vision—and the transmission of knowledge—onstage, it elicited their (re)consideration of the spectatorial position, complicities and all. What the spectators saw "reflected" onstage when the Elsinore court watched the pantomime and responded to it unfolded as an *us* versus *them* mirroring: the actual offstage audience versus the onstage participants in a political—and theatrical—plot. With this realization may have come the further one that the offstage spectators were not total strangers to the political manoeuvres of *Hamlet*: they only watched—viz., became privy to—what they were permitted to

see, and engaged in guesswork to fill in the rest, whether motivation or means to achieve one's goal. A sobering reminder indeed that we are never fully outside the socio-political game, even when we protest our innocent (or coerced) disengagement.

In more general terms, all the spectators' eyes were riveted on the student actors, visible and invisible by turns, albeit always present on the stage, as if ready to haunt it alongside the dead king. This was, in fact, *Hamlet*'s overall theatrical image, borne out particularly effectively by the unassuming grey mantles covering up the actors when idle and facing the wings, and off-white Victorian-style linen shirts and black tights for everyone (Figure 2). The simple costume formula evolved from the director's wish to teach her student actors to rely on their artistic skills, not costume, insignia and props, to create meaning. Not the costume was used here to indicate the character's position, as in professional theatre; rather, the director sought a visually neutral effect. Where necessary, accessories were added—as in Queen Gertrude's case—as royal insignia, yet by and large everyone looked like everyone else sartorially. By levelling out the characters' appearance, the stylized black-and-white costumes allowed the actors' interpretation to identify the character socially and emotionally. The spectators, therefore, could not but focus on enactment.

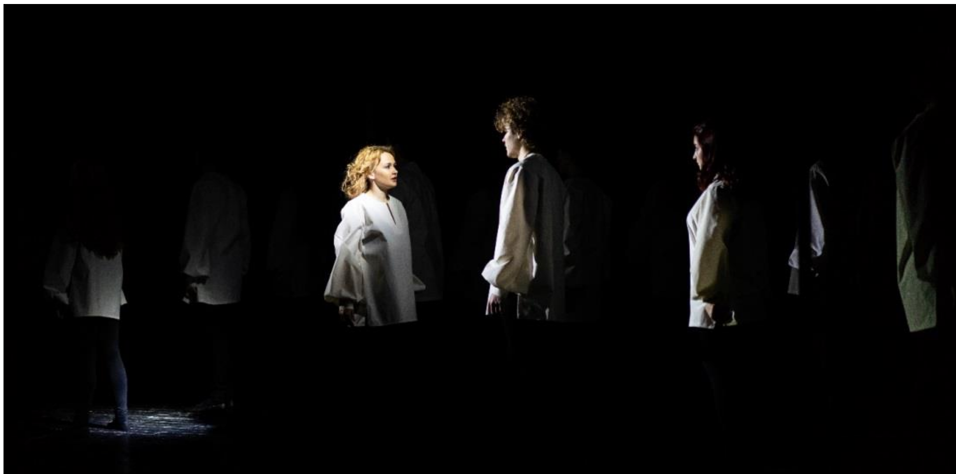

Figure 2. *Hamlet* (2018), directed by Dana Trifan Enache: Ophelia (Nicoleta Zghibarţă) and Hamlet (Ionuţ Roşu)
Photo credits: Iulian Enache

As with other artistic choices in this show, the actors' permanent presence on the stage had professional as well as symbolic reasons. On the one hand, the director made a versatile show, viz., one easily adaptable to various

performance venues, conventional and unconventional alike.[6] On the other, the characters' absence/invisibility—signalled by donning their mantles and turning sidewise to face the wings—pointed to a social dimension that was part and parcel of the collective character enacted by the women: we are all part of society even when we do not actively participate in particular events and civic actions.

In what follows, we look at artistic choices concerning the 2018 adaptation of the complex, lengthy Shakespearean play so as to meet both the specific requirements of the student actors' contest and the actors' memorization capacity and acting stamina. A factor we examine alongside the former regards the urgency of living up to the artistic imperative for a memorable theatrical event, lest the production be dismissed as a student actor show that merely pays lip-service to the page and/or where the student actors learn artistic complacency. With respect to the latter, one question relates, unavoidably, if loosely, to what Harold Bloom (1973/1997) has famously called "the anxiety of influence"[7]: how much of the western history of interpreting *Hamlet* may influence an adaptation without making the latter an old hat? Whether as direct indebtedness to or abiding influence of a particular modern rendition, especially a screen production, of Shakespeare's plays, the issue has yielded itself to hot debate by theatre critics and scholars. In the case of *Hamlet*, one could only think of the tremendous influence of Laurence Olivier's film (1948) on subsequent versions such as Franco Zeffirelli's (1990) and Kenneth Branagh's (1996). Yet, in the 2018 *Hamlet*'s case, the director did her best to let Shakespeare's *play*, not its interpretations, speak to her young actors, to start from scratch, as it were, lest they be overwhelmed by the critical or stage "pronouncements" on Shakespeare's play.

The issue of influence may be more complex than statements about it indicate, though. When playwrights, novelists or poets write, they allude to, quote or paraphrase other texts, in part or even wholly, as the case may be. Such intertextuality (in Julia Kristeva's terms) may be furthered, in shows of any kinds, through complex references to other shows and artists as well as to discourses in diverse other media; intermediality is regarded as the signature of

[6] The first challenge, in this respect, occurred in June 2018, when *Hamlet* was invited to perform in broad daylight in an ordinary classroom at Ovidius University during a conference at the Faculty of Letters.

[7] Influence, if not anxiety too, is an appropriate notion with respect to *Hamlet*. Bloom quotes Horatio's evocation of "the world of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*" (xi), with the stars' *influence* on human destiny, one different from ordinary *influence qua inspiration*, as Shakespeare uses the term elsewhere in his plays as well as in his sonnets (xii).

British director Peter Greenaway, for instance.[8] The necessary abridgement of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in performance may be of interest with respect to "influence" too, for the 2018 adaptation was done by an actor and stage director, Iulian Enache, who abridged the text—as virtually everyone does, save Kenneth Branagh on screen—in this case also in connection with non-dramatic strictures (viz., contest regulations). Yet there is an illustrious dramatic precedent for extra-dramatically motivated abridgement, Tom Stoppard's omnibus play *Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth* (1979), if not also his *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (performed in 1966). Stoppard's double feature furnishes a challenging term of comparison, even as we are interested here primarily in *The Dogg's Troupe 15-Minute Hamlet* part (written in 1972; published and performed separately in 1976) of *Dogg's Hamlet*.[9] In *Dogg's Hamlet*, the students who mount a thirteen-minute performance of Shakespeare's text transform the tragedy into a burlesque fast-paced routine; their two-minute encore only further reduces it to a farcically absurd assortment of half-lines and speeded entries and exits. Framed as it is within the activity of building a platform (viz., theatre stage), with its metadramatic deployment of linguistic building blocks framed as Wittgensteinian language game, the *15-Minute Hamlet* has expunged virtually all of Hamlet's famous cogitation and procrastination. Stoppard's characters' is *drama*, however farcical, in its etymological sense: *action*. There are certain similarities between Stoppard's fifteen-minute *Hamlet* adaptation and the 2018 Romanian production: the former's character-actors, like the latter's actors, are young students; in both cases, moreover, the adaptation is drastically time-bound. Stoppard's "adaptation" of Shakespeare, however, cannot have influenced the Romanian director and script writer due to their unfamiliarity with the Stoppard play. In retrospect, it may be argued that if Stoppard's characters could produce both a thirteen-minute *Hamlet* adaptation and a two-minute encore in the socio-cultural void of the *Dogg's Hamlet* script, then so—or even more so—could teenage student actors enact a sixty-minute *Hamlet* in the real world, or anyway not one scripted to be mounted on a makeshift stage. As already stated, the artistic wager was not to cross-reference other *Hamlet* interpretations, but to

[8] Theorized extensively especially by German and Canadian theorists (Rajewsky 43-46), the concept of *intermedial* "designates those configurations which have to do with a crossing of borders between media, and which thereby can be differentiated from intramedial phenomena as well as from transmedial phenomena (i.e., the appearance of a certain motif, aesthetic, or discourse across a variety of different media)" (Rajewsky 46). See also Yvonne Spielmann's distinction, in *Intermedialität. Das System Peter Greenaway*, between intermediality and diverse mixed forms such as hybridization, hypertext, hypermedium or multimedia.

[9] For historical details, see Stoppard's Introduction (141), Gianakaris (226-228) and Vareschi (126-127).

encourage the student actors to *respond* to Shakespeare's *play*. Fortunately, the short time they had for rehearsals colluded with the director's plans of devised ignorance with respect to the original play's fortunes in the theatre and on the screen.

A comparative study of Shakespeare's Ghost episode in the first act and its 2018 adaptation suggests a cross-culturally rich re-working of the script from a man-to-man and man-to-ghost dialogue to a woman-to-woman choral dialogue about the fateful human–ghost encounter. Shakespeare's first scene features Barnardo and Francisco as sentinels, soon joined by Horatio and Marcellus, Hamlet's Wittenberg friends. Their conversation is literally haunted by King Hamlet's ghost, whose genuine apparition, nevertheless, Horatio doubts on rational grounds:

> MARCELLUS
> Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
> And will not let belief take hold of him
> Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us. (1:1:23-25)

No sooner has Barnardo started to describe the previous night's apparition (1:1:35-39) than the Ghost—"like the king that's dead" (1:1:41)—enters, which "harrow[s]" Horatio "with fear and wonder" (1:1:44). Twice does Horatio entreat the Ghost to speak to him, and twice does the latter vanish, the second time due to the approaching daybreak. The best they can do, Horatio argues, is to "impart what we have seen tonight / Unto young Hamlet" (1:1:169-170) for assuredly "[t]his spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him" (1:1:171). Indeed, in the second scene, the strange news persuades Hamlet to try to talk to the Ghost. In the fourth scene, Hamlet joins Horatio and Marcellus on the castle battlements at nightfall, and before late Horatio spots the Ghost (1:4:38). "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" (1:4:39), Hamlet prays before mustering up the courage to interpellate the apparition: "I'll call thee Hamlet, / King, father, royal Dane. Oh answer me" (1:4:44-45). The Ghost beckons Hamlet towards a private spot and the prince consents to follow him, despite Horatio's misgivings and warnings to the contrary. Horatio and Marcellus decide, accordingly, to watch over the prince from a distance. Horatio fears that Hamlet "waxes desperate with imagination" (1:4:87) at a time when, as Marcellus famously puts it, "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" (1:4:90). Indeed it is: in the fifth scene, the Ghost describes King Hamlet's poisoning by his very brother, Claudius, eager to wrest both crown and queen for himself. The ninety lines are but briefly punctuated by Hamlet's protests of disbelief, before the Ghost takes his farewell and exits: "Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me" (1:5:91). Only now does the prince regain enough poise to become articulate and rage against Claudius's infamy, just as his two friends burst onstage. Try though they may, Horatio and

Marcellus learn nothing from Hamlet about his private conversation. Instead, they are sworn to secrecy and silence, for Hamlet decides "[t]o put an antic disposition on" (1:5:172) and feign lunacy in order to pursue his plans unencumbered. So much for Shakespeare on page. But on stage in the 2018 adaptation? To begin with, the Ghost's part appeared to have been edited out: no Ghost appeared anywhere in sight; nor were his words directly audible to the audience. Yet, it may be argued, whoever did not see the Ghost onstage simply did not believe it existed at all. Those who believed or came to believe in it—the female characters—did testify to its presence through their wonder response (Figure 3). Indeed, had there been an "actual" ghost walking across the stage, would the spectators have believed in its ontological reality all the eager?

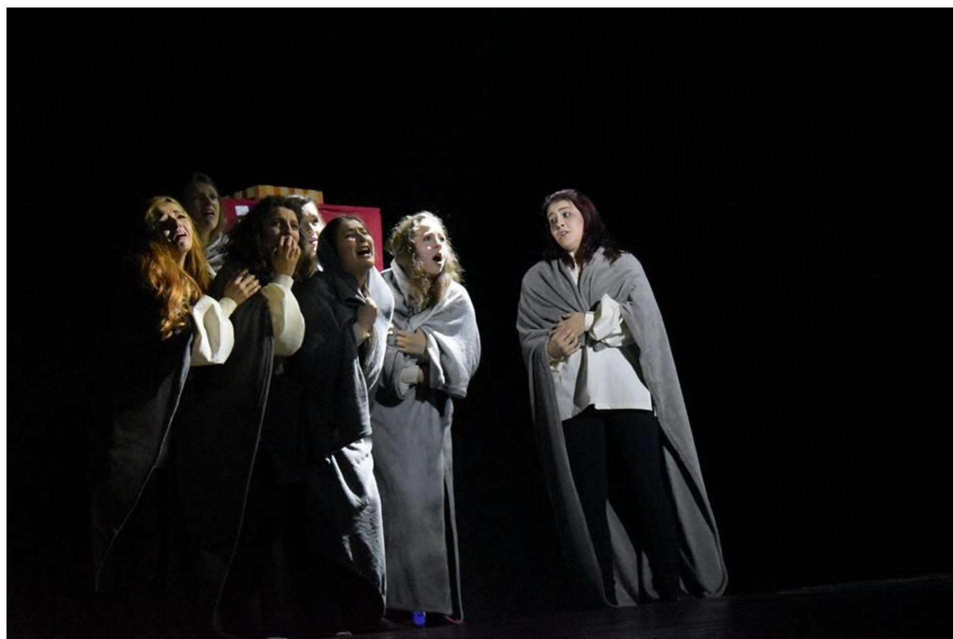

Figure 3. *Hamlet* (2018), directed by Dana Trifan Enache: Glennis (Ada Rusu) and the other women see the Ghost
Photo credits: Iulian Enache

Yet there is more to the encounter with the Ghost. In Shakespeare, giving Hamlet literal space, as he requests Horatio and Marcellus in compliance with the Ghost's request, impacts on *audibility*. The physical distance frustrates Horatio and Marcellus: wish as they may to eavesdrop on the conversation between ghostly father and frightened, if forward, son, they cannot—and thus cannot intervene promptly, should any danger to Hamlet arise. This very distance allowed the 2018 adaptation to substitute for the Ghost's confession to

Hamlet something akin to what grammar dubs “reported speech” and literary theory “indirect style” in fiction. The women as remote witnesses described Hamlet’s and the Ghost’s stage movement, gestures and whatever facial expression may have been plausibly visible to them from a distance, as well as reporting the remote exchange as best they, the women, could hear it. The female witnesses, however, articulated their fright-tainted perceptions in a dramatically different fashion from what readers of Shakespeare’s play or its spectators would have expected. Save individual names, [10] as well as particularized line allotment and responses, these women acted much like the chorus in ancient Greek tragedy: they mediated the remote scene to each other and, vicariously, to the spectators. [11] Their reporting of the first part of

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[10] This collective character was fashioned from Shakespeare’s Barnardo turned Bernarda (Daria Panaite) and Francesco turned Francesca (Beatrice Marciuc), alongside the non-Shakespearean Glennis (Ada Rusu), Clare (Sînziana Mocanu), Valeria (Andreea Ciurea), Maggi (Rebeca Chiriac) and Georgia (Alexandra Cîinaru).

[11] See Csapo (85-107) on ancient Greek actors—originally the poets themselves, then (also) their hired male relatives—and the professionalization of acting. Ancient Greek tragedy used the chorus to participate in or comment on the action, as in Aeschylus and Sophocles, respectively, and also to infuse a lyric element in it, as in Euripides (Cuddon 123). Exclusively enacted by men, the chorus could, nevertheless, be represented as female, as in Aeschylus’s *Choephoroi* (*The Libation Bearers*), the second play of the *Oresteia*. Pictorially too, the chorus was represented as either male or female. An Attic red-figured column krater in Basel (500-490 BCE), probably the earliest extant pictorial evidence of tragedy, depicts synecdochically the twelve men forming the tragic chorus. Costumed as soldiers, the choreuts, nevertheless, do not enact soldiers proper: wearing diadems and presumably also masks rather than carrying weapons, they dance and sing (Csapo 6-8, Fig. 1.2). However, the choreuts may also impersonate female characters. Thus, an Attic red-figured column krater fragment (430–420 BCE; Kiev, Museum of the Academy of Sciences) shows two tragic choreuts dancing on either side of a piper and his assistant; the *faces* of the choreuts’ *masks* “are overpainted with added white in an effort to contrast the (conventionally white) female flesh of the characters with the darker skin of the nape and neck of the male performer under the female mask” (Csapo 8, Fig. 1.3). Furthermore, a scene from Menander’s *Theophoroumene*, depicted in Dioskourides’s mosaic fragment (125-100 BCE; Naples, Museo Nazionale), with its “unprecedented theatre realism in Attic art”, shows that “the tragedy had a chorus of young women”, like “the majority of tragedies at this date” (Csapo 9; Fig. 5.7, 151).

Adopted by the Romans, the idea of a chorus passed from them, over a millennium later, to medieval and early modern English (and generally European) drama; nonetheless, not a full-scale chorus, but a one-person choric character—the “presenter” figure—was typically used (Cuddon 122-123). Such are the Expositors in late medieval biblical and moral drama, the Fool in Shakespeare’s *King Lear* or the Presenter in Greenaway’s film *The Baby of Mâcon* (1993).

See also Zeitlin (esp. 64-67, 80-81) on the implications of the all-male cast of the ancient Greek civic theatre for construing power relations, and primarily for teaching

Shakespeare's Act 1, scene 5 frustrated the spectators' seeing (and hearing) of the unseemly, if enthralling, apparition. Like the ancient chorus, whose task it was to bridge the dramatic and extra-dramatic worlds, the collective character became the (over)seer of Hamlet's congress with the Ghost. It was hardly a whimsical theatrical guise for Shakespeare's soldier-courtiers: female and choral, however clearly individualized, rather than male and self-standing, characters. Nevertheless, our ancient chorus analogy is of rather limited import. The ancient chorus developed a unitary view of events; although multiple in membership, it acted in unison—it was one person really. By contrast, the 2018 *Hamlet*'s collective character did not truly take after the ancient chorus for it aimed to somehow "hold the mirror [. . .] up to nature" (2:2:18-19), as Hamlet says (though not in the adaptation too). It acted collectively to suggest that our everyday existence is part of a collective person: society. Yet any homogeneity of both rationalization of events and expression was shunned. The members of the collective character retained individuality of opinion, emotion and response to what they saw at the Danish court, even as they acted as an aggregate mass disapproving of the court's boisterous entertainment or worried about Hamlet's strange deportment. Furthermore, while the choice of female characters was motivated by the gender of the student actors, it was also symbolically consistent with empirical knowledge of gendered psycho-social motivations and conduct: women are much harder to convince of anything and more inquisitive than men are. Persuade women and you have persuaded everyone else. One of the female characters, Glennis, moreover, was tipsy; drinking, she believed, would quell her fright. She knew she might encounter the Ghost any time, for its story had been circulating for a while, after all. The other women expressed their fear—or wonder—differently, as we shall see soon.

On the other hand, the female soldier-sentinels turned frightened witnesses not fully protected, in Glennis's case, by spirits against the Spirit haunting Elsinore, had yet another dramatic flavour. Before we spell that out, let us examine the function(s) of role doubling in the 2018 *Hamlet*.

One practical function of role doubling related to what professional theatre has virtually always been concerned with: to manage the mismatch between the small number of actors and the relatively large number of parts in certain productions. However, a comparison of the original text with that in the director's copy may reveal interesting instances of role doubling and also of something else altogether. We will start with two fairly straightforward cases in Scene 18 of the 2018 *Hamlet* (corresponding to Shakespeare's Act 5, scene 2) before proceeding to more complex, symbolically charged cases. In Scene 18,

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men how to "achiev[e] male identity" (66), through a particular representation of femininity by men (as enacted onstage by cross-dressed men).

Osric's two lines[12] were reassigned to Marcellus, for Osric was one of the characters edited out of the adaptation, as were Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the various lords at Claudius's court, or Fortinbras. Similarly, since the script retained Fortinbras's "O proud death, / What feast is toward in thine eternal cell / That thou so many princes at a shot / So bloodily hast struck?" (5:2:343-346), but not the character, his lines had to be reassigned, and they were prefixed to Horatio's farewell speech.

Yet line reassignment did not always work that neatly. On the one hand, there were instances when a male character was edited out of a particular scene, but not of the overall adaptation. Such was Scene 15 (corresponding to Shakespeare's Act 4, scene 5), where what was retained of Horatio's lines was fully reassigned to Valeria and Georgia. The two women informed Queen Gertrude about Ophelia's strange conduct (soon to appear as sheer madness), and the overall exchange unfolded as women's talk about an absent woman's erratic ways—gossip at its most classic. On the other hand, there was role doubling proper, mostly entrusted to the collective character. For instance, in Scene 17 (corresponding to Shakespeare's Act 5, scene 1), Glennis doubled as one of the gravediggers (the first Clown) and Maggie as the other. Nonetheless, one-to-one matching was rather infrequent. In Scene 9 (corresponding to Shakespeare's Act 2, scene 2), Bernarda doubled fairly consistently as the First Player of the itinerant troupe visiting Elsinore. However, when the First Player recited to Hamlet Virgil's *Aeneid*'s description of Pyrrhus and Priam clashing, the lines were partially shared with Glennis, Clare, Maggie and Francisca.

Such "erratic" line sharing, whether or not in role doubling proper, was unlikely to alert any but *Hamlet* connoisseurs in the audience to the likely symbolic burden of line or even role reassignment. Readers of the director's copy, however, can get amazing insights simply by placing the two scripts side by side. Let us examine the case of the soldier-courtiers, particularly in what corresponds, in the adaptation, to Shakespeare's first act. Granted that the 2018 *Hamlet* edited out Barnardo and Francisco altogether, or rather feminized them, yet also redistributed some half of their retained lines, such line reassignment begs comparison with that concerning Marcellus and Horatio, two characters whom the adaptation retained. Bernarda, whose name suggests she replaced Shakespeare's male character, shared some of Barnardo's lines with Glennis, Clare, Valeria or Maggie throughout the scenes that drew on Shakespeare's first act; Francisca (Francisco's female replacement), with Clare. Conversely, Horatio, although retained, lost most of his lines in the Ghost episode. Thus, in Scenes 2, 3 and 6 (roughly corresponding to Shakespeare's Act 1, scenes 1, 3, 4 and 5), Horatio's *emotional identity* was adopted by Georgia (his a priori disbelief, yet also his radical change thereof), as well as by Valeria and Glennis

[12] "Look to the queen there, ho!" (5:2:283) and "How is't Laertes?" (5:2:285).

(his post-factum wonder and terror). Likewise, some of Horatio's lines were reassigned to the aforementioned characters, and others to Maggie. (It may be instructive to recall that Maggie shared some of the lines of Shakespeare's First Player with Bernarda, his most consistent, but not exclusive, impersonator in the adaptation.) Marcellus, also edited out here, was impersonated by Glennis, Maggie, Valeria and Clare.

By contrast, Scene 4 (corresponding in part to Shakespeare's Act 1, scene 2) introduced Horatio and Marcellus, Hamlet's Wittenberg fellows, a preposterous position for female characters. Returned to Denmark for King Hamlet's funerals, Horatio and Marcellus had witnessed the apparition themselves—presumably from another vantage point than the women's in Scene 3—and confessed their dumb terror. Yet their "reported speech" here rewrote, in definitely dignified terms, the women's "direct speech" in Scene 3. It sounded as if the entire issue, in Shakespeare, but especially in the 2018 adaptation, concerned re-establishing the dignity of masculinity through vaunting the manliness of courtiers confessedly frightened by an apparition. We do not wish to argue that the 2018 *Hamlet* embarked on a deliberate male- (and masculine-) assertive project. Rather, the adaptation's reworking of the early encounter with the Ghost in female terms also affected the diction of the respective parts, due to the unconscious desire for culturally sanctioned gender verisimilitude.

Consider, in this respect, the previous scene's inebriated Glennis, whose terror was, at script level, the legacy of brave Horatio in Shakespeare's Act 1, scene 2. When she first appeared, in Scene 3, Glennis answered Bernarda's identity-related query "Ce, e şi Glennis?"—a rewriting of Barnardo's "What, is Horatio there?" (1:1:19) to match names—with a pronominal emendation of Shakespeare's Horatio's "A piece of him" (1:1:19): "Ce-a mai rămas din ea" (roughly, "A piece of her"). Indeed, unlike in Shakespeare, where there is no intimation that Horatio (or anyone else) might be inebriated, here Glennis uttered her line with such a poise as to show unambiguously that she had let the spirits get the best of her. The other women, too, sounded precipitate in their rendition of the lines describing their encounter with—or, as the case may be, incredulity towards the existence of—the Ghost. To this contributed two additions to Shakespeare's text: the women hushed each other in Scene 6 (corresponding to Shakespeare's Act 1, scene 4), when they saw the Ghost approaching Hamlet; and a terror-stricken Glennis interpellated the Ghost, in Scene 3, by a surprising onomatopoeia. Glennis's twice uttered "Pst!" (the Romanian onomatopoeia for "hey you!") was ludicrously inappropriate stylistically for its recipient—the spirit of a king. *Terror sacrum* (or something akin) she may have been feeling, but words failed her pitiably, as they do drunkards. All in all, in the adapted Ghost episode, the female group's performance as a collective character—however distinct, in many respects, from the ancient chorus—would recall the (medieval) gossips. Allegedly gossipy (in

the modern sense), the latter group was, due to the category's simultaneously abstract generalizing scope and largely libellous branding, a larger-than-life character both on- and offstage. Let us elaborate on this a little.

In her *Transforming Talk: The Problem with Gossip in Late Medieval England*, Susan E. Phillips has analyzed the late medieval construal of the disenfranchised, first and foremost women, as subversive to the hegemony. Their real or imaginary counter-discourse resulted in the collective label *gossips* (for women alone) and the branding of unsanctioned speech, to this day, as gossip. The feminization of the marginals taking liberties with discursive agency, at a time of consistent religious and secular silencing of women, alongside (mis)representation of gossip as unbecoming conduct often fuelled by inebriation, rendered unruliness women's premier *social sin*.

Thus suggest especially the *damnation plays* of Chester's late medieval biblical drama. Chester's is, arguably, a "non-coincidental bias towards the damnation of women" (Ciobanu 275-276): in *Noah's Flood*, of the Good Gossips (C3/201[13]); in *The Harrowing of Hell*, of Mulier (i.e., Woman), the "gentle gossippe" (C17/286); and in *The Last Judgement*, of high-rank women for their feminine "lapses". Yet the gossips' conviviality in the Chester *Noah's Flood* is worth examining here. Unlike any other Middle English Flood play, Chester's features a collective character, the Good Gossips, Noah's wife's female friends. The nameless Good Gossips invite the equally nameless Noah's Wife (manuscript speech-heading) to drink together strong "malnesaye" (C3/233)[14] right when Noah and sons struggle to get her aboard the ark.[15] Yet, not for the sake of good old times do the women prepare to drink heartily (231-232) to "rejoyse both harte and tonge" (234), but actually so as to ward off their fear of the fast-sweeping Flood (225-236):

> THE GOOD GOSSIPS
> The fludd comes fleetinge in full faste,
> one everye syde that spredeth full farre.
> *For fere of drowninge I am agaste;*
> *good gossippe, lett us drawe nere*. (C3/225-228, emphasis added)

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[13] The notation identifies respectively the Chester collection, the position within it of the individual play and the line (range).

[14] Malmsey is a sweet wine traditionally served on special occasions such as weddings.

[15] Chester's Gossips embody, therefore, the incriminating response mounted by an anxiety-ridden patriarchy to the advent of all-female social practices based on, and fuelling, female bonding, regarded as disruptive of the patriarchal civic fabric.

Unlike Noah,[16] his ostensibly gregarious wife can think of—and, in Chester, also extend empathetic, if short-lived, support to—her disenfranchised community of gossips when faced with the deluge.[17] The *tipsy* women of the Chester *Noah's Flood* confirm the overarching patriarchal discrediting of women,[18] lest they rightfully claim access to positions of power and the right to legitimate self-representation. Here, however, the gossips (wherein Noah's wife may be included temporarily) are savvy women who can, by implication, feel for themselves what the Flood accomplishes: the obliteration of human empathy (as demonstrated by Noah).

To revert to the 2018 *Hamlet*, we would argue that the gossipy female soldier-courtiers who watched Hamlet's congress with the Ghost and reported it to each other, and thereby to the audience, showed the mechanics of rumour-mongering (as well as vision-making). However, their consubstantiality with the medieval gossips, inebriation and all, drew upon the patriarchal incrimination of women as prone to drinking, debauchery and generally unruliness, but especially as untrustworthy and weak in all respects. Of course, such appraisal of the collective character as quasi-gossips in the medieval sense, sans counter-hegemonic discursive burden, may sound rather biased. Indeed, we cannot presume other spectators would necessarily have felt the same about Glennis (and her fellows), had they been well acquainted with medieval England.

Gossips or not, the collective character could not but elicit reconsidering the question of role doubling in the 2018 *Hamlet*, *beyond* staging practicalities. Role doubling revealed intellectual, symbolic and emotional functions.

To tease out the further implications of role doubling, we should first consider one basic assumption of the artistic profession. The actor is the "artistic instrument" that can, indeed must, "give life" to characters, that is to say, to "other people"; s/he behaves and lives offstage other than s/he does onstage. Yet the actor could be her-/himself living in the very way s/he impersonates the character as doing, had the elements which make up her/his life course occurred in a different succession. (This could also mean that s/he may not have become

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[16] The seemingly solitary patriarch has found favour with God for his singular righteousness, consistently named in all the Middle English biblical plays, on vetero-testamentary template, God-*fearing* conduct.

[17] Nonetheless, Chester's is not an anticipation of the modern psychodrama of gender identity and roles, which describes men as independent and competitive and women as other-related, viz., engaged in a network of relationships in the service of the other rather than intent on advancing one's personal interests.

[18] The discrediting of women—whether Eve or Mary Magdalene—in Judaeo-Christianity suggests a pattern which most people barely discern. See Schaberg (75-78) on the *harlotization* of Mary Magdalene as the most successful technology for disempowering women.

an actor at all.) What our remark entails is, ultimately, the human "manyness" to which an actor is committed professionally and emotionally.

One step further, let us try to imagine what a stage play could have looked like in the age represented by Shakespeare in any one of his plays. Willy-nilly, at some point we cannot but regard the show as rather the narration of the dramatic world's events, a "gossip" (in the modern, not medieval, sense) shared by the actors and spectators, in which some city notabilities also took part. What mattered, therefore, was *the story*, its novelty, which aimed to quench the characters'—and, at one remove, the spectators'—thirst for something new by offering a certain kind of information. Such shared gossiping could only be undertaken by an "informant"—that person or persons who had *watched* things. In the 2018 *Hamlet*, those who had "watched" were the women, or perhaps *Women*! Beyond contingencies such as the gender of most of the young student actors, of paramount importance appears to have also been a psychological gender trait as honed or perhaps merely stereotyped under patriarchy: women can accommodate to a certain topic remarkably well, especially insofar as it concerns rumour-mongering and generally gossiping. Simply stated, women are credited as always already able to get an informational update seemingly effortlessly. In this connection, empirical observation may suggest that when women gossip, the one who is talking never appears *not* to wish to "enact" that about which she gossips.[19] This may be indicative of women's deep-seated wish to be actresses—and made the young women particularly verisimilar "actors" in the 2018 show, hence the observer/witness–actor doubling. Role doubling in this case catered for this human wish for doubling as someone else when we take our distance from the story we narrate.

* * *

Analyzing *Dogg's Hamlet*, *Cahoot's Macbeth* as an adaptation of *Hamlet*, Gianakaris rightly observes that Stoppard's "utilitarian approach" to borrowing and adapting from his predecessor "cannibaliz[es] literary masterpieces—a trait [Stoppard] shares with Shakespeare" (225). Mutatis mutandis, we would argue, so did the 2018 *Hamlet* adaptation. Whilst the adapted script drew upon Shakespeare's text fairly accurately, save reassignment of lines to other, sometimes invented, characters, as we have seen, its staging capitalized on an individualized collective character (*sic*) that "cannibalized" theatrical and non-theatrical tradition alike. Not drastic text condensation would strike the 2018 *Hamlet* spectators, but the theatrical complexity and psychological verisimilitude

[19] From our modest familiarity with men's gossip, men appear to take their distance from the person(s) whom they talk about. Such difference in impersonation proclivities may owe to the differential gender identity with respect to the other-relation.

of marginal characters such as the witnesses of the Ghost, with their humanizing touch on the encounter. Understanding the Romanian adaptation could benefit tremendously from having the opportunity to read its script—as does understanding Stoppard's play from reading the playwright's explanatory notes in the Introduction. On the other hand, the 2018 *Hamlet* resembled in its earnest sobriety not the burlesque *Dogg's Hamlet* but the relatively restrained *Cahoot's Macbeth* (at least before the anti-totalitarian farce starts through recourse to the same Dogg language of *Dogg's Hamlet*). Could this have been one of those "energies" Stephen Greenblatt has teased out in the cultural fabric of the Renaissance, which in this case crossed cultures and ages, dramatic and non-dramatic texts, as well as mature and very young minds, without owing to any particularly circumscribable elective affinities?

Ours has been here an argument regarding the many-faceted complexity of the 2018 stage adaptation of *Hamlet*. In a cultural and spatiotemporal context far removed from Shakespeare's, the student production nevertheless echoed cross-culturally attitudes, discourses and texts, some of which preceded the Elizabethan Age, whether in England or in ancient Greece. The director testifies that the 2018 adaptation did not consciously deploy any such echoes to boost its characters' appeal to contemporary audiences, but especially to create such characters in the first place. Nor did the production aspire to participate in the contemporary Global Shakespeare adaptation phenomenon, specifically by challenging the centre (*Hamlet*, the Shakespeare canon and/or the western cultural canon) from the socio-cultural and/or gender margins.[20] It would not be far-fetched, therefore, to argue that the cross-cultural echoes occurred, in the 2018 *Hamlet*, in part due to shared assumptions about people's character and

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[20] Shakespeare adaptation/appropriation within the Global Shakespeare phenomenon, itself "fuelled by the myth of the canon's utilitarian value" (Joubin and Mancewicz 2), has become an arena for playing up both glocal cultural, ideological and/or political issues and technological prowess. Some critics decry such output as hardly relevant to either Shakespearean drama or adaptation practices, whether it regards technological enhancement (see Kidnie 89-101 on Robert Lepage's *Elsinore*'s reception) or the increasing *decentring* of Shakespeare in diasporic and minority productions (see Huang 283; Fischlin 5-6), for "Shakespeare is a site (and sign) of political struggle as well as the name of an author" (Albanese 1). Simply stated, Shakespeare has stepped down from the traditional position of power-related cultural privilege to be relocated in the public culture outside the academia (Albanese 4-6). See also Huang's overview of controversies over the progressive or reactionary politics of global Shakespeares, and the contributions to Massai's *World-Wide Shakespeares*. Some critics praise Global Shakespeare as "transnational cultural flow" (Huang 282) and an empowering resource for minoritized communities and the culturally disenfranchised (see essays in Desmet, Iyengar and Jacobson); others decry it as symptomatic of globalization and/or commodification of western cultural capital as universal value (Huang 274, 278; Joubin and Mancewicz 6-7), with Shakespeare commodified as a brand name (Massai 4).

personality and in part unwittingly, if through immersion in a shared European culture.

We would suggest that even without striving for originality at any cost such as shocking the spectators out of their cultural and theatrical comfort zone, yet without being unoriginal either, the 2018 Romanian *Hamlet* indicated that there is still room for a "new" *Hamlet* on the stage without rewriting it unrecognizable. Besides, the performance's bold choices from female witnesses (including invented characters) to half-visible and half-invisible dumb Gonzago play brought together contemporary metatheatrical concerns and issues of knowledge-/visuality-making with traditional patriarchal views of women's sociality. If, in present-day Romania (as elsewhere), women's speech[21] or interests may be still derided in certain social contexts, the 2018 *Hamlet* raised women's "gossip" to an unexpected position of authority—a position of knowledgeability spliced with empathy. These women were the ones who both mediated ghost(ly) knowledge to the audience and could recite the canonical texts of the past to the prince schooled at Wittenberg. *Hamlet* was a performance that bowed neither to political correctness nor to politics. It shunned political correctness with respect to both gender identity or roles and (misguided) reverence for the "sanctity" of Shakespeare's text. If it was political at all, it was through its choice not to ignore our implicit—perhaps complicit—participation in all things socio-political, whether we consciously attend to them or not. And Shakespeare might have given the latter a knowledgeable nod.

Appendix

Hamlet by William Shakespeare – adaptation
Student production, 2018[22]

Cast

Hamlet: Ionuţ Roşu
Ophelia: Nicoleta Zghibarţă
Gertrude: Ioana Chesoi
Claudius: Vlad Boloagă
Polonius: Gabriel Roşu

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[21] See Cixous (52) in more general terms on the issue of women's silencing through derision of their speech.

[22] The video recording of the performance (*Hamlet – Colegiul Național de Arte "Regina Maria" Constanța*) was published on YouTube on 5 May 2020 by the Faculty of Arts of Ovidius University of Constanţa, as part of the #StayHome campaign.

Laertes: Roberto Savu
Glennis: Ada Rusu
Bernarda: Daria Panaite
Clare: Sînziana Mocanu
Francesca: Beatrice Marciuc
Georgia: Alexandra Cîinaru
Valeria: Andreea Ciurea
Maggi: Rebeca Chiriac
Horatio: Gabriel Sandu
Marcellus: Andrei Calu

Directed by Dana Trifan Enache

Text adaptation: Iulian Enache
Project assistant: Alexandru Siclitaru
Choreography: Bianca Manta
Musical adaptation: Adrian Mihai

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Book Reviews

Emi Hamana, *Shakespeare Performances in Japan: Intercultural-Multicultural-Translingual*. Yokohama: Shumpusha, 2019. Pp. 188.

Reviewed by ***Yoshiko Matsuda***[*]

Since the 1990s, as the theories of postcolonialism and cultural studies have developed in Shakespeare studies, a great number of works concerning the localization of Shakespeare in performance in Asian countries have attracted wider attention among Shakespearean scholars and theatre practitioners worldwide. Significant books such as *Shakespeare in Asia* (2010) edited by Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan, or *Performing Shakespeare in Japan* (2001) by Minami Ryuta, Ian Carruthers and John Gillies, have shown us how Asian theatre has adapted or sometimes appropriated Shakespeare's "original" texts in the process of modernization and globalization. With this book, *Shakespeare Performances in Japan: Intercultural-Multicultural-Translingual*, Emi Hamana, one of the leading scholars of theatre studies in Japan, updates our perspective of the localization of Shakespeare through performance in contemporary Japanese theatre. With outstanding examples of "case studies" of Shakespeare performances in Japan within the last ten years or so, this book allows us to discover the power of a Shakespearean performance which can change our cognitive and even social reality in international, multilingual and translingual ways.

This book is divided into two parts; Part I "Intercultural and Multilingual Performance" composed of 4 chapters, and Part II "Translingual Performance" consisting of 3 chapters. Apart from chapter 5, where fundamental concepts of translingual practice is demonstrated by close-reading and analyzing the translingual moment between Henry and Katharine in the well-known wooing scene in *Henry V*, the book discusses Shakespeare performances in Japan from 2008 to 2017, aiming "to investigate them against the broad background of world Shakespeare performance studies" (12). Hamana began the project "combining Shakespeare studies and intercultural education more than

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fifteen years ago" (9), and in that sense, her main interest is always in investigating educational or interactive effects which Shakespeare performances have on our communities. The chapters in the book are not necessarily placed in chronological order, and she doesn't try to discover how Shakespeare performances have developed or evolved in Japan over the last ten years. Hamana, however, highly appreciates the fact that Shakespeare performances in Japan are now in the phase of transformation from intercultural or multilingual to translingual and that these performances actually change the world in which we live.

Part I, including chapters 1 to 4, deals with the present intercultural or multilingual situation of Shakespeare performances in Japan, analyzing certain performances or directors in each chapter. While Hamana admits that interculturalism is sometimes inseparably mingled with the history of European imperial expansion, and that intercultural theatre is, for better or for worse, a product of the globalized Shakespeare industry, she also believes that it can function as "a conduit" (36) for a cultural exchange between two cultures and reveals the "uniqueness" (35) which each culture has. In chapter 1, she discusses a Japanese-Korean performance of *Othello in Noh Style* (2008), a collaboration of Ku Na'uka, a Japanese theatre company, and Lee Young-taek, a leading Korean director, as an example of an intercultural performance of Shakespeare. By incorporating the elements of Korean shamanistic ritual and Japanese Noh theatre, the performance focuses on the salvation of Desdemona's soul instead of the racial issue of Othello in the original text. Pointing out that no other "feminist" intercultural performances of Othello explicitly address Desdemona's spiritual condition after her death, Hamana argues that the local performance of Othello has potential to disclose, question and subvert the original text.

Such potential which a local Shakespeare performance has in contemporary Japan in the aftermath of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami is pursued in the next chapter, "Performing Shakespeare after the March 2011 Disaster: Yamanote Jijosha's *The Tempest*." Yamanote Jijosha is a small theatre company based in Tokyo, and its founder and director, Masahiro Yasuda, is known for his *yojohan* acting method which confines "the movements of actors to the space of a typical tearoom size, *yojohan*" (39). Yamanote Jijosha's *Tempest* (2015), a radical adaptation of Shakespeare's original text, also utilizes his acting method, and presents the apocalyptic vision of humankind with the extreme physicality deeply rooted in contemporary Japanese life, rejecting the reconciliation in the romantic and consoling ending of the original text. Although the theatre company is not a "major" or commercialized one among Japanese theatre companies, the adaptation works as a strong criticism toward Japanese society after the disaster. Hamana highly values the company's postdramatic activity, writing that they present "Shakespeare in a manner to which contemporary Japanese audiences

can relate, retaining the underground theatrical spirit of resistance against establishment" (50).

In the next two chapters, Hamana continues to explore the possibility and significance of Shakespeare performances in recent Japan, dealing with Ninagawa Yukio's late directions of *Richard II* (2015), *Ninagawa Macbeth* (2015) and *The Two Gentleman of Verona* (2015), and Suzuki Tadashi's *King Lear* (2009). Both are the most famous and successful Japanese directors who have adapted Western plays into Japanese contexts, and moreover, have taken their performances abroad and received high commendations from both critics and audiences. In chapter 4, "Multilingual Performances of Shakespeare Worldwide: Multilingual *King Lear*, Directed by Tadashi Suzuki," she discusses the possibilities of multilingual performances of Shakespeare through her case study of the 2009 version of *King Lear* produced by SCOT, the Suzuki Company of Toga, in the mountainside village of Toga in Toyama prefecture. Multilingualism is a concept referring to the situation where there is "the knowledge and use of three or more languages" (Bhathia and Ritchie xxi). Hence, multilingual theatre could be interpreted as a theatre where three or more languages are used and understood by performers and sometimes the audience. In that sense, Suzuki's *King Lear* is a genuine multilingual performance which used four languages: German (spoken by Lear), English (by Goneril), Korean (by Regan) and Japanese (by Cordelia). Since Suzuki's choice of these four languages does not necessarily reflect the current linguistic condition in Japan, Hamana supposes that they are chosen for artistic and contingent reasons. This performance, however, reveals the reality of dis/communication in our society. She proceeds: "the four-language version of *King Lear* foregrounds the dysfunctional family that cannot understand one another" (82), and from the perspective of multicultural theatre, the limitation or incomprehensibility of language is important for the appearance of translingual practices where people who are from different cultures and speak different languages try to understand each other beyond the limitation of their otherness and heterogeneity.

The latter half of the book focuses on translingualism in Shakespeare's text and performances. Chapter 5 examines the translingual scenes of *Henry V* and demonstrates the translingual practice between the people of different linguistic and cultural background. Translingual practice signals a paradigm shift in language education, and its central concept is that communication "transcends individual language" and "involves diverse semiotic resources and ecological affordances" (91). Translingualism is differentiated from multilingualism in that translingual practices emphasize not linguistic communication but semiotic or cultural interaction and conflict as a significant motive to understand each other better, whereas the multilingualism just refers to the coexistence of different languages. Therefore, translingual practice is necessarily accompanied with something complementary for our mutual communication. The complementary

systems in translingualism are semiotic resources such as voice, facial expressions and gestures, and ecological affordances such as the circumstances and settings available for interaction. The wooing scene in *Henry V*, where Henry, the English king, has an exchange with Katharine, the French princess, in English and French presents an example of translingual practice. Although they each speak in their own languages, Henry sometimes speaks in broken French, and Katharine also speaks in broken English. Although neither of them understand the other language fully in the scene, the exchange highlights the significance of the incomprehensibility, or conflict which requires our awareness of "otherness," and drives us to further communication.

Then how do we develop communication with "others" beyond incomprehensibility? Hanama expects that there is the possibility of using innovative digital technology and ideas as the means of semiotic resources and ecological affordances. In chapter 7, she shows how *Safaring the Night* directed by Yasuro Ito, "a highly experimental production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*" (131), represents the current translingual reality in 2010's Japan. The adaptation is set in the world of virtual reality in 2045, in which the age of so-called singularity is predicted to come, and two AI enterprises, Oberon and Titania, who once fought a war with each other, have now agreed to a historic integration. It was performed as immersive theatre, and the audience became participants in the action, downloading a special application of the performance to their smartphones, walking around the special venue in the studio decorated by projection mapping, and finally making their decisions about the ending of the story through the app. Hamana suggests that all these props and devices of the production to immerse the audience into the world of *Safaring the Night* should be regarded as semiotic resources and ecological affordances in translingual practices to promote interactive communication beyond the limitation of languages in performances of Shakespeare. These factors of semiotic resources and ecological affordances require an audience member to "be a highly active, ethical and thoughtful agent in the performance" (148), and there we recognize the possibility of translingual practices in theatrical performance which stimulate the awareness towards the actual world that is abundant with conflict and incomprehensibility.

At the end of the book, Hamana again emphasizes the potential of Shakespeare's works which "will continue to be adapted, recycled and updated for a variety of audiences worldwide, thus giving life to new performative forms and meaning—whether intercultural, multilingual or translingual" (150). As a specialist of performance studies as well as language education, she strongly believes that cultural contact through performance, adaptation, or translation of Shakespeare actually changes our cognitive and social reality in spite of incomprehensibility and heterogeneity inherent in communication. Her belief about the possibilities of cultural exchanges fascinatingly connects the concepts

of intercultural, multilingual, and translingual practice to the contemporary performances of Shakespeare in Japan. In that sense, this book is an innovative and welcome contribution to Shakespeare studies, as well as performance and adaptation studies that are always waiting to be updated.

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Li Jun, *Popular Shakespeare in China*: *1993-2008*. Beijing: University of International Business and Economics Press, 2016. Pp. 199.

Reviewed by ***Lan Zhou***[*]

As the book title indicates, this book surveys a period from 1993 to 2008, a span of fifteen years around the turn of the millennium, on the topic of popular Shakespeare in China. During this period, China witnessed the important cultural phenomenon of a Shakespeare boom. This cultural phenomenon was also characterized by the development of a socialist market economy and the rise of popular culture. This book is significant and new as it addresses issues on popular Shakespeare during this important historical period. Li's awareness of the notable different situations between China and the West can best be seen in his research method with cultural materialism—a perspective rooted in Marxist theory and popular in Shakespeare studies of recent years. This book explores how these two cultural entities, Shakespeare and popular culture in China, "are determined by various political, economic, or social factors in a peculiar Chinese context," which contribute to a localized study of popular Shakespeare (Preface). It tries to explore the relationship between Shakespeare and popular culture by examining three basic traits of popular Shakespeare in China: accessibility-oriented and audience-oriented, carnivalesque, and re-contextualization (169).

This book starts with an overview of the scholarship on Shakespeare in China from 1989-1990 and onward. An array of major scholarly works written in Chinese are carefully reviewed with an objective evaluation of their remarkable contribution as well as limitations. Li also notices an increase of works in English by authors that embrace both international vision and cultural heritage. Among these, two deserve special mention: Li Ruru's *Shashibiya: Staging Shakespeare in China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003) and Alexa Huang's *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), both of which are highly evaluated by the author and have a discernable influence on his book. Rather than following the critical tradition of making a general comparison of Shakespeare's plays between the East and the West or searching for Shakespeare-ness within the Western tradition, Li follows the method shared by Li Ruru and Huang by "exploring full meanings of both Shakespeare and China in the process of localizing and re-contextualizing Shakespeare in China" (9). It adds to the book's originality and academic depth. Moreover, Li Ruru's and Huang's acute senses of fundamental changes and new trends of Shakespeare performances in China help shed light on Li's research.

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The tension between Shakespeare's high-cultural status and vitality in popular culture is a heated topic in Shakespeare studies. However, the concept of popular culture is still problematic and difficult to define. An outstanding merit of Li's book is its outlining of several basic characteristics of popular culture in China. Li tries to draw from Western theorists and literary critics of culture studies, such as Matthew Arnold, F. R. Leavis, Theodor Adorno, Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, John Fiske, and Mikhail Bakhtin, to formulate a working definition of popular culture. Despite their spectrum of varying attitudes towards popular culture, Li sets the definition in historical context by applying fundamental principles of Marxist criticism, which highlight the social conditions represented by the market economy base and the importance of populace.

This book has a chronological approach with three subdivisions of the whole period (1. The 1990s, 2. Between 2000 and 2008, 3. 2009 and after). Each shares the aforementioned characteristics while evolving to new implications and complexities. During the 1990s popular Shakespeare was a new phenomenon in China. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the emergence of a booming culture industry and a competitive culture market promised a more diverse form in Shakespeare productions. The post-2008 period witnesses the opportunities and challenges of global culture industry. Shakespeare productions during this time span have displayed new shades to be more prolific and cross-cultural.

Li explores the emergence of popular Shakespeare in China in the 1990s by focusing on two productions of *Twelfth Night* in the years 1993 and 1999 respectively. Shakespeare had been a highly mystified icon of high culture in China before the 1990s. Those two productions of *Twelfth Night* are chosen as examples of a new cultural phenomenon that challenged high culture. He draws on Bakhtin's theory to explain the subversive nature of popular culture, analyzes several aspects of the carnival (including music, makeup, and language) in the 1993 version, and critiques another particular paradigm of the carnival—carnivalesque laughter in the 1999 version. As both productions were by the same co-directors, they are good for comparison. While the 1993 version is significant for its awareness of incorporating elements of popular culture and marks a popular Shakespeare rising in China, Li finds an intentional reinforcement of carnival spirit in the 1999 version. Take Malvolio, a minor character for example: his costume creates a comic effect by having a mismatched Chinese tunic suit paired with Western-style bottoms, whereas he simply wears a Chinese tunic suit in the 1993 version. As Li observes, Malvolio's new image in the 1999 version "sarcastically addresses the contradictory sentiments of both nationalism and xenophilia" at that time (58). Compared with the campus production in 1993, what made the market-oriented

production in 1999 a great success was social progress and the vitality of cultural enterprises in the late 1990s.

Li further explores popular Shakespeare in China between 2000 and 2008 through three categories of Shakespeare productions: "big-time" productions, "autobiographical" small-time productions, and "anthropological" small-time productions. He creatively annotates Alexa Huang's definition of small-time Shakespeare productions by subdividing them into two categories. He concludes that there is an ongoing evolution of popular Shakespeare from the "big-time" to the "small-time" productions in mainland China during this period. Li concentrates on nine distinct Shakespeare productions representative of those varied categories: Tian Qinxin's *Ming* in Beijing in 2008, three performances (*Richard III*, *Coriolanus*, and *Hamlet*) by the avant-garde director Lin Zhaohua, and five productions (*Approaching Shakespeare*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* staged in three cities) by several directors (Peter Lichtenfels as the only foreign theatre director). His detailed analysis looks at several aspects of the adapted plays. The argument goes as follows: the accessibility and audience-oriented "small-time" productions represent popular Shakespeare in a truer sense and they are more fitting and valuable than "big-time" and director/adapter-centered "small-time" Shakespeare productions in China during this period (71). According to Li, the commodity fetishism and *shengshi* (a grand nation) ideology of *Ming* drives away *King Lear*'s intrinsic aesthetic value from the adapted play. On the other hand, Li argues that Lin Zhaohua's productions go too far in experimenting with form and challenging mainstream theatre conventions, rendering them difficult for general appreciation. Productions of the first two categories serve one of two ends: either commercial and political ends which are not primarily aesthetic, or the director's ends which are not primarily audience-oriented. There is an ongoing evolution of Shakespeare from the "big-time" to the "small-time" productions in China. However, Li's personal preference for "anthropological" small-time Shakespeare productions is a slight hindrance to scholarly objectivity. He overstresses audiences' accessibility as the criterion for evaluating adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. As far as the particular socio-economic and cultural conditions are concerned, all these adaptations are valuable attempts to embrace the Bard with local characteristics which will contribute towards the enrichment of literature and the development of culture identities, whether they be commodities of culture industry, art for art's sake, or art for the people's sake.

Another notable contribution of this book lies in its survey of performances and activities relating to Shakespeare in Chinese universities with a case study of the University of International Business and Economics (UIBE) thanks to the author's first-hand observation and direct participation. Based on his personal experience as a former student and a current faculty member, Li provides a detailed account of UIBE's holding of three Shakespeare festivals on

campus and its active participation in the Chinese Universities Shakespeare Festivals. While Li's alma mater is characterized by its business-oriented environment with a strong vocational emphasis, Li and his colleagues ably utilize these business elements by setting new curriculum on Shakespeare's plays and business, following the interdisciplinary course modes practised at universities abroad. He also teaches drama for performance to make the Bard attractive to his students. It reveals his expectations on the Bard's accessibility from the artistic training institutes to the public, especially on how it contributes to the prosperity of art and humanities in domestic colleges and universities. It is a huge task with a promising future in reforming the current learning system, as the young and the well-educated are always a major social composition of the audience. As a platform for education and creativity, campus Shakespeare study holds a great potential in shaping the future of Shakespeare performances in China. Amateur performances and festivals on campus are often ignored by critics, and very little has been known about this topic. Li's study fills the lacuna by drawing attention to the role that Chinese universities play in popularizing Shakespeare in China.

Li's book is largely based on his PhD thesis in 2013. Full of original observations and elaborate footnotes, it is a very informative book despite its occasional careless editing. For example, "The above-reviewed Chinese Shakespearean scholars and their works have made remarkable contribution to Shakespearean studies in China" is a repeated sentence within the same paragraph (4). Li updates and refines his research in a more recent article with a fuller discussion (Li and Sanders). While ambitious as the book title suggests, Li's book does not include important performances from other parts of the Chinese-speaking regions (such as Hong Kong and Taiwan). The historical circumstances make popular Shakespeare in these two locations unique and significant. Nor does it include performances from other areas in China. All the cases only include performances from big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin. The dynamics of popular culture in small cities will also add to a carnivalesque spirit and a larger audience. Besides, the reader might also be interested in various forms of popular Shakespeare (such as fiction, music, and film). Understandably, the author has to be selective when explaining a representative cultural phenomenon, but it would be helpful to include more topics to study the relationship between Shakespeare and popular culture in China.

Various forms of popular Shakespeare production make it easy for the average contemporary Chinese audience to appreciate the Bard and stretch their appreciation of art. The task of popular Shakespeare is to keep a balance between the Bard's cultural legacy and entertainment value. But it doesn't all work out smoothly due to political, social, and cultural factors. Murray Levith criticizes the Chinese adaptations of the Bard for having "celebrated his lesser

plays, neglected several of his masterpieces, excised sex, religion, and contrary politics from his texts, added to them, and at times simplified, corrupted, or misunderstood his characters and themes" (137). Even though Levith's study is based on productions before the year 2000, we are still facing this dilemma to some extent. Hopefully there will be a tendency of high quality productions benefiting from increasingly frequent cultural exchanges and economic growth. By examining a specific form of Shakespeare in a specific context, Li's book demonstrates that Shakespeare productions have been improved and innovated in a new era.

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Soji Iwasaki's Japanese Translation of Shakespeare, *The Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint.* Revised edition. Tokyo: Kokubunsha, 2019. Pp. 242.

Reviewed by ***Yasumasa Okamoto***[*]

Now in Japan ten complete Japanese translations of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* are available for us to read, together with half a dozen translations of his selected sonnets. The translators' names are, in chronological order of their first editions: Shoyo Tsubouchi (1934), Junzaburo Nishiwaki (1966), Ichiro Tamura, Tadanobu Sakamoto, Osamu Rokutanda and Mikio Tabuchi (1975), Nobutaro Nakanishi (1981), Yuichi Takamatsu (1986), Yushi Odashima (2007), Hideo Yoshida (2008), Toshihiko Ohyagi (2013), Soji Iwasaki (2015), and Kenji Ohba (2018). It might be said that these many translations of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* typically show the results of English studies that have been actively carried on in postwar Japan.

Iwasaki's translation, which was revised with a few corrections in a larger format in 2019, is unique first in that he translated Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and *A Lover's Complaint* as a volume as they were originally published in quarto in 1609. Nishiwaki also translated *A Lover's Complaint*, and there were two other translations of the longish narrative poem by Atsuhiko Narita (1995) and by Sadanori Ohtsuka and Yoshitoshi Murasato (2011) before Iwasaki. But the three predecessors were translations independent and separate from *The Sonnets*. Iwasaki enabled the Japanese readers for the first time to read *The Sonnets* and *A Lover's Complaint* as a collection, as a continuous whole.

Iwasaki follows John Kerrigan in considering that Samuel Daniel's *Delia and the Complaint of Rosamond* (1592) gave a model (a tripartite structure) of publishing a sonnet sequence to his contemporary poets, including Thomas Lodge (*Phillis*, 1593), Giles Fletcher (*Licia*, 1593), Edmund Spenser (*Amoretti*, 1595), and Shakespeare. Kerrigan asserts that "as Katherine Duncan-Jones has shown, *Delia* spawned a series of books in which a sonnet sequence is followed by a lyric interlude and a long poem" (66). But Iwasaki does not merely follow Kerrigan. He has long devoted himself to the study of Elizabethan poetry including sonnet sequences and translated into Japanese Samuel Daniel, *Delia with the Complaint of Rosamond* (1592), Henry Constable, *DIANA, OR the excellent conceitful Sonnets of H. C.* (1594), and Michael Drayton, *Idea, In Sixtie Three Sonnets* (1619) [all published by Kokubunsha, in 2000, 2016, 2017 respectively], and edited *English Renaissance Love Sonnets*, an anthology of selected sonnets by his translation of Sir Thomas Wyatt, Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, Sir Philip Sidney, Samuel Daniel, Henry Constable, Michael Drayton,

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Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, and Mary Wroth (Tokyo: Iwanami Library, 2013). He also published *The Poets of the Rose* (Tokyo: Kokubunsha, 2012), which is a collection of essays in Japanese on the Elizabethan sonneteers.

Both Duncan-Jones and Kerrigan think highly of Alastair Fowler's numerological analysis of Elizabethan poetry in his *Triumphal Forms: Structural Patterns in Elizabethan Poetry*. Iwasaki appends to his translation two essays, one of which is entitled "The Individualism of Desire in English Renaissance Poetry: Death of Cupid" and the other is a summarized account of Alastair Fowler's, a little esoteric, theory of numerology in Shakespeare's *Sonnets* which could be made sense of only if *The Sonnets* and *A Lover's Complaint* are considered as a whole. Fowler's analysis also explains the significance of Shakespeare's irregular sonnets (fifteen-line sonnet 99, twelve-line sonnet 126, iambic tetrameter sonnet 145) in his numerological scheme. Iwasaki's summarized account is very useful to the Japanese readers.

Iwasaki has been engaged in English studies with a clear awareness of method. Among his main published works in Japanese are *Shakespeare's Iconology* (1994) and its sequel *Shakespeare's Cultural History: Society, Theatre, Iconology* (2002). In the introductory chapter of the former he explains his method for studying English Renaissance drama. He intends: (1) to read history in images just as history of ideas tried to read history in ideas, (2) to deal with images on the stage as stage tableaux, not as linguistic images, (3) to grasp drama as an integration of visual, auditory and physical experiences, or as a device for making us experience visions rather than as media of transmitting meanings. Thus he pays special attention to Elizabethan emblems and icons, for there exist in emblems both allegorical "picture" and "application" (poetry as an explanation), that is to say both visual images and linguistic expressions, and in icons images and meanings as incarnations of religious and secular cultures. He says that if we call the total system of those images iconography, Renaissance iconography is indispensable for decoding the stage tableaux and visual images of Shakespeare's plays. Iwasaki analyses in terms of iconography *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *The Winter's Tale* in *Shakespeare's Iconology*. His translation of Shakespeare's *Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint* is based upon his accumulated knowledge of Elizabethan poetry and iconology in the wide perspective of cultural history. He provided footnotes to every sonnet and, in addition, 27 relevant illustrations from Geoffrey Whitney, *A Choice of Emblems* (1586) and other sources. This is a second unique feature of his translation.

Iwasaki is well known to the reading public in Japan as the translator of William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1974; Iwanami Library, 2006), in which Empson chooses examples for his analysis from Shakespeare more than any other poet, and especially from Shakespeare's sonnets. A third feature of Iwasaki's translation is that he invites us to be

sensitive to Empsonian ambiguities, or multiple meanings the words and phrases of the sonnets imply. In "Afterword" to his translation he says that we should be sensitive to Empsonian ambiguities, if we are to fully understand the complex ideas implied in "use" in Sonnet 6, the multiple meanings of "lines" in No. 16, the ambiguity of "Th'expense of spirit in a waste of shame" in No. 129, and the ambiguities produced by puns typically found in "will" in No. 135. In the first essay appended to his translation, he quotes Empson's analysis of "lines" in Sonnet 16.

> *Lines of life* refers to the form of a personal appearance, in the young man himself or repeated in his descendants (as one speaks of the lines of someone's figure); time's wrinkles on that face (suggested only to be feared); the young man's line or lineage—his descendants; lines drawn with a pencil—a portrait; lines drawn with a pen, in writing; the lines of a poem (the kind a sonnet has fourteen of); and destiny, as in the life-line of palmistry—*Merchant of Venice*, II. ii. 163. (Empson 54-55)

Iwasaki's translation enables us to read Shakespeare's *Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint* in the wide context of Elizabethan cultures, evoking the multiple meanings the words, images, and ideas may imply in Renaissance iconography, in the total system of associations of Renaissance people.

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Theatre Reviews

Some Shakespeare productions on the Turkish stage in 2017-2018: a one-man *Hamlet*, an all-wet *Romeo and Juliet*, and an all-male *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Reviewed by ***İlker Özçelik***[*]

William Shakespeare is generally considered the greatest dramatist the world has ever known and the finest poet who has written in the English language. Today, he is more present in Turkey than ever. This is partly due to the spectacular growth of his popularity among Turkish people who consider him the symbol of literary and aesthetic values. The present review focuses on three Turkish Shakespeare productions of the 2017-2018 season, namely Bülent Emin Yarar's one-man *Hamlet*; *Romeo and Juliet* produced by the Istanbul State Theatre and directed by Dejan Projkovski; and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* by the Antalya State Theatre.

An exciting one-man version of *Hamlet* or "Meddah Hamlet"

For the Turkish audience, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is by far the best introduction to the playwright's complete works. Talat Halman, the first Minister of Culture of Turkey, argues that "*Hamlet*, as everywhere else, is the jewel in Turkey's Shakespearean crown. In the past 100 years there have been 20 full-dress productions –and in 2004 a ballet version entitled *Naked Hamlet*. Nine different *Hamlet* translations have been published in book form" (17). Halman's review communicates the essence of the Turkish appropriation of the play. Hamlet is recognized as a major figure by the Turkish audience. One could say that the play was written for the Turkish audience, functioning as a tool to resolve any

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cultural conflict between Turkish spectators and the works of the greatest English-speaking playwright.

A one-man version of *Hamlet* was introduced by the Istanbul State Theatre a few years ago, starring Bülent Emin Yarar, an actor in his fifties. The talented actor played all the characters and only used parts of the original text in a ninety-minute show. His performance, by any standards, was a solo "tour de force". The intertwining of his brilliant acting skills with the well-worked text introduced a unique presentation of the uninterrupted descent into the Prince's "madness", bringing his heart and soul to the words.

The stage scenery reflected the mind of the set and costume designer Hakan Dündar. He set the action inside a large red clamshell-like structure, which could also be seen as a big red ring box, which opened facing the audience revealing the sole performer and functioning as the stage space.

The performance stuck resolutely to the three major elements of theatre: the text, the audience and the performer. The director Işıl Kasapoğlu seemed quite successful in that, because he simply followed the basic storyline, truly understanding the essence of Shakespearean drama. Working from a translation by Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, the director streamlined some of the action and reduced the cast to one actor. And Yarar played Old Hamlet (the Ghost) with as much accuracy as he did young Hamlet.

The production could be characterized as the bare bones of the play, as Yarar impersonated all the characters in a shortened version of the original play. At this point one may ask a simple, naïve, yet unavoidable question: Is Hamlet a meddah? A meddah is a traditional, long-established storyteller from Ottoman times. The storytellers gave performances in front of a small audience, in public squares, coffee houses, or even private houses. They were particularly popular in the Ottoman times from the 16th century onwards. The meddahs would tell their stories with great delight, as they changed characters, the tone of their voice, dialects, and also props such as food, a chair, or headwear.

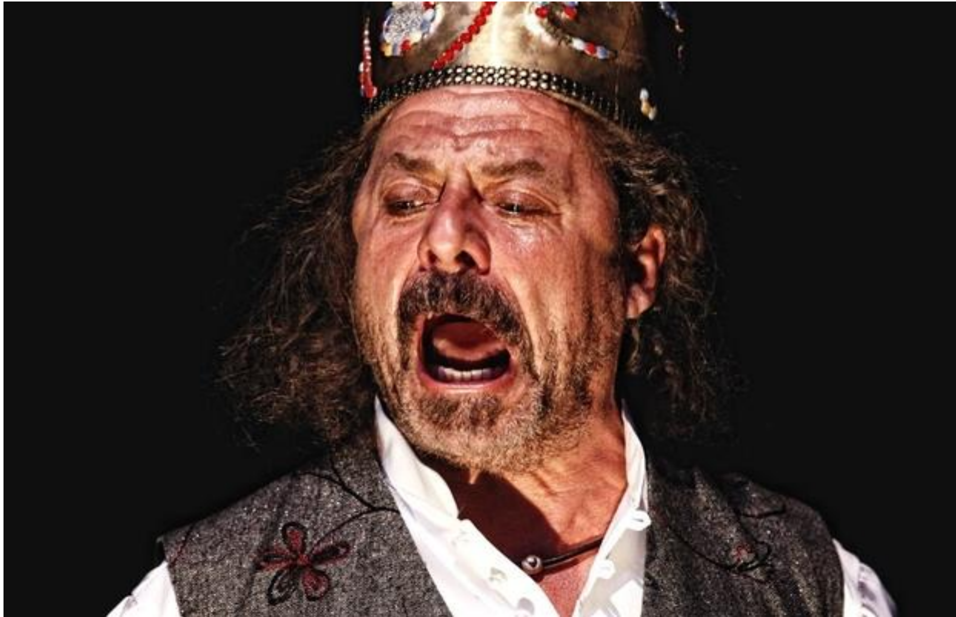
Commenting on the qualities of a meddah, Metin And argues that "[u]sually these storytellers (meddahs) represented several different people by imitating peculiarities of dialects and behaviours, which demanded considerable skill… The storyteller knows various methods of creating and holding suspense and introducing surprise, and employs diverse techniques: inserting pauses, switching from conversational speech to chanting, moving the arms and head in sweeping gestures, whispering, screaming, and pounding his feet. He thus imparts to the audience the wide range of passions and feelings experienced by the narrators" (21). To achieve this effect in the play, director Kasapoğlu and script editor Zeynep Avcı had to rearrange the text.

In an interview with Gülin Dede Tekin in 2018, when he was asked if there was any form of meddah (storyteller) in his one-man *Hamlet*, Yarar said: "This is something spontaneous. It's good for us. Some called it meddah, but we

did not name it. It is somehow experienced by the audience" (Dede Tekin). But with his performance, Yarar guided the audience through Shakespeare's original text, almost in the way a traditional meddah/storyteller might do, giving a glimpse of the character upon which they could build using their own imagination.

What made this performance so unique is that Kasapoğlu and Avcı rearranged and adapted the play so well for a one-man show. In this play's world, all the characters except Hamlet are illusory; the main character changes roles to impersonate different characters. This strengthens the metadramatic aspect of the play, and the concept is also philosophically thought-provoking in that everything except Hamlet is illusion.

In order to better understand the development of illusion, we need to pay special attention to the well-known Shakespearean assumption expressed here by John Lawlor: "the world of appearance is largely the world of illusion, and this illusion is the projection of ourselves, our dominant interests. Thus there is blindness to what is outside our own conception; and so our guesses about each other can be disastrously wrong" (42). John Dover Wilson deepens this perspective when he suggests that it is an illusion that the play has a heart, that the "mystery itself is an illusion, that Hamlet is an illusion. The secret that lies behind it all is not Hamlet's, but Shakespeare's" (229).



Bülent Emin Yarar in *Hamlet* (2017-2018)
(© The Turkish State Theatres Refik Ahmet Sevengil Digital Theatre Archive and Library)

Shakespeare employed a wide range of technical and literary devices to create the dominant and overwhelming theme of illusion that is amplified throughout the entire play, which is organized around various pairs of opposing forces. Hamlet appears to oscillate between lunacy and sanity; he is as much a man of thought as he is a man of action; and he can be proclaimed a coward and a hero. These opposing forces and illusions were skilfully communicated by Yarar throughout the entire play as he apparently brought his own feelings to it and felt what he was portraying. His acting skills fully captured the audience and brought them to a point where they experienced each and every feeling portrayed on the stage, including the hidden depths and elusive nuances of the characters.

With one actor dressed in black, using colourful accessories for different characters, this performance stands as a showcase for the brilliant acting skills of Bülent Emin Yarar, who endowed the characters with all the features of his own personality. Throughout the performance of this inventive solo *Hamlet*, we could track his transformation from a helpless man to a passionate character, from passivity to action. Yarar excelled in this challenging and demanding task and the audience could not help being drawn into the mood swings and internal conflict of the titular character. For over an hour and a half Yarar held the whole audience in the palm of his hand, allowing no one to even breathe until the red ring box, or clamshell-like set piece, closed down on him.

In this exciting one-man version of *Hamlet*, there was truth in every character portrayed by Yarar, who performed with the accompaniment of two sad-faced flautists, Yasemin Taş and Özge Özdemir. Their music strikingly conveyed the shades of emotions and turbulent thoughts of the Prince and suggested each and every feeling of the other characters. As Falk Hübner remarked, "[t]he musicians on stage were thus staged and composed as if they were 'playing' the roles of musicians in a play, instead of 'merely' functioning as on-stage musicians in the larger musical context" (64).

By any standards, Bülent Emin Yarar's solo *Hamlet* was an outstanding performance of Hamlet's tragedy in such an amazing production, that it will be remembered as the way such tragedies should be performed: violently intense, unbelievably powerful, and staggeringly clever.

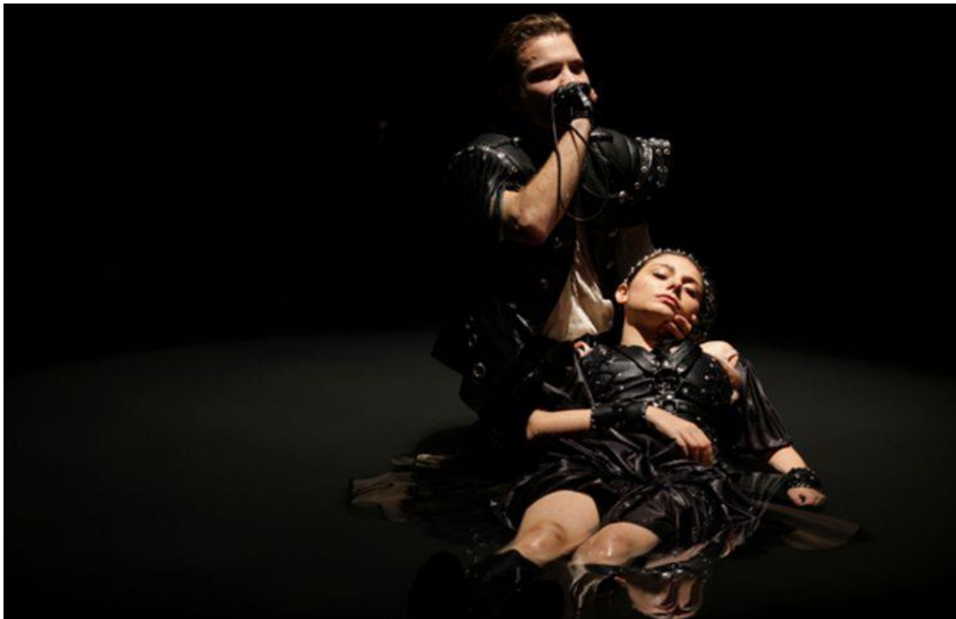
A rain of tears on Romeo and Juliet: the flood of love

The passionate battle of water and fire was presented at the State Theatre in İstanbul, where *Romeo and Juliet* opened in a powerful and explosive brand-new production. This unforgettable show, directed by the general manager of the Macedonian National Theatre, Dejan Projkovski, featured water –tons of it. The

centrepiece of this Verona was a large, enigmatic pond, which functioned as the stage space, apparently for specific dramatic and symbolic purposes. In contrast, there was fire raging within the blood of each and every character, a conflagration so destructive that it threatened to transform Shakespeare's quintessential tragic love story into a collective funeral pyre.

The use of water on stage can be utterly stunning. In recent years, many directors introduced water in their productions, including Vesturport Theatre's amazing *Woyzeck*, Bush Theatre's *In the Red and Brown Water*, or Chichester Festival Theatre's *The Gondoliers*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Seagull* and *The Water Babies*, and so on.

Although water involves challenges ranging from health and safety hazards to keeping the performers warm enough throughout the show, from waterproofing electrical cables to hygiene issues, it is worth it for the wow factor. It is simply captivating. There is almost nothing more sensational and striking than using water onstage, and Projkovski is apparently fond of it. For him, water symbolizes the unstoppable tears, connected to words, thoughts and feelings, pain and sorrow, and most importantly love, a fierce, intense, and uncontrollable force superseding all other values and feelings. In his production, water was used to symbolize the unstoppable tears that neither Romeo nor Juliet imagined being able to swim out of.



A scene from *Romeo and Juliet*. Atakan Akarsu (Romeo) and Damla Ece Dereli (Juliet) (© The Turkish State Theatres Refik Ahmet Sevengil Digital Theatre Archive and Library)

This unforgettable production featured live music and an outstanding new ensemble of actors, starring Damla Ece Dereli as a Juliet truly to die for, and Atakan Akarsu as a quintessential Romeo.

This version of the play centred on the body of water (5 tons of it) that was brought to the stage by the designer M. Nurullah Tuncer. It looked awesome, mirroring twilight and moonlight as early evening turned into night, making a great dramatic and aesthetic impression. For a Shakespearean play like *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night* or even *The Comedy of Errors*, imbued with maritime adventure, it might be relevant to turn on all the taps. But for *Romeo and Juliet*, where the flame and lightning are the most dominant images? As Helen Morris says, "[i]n *Romeo and Juliet*, the dominant imagery is concerned with light –sun, moon, stars, candles, gunpowder, lightning, fire, torches– many times repeated" (71).

The traditional readings and stagings of *Romeo and Juliet* suggest a portrayal of an innocent and victimized love in the darkness of feud-ridden Verona, whereas Projkovski brought a novel approach to the play. Black-haired and luminously pale, Damla Ece Dereli was the perfect, innocent Juliet. She was such a shining candle light that the water motif after all stood to reason in the final death scene of the play. It takes much water to quench such a large and destructive fire.

In this production the ultimate tragic love story was centred on the Adige river, the second longest river in Italy, on whose shores the province of Verona spreads. The water onstage looked great, reflecting the romantic moonlight, but the focus on the Adige river also served and functioned as a split. The city is divided geographically, culturally and socially by the Adige, while Romeo and Juliet are separated by powerful physical, social and emotional barriers at first, and finally driven apart forever through death.

On the other hand, the director used water as a symbol of rebirth, cleansing and purity. For the two star-crossed lovers, the water served as a medium that joined them together as one. Through water, their love became an archetype, expressing the passionate longing to be united and loved forever. In the water, the relationship of Romeo and Juliet and anything else is possible. This type of love passion is cleansing, and it is the water image that best represents their flood of love for each other. As Jennifer L. Martin notes, "[t]his use of water suggests purity, a spiritual component to their love" (45).

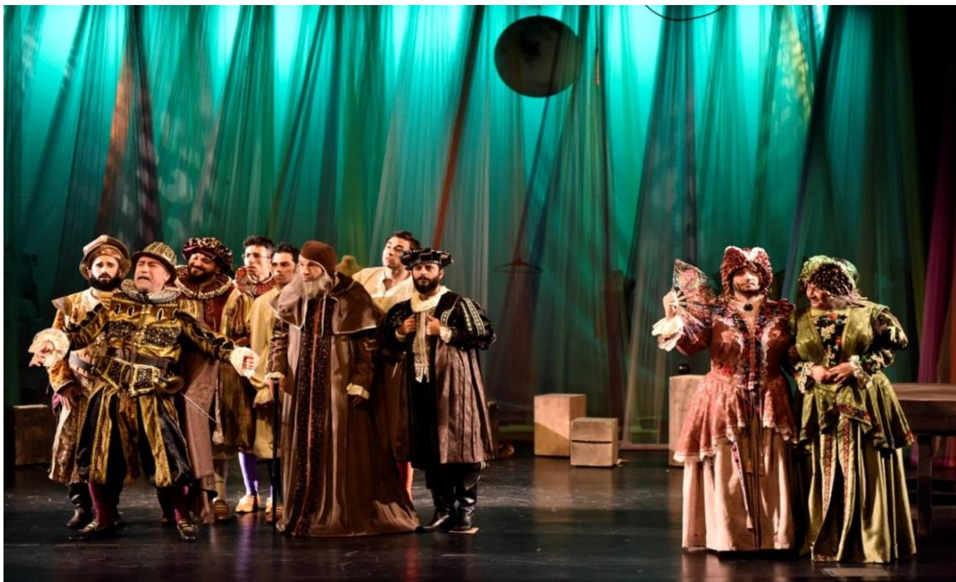
The symbol of water can also be associated with regeneration of life, creativity, and wisdom. If the two families were not feuding, Montague and Capulet would have probably arranged a marriage between their children, since Romeo would made a good husband for Juliet, and such a union could have ended the feud between the houses of Montague and Capulet, and even united their fortunes. In the final blazing glory of their deaths, the two lovers end the long-lasting feud with their blood.

Merry *Merry Wives of Windsor*: an all-male cast

When Shakespeare wrote *Henry IV, Part 1* in the late 1590s, the character of Falstaff was a break-out hit, popular enough to fuel a sequel (*Henry IV, Part 2*) and a spin-off (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*)—allegedly written at the request of Elizabeth I, who was so taken by Falstaff that she wished to see him in love. Complying with this royal order, Shakespeare detached Falstaff from the historical background of the *Henry* plays (1402-1413) and placed him in Shakespeare's own time.

Unlike Shakespeare's other plays, this one is set in the playwright's England and features ordinary middle-class characters. Being the only comedy that the playwright set in his native land, it provides a realistic portrait of England. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* features middle-class characters, powerful women and a main male character wildly pinched. As Jonathan Bate argues, "the title of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* suggests that this is a play in which women will be happily dominant" (3).

The Antalya State Theatre's production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, directed by Nesimi Kaygusuz, best known for his role as Derviş Kasım in the film *Yunus Emre: Aşkın Sesi*, delivered the "merry" promised in the title. The play was performed by an all-male cast with Elizabethan costumes, music and dance.



A scene from *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (2017-2018)
(© The Turkish State Theatres Refik Ahmet Sevengil Digital Theatre Archive and Library)

The director resolutely stuck to the original practices of Shakespeare's time in terms of casting, costumes, set design and music. And perhaps the most challenging task was the choice of replicating as many of the original theatrical practices of Shakespeare's own company as possible, i.e. an entirely male cast with authentically Elizabethan costumes. The absence of women in the cast was justified by this concept of "original practices" introduced by the director. Women were not allowed to be on the commercial English stage, at least not until the Restoration of King Charles II. In Shakespeare's day, it was believed that it was impure and improper for women to act, as they were expected to be housewives and mothers. As Erin M. McLaughlin states, "Elizabethan theatre companies solely used males for all parts as the stage was not thought to be a place for women to display themselves" (13). And if there were men's jobs and women's jobs, acting was definitely a man's job. Therefore, women must be kept within the confines of the family and could in no way be permitted to appear in public. Commenting on women on stage, Hugh Hunt also argues that "[i]n drama she was considered immoral if she appeared on stage; until recently the terms 'actress' and 'whore' were considered to be almost synonymous" (182).

Casting entirely male actors plays a significant role for any Shakespearean play, as it does with this version of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Kaygusuz took a bold step to explore the playwright's rich approach to gender onstage, with a well-worked text and an entirely male cast. Apparently, he did a great job with textual emendation, eliminating dated jokes and streamlining the play into what would be a modern sitcom. He also created an atmosphere where all the actors knew each other, most probably in a sense of belonging, another big achievement of the director.

The all-male cast had good energy, and the roles were enriched with funny, spot-on characteristics. But no production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* can succeed without a good Falstaff, and Selim Bayraktar was up for the task. The highlight of this production was undoubtedly his performance, with his stylized voice and vivid acting. Best known as "Sümbül Ağa" in *The Magnificent Century*, a Turkish historical TV series based on the life of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, he had the rich voice and impressive demeanour necessary to bring the fat, vain and boastful knight into life, and grabbed the viewers' attention from the very first moment he appeared on the stage.

Hakan Dündar's Elizabethan style set design looked fascinating, fitting naturally to the beautiful stage. This open set allowed the actors' full use of the stage's many entrances and exits. Efe Ünal's musical sequences were terrific, and dynamically choreographed by Nazlı Uğurtaş. The stunning period costumes were created by Esra Selah.

Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* is not often performed or filmed. The Antalya State Theatre's production of the play, therefore, offered a unique opportunity to see if its popularity can be recreated. This was achieved through

the creative talent and inventive imagination of the production team, who made this relatively unknown play a popular hit.

All things considered, this production displayed a keen understanding of what is best in Shakespeare's comedy, and the chief result was the emergence of a new, authentic Shakespeare, who was both ancient and modern, both old and new.

Conclusion

There are countless Shakespearean plays running on several stages in Turkey, and apparently they are increasing in quality and quantity. More and more Shakespearean plays are produced with never-failing energy. These productions, whether big or small, mark the active legacy of the Immortal Bard in Turkey.

As E. S. Ç. Mazanoğlu argues, "[e]very staging of Shakespeare's plays on the Turkish stage by the State Theatre, İstanbul City Theatre and private theatres has presented a distinctive, creative and constructive output" (123). The Shakespearean tradition in Turkey is an ongoing process that is open to new readings, writings, interpretations, as well as new forms of acting and staging. The productions of solo *Hamlet* and all-wet *Romeo and Juliet* by the İstanbul State Theatre, and the all-male *Merry Wives of Windsor* by the Antalya State Theatre were all unique, special and big productions that have proven successful. Turkey is a cultural mosaic where Shakespeare can be studied, taught and interpreted as part of this mosaic through a cultural fusion that brings new Shakespeare productions on stage.

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