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Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney* 

From the Editor

The articles in this volume explore Shakespeare interests dominating the international arena in the fields of translation, appropriation, theatre and critical studies. Since their authors come from various cultures, the studies reflect their experiences of Shakespeare on page and stage in disparate political, social and cultural milieus. In other words, though they are centred on the same texts, the interpretations they offer vary greatly, presenting cultural appropriation as seen through the prism of both the past and the present.

It would be difficult to immerse oneself in Chinese or Bengali history and customs without any preparation. Yet, when we have Shakespeare's texts, known around the world, as our mentors, understanding even the most complicated and complex processes, data and theories becomes easier.

Daniel Gallimore's article "Four-Character Idioms and the Rhetoric of Japanese Shakespeare Translation" opens this volume. By presenting the intricacies of Japanese culture and language, it also introduces us to the theatrical and translation reception of the play in Japan. Mohammed Naser Hassoon's work, "The Domestication and Arabization of the Bard: towards the Reception of Shakespeare in the Arab World," outlines the reception of his texts, which have followed a process of translation, adaption and Arabization. Since the nineteenth century, when the first Arabic version of *Romeo and Juliet* appeared in the Arab world, almost all literary, translation and critical responses to Shakespeare's plays can be treated as examples of cultural appropriations, even adaptations.

A similar subject is addressed in "Individualization and Oedipalization in Reza Servanti's Adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: An expressionist Reworking," written by Mahdi Javidshad. Although the essay only deals with one example of adaptation and appropriation, Reza Servanti's prize-winning work, it also is deeply embedded in an Arab culture—in this case, Iranian. It identifies the changes introduced into the translation and demonstrates how the translator negotiated the source text with a psychological approach, mainly Freudian, and individualization of the characters.

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With Natalia Khomenko's "From Social Justice to Metaphor: The Whitening of Othello in the Russian Imagination," we move to Russia. Its author investigates the theatrical history of *Othello*, especially the presentation of its racial problematics from the early Soviet times to the present day.

In "Crossing with *Jatra*: Bengali Folk-Theatre elements in a Transcultural Representation of Lady Macbeth," Aabita Dutta Gupta concentrates on transcultural dance theatre as seen through *Jatra*, from the Eastern Indian Bengali folk tradition. In Vikram Iyenger's production, *Crossings: Exploring the Facets of Lady Macbeth* (2004), four female actors played Lady Macbeth to more fully depict the profound complexity of her character.

Eleonora Oggiano shows in what ways Verona, the location of *Romeo and Juliet*, has not only helped with generating the myth of the star-crossed lovers but has also helped with its commodification in world culture. Some space is devoted to the function of letters written by women who, over the decades, have sought Juliet's advice for their love life.

Indian history constitutes the main subject of Arup K. Chatterjee's article "Performing *Calibanesque* Baptism: Shakespearean Fractals of British Indian History." Operating within the field of British imperialism, politics and philosophy, its author examines three events in Indian history that can be treated as examples of historical connections between Indians and the British. To demonstrate his assumption, he references Jungian effects of non-causal "synchronic" reality and Benoit Mandelbrot's conception of fractals.

The New Historicist approach constitutes the main subject of James Dale's work "*How Can you Say to me I am a King?*" New Historicism and Its (Re)interpretation of the Design of Kingly Figures in Shakespeare's History Plays." He presents the new historicist methodology and comments on its application in the texts of Shakespeare's second tetralogy. Kingly power and its subversion and containment, as well as the structure of the kingly characters, comprise the critical thrust of this work.

Andrzej Wicher contributes "The Inverted Initiation Rituals in Shakespeare with a Special Emphasis on *Hamlet*." Vladimir Propp's anthropological methodology serves here as the most prominent critical approach. It allows Wicher to identify the pattern of inverted rituals present in Shakespeare's play.

One article is devoted to Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Anna Czarnowus studies the play in the context of emotions. She juxtaposes studies of emotions in early modern times with contemporary approaches to this concept.

The volume finishes with Tao Tianhu's work "The Readers of the 17th-century Manuscript Commonplace Book *Hesperides, or the Muses' Garden*." The manuscript is generally known for its connection with Shakespeare studies. Its intended use is as a linguistic and literary source. This article, however, analyses the text in the context of its role as a reference

publication by selected readers coming from the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The work makes references to palaeographical examination.

As the articles in this volume demonstrate the role of cultural adaptation and appropriation is constantly changing. We continuously experience “an individual nation’s progress and life.” In this context, Shakespeare’s works serve as bridges and railroads that not only reveal, but also cement multiculturalism. Challenges to national definitions from within, e.g., from the Indian or Arab perspectives, and from without, e.g., globalization, have explicitly involved the national in global concerns. The translations, appropriations and theatrical adaptations are no longer just Shakespeare of a specific country/nation, but a globalized form of cultural phenomena. This volume’s strength is its commitment to intercultural and interdisciplinary vistas.

I conclude with thanks to the members of the Editorial Board, especially Dr Monika Sosnowska, the Academic Secretary of *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance*, for her organizational and administrative work. As always, I am grateful for all the assistance from Dr Agnieszka Kałowska, the Head of the Journals’ Publishing Department, and to Zdzisław Gralka, also of the University of Lodz Publishing House, for his digitalized knowledge and expertise. Paraphrasing the final message of Robert Frost’s poem “Tuft of Flowers,” it should be said from the heart that people work together, whether they work together or apart.

Daniel Gallimore* 

Four-Character Idioms and the Rhetoric of Japanese Shakespeare Translation

Abstract: *Yoji jukugo* are idioms comprised of four characters (*kanji*) that can be used to enhance the textuality of a Japanese Shakespeare translation, whether in response to Shakespeare's rhetoric or as compensation for the tendency of translation to be carried out at a lower textual register than the source. This article examines their use in two translations each of *Julius Caesar* by Matsuoka Kazuko (2014) and Fukuda Tsuneari (1960) and of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* by Matsuoka (2001) and Odashima Yūshi (1983); in both cases Matsuoka uses significantly more *yoji jukugo* than her predecessors. In the *Julius Caesar* translations their usage is noticeable in the set speeches by Antony and Brutus in 3.2, and commonly denote baseness or barbarity. In the *Merry Wives* translations they commonly denote dissolute behaviour, often for comic effect, and can even be used malapropistically in the target language.

Keywords: Japanese writing system, *yoji jukugo*, Matsuoka Kazuko, idiomatic expression, visualization, classical rhetoric, malapropism

Yoji jukugo as interpretive literary devices

The use of four-character idioms (*yoji jukugo* 四字熟語) is an effective technique for conveying Shakespeare's rhetoric in Japanese translations. These idioms stand out from ordinary Japanese text, which consists mainly of single characters (*kanji*) or pairs of characters written in combination with phonetic *kana* letters, in the way that Shakespeare's own rhetorical devices can be said to stand out from less heightened language. Many of them are metaphorical in the sense that they juxtapose like with unlike to generate new meanings; all of them visualize meaning semantically and on the page through the logographic Japanese writing system. *Yoji jukugo* seem particularly suited to representing the compact, pithy dimension of Shakespeare's rhetoric, and as a typical literary trope have the advantage of placing Shakespeare translation within Japan's literary culture. Moreover, since they do stand out from the usual components

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of a Japanese sentence, which comprises polysyllabic nouns, verb endings, particles and so on, they can also be used to rhythmic effect. These idioms have been used by translators since Shakespeare's plays were first translated into Japanese in the late 19th century, and are a feature of the work of Matsuoka Kazuko (b. 1942), the most prolific of contemporary Shakespeare translators, which this article discusses.

This article focuses on idiomatic usage, although *yoji jukugo* are often simply informative rather than idiomatic, for example *kokuritsu gekijō*, which combines the characters for 'country' (*koku*), 'establish' (*ritsu*), 'drama' (*geki*) and 'place' (*jō*) to make the phrase 'National Theatre'.¹ The meanings of idiomatic compounds, however, are usually more obscure, taught in high school and tested by examination. To give two familiar examples, the idiom *kachō fūgetsu* 花鳥風月 comprises a sequence of characters meaning 'flower', 'bird', 'wind' and 'moon' that combine idiomatically to mean 'the beauties of nature', while *tantō chokunyū* 単刀直入 compounds characters for 'short', 'sword' (i.e. dagger), 'direct' and 'enter', and means quite simply to get straight to the point (similar to English 'without beating about the bush'). These idioms are representative of the *yoji jukugo* to be found in Japanese Shakespeare translation.

As everyday idioms, *yoji jukugo* may exemplify Gideon Toury's first law of standardization: that 'in translation, items tend to be selected on a level which is *lower* than the one where textual relations have been translated in the source text' (Toury 305). To achieve a higher literary or rhetorical effect, they may need to be combined with other devices such as rhythm and alliteration, and, in performance, with the modulations of the actor's voice. A further distinction is made by Simon Palfrey between a basic type of metaphor in Shakespeare, 'which is when one noun or noun-phrase stands in for another' (Palfrey 33), and figurative language that

is not primarily there to describe what is already known and observed. In short, it is itself finding out what might be. Above all, it gives us minds and societies in process. (37)

Idioms such as *kachō fūgetsu* and *tantō chokunyū* have fixed dictionary meanings, but can also be used in the context of the translator's line to achieve

¹ *Yoji jukugo* consist of two contrasting pairs of *kanji* characters, and would never comprise a group of three or five or more characters. This kind of symmetry is common in Japanese rhetoric, for example in the five-seven syllabic meter of traditional verse where each group consists respectively of two or three pairs of syllables and a single break to complete the set. Many *yoji jukugo* were originally adopted from Chinese, where they are known as *chengyu*.

the creative, speculative effect of which Palfrey writes. Both these idioms have the potential to add considerably to whatever else has been said, the second with reference to Japan's colourful samurai past; the phrase originally described a warrior charging wildly into an enemy position with a single sword.

It is also worth considering the wider normative context of how, for example, a Tokyo audience might react to hearing *yoji jukugo* in a production of one of Matsuoka's Shakespeare translations. On the one hand, these idioms are said to have become more popular over the last thirty years, which would be due to increased literacy in the post-war era, the digitalization of Japanese writing, the proliferation of media and advertising, and the emergence of new consumer lifestyles that promote self-expression. In addition to the lists of well-known idioms tested at school and in the popular Kanji Aptitude Test,² many people invent their own, often witty idioms, and the media personality George Tokoro even published a book of homemade idioms, with one a pun on his name, *tokoro jōji*, meaning 'to lie about past triumphs'.³ Yet while such usage might correspond to the playful aspect of Shakespeare's rhetoric, veteran playwright Betsuyaku Minoru suggests that in Japan's advanced information society *yoji jukugo* have acquired a resonance that exceeds, and can even obscure their original meaning (Betsuyaku 209-12). Chinese literature scholar Takashima Toshio makes a similar point that *yoji jukugo* may be used to lend cultural cachet when in fact they are no more than everyday idioms (Takashima 38). In other words, while these idioms may succeed in advertising the richness of Shakespeare's rhetoric, they can also be obfuscatory.

In this article, I look mainly at examples of *yoji jukugo* from Matsuoka's translations of *Julius Caesar* (2014) and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (2001), which were originally completed for production by the director Ninagawa Yukio. Starting in 1998, Matsuoka has now translated all thirty-seven of the canonical plays, originally for Ninagawa's Shakespeare Series of productions of the Complete Works and (since his death in 2016) for Ninagawa's successor, Yoshida Kōtarō. Her translations are known for their actorly, speakable style and sensitivity to language trends, to both of which *yoji jukugo* are relevant. The extent to which she does actually use *yoji jukugo* more than other translators can only be substantiated through a thorough corpus analysis that is beyond the scope of this article, but, for example, her translation of *Macbeth* (1996) uses forty of them compared with just thirteen in another contemporary translation by

² This test was introduced in 1975, and formally recognized by the Japanese government in 1992. *Yoji jukugo* are tested from Level 4, which is at junior high school level (i.e. student age 12 to 15) and tests 1,322 *kanji* altogether; Pre-Level 2, the high school graduation level, tests 1,940 *kanji*.

³ Matsuoka told me when I interviewed her on 15th January, 2015, that she likes to make up her own *yoji jukugo*, and keeps a notebook of her coinages.

Kawai Shōichirō (2009).⁴ Matsuoka also appears to find some plays more suited to *yōji jukugo* than others. She uses fifty-one in translating *Julius Caesar* (19,793 words), a big rhetorical tragedy, and thirty-five in *Merry Wives* (21,845 words), a polyglossic social comedy, but only five in her *Hamlet* translation (30,557 words) and seven in *Pericles* (18,520 words). In comparison, Fukuda Tsuneari's translation of *Julius Caesar* (1960) contains thirty-five *yōji jukugo*, and Odashima Yūshi's translation of *Merry Wives* (1983) thirty-one.⁵

The idioms occurring in these four translations by three translators of two Shakespeare plays are listed in the appendix below. Matsuoka clearly uses more *yōji jukugo* than the other two, but it is not my intention to argue that this propensity makes her any the more 'creative', since it may simply reflect the recent popularity of these idioms in comparison to the 1950s and 1970s when Fukuda and Odashima became active, and there are many other devices available to Japanese translators, such as paraphrase and word play. In the appendix, I have also listed the nine idioms in the *Julius Caesar* translations that connote cruel or barbaric behaviour and the thirteen idioms in the *Merry Wives* translations connoting negative, mainly immoral characteristics. These proportionately high occurrences might suggest the suitability of a rhetorical device like *yōji jukugo* for registering generic themes (the tragic horror of the Roman tragedy and the licentious excess of the English social comedy), but more concretely are quantifiable examples of how Shakespeare translators in any language develop a coherent response to a text by the recurrent use of a device or trope.

A few of the idioms listed (e.g. *dōhō shokun*, 'countrymen', and *saishū saigo*, 'ultimately') are merely informative, and several of them (e.g. *taigen sōgo*, 'bragging', and *muri yari*, 'forcibly') are in such common colloquial use as to seem hardly literary or rhetorical at all. Yet, whether clichés or not, almost all the examples are figurative in their context, and many of them replicate Shakespeare's typical technique of juxtaposing words and phrases of similar meaning for rhetorical emphasis, for example *kyōaku muzan* ('heinous' and 'merciless') to mean 'pitiless'. In short, these idioms enrich the textuality of Japanese Shakespeare translation with a resource that was not available to Shakespeare, namely the logographic system of Japanese *kanji*.

⁴ Kawai (b. 1960) has translated thirteen of Shakespeare's canonical plays for publication and theatrical production.

⁵ Fukuda (1912-1994) was the dominant Shakespeare translator of the 1950s and 60s, translating some nineteen of the plays for publication and theatrical production under his own direction. Odashima (b. 1930) translated all Shakespeare's canonical plays in the 1970s and 80s, initially for production by the Tokyo-based Shakespeare Theatre company.

As one comic illustration of this potential in Matsuoka's *Merry Wives*, the idiom *unsan mushō* 雲散霧消, meaning 'vanishing like mist' ('cloud', 'disperse', 'mist', and 'fade away'), is used twice, both times by Falstaff, as follows:

Vanish like hailstones, go! (1.3.78)
Unsan mushō shiro, deteke! (Matsuoka 2001, 34)
 'vanish like mist'—be gone with you

Mistress Ford, your sorrow hath eaten up my sufferance. (4.2.1-2)
Okusan, anta ga nageki kurushimu no wo me no atari ni shite, watashi no kurushimi wa unsan mushō shita. (139)
 mistress—your grieving—before my very eyes—my suffering—has faded away

The first example, where Falstaff is dismissing Nim and Pistol, renders the humorous malapropism of disappearing hailstones with an equivalent meteorological metaphor. The second example uses the same Japanese idiom of 'vanishing mist', but this time to ironize Falstaff's sympathy for Mistress Ford as a quality that makes him feel less sorry for himself. Both examples convey a sense of the ridiculous and the sublime that seems essential to Falstaff's character and to a comedy like *Merry Wives*, and display the potential of these idioms to render like for like by responding rhetorically to the rhetoric of the source text.

***Yoji jukugo* and Roman rhetoric (*Julius Caesar*)**

In translating *Julius Caesar*, Matsuoka was specifically requested by Ninagawa 'to pump up the volume' (Matsuoka, 2014: 194). Ninagawa's productions used various devices to make Shakespeare's classical background accessible to Japanese audiences, which in *Julius Caesar* includes not only the mythological references that occur throughout the plays, but also the forms of Roman rhetoric—its role in maintaining the patrician code of honour and the different rhetorical styles of Marcus Brutus and Mark Antony—may be unfamiliar. A native device such as *yoji jukugo*, which stand out from the normal flow of speech, can only have contributed to Ninagawa's overall strategy. Conversely, in *Merry Wives*, there is a comic potential for bringing out the schoolroom pedantry and other rhetorical abuses.

As a preliminary example, we can see how Matsuoka translates Antony's accusation of Brutus over the bloody corpse of Caesar, 'This was the most unkindest cut of all' (3.2.181), in which the double superlative intensifies the double meaning of Brutus' crime as not only inhumane but a crime against a nature; Brutus has killed a man who was both his trusted friend and *primus*

inter pares. The idiom Matsuoka uses is *zankoku hidō* 残酷非道, ‘cruel and outrageous’, with the characters *hi* and *dō* meaning ‘no way’ or ‘out of order’.

This was the most unkindest cut of all
kore koso hoka no dono kizu ni mo mashite, mottomo zankoku hidōna ichigeki
 (123)
 this itself—more even than the other wounds—the most cruel and outrageous
 single blow

The line as a whole is remarkable for its length (thirty-two morae against the ten syllables of iambic pentameter),⁶ with the idiom coming towards the end of the line. The first part, alliterative and assonantal, does what Shakespeare often does (but does not do here), namely intensify the expression through the juxtaposition of words and phrases of similar meaning, while *ichigeki* 一撃 echoes another *geki* 劇, ‘drama’, in the metatheatrical sense that Caesar’s assassination, enacted on stage in Shakespeare’s play in a radical break from classical tradition, is the drama at the play’s heart. Matsuoka quite literally translates the sub-text of Antony’s suppressed rage by diffusing it through a line three times the length of the source; a translation as compact as the source would probably sound inconsequential, and instead she precisely elaborates the meaning in the first half of the sentence, generating a rhythmic momentum that supports the idiom in the second half.

The assassination becomes the focus of the patricians’ debate, and as a test of moral integrity is reflected in Brutus’ relationship with his wife Portia, who also uses *yoji jukugo*, uttered in consecutive lines as she urges Brutus to let her in on the truth of the conspiracy:

Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,
 Is it excepted I should know no secrets
 That appertain to you? Am I yourself
 But as it were in sort or limitation,
 To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed
 And talk to you sometimes? (2.1.279-84)

Matsuoka explains in her note that Portia is using *katai hōritsu yōgo* (‘formal legal language’) (69), since as the editor of the Third Arden edition explains,⁷

⁶ Unlike English syllables which comprise an indeterminate number of consonants and vowels (e.g. ‘hedge’, one syllable), in Japanese phonology a mora is basically limited to a single consonant followed by a vowel and to the one final consonant *n*.

⁷ According to the afterwords of her published translations, Matsuoka typically refers to the Arden Shakespeare when translating plays, as well as to other editions such as The Riverside Shakespeare and previous translators such as Odashima.

The words ‘bond’, ‘excepted’, ‘appertain’, ‘sort’ and ‘limitation’ are legal terms (the last phrase means ‘only in one way, for a limited period’) set off by the narrower legal sense of ‘bond’. Portia is making the highest claims for herself as a wife, far beyond the simple legal basis. Her speech is a development of that in Plutarch [...]. For a legally-minded Portia much concerned with bonds, see [*The Merchant of Venice*] 4.1.220-34. (Daniell 215)

What neither Daniell nor Plutarch make explicit, but which I feel Matsuoka does dramatize in her choice of idioms, is the extent to which Brutus’ Portia is speaking as a man. In the third line, she uses the idiom *futai jōkō* 付帯条項:

Is it excepted I should know no secrets / That appertain to you?
watashi wa shitte wa naranai to iu futai jōkō ga arimasu ka (Matsuoka, 2014: 69)
 I—should know—additional clauses—are there?

Portia’s wish to debate the matter, coming as it does so soon after Brutus’ insistence on the need for secrecy among the conspirators (2.1.123-5), which Matsuoka denotes with another *yoji jukugo*, *himitsu genshu* 秘密厳守 (‘top secret’), connects her personal drama with the broader political contest of the play about honour, and the safeguarding of honour among the privileged few. Yet, in a bitter twist, Portia’s ‘unwomanly’ rhetoric returns to haunt her later in the play when she kills herself by ingesting hot coals. She quite literally eats the words that cause Brutus to see his wife as a projection of his masculine honour (‘my true and honourable wife, / As dear to me as are the ruddy drops / That visit my sad heart.’, 2.1.287-89). This crisis of identity is also made explicit in the juxtaposition of the other idiom, *isshin dōtai* 一心同体 (‘one heart, same body’, in the sense that ‘husband and wife are one flesh’) with a word meaning ‘legal proviso’ (*tadashigaki* 但し書き):

Am I yourself / But as it were in sort or limitation?
anata to isshin dōtai da to iu koto ni tadashigaki ga tsuku no desu ka (69)
 with you—one heart, same body—am—to this thing—legal proviso—attached
 —is there?

In Matsuoka’s translation, Portia’s two *yoji jukugo* compare with the twenty spoken by Brutus, twelve by Antony (six in his oration to the Plebeians in 3.2), eight by Cassius, two by Caska, and one each by Caesar, Cicero, Cinna, Lucillius, Metellus, Octavius and 1st Plebeian. Many of these relate to the play’s theme of honour, which connects the interiority of characters with their outer, public selves and is neatly encapsulated in the idiom *kōmei seidai* 公明正大. Used three times in Matsuoka’s translation (and four times by Fukuda), the characters mean in sequence ‘public’, ‘bright’, ‘straight’ and ‘big’. This is

a common idiom in everyday usage, that may even sound hackneyed, but in the translation it works within the overall context as the notion of honour is contested throughout the play, and affirmed at the end of the play in Antony's oration over the slain Brutus:

His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him that nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!' (5.5.74-6)

Portia hints to her husband that the honourable line of resistance to Caesar's dictatorship would be to resort to the laws and customs in which she, as a Roman *matrona*, is a willing participant. Yet Brutus will not tell his secret, and we find too that that about half of the idioms he utters in Matsuoka's translation are derived from his sense of superiority as 'an honourable man' that is finally proven by his oath of friendship with Cassius in Act 4 and suicide in Act 5. These idioms express an ingrained value system, and mostly occur in the conspirators' scene at his house (2.1) and in his oration to the Plebeians in 3.2:

sōran jōtai 騒乱状態 (54) ~ 'state of rebellion' for 'The nature of an insurrection' in 'the state of man, / Like to a little kingdom, suffer then / The nature of an insurrection.' (2.1.67-69). In this monologue spoken before the other conspirators arrive, Brutus says he has not slept since Cassius told him of his plan to kill Caesar; his fear of mental turmoil reflects his patrician fear of civic disorder.

himitsu genshu 秘密厳守 (58) ~ 'top secret' coming in 'What other bond / Than secret Romans that have spoke the word / And will not palter?' (2.1.123-25). The gentlemen's bond is clearly essential to their code of honour.

kōmei seidai 公明正大 (59) ~ 'honourable' for 'The even virtue of our enterprise' (2.1.132). Brutus does not doubt the honourable intentions of the conspirators.

futō fukutsu 不撓不屈 (59) ~ 'unyielding' for 'th'insuppressive mettle for our spirits' (2.1.133). Likewise, the conspirators will not give in to dishonourable wavering.

bōryoku sata 暴力沙汰 (62) ~ 'act of violence' as Brutus urges the conspirators to 'let our hearts, as subtle masters do / Stir up their servants to an act of rage' (2.1.175). In Brutus' code, the assassination is not a base act, but springs from the heart as the source of honour and sincere feeling.

hinsei geretsu 品性下劣 (113) ~ 'of low character', 'Who is here so base, that would be a bondman?' (3.2.29). In Brutus' hierarchical thinking, the freedom of citizens is inseparable from their honour.

sobō yaban 粗暴野蛮 (113) ~ ‘brutal and barbaric’, ‘Who is here so rude, that would not be a Roman?’ (3.2.30). As above.

akuratsu hiretsu 悪辣卑劣 (113) ~ ‘mean and unscrupulous’, ‘Who is here so vile, that will not love his country?’ (3.2.32). As above, love of country meaning respect for self.

taigen sōgo 大言壮語 (144) ~ ‘loud and boastful’, spoken to Cassius, ‘make your vaunting true’ (4.3.52). Boastful talk can only be justified by sincere and effective action.

As before, it is significant that all these idioms employ the Shakespearean technique of juxtaposition when Shakespeare does not use juxtaposition in the source quotations. A similar example that occurs twice in Matsuoka’s translation is *uzō muzō* 有象無象 (22 and 32), literally ‘with form and without form’, or ‘the rout’ (1.2.78) or ‘rabblement’ (1.2.243). The code of honour demands forms of speech and behaviour that rise above the volatile crowd. The fact that Matsuoka’s Brutus uses rather more *yoji jukugo* than any other character suggests both that he is overstating his case, as he clearly does in comparison with Antony (which is dramatic irony), and that honour is indeed proven more by sincerity of action than ‘loud and boastful’ words.

Brutus might seem more reprobate to a Japanese than to a Western audience, since in Japanese culture rhetorical verbosity is typically regarded as suspect and insincere irrespective of the content, and yet *Julius Caesar* was first translated in the 1880s at a time when Japanese intellectuals were actively exploring Western rhetorical models as a means of improving communication within society and with the outside world (Tomasi 58-64). Just as the play *Julius Caesar* is a work that at once affirms and problematizes Roman rhetoric as a mode of political discourse, so (as I have mentioned) can *yoji jukugo* on the one hand risk obfuscation while, in translation, serving as dynamic equivalents to Shakespeare’s rhetoric; Brutus does not have to be reprobate.

***Yoji jukugo* and comic malapropism (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*)**

Matsuoka is a translator who invites her audiences not only to understand Shakespeare but also into a process of understanding Shakespeare that she has presumably experienced for herself, and which is to some extent laid bare in her translations; this may be similar to Palfrey’s exploratory mode of ‘finding out what might be’ (Palfrey 37). She has told me, for example, that in translating Shakespeare’s malapropisms *yoji jukugo* are particularly useful for communicating

this cognitive process since the time it takes for audiences to recognize more complex phrases in their context is something like the time it takes to realize that the original itself is mistaken.⁸ Moreover, if malapropisms usually occur when comic characters such as Bottom and Dogberry are acting above their station, native Japanese speakers, who must grapple every day with their complex writing system, can only sympathize with their mistakes.

In the above examples from *Julius Caesar*, *yōji jukugo* serve mainly to imitate the rhetoric of the source, capturing a rhetorical turn of phrase that would otherwise be expressed more awkwardly or literally. In Matsuoka's translation of *Merry Wives*, they work with devices such as dialect to render the verbal humour and playfulness of the play, but if she were to use a comic device like malapropism throughout her translations, it would—as Evans puts it—be 'lunatics' (4.2.118), and in this case it is enough for her to use only dialect and to avoid malapropism in order to capture the absurdity of Evans' expression: *Nanto, kore wa seizun ejōsha (seishin ijōsha 精神異常者* in standard Japanese). Matsuoka here translates Evans' Welsh inflexions consistently in the north-eastern Tohoku dialect, which is not necessarily a joke against either Welsh or Tohoku people. In this play, it is not the Welsh Evans or French Dr Caius who are proven ignorant but Falstaff, who is given his own brusque idiolect in the translation.

In the first scene of the play, malapropism is used to striking effect to assert that it is at one level a play about misunderstanding, and that one solution to misunderstanding is comedy. This is when Evans' interrogation of the lovestruck Slender becomes so bloated with exaggeration and innuendo that it seems to push Slender into perpetrating a malapropism that unwittingly reveals his sexual intentions. Evans is trying to put his pupil on the spot in just the way that Evans may fear the locals will mob him for his Welshness, asking the young man:

But can you affection the 'oman? Let us command to know that of your mouth, or of your lips—for diverse philosophers hold that the lips is parcel of the mouth. Therefore, precisely, can you carry your good will to the maid? (1.1.211-15).

Matsuoka translates 'diverse' with an elaborate idiom that compensates for the difficulty of translating Shakespeare's 'will' precisely while at the same time prompting the actor to speak with the niceness demanded of the lines. The idiom *kokon tōzai* 古今東西 (Matsuoka, 2001: 22) means 'in all times and places' but more literally 'past and present, east and west', and it is not long before Evans and Shallow have provoked Slender into declaring his hand:

⁸ Interview with Matsuoka (15th January, 2015).

I hope upon familiarity will grow more contempt. But if you say marry her, I will marry her—that I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely.’ (1.1.233-5)

For ‘freely dissolved’, Matsuoka’s Evens insists that he is ‘determinedly erect’ (i.e. ‘tumescent’, *ichinen funki* 一念奮起) (23), which is a lot more explicit than the original but perhaps necessary for a Japanese audience to catch the gist of the original.

Matsuoka makes another connection between sense and meaning in her version of Bardolph’s malapropism, ‘I say the gentleman had drunk himself out of his five sentences.’ (1.1.161-2):

kochira no shinshi wa yopparatte kokan wo nakushitan darō sa. (19)
this gentleman—is drunk—[his groin]—has lost

Kokan is written in *hiragana*, but the audience does not know that, and what it sounds like is that he has ‘lost his groin’ (*kokan* 股間), or ‘been kicked in the balls’. Evans rebukes Bardolph with the schoolroom idiom, *muchi mōmai* 無知蒙昧, ‘unenlightened’, or more literally ‘ignorant and tasteless’:

It is ‘his five senses’. Fie, what the ignorance is! (163)
Sore wo iu nara ‘gokan wo nagusuda’ darō. Nan daro muchi mōmai! (19)
If you say that—‘five senses’—he has lost [dialectal inflexion]—it would be
—Such—ignorant rubbish!

As I have suggested, the cognitive trick played by these idioms reproduces a generic mediocrity at the heart of Shakespeare’s comedy: the reality that none of the characters can satisfy the demands of classical rhetoric to have both the idea and the language at the same time. For a few tricky moments at Herne’s Oak, Falstaff feels the kick in the balls that his middle-aged illusions have brought on others, and once he has admitted his folly, it is hardly surprising that Matsuoka should give him Evans’ idiom:

Well, I am your theme: you have the start of me. I am dejected, I am not able to answer the Welsh flannel, ignorance itself is a plummet o’er me. Use me as you will. (5.5.159-62)

Yare yare, shūchū hōka da na. Sakite wo utaretan dakara shō ga nē ya. Marukkiri katachi nashi da, Uēruzu no furanneru yarō ni iwareppanashi de gū no ne mo deyashi nē. Muchi mōmai no yabo tenma de ga ore wo mikudashiyagaru. Sā, dō to demo suki ni shiyagare.

dear me!—‘concentrated firepower’—it is—I am taken advantage of—it can’t be helped—Completely without form—I am—to the Welsh flannel fellow—left unable to speak—I cannot answer [the words stick in my throat]—Ignorant—and lowly devil—on me—looks down [colloquial]—Well, then—one way or the other—do as you please [colloquial] (190-1)

In this example, Matsuoka may seem to run very close to the spirit of the original by dramatizing Falstaff's comic infidelity with her own free translation. There are two *yoji jukugo*. *Shūchū hōka* 集中砲火, 'concentrated firepower', expresses the idea of being the target of attack ('your theme'), and *muchi mōmai* is combined with *yabo tenma* 野暮てんま ('lowly devil') to effect the personification of 'ignorance' in Evans' own person: 'the ignorant and lowly devil looks down on me'. This is the only time in the translation that *muchi mōmai* (an everyday and usefully alliterative idiom) is used after Evans' scorning utterance in the first scene mentioned above (at which Falstaff is present), allowing Falstaff a subtle opportunity to spit the phrase back in Evans' face, which is a point that audiences may well register. *Marukkiri katachi nashi* まるつきり形無し, 'completely without shape', is a free rendition of Falstaff's 'dejected': culturally specific because, in departure from the source, it associates loss of form with low self-esteem in a culture that attaches great importance to outward appearances, and also humorous because *marukkiri*, 'completely', is written with the character for *marui* 丸い, 'round', Falstaff's round girth. In front of a Japanese audience, the latter might well give the actor playing Falstaff the verbal padding he needs by way of compensation for the obscurity of 'the Welsh flannel'.

***Yoji jukugo* and the higher level of rhetorical invention**

The idioms discussed from the two translations serve a broadly rhetorical purpose of clarifying rhetorical sub-texts. Rhetoric likes to state the terms of its arguments; it is helpful for audiences to be made aware in this way that *Julius Caesar* is a play about honour and *Merry Wives* about the low life. Most of these idioms occur at the lower level of textual relations in Toury's first law of standardization, but there must be numerous examples of when translators achieve a higher level of textuality, or rhetorical invention, that individuates speech rather than simply coordinating it within the communicative flow. In Japanese, the weight of sentences tends to fall on verbs, which usually follow subject and object words to come at the end of a sentence, whereas in Shakespeare's English the weight is usually on the nouns. For this reason, a string of sentences in a Japanese Shakespeare translation can create a rather rapid impression of ceaseless doing and becoming. The very least that *yoji jukugo* can do is put the breaks on all the ceaseless trajectory with a little necessary detail, detail that may even reify thematic features.

Suematsu Michiko has questioned the view of Ninagawa as a purely visual director to insist that he was quite typical of the tradition of modern Japanese drama (*shingeki*) in his fidelity to the text (Suematsu 585-6). Ninagawa's Shakespeares espouse a tension between the director's radical need

to visualize the plays in terms of his native aesthetics and his respect for the details of Shakespeare's texts.⁹ At a microcosmic level, a broadly similar dichotomy of sound and image can be observed in the translations, especially if *yoji jukugo* and other literary devices are to be heard as something more than background accompaniment to whatever is happening on stage.¹⁰ In *Julius Caesar*, to the extent that the visual spectacle of Caesar's killing makes him the play's tragic hero, a pacey, verb-oriented translation will honour the deeds on which Caesar's reputation is built and make the punishment of his assassins a straightforward matter of cause and effect. Yet in preparing for his 2014 production, Ninagawa adopted a more textual (and, of course, not uncommon) view that the play is also the tragedy of Marcus Brutus (Akishima 109-11). Brutus' rhetoric, represented in Matsuoka's translation by his twenty *yoji jukugo*, is heard rather than seen to indicate a genuine desire to slow down the ruthless logic of dictatorship, even to rekindle a conversation about honour that Caesar had apparently neglected.

In *Merry Wives*, the effect is opposite, as Falstaff is divided comically between the rhetoric of his knightly role as a man of honour and action and his material carnality. The effect of a device like *yoji jukugo* is mainly one of rhetorical indulgence, or of indicating that this is more a play about enjoying language than doing anything with it. This ludic dimension raises the pressure on translators to be inventive. Odashima presents two striking examples in 1.3. The first is when Falstaff brags of his intentions towards Mistresses Ford and Page that 'They shall be my East and West Indies, and I will trade to them both.' (1.3.68-9):

futari no onna wo tōzai ryōhō Indo ni mitate, ore wa tōhon seisō shite umaku torihiki shiyōtte sunpō da. (Odashima 1983, 28)

the two women—to the East and West Indies—comparing—I—'rushing around and keeping myself busy'—skillfully—will trade—is my plan

Tōhon seisō 東奔西走 is a four-character idiom taught at school as a metaphor that literally means 'to scurry east and run west'. The historical context of

⁹ *Shingeki* was pioneered in the early 20th century by the Shakespeare translator Tsubouchi Shōyō, was deeply influenced by Western models of realist dramaturgy, and remained the dominant convention for staging Shakespeare in Japan through to the 1960s and beyond. Ninagawa belonged to the radical underground movement that rejected *shingeki* in the 1960s, although as Suematsu argues (Suematsu 591), the younger generation of Shakespeare directors of the last thirty years have been considerably freer in their treatment of the text in their quest for new theatrical modes of narrating the plays.

¹⁰ *Yoji jukugo* can be said to symbolize this tension between the euphony and speakability of Shakespeare in Japanese and its capacity for meaning.

England's burgeoning trade routes in the Age of Exploration may be unfamiliar for Japanese audiences, and Odashima's translation of Falstaff's bravado (the Sir Francis Drake of Eastcheap) with an idiom reiterating the elements of East and West works both semantically and rhetorically to bring out this dramatic sub-text. The second example, spoken by Pistol, also offers dramatic cues:

Tester I'll have in pouch when thou shalt lack (84)
Sono kinchaku wo karappo ni shite naku ga ii, kono ore wa / kinka ginka ni koto kakanu. (29)
 this purse—empty—make—you will cry—my one [deictic]—‘gold and silver coins’—will not lack

With the liberal alliteration on words beginning with ‘k’, the slight onomatopoeia in *kinka ginka* 金貨銀貨 (i.e. the tinkling of coins) again brings out a dramatic sub-text of Pistol scoring points off his companion Nim. Two final examples from Odashima's translation draw on Japan's feudal past to connote female virtues (and perhaps the Virgin Queen and her castle at Windsor in whose gaze the play is set). The first is when Ford suggests to Falstaff that the knight ‘lay an amiable siege to the honesty of this Ford's wife.’ (2.2.223-4), and then when he warns him of his wife's ‘marriage vow and a thousand other her defences, which now are too too strongly embedded against me.’ (237-8). Odashima's two idioms are *yōsai kengo* 要塞堅固 and *kinjō teppeki* 金城鉄壁:

Fōdo no nyōbō no yōsai kengo na misao wo semeotoshite kudasai. (64)
 Ford's wife—‘secure fortress’ [as adjective]—chastity—assault—please

kekkon no seiyaku to ka, ima de koso kinjō teppeki to mieru ano onna no toe hatae no bōgyomō ni (64)
 marriage vow—or else—right now—‘impregnable fortress’—seems like—that woman's—many layered—defensive network

These too are idioms that can be said to stimulate audiences to find out ‘what might be’. While Matsuoka and the other translators favour *yoji jukugo*, they are still used with much less frequency than devices such as alliteration and metaphor,¹¹ and in that sense their usage can be taken as a synecdoche for the Japaneseness of Japanese Shakespeare translation. One final example indicates this potential to its creative maximum. In 2.2, when Quickly deceives Falstaff into believing that Mistress Ford loves him, she repeats the same likely malapropism (‘canary’ for ‘quandary’) as follows:

¹¹ Assonance and consonance are to be found in almost every line of a Shakespeare translation, while Japanese translators both translate Shakespeare's metaphors and make some of their own.

you have brought her into such a canary as 'tis wonderful. The best courtier of them all, when the court lay at Windsor, could never have brought her to such a canary (2.2.57-61)

Odashima and Matsuoka both acknowledge the malapropism, Odashima with the idiom *suisei mushi* 醉生夢死 ('drunken life' and 'dream of death', meaning 'to idle one's life away') and Matsuoka with the idiom *kyōki ranbō* 狂気乱暴 ('folly' and 'rudeness', or 'getting mad'):

Ano hito wa, anatasama no sei de, sukkari suisei mushi no kyōchi de gozaimasu wa yo. Soryā kono Uinzā ni kyūtei ga okaremashite kara, gorippana kyūteijin ga ōzei irasshaimashita ga, sono naka no ohitori datte ano hito wo kore hodo suisei mushi ni saseta kata wa imasen deshita. (Odashima, 1983: 55-6)
that person—thanks to you [respectful]—completely—'idling her life away'
—ground—is—[emphatic particles]—that is [emphatic]—at Windsor—the
court—is in session—because—splendid courtiers—many—there were—
among them—not one—[emphatic]—her—so much—'idling her life away'
—[could have] made—person—was not

anatasama no sei de, ano kata wa sorya mō yopparatta mitai na kyōki ranbō. Kyūtei ga Uinzā no oshiro ni hikkoshi shite masu to, orekireki ga ōzei irasshaimasu kedo, sono naka no ichiban rippana tonogata datte okusan wo anna ni kyōki ranbō saseya shimasen yo. (Matsuoka, 2001: 65-6)
thanks to you [respectful]—that person—extremely—already—like she's
drunk—getting mad—the court—to Windsor Castle—has moved—high-
ranking people—many—there are—but—among them—the most splendid
—gentlemen—even—[Mistress Ford]—that much—'getting mad'—would not
make—[emphatic]

Quickly's malapropism doubly confuses 'quandary' with both the lively Canary dance that originated in the Canary Islands and the sweet white Canary wine from the same locality. Odashima hints at the drink in *suisei* ('drunken life', with the character *sui* meaning 'drunk'), and Matsuoka goes even further in introducing what is a Japanese malapropism, *kyōki ranbō*, 'getting mad', for *kyōki ranbu*, 'a boisterous dance'.

* * *

The question remains as to the extent that *yoji jukugo* are noticeable in live theatrical performance. My personal impression from seeing Ninagawa's production of Matsuoka's translation of *Julius Caesar* in 2014 (and later on DVD) and of other Ninagawa Shakespeares is that because of the director's 'self-inflicted struggle' (Suematsu 590-1) to balance visual representation with

fidelity to the text, the actors tend to speak the lines at high speed and treat *yoji jukugo* with no greater degree of emphasis and intonation than they do any other word or phrase so that they stand out much less than one might expect.¹² Modern Japanese actors do not intone lines in the style of the traditional Japanese theatre, being mainly concerned to project sense and meaning in the manner of Anglophone Shakespeare actors, and would therefore only emphasize *yoji jukugo* by slowing down or changing the pitch if they or the director felt it necessary to do so. This is not, however, to deny the ability of Japanese audiences to appreciate these idioms in context nor their relevance to a director's interpretation. Ninagawa's *Julius Caesar* was a physical, high octane production that emphasized the themes of honour and male bonding, and Matsuoka's *yoji jukugo* can only have supported Abe Hiroshi's portrayal of Brutus as a proud and aloof patrician in contrast to the volatility of Yoshida Kōtarō's Cassius and camaraderie of Fujiwara Tatsuya's Mark Antony. Further research needs to be done on contemporary Japanese Shakespeare audiences who are arguably more familiar with Shakespeare's stories than those of previous generations and expect more of the language of both translation and production.¹³ *Yoji jukugo* are literary tropes that exemplify this continued creative potential of Shakespeare in Japanese.

Appendix

List of *yoji jukugo* in Matsuoka (2014) and Fukuda (1960) translations of *Julius Caesar*

Phrases in the source text are underlined where the semantic correspondence is unclear.

1.1.31	Fukuda	商売繁盛 (10) <i>shōbai hanjō</i> 'thriving business' business—flourish	to get myself into more work. (Cobbler)
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¹² The totality of a Ninagawa productions comprises elaborate three-dimensional set designs, frequent movement, stage business and changes of *mise-en-scène*, metatheatrical effects such as the entrance of actors through the audience, and continual background music, so that at its most hurried actors rush to speak the lines in time with the next stage direction, and can even seem redundant against everything else that the production is saying.

¹³ Matsuoka mentions *yoji jukugo*, as well as devices such as puns, in the programme notes she contributes to Ninagawa's Shakespeare Series, but nothing so far has been written on this topic in the English research literature, which has focused on issues such as prosody and the role of translation in the performance history of Shakespeare in Japan.

1.2.78	Matsuoka	有象無象 (22) <i>uzō muzō</i> ‘the rabble’ have image—no image	That I profess myself in banqueting To all the rout (Cassius)
1.2.126	Matsuoka	一言一句 (25) <i>ichigon ikku</i> ‘every single word and phrase’ one word—one phrase	and write his speeches in their books (Cassius, emphatic)
1.2.132	Matsuoka	拍手喝采 (26) <i>hakushu kassai</i> ‘applause’ hand clapping—applause	I do believe that these applauses are For some new honours that are heaped on Caesar. (Cassius)
1.2.169	Matsuoka	重要事項 (28) <i>jūyō jikō</i> ‘important matter’	Both meet to hear and answer such high things. (Brutus)
1.2.230	Matsuoka	隣人諸君 (31) <i>rinjin shokun</i> ‘honourable neighbours’ neighbours—gentlemen	and at every putting-by, mine honest neighbours shouted. (Caska)
1.2.230	Fukuda	同胞諸君 (23) <i>dōhō shokun</i> ‘countrymen’ same breath—gentlemen	mine honest neighbours shouted. (Caska)
1.2.243	Matsuoka	有象無象 (32) as 1.2.78	and still as he refused it the rabblement hooted (Caska)
1.2.311	Matsuoka	堅固不伐 (36) <i>kengo fubatsu</i> ‘strong and unyielding’	For who so firm that cannot be seduced? (Cassius)
1.3.60	Matsuoka	茫然自失 (41) <i>bōzen jishitsu</i> ‘stunned’ hazy state of mind—loss of self	You look pale, and gaze, And put on fear, and <u>cast yourself</u> <u>in wonder</u> . (Cicero)
2.1.31	Fukuda	暴虐非行 (36) <i>bōgyaku hikō</i> ‘outrageous act’	Would run to these and these extremities. (Brutus)
2.1.69	Matsuoka	騷乱状態 (54) <i>sōran jōtai</i> ‘state of rebellion’	and the state of man, Like to a little kingdom, suffers then The nature of an insurrection. (Brutus)
2.1.84	Fukuda	暗黒地獄 (38) <i>ankoku jigoku</i> ‘dark hell’ (Erebus in classical mythology)	Not Erebus itself were dim enough To hide thee from prevention. (Brutus)
2.1.117	Fukuda	傲岸不遜 (40) <i>gōgan fuson</i> ‘arrogance’ overbearing—haughty	So let <u>high-sighted tyranny</u> range on (Brutus)

2.1.118-9	Fukuda	大義名分 (40) <i>taigi meibun</i> ‘good reason’	But if these, As I am sure they do, bear fire enough To kindle cowards (Brutus) (i.e. if the conspirators have ‘good reason’ to follow ‘these’ signs of the times by overthrowing Caesar)
2.1.121	Fukuda Matsuoka	同胞諸君 (40) 同胞諸君 (58) as 1.2.230 (Fukuda)	then, countrymen What need we any spur but our own cause (Brutus)
2.1.124	Matsuoka	秘密嚴守 (58) <i>himitsu genshu</i> ‘strict secrecy’	What other bond Than secret Romans that have spoke the word (Brutus)
2.1.131	Fukuda	常套手段 (41) <i>jōtō shudan</i> ‘usual practice’	unto bad causes swear Such creatures as men doubt. (Brutus) (i.e. it is usual for weak-minded individuals to support ‘bad causes’)
2.1.132	Matsuoka	公明正大 (59) <i>kōmei seidai</i> ‘honourable’ fair—just	But do not stain The <u>even virtue</u> of our enterprise (Brutus)
2.1.133	Matsuoka	不撓不屈 (59) <i>futō fukutsu</i> ‘indefatigable’ no bending—no bending	Nor th’insurpressive mettle of our spirits (Brutus)
2.1.159	Matsuoka	先手必勝 (60) <i>sente hisshō</i> ‘the early bird gets the worm’ hand in first—sure of victory	which to prevent Let Antony and Caesar fall together. (Cassius) (i.e. the conspirators must kill Antony quickly to stop the situation from getting out of hand)
2.1.175	Matsuoka	暴力沙汰 (62) <i>bōryoku sata</i> ‘resorting to violence’	Stir up their servants to an act of rage (Brutus)
2.1.197	Matsuoka	超常現象 (63) <i>chōjō genshō</i> ‘supernatural phenomena’	It may be these apparent prodigies, The unaccustomed terror of this night (Cassius)
2.1.280	Matsuoka	付帯条項 (69) <i>futai jōkō</i> ‘provisory clause’	Is it <u>excepted</u> I should know no secrets That appertain to you? (Portia)
2.1.281	Matsuoka	一心同体 (69) <i>isshin dōtai</i> ‘two hearts beating as one’ one heart—same body	Am I <u>your self</u> But as it were in sort or limitation (Portia)

3.1.33	Matsuoka	権勢最大 (93) <i>kensei saidai</i> ‘most powerful’	most mighty and most puissant Caesar (Metellus)
3.1.43	Matsuoka	平身低頭 (93) <i>heishin teitō</i> ‘kowitz’ flat body—low head	Low-crooked curtsies and base spaniel fawning. (Caesar)
3.1.45	Fukuda	阿諛追従 (64) <i>ayu tsuishō</i> ‘excessive flattery’ flattery—flattery	If thou dost bend and pray and fawn for him (Caesar)
3.1.86	Fukuda Matsuoka	茫然自失 (66) 茫然自失 (96) as 1.3.60	quite <u>confounded</u> with this mutiny. (Cinna)
3.1.165	Fukuda	兇惡無慙 (70) <i>kyōaku muzan</i> ‘pitiless’ heinous—merciless	Though now we must appear bloody and cruel (Brutus)
3.1.180	Matsuoka	錯乱状態 (103) <i>sakuran jōtai</i> ‘confusion’ deranged—state	The multitude, beside themselves with fear (Brutus)
3.1.223	Fukuda	殘虐行為 (73) <i>zangyaku kōi</i> ‘atrocious’ cruelty—act	Or else were this a savage spectacle. (Brutus)
3.1.262	Matsuoka	四肢五体 (108) <i>shishi gotai</i> ‘the whole body’ four limbs—five bodies	A curse shall light upon the limbs of men (Antony)
3.1.263	Matsuoka	内紛内乱 (108) <i>naifun nairan</i> ‘internal disorder’	Domestic fury and fierce civil strife (Antony)
3.1.265	Fukuda	日常茶飯 (74) <i>nichijō sahan</i> ‘everyday occurrence’ everyday—rice boiled in tea	Blood and destruction shall be so <u>in</u> <u>use</u> (Antony)
3.1.269	Fukuda	兇惡無慙 (75) as 3.1.165	All pity choked with custom of <u>fell</u> <u>deeds</u> (Antony)
3.1.294	Fukuda	兇惡無慙 (76) as 3.1.165	The cruel issue of these bloody men (Antony)
3.2.13	Matsuoka	同胞諸君 (112) as 1.2.230	Romans, countrymen and lovers (Brutus)
3.2.15	Fukuda	公明正大 (77) as 2.1.132	Believe me for mine honour (Brutus)
3.2.29	Matsuoka	品性下劣 (113) <i>hinsei geretsu</i> ‘of low character’	Who is here so base, that would be a bondman? (Brutus)

3.2.30	Matsuoka	粗暴野蛮 (113) <i>sobō yaban</i> ‘barbaric’ violent—barbaric	Who is here so rude, that would not be a Roman? (Brutus)
3.2.32	Matsuoka	惡辣卑劣 (113) <i>akuratsu hiretsu</i> ‘villainous’ corrupt—base	Who is here so vile, that will not love his country? (Brutus)
3.2.49	Matsuoka	凱旋行進 (114) <i>gaisen kōshin</i> ‘parade in triumph’	Bring him with triumph home unto his house. (1 Plebeian)
3.2.73	Fukuda	市民諸君 (80) <i>shimin shokun</i> ‘fellow citizens’	You gentle Romans. (Antony)
3.2.74	Fukuda	同胞諸君 (80) as 1.2.230	Friends, Romans, countrymen (Antony)
3.2.82	Matsuoka	同志諸兄 (117) <i>dōshi shokei</i> ‘comrades’ same will—brothers	under leave of Brutus and the rest (Antony)
3.2.83	Matsuoka	公明正大 (117) as 2.1.132	For Brutus is an honourable man (Antony)
3.2.84	Matsuoka	同志諸兄 (117) as 3.2.82	So are they all, all honourable men (Antony)
3.2.84	Matsuoka	公明正大 (117) as 2.1.132	So are they all, all honourable men (Antony)
3.2.100	Fukuda	公明正大 (81) as 2.1.132	And sure he is an honourable man. (Antony)
3.2.121	Fukuda	匹夫野人 (82) <i>hippu yajin</i> ‘person of low estate’ humble man—rustic	And none so poor to do him reverence. (Antony)
3.2.125	Fukuda	公明正大 (82) as 2.1.132	Who (you all know) are honourable men. (Antony)
3.2.181	Matsuoka	殘酷非道 (123) <i>zankoku hidō</i> ‘atrocious’ cruel—out of order	This was the most unkindest cut of all (Antony)
3.2.188	Fukuda	同胞諸君 (85) as 1.2.230	O what a fall was there, my countrymen! (Antony)
3.2.190	Fukuda	兇惡無慙 (85) as 3.1.165	Whilst bloody treason flourished over us. (Antony)
3.2.200	Fukuda	同胞諸君 (86) as 1.2.230	Stay, countrymen. (Antony)
3.2.205	Fukuda	公明正大 (86) as 2.1.132	They that have done this deed are honourable. (Antony)
3.2.214	Matsuoka	到底無理 (125) <i>tōtei muri</i> ‘absolutely impossible’	For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth (Antony)

3.2.226	Fukuda	同胞諸君 (87) as 1.2.230	Yet hear me, countrymen (Antony)
4.1.20	Matsuoka	非難攻擊 (134) <i>hinan kōgeki</i> ‘critical abuse’	To ease ourselves of diverse <u>slanderous loads</u> (Antony)
4.1.28	Fukuda Matsuoka	百戰鍊磨 (94) 百戰鍊磨 (134) <i>hyakusen renma</i> ‘battle- hardened’ 100 battles—trained	But he’s a tried and valiant soldier (Octavius)
4.2.2	Fukuda	命令伝達 (95) <i>meirei dentatsu</i> ‘give orders’	Give the word, ho, and stand. (Lucilius)
4.2.15	Fukuda	懇懃鄭重 (96) <i>ingin teichō</i> ‘with courtesy’ courtesy—courtesy	With courtesy and with respect enough (Lucilius)
4.2.33	Fukuda	命令伝達 (97) as 4.2.2	Speak the word along. (Brutus)
4.3.4	Fukuda	赦免嘆願 (98) <i>shamen tanga</i> ‘plea for mercy’ pardon—entreaty	Wherein my letters, praying on his side (Cassius)
4.3.15	Fukuda	腐敗醜聞 (99) <i>fuhai shūbun</i> ‘rumour of scandal’	The name of Cassius honours this corruption (Brutus)
4.3.52	Matsuoka	大言壯語 (144) <i>taigen sōgo</i> ‘bragging’ big words—grand talk	Make your vaunting true (Brutus)
4.3.67	Matsuoka	清康潔白 (145) <i>seiren keppaku</i> ‘clean hands’ upright—clean	For I am armed so strong in honesty (Brutus)
4.3.75	Fukuda	不正手段 (102) <i>fusei shudan</i> ‘unfair means’	By any indirection. (Brutus)
4.3.153	Matsuoka	錯乱状態 (151) as 3.1.180	with this she fell <u>distract</u> (Brutus)
4.3.163	Matsuoka	緊急事態 (152) <i>kinkyū jitai</i> ‘emergency matter’	And call in question our necessities (Brutus)
4.3.207	Matsuoka	気分一新 (156) <i>kibun isshin</i> ‘complete change of mood’ mood—renewal	Come on <u>refreshed</u> , new-added and encouraged (Brutus)

4.3.234	Matsuoka	万事良好 (158) <i>banji ryōkō</i> ‘all is well’ 10,000 things—well	Everything is well. (Brutus)
5.1.11	Matsuoka	勇氣凜々 (165) <i>yūki rinrin</i> ‘full of spirit’ courage—awe-inspiring	thinking by this face To fasten in our thoughts that they have courage (Antony)
5.1.90	Matsuoka	氣力一新 (171) <i>kiryoku isshin</i> ‘refreshed’	For I am fresh of spirit and resolved (Cassius)
5.1.108	Matsuoka	凱旋行進 (172) as 3.2.49	You are contented to be led in triumph Thorough the streets of Rome? (Cassius)
5.4.1	Matsuoka	同胞諸君 (184) as 1.2.230	Yet, countrymen: O yet, hold up your heads. (Brutus)
5.4.20	Matsuoka	無事安泰 (186) <i>buji antai</i> ‘safe and sound’ safe—peaceful	Brutus is safe enough. (Lucilius)
5.5.33	Matsuoka	同胞諸君 (190) as 1.2.230	Farewell to thee too, Strato. Countrymen (Brutus)
5.5.70	Matsuoka	一味徒党 (193) <i>ichimi totō</i> ‘the whole gang’ gang—faction	This was the noblest Roman of them all: All the conspirators save only he (Antony)
5.5.72	Matsuoka	私利私欲 (193) <i>shiri shiyoku</i> ‘self- interest’ personal profit—personal desire	He only, in a general honest thought And common good to all, made one of them. (Antony) (i.e. Brutus was a selfless man who renounced self-interest)
5.5.74-5	Fukuda	円満具足 (136) <i>enman gusoku</i> ‘in complete harmony’ genial—fully equipped	the elements So mixed in him (Antony)
5.5.78	Fukuda	葬儀万端 (136) <i>sōgi bantan</i> ‘a proper funeral’ funeral—all	With all respect and rites of burial. (Octavius)

Matsuoka ~ total 51 *yoji jukugo*

Brutus (20), Antony (12), Cassius (8), Caska and Portia (2 each),
and Caesar, Cicero, Cinna, Lucillius, Metellus, Octavius and 1 Plebeian
(1 each)

Fukuda ~ total 35 *yoji jukugo*

Antony (14), Brutus (12), Octavius and Lucilius (2 each), and Caesar, Caska, Cassius, Cinna, and Cobbler (1 each)

Idioms in *Julius Caesar* translations connoting baseness and barbarity

akuratsu hiretsu ‘villainous’ (Matsuoka)
bōgyaku hikō ‘outrageous act’ (Fukuda)
bōryoku sata ‘resorting to violence’ (M)
hinan kōgeki ‘critical abuse’ (M)
hinsei geretsu ‘of low character’ (M)
kyōaku muzan ‘pitiless’ (F 4 times)
sobō yaban ‘barbaric’ (M)
zangyaku kōi ‘atrocious’ (F)
zankoku hidō ‘atrocious’ (M)

List of *yoji jukugo* in Matsuoka (2001) and Odashima (1983) translations of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

1.1.131	Odashima	暴動事件 (10) <i>bōdō jiken</i> ‘riot’	The Council shall hear it, it is a riot. (Shallow)
1.1.132	Odashima	暴動事件 (10)	It is not meet the Council hear a riot. (Evans)
1.1.130	Odashima Matsuoka	最終最後 (14) <i>saishū saigo</i> ‘ultimately’ finally—finally 最終最後 (17)	and the three party is, lastly and finally, mine host of the Garter. (Evans)
1.1.134-5	Odashima	慎重審議 (15) <i>shinchō shingi</i> ‘careful consideration’	we will afterwards <u>’ork upon the cause with as great discreetly as we can.</u> (Evans)
1.1.163	Matsuoka	無知蒙昧 (19) <i>muchi mōmai</i> ‘ignorant and uneducated’	Fie, what the ignorance is! (Evans)
1.1.172	Odashima Matsuoka	事實無根 (17) <i>jjitsu mukon</i> ‘unfounded’ 事實無根 (19)	You hear all these matters denied, gentlemen (Falstaff)
1.1.212-3	Odashima Matsuoka	古今東西 (19) <i>kokon tōzai</i> ‘all times and places’ old—now—east—west 古今東西 (22)	for <u>diverse</u> philosophers hold that the lips is parcel of the mouth. (Evans)

1.1.235	Matsuoka	一念勃起 (24) <i>ichinen bokki</i> ‘resolutely erect’ ardent wish—male erection ~ comic malapropism for <i>ichinen hokki</i> , ‘resolved to do something’	I will marry her—that I am freely <u>dissolved</u> , and dissolutely. (Slender)
1.2.8	Odashima	完全至極的 (24) <i>kanzen shigoku</i> ‘completely utterly’	For it is a ’oman that <u>altogether’s</u> acquaintance with Mistress Anne Page (Evans)
1.3.14	Odashima	無言実行 (25) <i>mugen jikkō</i> ‘action before words’	I am <u>at a word</u> , follow. (Host)
1.3.68-9	Odashima	東奔西走 (28) <i>tōhon seisō</i> ‘keep oneself busy’ east—scurry—west—run ~ emphatic	They shall be my East and West Indies, and I <u>will trade</u> to them both. (Falstaff)
1.3.78	Matsuoka	雲散霧消 (34) <i>unsan mushō</i> ‘vanish like mist’ cloud—disperse—mist —extinguish	Vanish like hailstones, go! (Falstaff)
1.3.84	Odashima	金貨銀貨 (29) <i>kinka ginka</i> ‘gold and silver coins’	<u>Tester</u> I’ll have in pouch when thou shalt lack (Pistol)
1.3.91	Matsuoka	卑怯未練 (35) <i>hikyō miren</i> ‘cowardly’	And I to Page shall eke unfold How Falstaff, <u>varlet vile</u> (Pistol)
1.3.98	Matsuoka	不滿分子 (35) <i>fuman bunshi</i> ‘discontented element’	Thou art the Mars of malcontents. (Pistol)
1.4.5	Odashima Matsuoka	惡口雜言 (31) <i>akkō zōgon</i> ‘stream of abuse’ bad mouth—mixed words 惡口雜言 (36)	here will be an old abusing of God’s patience and the King’s English. (Quickly)
1.4.69	Odashima	神經過敏 (34) <i>shinkei kabin</i> ‘oversensitive’	I beseech you, be not so phlegmatic (Quickly)
2.1.13	Odashima	忠實無比 (41) <i>chūjitsu muhi</i> ‘unmatched loyalty’	thine own true knight (Mistress Page)
2.1.54-5	Matsuoka	言行不一致 (50) <i>genkō fuicchi</i> ‘saying one thing and doing another’	they do no more adhere and keep place together than the hundred psalms to the tune of ‘Greensleeves’. (Mistress Ford)

2.1.62	Matsuoka	一字一句 (51) <i>ichiji ikku</i> ‘word for word’	Letter for letter, but that the name of Page and Ford differs! (Mistress Page)
2.1.90	Odashima	未来永劫 (45) <i>mirai eigō</i> ‘eternity’	It would give eternal food to his jealousy. (Mistress Ford)
2.2.58	Odashima Matsuoka	醉生夢死 (55) <i>suisei mushi</i> ‘idling one’s life away’ drunken life—dream of death 狂喜乱暴 (65) <i>kyōki ranbō</i> ‘mad with delight’ raptures—rudeness ~ malapropism for <i>kyōki ranbu</i> , ‘boisterous dance’, equivalent to Quickly’s malapropism of ‘canary’ (a lively Spanish dance as well as an alcoholic drink) for ‘quandary’	you have brought her into <u>such a canary</u> as ’tis wonderful. (Quickly)
2.2.60-1	Matsuoka	狂喜乱暴 (65) as 2.2.58	The best courtier of them all [...] could never have brought her to <u>such a canary</u> (Quickly)
2.2.92	Odashima	品行不逞 (57) <i>hinkō futei</i> ‘of loose morals’ high morals—retrograde ~ malapropism; in another combination, <i>futei</i> can also mean ‘promiscuous’	and let me tell you in your ear she’s as <u>fartuous a civil modest wife</u> (Quickly)
2.2.128	Odashima	追撃開始 (59) <i>tsuigeki kaishi</i> ‘start fighting’	up with your fights (Pistol)
2.2.128	Matsuoka	戦闘準備 (70) <i>sentō junbi</i> ‘prepare for battle’	up with your fights (Pistol)
2.2.129	Matsuoka	砲撃開始 (70) <i>hōgeki kaishi</i> ‘open fire’	Give fire! (Pistol)
2.2.223	Odashima	要塞堅固 (64) <i>yōsai kengo</i> ‘impregnable’ fortress—secure	as to lay an amiable siege to <u>the honesty</u> of this Ford’s wife. (Ford)
2.2.238	Odashima	金城鉄壁 (64) <i>kinjō teppeki</i> ‘impregnable fortress’ metal castle—iron wall	a thousand other her defences, which now are too strongly embattled against me. (Ford)

2.2.239	Matsuoka	難攻不落 (76) <i>nankō furaku</i> ‘impregnable’ difficult to attack—cannot fall	her defences, which now are <u>too strongly embattled</u> against me. (Ford)
2.2.261	Matsuoka	豊年満作 (78) <i>hōnen mansaku</i> ‘bumper crop’ rich year—full crop	I will use her as the key of the cuckoldly rogue’s coffer, and there’s my harvest-home. (Falstaff)
2.2.268	Matsuoka	田吾作野郎 (78) <i>tagosaku yarō</i> ‘country yokel’	Master Brook, thou shalt know I will predominate over the peasant (Falstaff)
2.3.24	Matsuoka	色黒大將 (82) <i>iroguro taishō</i> ‘dark-skinned master’ ~ possible pun on <i>eroguro</i> , ‘erotic and grotesque’	Is he dead, my <u>Ethiopian</u> ? (Host)
3.1.11	Odashima	神経過敏 (73) as 1.4.69	Jeshu pless my soul, how <u>full of cholers</u> I am (Evans)
3.2.40	Matsuoka	拍手喝采 (97) <i>hakushu kassai</i> ‘applause’	all my neighbours shall <u>cry aim</u> . (Ford)
3.2.65	Matsuoka	放蕩三昧 (99) <i>hōtō zanmai</i> ‘debauchery’ fast living—three tastes	he kept company with the wild Prince (Page)
3.2.66	Matsuoka	万事垢抜け (99) <i>banji akanuke</i> ‘highly polished manner’	He is of too <u>high a region</u> , he knows too much (Page)
3.3.51	Odashima	奇想天外 (87) <i>kisō tengai</i> ‘fantastic’ fantastical idea—beyond the heavens	thou hast the right arched beauty of the brow that becomes the ship-tire, the <u>tire-valiant</u> (Falstaff)
3.3.161	Odashima Matsuoka	一石二鳥 (93) <i>isseki nichō</i> ‘to kill two birds with one stone’ one stone—two birds 一石二鳥 (112)	Is there not a <u>double</u> excellency in this? (Mistress Page)
3.5.11	Odashima	疾風迅雷 (104) <i>shippū jinrai</i> ‘with lightening speed’ gale—thunderbolt	you know by my size that I have a kind of <u>alacrity</u> in sinking (Falstaff)
4.1.61	Odashima	精神異常者 (115) <i>seishin ijōsha</i> ‘lunatics’ mind—abnormal	’Oman, art thou lunatics? (Evans)
4.2.1-2	Matsuoka	雲散霧消 (139) as 1.3.78	Mistress Ford, your sorrow <u>hath eaten up</u> my sufferance. (Falstaff)

4.2.97	Matsuoka	破廉恥男 (145) <i>harenchi otoko</i> ‘insolent man’	Hang him, dishonest varlet! (Mistress Page)
4.2.118	Matsuoka	精神異常者 (147) as 4.1.61	Why, this is lunatics (Evans)
4.2.198	Odashima Matsuoka	助平根性 (127) <i>sukebei konjō</i> ‘lewdness’ lecher—disposition 助平根性 (152)	The spirit of wantonness is sure scared out of him. (Mistress Page)
4.2.200	Odashima	無期限無利息 (127) <i>mukigen murisoku</i> ‘indefinitely interest free’	If the devil have him not in fee- simple, <u>with fine and recovery</u> (Mistress Page)
4.2.200-1	Odashima	無理無体 (127) <i>muri mutai</i> ‘by force’	he will never, I think, in the way of waste, <u>attempt us</u> again. (Mistress Page)
4.4.1	Odashima Matsuoka	思慮分別 (129) <i>shiryō bunbetsu</i> ‘discretion’ 思慮分別 (154)	’Tis one of the best discretions of a ’oman as ever I did look upon. (Evans)
4.5.79-80	Matsuoka	疑心暗鬼 (166) <i>gishin anki</i> ‘suspicion begets idle fears’ doubt—heart—dark —demon	Here, master Doctor, in perplexity and <u>doubtful dilemma</u> . (Host)
4.5.91	Matsuoka	一滴一滴 (167) <i>itteki itteki</i> ‘drop by drop’	they would melt me out of my fat drop by drop (Falstaff)
4.5.10	Matsuoka	臨機応変 (168) <i>rinki ōhen</i> ‘resourcefulness’ contingent—appropriate response	my admirable dexterity of wit (Falstaff)
5.5.29	Matsuoka	正真正銘 (181) <i>shōshin shōmei</i> ‘genuine’	As I am a true spirit, welcome! (Falstaff)
5.5.146	Matsuoka	無理矢理 (190) <i>muri yari</i> ‘forcibly’ unreasonable—arrow reason	though we could have <u>thrust</u> virtue out of our hearts by the heads and shoulders (Mistress Page)
5.5.150	Odashima	豚肉饅頭 (163) <i>butaniku manjū</i> ‘pork steamed bun’	What, a hodge-pudding? (Ford)
5.5.157	Matsuoka	暴飲暴食 (190) <i>bōin bōshoku</i> ‘overeating and overdrinking’ rough drinking—rough eating	And given to fornication, and to taverns, and sack, and wine, and metheglins, and to drinkings (Evans)

5.5.158	Odashima	大言壯語 (163) <i>taigen sōgo</i> ‘bragging’	and swearings, and starings (Evans)
5.5.158	Odashima	喧嘩口論 (163) <i>kenka kōron</i> ‘quarreling’	pribbles and prabbles? (Evans)
5.5.159	Matsuoka	集中砲火 (190) <i>shūchū hōka</i> ‘concentrated fire’ ~ as victim of the ruse at Herne’s Oak, Falstaff has been ‘under attack’ by the other characters	Well, I am your theme (Falstaff)
5.5.161	Matsuoka	無知蒙昧 (190) as 1.1.163	ignorance itself is a plummet o’er me. (Falstaff)

Matsuoka ~ total 36 *yoji jukugo*

Falstaff (10), Evans (6), Mistress Page (5), Pistol (4), Quickly (3), Ford, Host and Page (2 each), and Mistress Ford and Slender (1 each)

Odashima ~ total 28 *yoji jukugo*

Evans (10), Mistress Page (5), Quickly (4), Ford (3), Falstaff and Pistol (2 each), and Host, Mistress Ford and Shallow (1 each)

Idioms in *Merry Wives* translations connoting immorality

akkō zōgon ‘stream of abuse’ (Matsuoka and Odashima)

bōdō jiken ‘riot’ (M/O)

bōin bōshoku ‘overeating and overdrinking’ (M)

fuman bunshi ‘discontented element’ (M)

harenchi otoko ‘insolent man’ (M)

hikyō miren ‘cowardly’ (M)

hinkō futei ‘of loose morals’ (O)

hōtō zanmai ‘debauchery’ (M)

ichinen bokki ‘resolutely erect’ (M)

muchi mōmai ‘ignorant and uneducated’ (M twice)

shinkei kabin ‘oversensitive’ (O 2)

sukebei konjō ‘lewdness’ (O)

taigen sōgo ‘bragging’ (O)

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The Domestication and Arabization of the Bard: Towards the Reception of Shakespeare in the Arab World

Abstract: Since Najib al-Haddad and Tanyus‘ Abdu’s first Arabic versions of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* at the end of the 19th century, the reception of Shakespeare in the Arab world has gone through a process of adaptation, Arabization, and translation proper. We consider the process of Arabization / domestication of Shakespeare’s plays since Najib al-Haddad’s adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* and Tanyus‘ Abdu’s adaptation of *Hamlet*, to the achievements of Khalil Mutran and Muhammad Hamdi. We underline, as particular examples of Shakespeare’s appropriation, the literary response of Ali Ahmed Bakathir, Muhammad al-Maghut and Mamduh Udwan, with a particular stress on Khazal al-Majidi and his adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays. All these writers reposition Shakespeare’s plays in an entirely different cultural space.

Keywords: adaptation, Arabic, Arabization, cultural transfer, Khazal al-Majidi, repositioning, Shakespeare, translation

Introduction: Arabization as a framework

Spencer Dan Scoville, in his PhD dissertation, *The Agency of the Translator: Khalil Baydas’ Literary Translations* (2012), quotes an excerpt from the letter sent in 1895 by a Palestinian student, Khalil Baydas, to the Egyptian journal *al-Hilal*:

If a person Arabized (*‘arraba*) a European novel, carrying across (*naqala*) its meanings into an eloquent and impeccable (*faṣīḥah*) Arabic idiom, which does not create the impression that it has been Arabized (*ta’rīb*), and took liberties (*taṣarrafa*) with the novel as he saw fit, but left the historical events and the proper nouns unchanged [...], if he read a European (*ifranjiyyah*) novel and adapted it, and wrote it down to the best of his linguistic abilities, using Arabic proverbs, spicing it up with verse, and using the idioms of the Arabs and their modes of expression, then what should his work be called—an Arabization (*ta’rīb*)? A composition (*taṣnīf*)? Or what? (Scoville 4)

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The letter is concerned with different issues of the translation of European literature, particularly the novel, into Arabic and stresses the importance of fidelity in literary translation. He uses two different Arabic words for “translation”: *naqala* (*naql*) and *‘arraba* (*ta’rīb*), to which he assigns two different meanings: thus, the process of *naql* is linked to the meaning of the text, while *‘arraba* is linked to the complex process of bringing a literary text into the Arabic context. By its extra semantic value, *‘arraba* (“to Arabize”) adds to the process the translator’s adaptation and originality. By resorting to *ta’rīb*, the translator goes beyond the surface meaning of the words in the source language text to its stylistic effects which he captures and renders in the new linguistic and social environment (target language).

In a study conducted by Gregor Meiering and Next Page Foundation in 2004, the authors have highlighted several aspects of the process of Arabization (*ta’rīb*), a term which, though synonymous with translation (*tarjama*), “reflects a much broader concept and is indeed of wider implications for translating”. Its purpose was the promotion of literary Arabic in all fields—education, science, administration and politics, leading to the development of a modern standard version of Arabic, to enhance “the transfer and growth of knowledge among speakers whose mother tongue is (colloquial) Arabic” (Idem). The aim of Arabization was to enhance “the efficiency of education, and strengthen the cultural self-consciousness in Arab societies” and “to create channels of opening up towards the outside world, allowing Arabic to become a language capable of expressing modern concepts and to develop itself into a language of knowledge production”. As a conclusion, “Arabization must be seen as a huge linguistic challenge that was at times taken and at times missed by Arab political elites. Arabization as a grassroots project was traditionally seen as a vehicle of achieving democracy and promoting Arab unity” (Next Page 5).

Obviously, the technique of Arabization is the Arabic version of domestication which, together with foreignization represents the two strategies used by translators, especially those specialized in literary translation, and which have a specific application in the case of the literary translations from English into Arabic—two different languages representing different cultures. However, as is obvious, the two techniques are not limited to translating from English into Arabic and can be used with any language.

The Arab view

We are justified to believe that preservation of cultural essence in translating into Arabic any of Shakespeare’s plays or poems is an extremely difficult task for the linguistic and cultural remoteness of the two involved languages, English and Arabic. Especially in literary texts, it should be considered that source and

target language equivalents have to entertain similar spirits, regardless of the verbal violation of the source text, and rarely does literary translation attain the stability of the original work. The translator encounters great difficulties with what the target language may offer him/her of expressions that can hold similar spiritual or essential functions and convey features of beauty of which readers can be entertained and pleased. Commenting on the translation of Shakespeare's Sonnet 18, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day", Bakri Al-Azzam points out that,

The description of beauty that Shakespeare gives in the sonnet does not apply in Arabia, for instance, where summer is the time of hot days, thirst, and dry and devastating winds. In this case, it is better to give the translator the license to introduce new notions that convey such features of beauty from Arabia, through the reading of which Arab readers and those who have good knowledge of Arabic can be entertained. In addition, along with the translated version, the translator should explain the beautiful features of the original work so that readers can understand both cultures by comparing the two texts. Shakespeare chooses summer as a beautiful. (Al-Azzam 64-65)

Though similar cultural expressions may not often stand for identical spirits or essences, replacing them by expressions that may carry identical connotations can be recommended, provided that the conveyed material is propped up with enough considerations of their implications. In other words, the translator has to "situationalize" the text by relating it to its environment, both verbal and non-verbal (Hatim 1990).

Finally, the translator should understand and live the mentality and thinking of the source text writer and audience, on the one hand, and that of the target text readers, on the other (Al-Azzam 62). The same point is put but differently by Haywood (ix) who, in his volume *Modern Arabic Literature* (1971) asserts that,

[in the translation of Arabic literature] there is something to be said for literal translation, which, though apt to be stilted, sometimes gives the flavour of the original. On the other hand, free translation can produce better literature and pleasanter reading. Poetry should not be translated as prose: this is a certain road to boring the reader. So, verse should be translated in verse, almost invariably with rhyme. (Haywood ix)

All along the process of translation, the new literary text in the target language is individually thought, and individually formed. Its creation is based upon the translator's experience and reaction towards certain events. In other words, the writer shows his intrinsic response and feedback in a transcribed manner, which very often differs from the manner of others, though sharing similar

experiences. Not only this, but also the way the audience or reader comprehends the literary text differs from one person to another, which is also another literary translation complication. This requires that the translator should be deviant and extraneous to make cultural shifts in order to produce similar cultural influence on the reader of the target language (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins 32).

Translators and translations

In his essay, “Decommercializing Shakespeare: Mutran’s translation of *Othello*” (2007), Sameh F. Hanna stresses the contribution of the Syro-Lebanese translators who emigrated to Egypt during the al-Nahda period and played a significant role “in initiating and promoting such new cultural activities as journalism, theatre and translation”, focusing on drama and popular fiction. According to Hanna,

These cultural products were qualitatively different both from the elitist culture offered by scholars of religion (*‘ulama’*)—religious exegesis, books on Arabic grammar and rhetoric, commentaries on classical poetry and various books of tradition (*turath*)—and from the popular culture of the time, which mainly found expression in popular singing, folk tales, and acrobat and circus playing, all practised in such public spaces as markets and cafés. (Hanna 37)

Tanyus ‘Abdu (1869-1926), himself a playwright, fiction writer and journalist, stands out as one of the outstanding translators of plays for the stage. According to Hanna, his translations illustrate “the practices of early Shakespeare translators and the translation norms to which they subscribed” (Hanna 29). One example is his 1901 version of *Hamlet* which responds to the requirements of the market the expectations of theatregoers at the time. He adapted the play so as make it more accessible to the audience: Hamlet does not die in the end of the play and retrieves his father’s throne. Also, the leading role is performed by Shaykh Salama Hijazi a popular singer whose death on stage would not have been accepted by the Cairene audience. What is remarkable about ‘Abdu’s translation is that he translated from the French, appropriating and adapting the French version by Alexandre Dumas, *père*. In her seminal volume *Hamlet’s Arab Journey* (2011), Margret Litvin points out that,

Abdu’s debt to Dumas explains nearly all the peculiarities of his Hamlet, from the apparent padding throughout (the French alexandrine is two syllables longer than Shakespeare’s iambic pentameter line) to the cleaned-up plot and added scenes. All the character changes with which Arab critics have reproached Abdu—the decisive Hamlet, the active Ophelia, the unsensual Gertrude, and the prayerless Claudius—can be traced to his peculiar French source. (Litvin 65)

One peculiar feature of the translation activity at the beginning of the 20th century is the increase of the number of published translations with the Egyptian elite as the target readership. Sameh F. Hanna comments upon the paratexts which the new translators resort to with the purpose of framing and packaging their work, such as the dedication of Muhammad ‘Iffat’s translation of *Macbeth*: “Our Arabization is dedicated to the whole world; to every writer, poet or scholar” (Hanna 33). It is the translator’s way of asserting that,

Shakespeare is not for entertainment or pastime in theatres, but rather for study and meditation through reading, as Sami al-Juraydini says in the preface to his translation of *Hamlet* whose first edition was most probably published around the second decade of the twentieth century. (al-Juraydini 8)

The developments in theatre production in the 1910s triggered a significant change in the principles underlying the translation of drama supported by the rise of a new generation of translators supported by distinguished theatre critics such as Muhammad Taymur, who highly appreciated the translations of Khalil Mutran which counterbalanced the commercial versions of Tanyus ‘Abdu.

Unlike his predecessors, Mutran and his peers were not financially dependent on published translations. They were educated, middle-class professionals with well-established positions in society. According to Hanna, these newcomers to the translation business made good use of their education and social position:

By flagging their cultural and educational assets and their social resources, especially on the covers of published translations, these new translators strove to challenge the authority of the old group whose legitimacy in the field was mainly dependent on the box office success of their translations. (Hanna 36)

It is interesting to note that over a span of one century there were fourteen different translations of *Hamlet*, eight translations of *King Lear*, ten translations of *Macbeth*, and eleven translations of *Othello*. Most of these translations were published in Egypt (Cairo and Alexandria), but also in Kuwait, Tunisia, Sudan, and Lebanon. Among the translators listed, the most prolific is Khalil Mutran, who translated four of Shakespeare’s plays: *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. Apart from al-Haddad’s translation of *Romeo and Juliet*, another translation of the same play was produced in 1898 by Tanyus ‘Abdu (1869-1926), who also translated *Hamlet* for the stage in 1901. An anonymous translation of *Othello* published in 1910 is also allegedly authored by ‘Abdu (Najm 243).

The translator took their time to properly advertise their work. Thus, Muhammad Hamdi, the translator of *Julius Caesar* (1912) introduces himself as “a teacher of translation at the Higher School of Teachers”, while Muhammad

‘Iffa, the translator of *The Tempest* (1909) and *Macbeth* (1911) prefers more personal allusions when he describes himself as “an ex-judge in civil courts”, and “the son of Khalil Pasha ‘Iffat”. Perhaps following the example of Shakespeare himself who dedicated his sonnets to his patron, ‘Iffat seeks for commercial success and does not hesitate to mention his personal connection to a prominent figure of the day when he confesses the support of Shaykh Muhammad ‘Abdu who “encouraged me to publish it” (the translation of *The Tempest*).

We should mention that all the representatives of this new generation of translators, and the translators of Shakespeare were no exception, placed a major emphasis on a printed statement on their fidelity to the original. It soon became a practice. For example, in 1912, prestigious translators as Khalīl Mutran (*Othello*), Muhammad Hamdi and Sami al-Juraydini (*Julius Caesar*) write in the prefaces to their translations that they are almost literal renderings of what Shakespeare says, “letter for letter, word for word”, where “no word, phrase, simile, metonymy, nor metaphor is left out” (qtd by Hanna 37).

Shakespeare, admirer of Arabs?

From anecdotal and recorded evidence, the fact remains that one of the main reasons why Shakespeare is popular and respected by many Arabs is because they believe that in *The Merchant of Venice* he put Shylock and his race, the Jews, whom Arabs view as the orchestrators of Zionism, in the most unfavourable light. It is also the belief of many Arabs that when Shakespeare referred to Arabs and Arab elements on various occasions, he, in the main, spoke about them positively. For instance, in an article that appeared as early as 1956 in the Baghdad periodical, *Ahl al-Naft*, the Iraqi critic Safā’ Khulūsi commented, “In *The Merchant of Venice* he [Shakespeare] presents the prince of Morocco as a noble and honourable man who is handsome and courteous, whilst he portrays the Jew Shylock with all connotations of villainy and baseness” (Khulūsi 14).

Khulūsi also echoes the commonly held view in the Arab world that in *Othello* Shakespeare is an “admirer of Arabs”. According to Khulūsi, Shakespeare, apart from making Othello, an Arab like themselves, the titular hero of one of his major tragedies, he on the whole portrays Othello as valiant, devoted, and of noble nature:

He [Shakespeare] devotes one play to a Moorish Arab, Othello... We see Shakespeare as an admirer of the Arabs. He endows Othello with courage and manly qualities. He presents him [Othello] as a valiant man and jealous of his honour. When he becomes aware of his error, he does not hesitate to die the death of a Roman hero. (Khulūsi 13)

Part of many Arabs' appreciation of Shakespeare lies in the fact that they think that Shakespeare's fascination with Arabic elements is manifest in the fact that he used a number of Arab locales to provide colourful scenes to two of his plays: a historical play, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and a romance, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*. Part of the action of *Antony and Cleopatra* is set in Alexandria in Egypt and part of *Pericles* is set in Tyre in Lebanon and in Antioch (the historical Syrian city, now occupied by Turkey). Furthermore, the heroes of these two plays are of particular fascination to the Arabs: Cleopatra, whom many Arabs cannot accept as being any other than an Egyptian Queen, and Pericles, whom many Arabs speculate to be an Arab Prince or at least an Oriental one. Moreover, Tunis, though ostensibly not the immediate setting of *The Tempest*, some Arabs, nevertheless, appreciate the fact that it plays an important role in the background to the play. It is from Tunis that Alonso, King of Naples, Antonio, Duke of Milan, and other courtiers were returning from the wedding party of King Alonso's daughter to the King of Tunis, when their ship was overtaken in the opening scene by the terrible tempest raised by Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan, with the help of his sprite, Ariel.

A few Arab critics, however, have adopted an entirely different trend of thinking as regards Shakespeare's attitudes not only to Arabs but to the Orient and Oriental subjects. Hawamdeh argues that Shakespeare, like many other Renaissance dramatists, if not necessarily expressing his own attitudes or judgment regarding Orientals and Muslims, nevertheless reveals and registers in his writing the conventional Elizabethan attitude toward Orientals. Contrary to Khulūsi's view of *Othello*, Hawamdeh, in "Shakespeare's Treatment of the Moor in *Othello*", tries to substantiate the focal point of his article that "*Othello* is a documentary expression of the Renaissance misconceptions, racial prejudices and stereotypical notions about Moors in particular and the Muslims in general." He goes on to say,

Shakespeare, like other Elizabethan playwrights, was clearly very much aware of the Western legacy of traditional misrepresentations, distortions, legends and popular images about Islam and Muslims. The Elizabethan inherited legacy was established during long, yet incessant, centuries of military and at times intellectual, though polemical, confrontations between the Muslim Orient and Christian West. (Hawamdeh, *Shakespeare's Treatment* 93)

Also, in "Allusions to Muhammad in Shakespeare", Hawamdeh looks at a number of allusions to Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, and how Shakespeare, to use Hawamdeh's own words,

demonstrates full awareness of, and reflects, the Renaissance traditional views of the Prophet of Islam, which portray him as a false deity, a devil, an imposter

and a lecher, among other grotesque allegations. Throughout his canon, Shakespeare once refers [in *Henry VI Part One*, I.ii.140] to the Western popular legend of “Mahomet’s dove”, twice mentions “Mahu” [in *King Lear*, III.iv.140, and IV.i.63] as a name of a devil, twice uses the word “Mammat(s)” [in *Romeo and Juliet*, III.v.186 and *Henry IV Part One*, I.ii.90-92] to mean an idol (s), and employs the word “Termagant” in three forms [in *1 Henry IV*, V.iv.114-115, *Hamlet*, II.ii.13, and in *Antony and Cleopatra*. (Hawamdeh, *Allusions* 54)

Hawamdeh reaches the conclusion that “Shakespeare clearly utilizes the Western perception of Islam as the religion of the sword, war and bloodshed” (Hawamdeh, *Allusions* 63). Not from such speculation as colours most of the comments given above, but from the evidence of the many plays in the canon, the fact remains that Shakespeare indeed knew a great deal of Arab characteristics and places, and probably admired them as many lines from his plays seem to suggest. Thus we find references to “Arabian trees” (in *Othello*, 5.2.350-1, and *The Tempest*, 3.3.22), to the “vastly wilds” and “perfumes” of Arabia (in *The Merchant of Venice*, 2.7.42, and *Macbeth*, 5.1.57), to the “Arabian birds” (in *Antony and Cleopatra*, 3.2.212, and *Cymbeline*, 1.6.1), or direct geographical references to Arabia, Syria, Antioch, Damascus, Aleppo, Tunis (in *Coriolanus*, *Pericles*, *The Tempest*, *Henry VI*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*)—to mention just a few of the best-known examples.

All these seem to indicate that the “East” in general occupied a special place in Shakespeare’s heart, for which he expressed admiration in the memorable line, “I’ th’ East my pleasure lies”, which he put in the mouth of Antony, the “Arabian bird” of *Antony and Cleopatra*. How, we may wonder, did Shakespeare come to know about such Arabian elements and places that are found in many of his plays, bearing in mind that these elements are hardly referred to in the major sources that Shakespeare had consulted? In an attempt to unravel this mystery, or part of it, a number of theories have been proposed by Arab critics and artists as well as by Western critics, the nature of which varies from stimulating remarks to somewhat strange and controversial speculations.

From Arabization to appropriation

One of the key tactics which the new generation of drama translators, particularly those who translated Shakespeare, deployed to establish their legitimacy in the field was their emphasis in their published translations on a purported fidelity to the original text. This was regardless of whether or not their actual translation practice honoured the ideal of ‘fidelity’ they promoted in the prefaces and short introductions to their translations. In three important translations published in 1912, one of *Othello* by Khalil Mutran and two of

Julius Caesar by Muhammad Hamdi and Sami al-Juraydini, the issue of fidelity was overemphasised in the translators' paratexts. Both Mutran and Hamdi state in the prefaces to their translations that theirs are almost literal renderings of what Shakespeare says, "letter for letter, word for word", where "no word, phrase, simile, metonymy, nor metaphor is left out".

The full title of Tanyus 'Abdu's second edition of his version of *Hamlet* (1902) reads: "The story of HAMLET, a play in five acts composed by Shakespeare the renowned English poet, Arabized by the skilled writer Tanyus Effendi 'Abdou, Owner of the well-reputed al-Sharq Newspaper". The keyword in this complex, meaningful title is "Arabized", and the question we are asking is: How far could Arabization go?

Almost one century after 'Abdu's stage versions, Arab contemporary playwrights are adapting and appropriating Shakespearean plays. Linda Hutcheon was very explicit about the direction that adaptation may take, when she asserts that adaptation, as a *process of creation*, "always involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation; this has been called both *appropriation* and *salvaging*, depending on your perspective (Hutcheon, 2013: 8, emphasis added).

Ali Ahmed Bakathir is remembered for his translation of *Romeo and Juliet* in blank verse in an attempt to demonstrate the richness and complexity of Arabic that allow for the translation of Shakespeare's plays in the original blank verse. Also, Bakathir adapted *The Merchant of Venice* in *Shaylouk al-Jadid* ("The New Shylock"), a play with a political message against Zionism and the state of Israel: "he adapts Shakespeare to set out his political stance vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict, drawing heavily on the stereotypical notions traditionally associated with Jews in English literature, especially Shakespeare's play" (Al-Shetawi, *Arabic Adaptations* 17).

The Syrian playwright Muhammad al-Maghut wrote *Al-Muharej* ("The Clown"), an adaptation of *Othello*, which conveys a fierce criticism of the corruption of politicians not only in Syria but also in the other Arab countries. According to Mahmoud Al-Shetawi, "The play serves two purposes: it incorporates *Othello* from a postcolonial perspective to suggest that Shakespeare, as a colonial dramatist, is consciously portraying Othello as foolish and violent to justify his defeat and eventual destruction" (Al-Shetawi *Arabic Adaptations* 20-21). The originality of *Al-Muharej* resides in the use of theatrical procedures and improvisation derived from the Italian *commedia dell'arte*; the performance is interactive, allowing the audience to suggest and change the theme of the play, in the tradition of the Arab *masrah al-furjah*.

Hamlet without Hamlet: Khazal Al-Majidi

The Iraqi playwright Khazal al-Majidi considers that Shakespeare probes the depths of humanity, and his theatrical selections constitute a unique experience in re-reading the tragedies of the prominent English poet and writer and sheds light on the sunset of freedom in his country and the escalation of the lust for power and money. In the introduction to his theatrical anthology entitled “Shakespeare’s Inferno” (2018), he writes:

If the Italian poet Dante wrote about Hell, Paradise and Purgatory in his legendary poetic epic “The Divine Comedy”, Shakespeare also did it in most of his major tragedies descending and delving into the hell of life and the depths of humanity, not in the world of the afterlife as in Dante. Likewise, his comedies were a joyful delving to the paradise of life and inside it as well, and his historical plays were a kind of purgatory between this and that. (in Al-Janabi np, my translation)

Al-Majidi presents his experience in re-reading and producing Shakespeare’s tragedies to describe his hell, raging in him and in his country between the sunset of freedom in his country and the escalation of the lust for power and money that dominated him and is still present, and the fall of meteors of wars over it, which today has become the war of the entire Arab world. If Al-Majidi has dealt with these matters in his other plays, directly, in order to dig up the classes in his country and in his burning self, then, here, he offers us a unique experience in five plays in love with Shakespeare and distancing himself from him with new treatments, in form and content, and presenting unique texts of Arab theater.

To consider only one example, Shakespearean influences are the main contribution to Khazal al-Majidi’s play *Hamlet bila Hamlet* (“Hamlet without Hamlet”). Although the text bears the name of the Shakespearean character, the writer treated this name in a way that differs from the original Hamlet, by drawing his own character and transcending all the constants and events through the exploitation of symbols and connotations, and conferring to Shakespeare’s original text an implicit intertextuality. By a process of hybridization, Al-Majidi borrowed the characters’ names from Shakespeare’s play, and hybridized them. As a result, the characters changed and migrated from old classic to living reality.

The Iraqi playwright structures his play in seven acts, or scenes, to which he assigns explanatory titles, as follows: Scene I: *Hamlet’s Death* (موت (هاملت); Scene II: *Ophelia’s Confusion* (حيرة أوفيليا); Scene III: *Horatio’s Escape* (هروب هوراشيو); Scene IV: *The Queen and Ophelia: The Woman and the Mirror* (الملكة وأوفيليا: المرأة والمرأة); Scene V: *Gertrude’s Death* (مصرع غرتروود); Scene VI:

Laertes's Lusts (شهوات ليرتس); Scene VII: *Flourish of Death* (زهور الموت). There are seven characters: As for the script of the play, it consists of seven scenes and seven characters also present in the Shakespearean original: Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius, Laertes, Ophelia, Horatio, and the grave digger.

This hybridization aimed to strengthen the mythical dimension of the writer, especially in his play through the events summarized in King Hamlet's murder by his brother Claudius in complicity with Gertrude, his brother's wife. As a result, Hamlet, who is studying abroad, decides to return to Denmark to attend his father's funeral, but the ship sinks and he dies. Hamlet's death triggers his mother's feelings of grief despite the crime she had committed. In the midst of all these, Ophelia stands as a symbol of purity. Death has entered the ramparts of the city walls and its stench is felt everywhere. Confessions of the guilt that led to the ruin of the kingdom begin. Laertes, upon knowing that his ancestors are the true kings of Denmark, hence more deserving to inherit, kills the king and his son to become king himself. Later, he is killed by the grave digger.

According to Margaret Litvin, the play, first produced in 1992, "fits clearly into the post-1975 pattern". A more recent production of the play (2008), titled *This is Baghdad*, and directed by Monadhil Daood, emphasized "the violent imagery of Iraq's recent political history", incorporating stylistic elements of ta zīya theatre: "The use of this traditional Shi'a dramatic form, specific to passion plays commemorating the death of the Prophet Muhammad's grandsons Hassan and Husayn, carries a political charge: ta zīya was banned in Saddam Hussein's Iraq" (Litvin 185).

The play is about the struggle for power, which Al-Majidi borrowed from *Hamlet* as a general idea. As for the text, it is an independent text in itself that has nothing to do with Shakespeare's text, but he borrowed some dialogues for the real characters of *Hamlet* and worked to transform and transfer them to reality. Hence the anonymous, personal dialogue that Al-Majidi did not specify in the text in order to bring the recipient in a state of constant anticipation:

Ah ... yet this stiff, hardened body wears out to become dew. Oh my God ... to the extent that the customs of this world seem obsolete and outdated that ... please do not work without ... Damn this world ... Damn it. (al-Majidi, *Hamlet bila Hamlet* 468, my translation)]

Here, the lines show the hybridization process that took place between the Shakespearean text and the text of Al-Majidi. Its poetic formulation is an approach to Shakespeare's method in writing theatrical texts.

The theatrical text—the death of Hamlet in the first scene of the play—ends the true link between the Shakespearean text and the text of Al-Majidi, breaking the restrictions in the process of writing the theatrical text and departing from the norm in embodying those stories and representing them as

mythical symbols to strengthen the events and draw the recipient's literary attention. The writer left the fixed taboos and broke the rigid traditions in a realistic manner. *Hamlet without Hamlet* is a mixture of literary genres that switch between the true spirituality of Hamlet and his own story, changing the centers of the main characters and transforming them into other characters, as the death of Ophelia was transferred to Hamlet in order to turn the scales and in order for the implicit message to surface. Here is one example:

Ophelia: Why did you leave me alone, Hamlet? Play to the rise of temptations and go into the pools of whims that our souls portray to us as conquests of horizons, breaking barriers and creating traps ... Our stomachs have entered the licking of the forbidden and our souls are saturated with abnormalities and abominations, and adorned with the corruption of the severity of the evil that is taking them to the abyss. (al-Majidi, *Hamlet bila Hamlet* 509, my translation)

Al-Majidi described, in his controlled way, the state of the society in which he lives and worked to transfer, via a realistic method, the historical discourse to become a speech stemming from the human conscience and aimed at the reformation of the Iraqi society. The speech is the result of a collective awareness of the human being in society and the work to purify the human soul from mistakes. It is the legend and what it carries in terms of latent powers, the strength of the text and the flexibility in moving through different times and places with the possibility of transforming characters and destinies, given that these destinies represent the whole society and that the product of hatred is hatred. It did not hit the center in Hamlet only, but also created other centers around which conflicts and doubts revolve, as the high language and short dialogues intensified the meanings and connotations with the fewest possible words through the use of lines as tools that work to create twinning and homogeneity in the context.

Conclusions: Repositioning Shakespeare

Probably Shakespeare is more appreciated by the average Arab reader or spectator than most other modern English or Western writers. If the latter present to him in a piece of literature strange philosophy and complicated contemporary Western themes and problems still alien to his culture and therefore quite hard to digest, Shakespeare, regardless of the complications of his language, has found a smooth path to his heart. In Shakespeare what chiefly matters to the Arab reader or playgoer is not the now archaic English in which he wrote his works, but the works themselves. In Shakespeare, the reader or the playgoer can encounter intimate issues and problems which he daily experiences. He is quick

to respond particularly to the emotional and passionate elements inherent in many of Shakespeare's plays, should they be comedies or tragedies.

Of all Shakespeare's plays, *Hamlet* is perhaps the most often appropriated or interpolated into Arabic drama and literature. In numerous studies, American scholar Margaret Litvin has extensively explored the reception of *Hamlet* in Arabic drama, pointing out that Hamlet has been politically incorporated into Arab dramatic literature and theatre. In his article "Hamlet in Arabic" (2000), Mahmoud F. Al-Shetawi explored the various treatments of the play in Arabic literature, and Arabic drama in particular. For example Mamduh Udwan's play *Hamlet Yastiqidu Muta'akhiran* ("Hamlet Awakens Belatedly"), who rewrote Shakespeare's masterpiece in such a way as to express his concerns about political repression and corruption in his native Syria and in the Arab world at large. Udwan highlights the dilemma of the Arab intelligentsia with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and comments on the decadence of Arab societies. The situation he creates in this political drama is reminiscent of the state of affairs in the Arab world shortly before the breakout of the 1967 War. By juxtaposing Hamlet's "rotten" world with the Arabic situation, Udwan tries to highlight the causes of defeat and comment on the malady which blights Arab intellectuals, especially their impotence to act positively towards their countries.

In December 2020, despite the unprecedented restrictions caused by the pandemic and the nation-wide economic unrest, a new play was staged in Baghdad, directed by Monadhil Daood, the Iraqi director who had previously adapted Al-Majidi's *Hamlet Without Hamlet*, produced *Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad* at the RSC (2012), and who had performed in Sulayman Al Bassam's *Al-Hamlet Summit* (2006, Polonius) and *Richard III* (2009, Catesby). The play was *Forget Hamlet / Ophelia's Window*, by the Iraqi theatre director and playwright Jawad al-Asadi. This is a rich, revolutionary text in which the Iraqi reality today is deeply blended with the reality of Shakespeare's time, more than four centuries ago. It is as if time were repeating itself, and redistributing the same roles over the days and years and making us follow suit against our will, to re-play the same roles in a different time and place, starting from the same pain and concern and to meet the same terrible appeal that groans betrayal, treachery, power and the power of the executioner.


All these add to our attempt at demonstrating how Shakespeare has been repositioned in the Arab world. Literary critics and scholars who have commented on postcolonial drama and the repositioning of Shakespeare in postcolonial studies have glossed over Arabic literary examples. Since Arabic rewrites of Shakespeare were not rendered in English, and have only recently been explored, postcolonial critics might be forgiven for this omission. Our purpose was to demonstrate that the appropriations of Shakespeare's dramas by

Arabic literature discussed above illustrate the cultural impact of the West, Britain in this case, on Arabic drama and literature; and by studying these appropriations of Shakespeare in Arabic drama and literature in the context of the postcolonial literary theory, it fills a gap in comparative literary studies.

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Performing *Calibanesque* Baptisms: Shakespearean Fractals of British Indian History

Abstract: This paper uncovers new complexity for Shakespearean studies in examining three anecdotes overlooked in related historiography—the first Indian baptism in Britain, that of Peter Pope, in 1616, and its extrapolation in Victorian history as *Calibanesque*; the tale of Catherine Bengall, an Indian servant baptised in 1745 in London and left to bear an illegitimate child, before vanishing from Company records (like Virginia Woolf’s invention Judith Shakespeare vanishing in Shakespeare’s London); and the forgotten John Talbot Shakespear, a Company official in early nineteenth-century Bengal and descendant of William Shakespeare. I argue that the anecdotal links between Peter, Caliban, Catherine, Judith, Shakespear and Shakespeare should be seen as Jungian effects of non-causal “synchronic” reality or on lines of Benoit Mandelbrot’s conception of fractals (rough and self-regulating geometries of natural microforms). Although anecdotes and *historemes* get incorporated into historical establishmentarianism, seeing history in a framework of fractals fundamentally resists such appropriations. This poses new challenges for Shakespearean historiography, while underscoring distinctions between Shakespeareanism (sociological epiphenomena) and Shakespeare (the man himself).

Keywords: Shakespeare, Caliban, Peter Pope, Catherine Bengall, John Talbot Shakespear, genealogy, New Historicism, anecdotes, fractals, London

In the year of William Shakespeare’s death, another momentous event occurred in London. On December 22, 1616, Peter Pope, the first Indian to be baptised in Britain, walked up to St Dionis at Fenchurch Street. The ceremony of his spiritual rebirth under the Anglican Church was attended by the Lord Mayor, members of the Privy Council and the newly formed East India Company, blessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and monitored, in proxy, by King James himself, who had chosen the new name for the sixteen-year-old Indian lad from “Bengala”. Around 1800, a seemingly unconnected episode occurred in Calcutta with the arrival of John Talbot Shakespear, a descendant of William Shakespeare, whom almost no one recognised for that illustrious genealogy.

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He married the daughter of William Makepeace Thackeray senior, grandfather of the more famous novelist. John Talbot Shakespear died in 1825. His forgotten and weatherworn tombstone lies in Calcutta's Park Street Cemetery. Another anecdote, lying chronologically between the histories of Peter and Shakespear, is that of Catherine Bengall. She was trafficked from Bengal to London, baptised in the summer of 1745 at St James Church in Westminster, impregnated by one William Lloyd, left impoverished and with child, given asylum in the workhouse of St Martin in the Fields, only to disappear from the records of the East India Company by the following year.

The above events were entirely overshadowed in Britain by those of national importance—the English Civil War, the beheading of King Charles I, the Restoration of monarchy, the Great Fire of London, the expansion of tea, silk, opium and gunpowder trade between Britain and South Asia, the Battles of Plassey and Buxar, the popularity of Shakespeare's plays in colonial Bengal and two centuries of India's colonisation. This paper demonstrates how, if the anecdotes of Peter Pope, John Talbot Shakespear and Catherine Bengall had stayed alive in popular histories, Shakespearean studies would have been enriched.

Historemes and fractals

While hearing the persuasions of Shakespearean scholars Sigurd Burckhardt and Stephen Greenblatt, voices of the dead seem to contrive themselves as the words of the living; that the many meanings of *Shakespeareanism* were and remain, after all, works of social will and discourse. Are the lost stories of Peter, Catherine and John Talbot—unravelling by Victorian historiography and again thrust into oblivion—also outcomes of social determinism?

Victorians recognised that Peter's baptism reflected an inherent racialism in British attitudes that prefigured in the treatment meted out to Caliban in Shakespeare's allegedly final play, *The Tempest* (1611). On the other hand, with William Makepeace Thackeray as his nephew, the life and extended family of John Talbot Shakespear were as eventful as a theatrical assemblage of Shakespearean twists. Finally, when Virginia Woolf wrote *A Room of One's Own* (1929), she created Shakespeare's fictional sister, Judith, who, probably without the knowledge of the author, uncannily resembled Catherine. These correlations are not suggestions that Shakespeare had foreseen Peter's baptism, that Woolf's feminism was inspired by an anecdote from Britain's exploitative imperial history, or that there was any secret literary connection between the works of William Makepeace Thackeray and, his Elizabethan namesake, William Shakespeare. Recalling these forgotten anecdotes uncovers new complexity in our notions of history, especially Shakespearean historiography,

and what relationship anecdotes share with grand historical discourses. Each of these anecdotes is famously linked to literature, being such stuff as new historiography may be built on. Like the anecdotes of Peter, Shakespear and Catherine, the concept of *anecdote* itself has been marginalised by vociferous imperial, nationalist and identitarian histories. In 1983, Marc Ferro called the “fortuitous incident”, repressed by churches, states, educational institutions and even society, “a privileged historical object” bearing the seeds of disruption (qtd. in Gossman 168). Six years later, New Historicist Joel Fineman took a remarkable shot at quantising history, to extract the “smallest minimal unit of the historiographic fact”, the *historeme*. Fineman reckoned that the *historeme* “lets history happen by virtue of the way it introduces an opening into the teleological, and therefore timeless, narration of beginning, middle and end.” The *historeme* disrupts the realism, teleology and causality of history by staging itself as an abject historical truth. It establishes “an event as an event within and yet without” historical successions (Fineman 57-61).

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), Michel Foucault attempted something similar in what he called “tangential” or outlier histories, a history “not of literature but of that tangential rumour, that everyday, transient writing that never acquires the status of an oeuvre, or is immediately lost: the analysis of sub-literatures, almanacs, reviews and newspapers, temporary successes, anonymous authors” (153). This raises fundamental questions on historiography and literariness. That the literary and the historiographical are assumed to be phylogenetically different is a tragic—though real—manifestation of our alienation from what Greenblatt called the *order of things*. Order “is never simply a given: it takes labour to produce, sustain, reproduce, and transmit the way things are, and this labour may be withheld or transformed” (Greenblatt, 1990: 165).

New Historicism, according to Greenblatt, is to read the traces of the past with due consideration otherwise reserved for literary texts. Hayden White urges us to see the overlooked essence of historiography in aspects like emergence, contingency, the anecdotal and the abject (63-64). Otherwise, an author runs the gauntlet of being determined as the sole cause and effect of his writings—as in the phrase *I know my Shakespeare*—and trivialised into personality assassination. Although historians have invested decades in problematising the authorship of Shakespeare’s plays—some now credited to Christopher Marlowe and others—the bard gets attacked for racist and imperialist stances of *an* author rather than being seen as epiphenomena of social discourse. A case in point is Burckhardt’s note on the supreme importance of anachronism in *Julius Caesar*. Set in ancient Rome, the play is criticised by modern day *University wits* for having the modern invention of a clock as an implied prop, as though Shakespeare’s lack of university education—supposedly there were no clocks in ancient Rome—caused this blooper. Counterintuitively,

Burckhardt argues that Shakespeare speaks to us as clearly as to Elizabethans, inspiring our willing suspension of disbelief, while the plays of his university educated contemporaries, fastidious and footnoted, have dropped dead (4-11).

The hallmark of poststructuralist thinking is its sustained onslaught on macrocosmic sociological constructs by quantising fundamental building blocks of reality like perception, cognition and meaning. Poststructuralists have done to our consciousness of history what theories of relativity and quantum mechanics did to classical Newtonian physics. The poststructuralist oeuvre, then, is to defy the *knowability* of history and the *authenticity* of historical meanings. In Victorian historiography, considerable attention was paid to publishing anecdotes, with publishers increasingly desirous of appeasing readers who were “allegedly no longer willing or able to engage seriously with literature or history” (Gossman 154). However, this itself does not answer the question: are anecdotes formally and functionally disconnected from the vectors of historical time, or can their invocation fundamentally alter perceptions of history—in this case the history that informs interpretations of Shakespeare and his reception in colonial India? By way of exploring possible answers, this paper serves a twofold purpose.

First is to propose a new paradigm in social sciences for viewing historical anecdotes as fractals. Deeply canonised histories, such as Shakespeare and the British imperial history of India, have resisted New Historicism. In India, Shakespearean interpretations are increasingly shaped under immediate postcolonial realities and identitarian politics which do not necessarily allow for nuanced New Historicist readings. Though this is inevitable for Shakespearean studies, it runs the risk of systematically omitting anecdotal subversions of historiography from within the framework of a time past. Meanwhile, although there is nothing fundamentally erroneous in defining smallest units of historiographical facts as *historemes*—it is rather poetical and evocative—one operational hazard is that it makes historiography less interdisciplinary, perhaps alienating psychology (from which New Historicism derives a lot) or quantum studies (an emergent discipline cutting across physics, biology, statistics, computing, economics and geography) which can not only mainstream but also enrich New Historicism.

My formal purpose is to study anecdotal fractals around Pope, Bengall and Shakespeare, examining their subversions of Shakespearean historiography, and how they contribute from *margins* as more than marginalia in restructuring the background. Carl Jung, the chief exponent of the *collective unconscious*—a pseudoscientific concept in psychology with increasing neuroscientific validity today—proposed that though reality is perceived as continuous and causal, manifold events also unfold as non-causal and synchronic, and yet appear as coincidental and continuous. Later, Benoit Mandelbrot transformed mathematics, physics and geography by demonstrating fractals as the essential

rough and self-governing geometry of microforms, otherwise perceived as smooth, such as in coastlines, plant life, neuronal forms, molecular patterns or even the randomness of financial markets. Jung's notion of synchronicity and Mandelbrot's fractals can broaden explanations of the historiographical importance of anecdotes, besides strengthening the bond between natural sciences and humanities. I argue that while the microhistories of Pope, Bengall and Shakespear are satisfying as anecdotes or as standalone *histoemes*, like synchronic fractals, they are also the self-governing building blocks of British and Indian historiography. As the non-causal, fractalized and rough microstructural elements in a smooth-looking macrostructure, they dispute both colonial and postcolonial structures of macro-historiography revolving Shakespeare.

Dreaming of Caliban

Edward Duffield Neill—American Presbyterian and Chancellor of the University of Minnesota—may appear as the most unlikely candidate to unearth the story of Peter's baptism. But, the source of his book, described in its title, *Memoir of Rev. Patrick Copland: Rector Elect of the First Projected College in the United States: A Chapter of the English Colonisation of America* (1871), does explain. Peter Pope figures in Neill's history as a postcolonial fractal—postcolonial in the sense that America was an erstwhile British colony.

For centuries Fenchurch Street has, during Christmas week, been alive with persons busily passing to and fro, but on Sunday, 22nd of December 1616, an unusual crowd surged toward the Church of St Dennis, for it had been announced that, by the rite of baptism, a lad, a native of Bengala, was to be initiated into the Church of Christ (Neill, 1871: 12).

Despite the climactic representation of the pageant, Neill must have had little idea of its future significance. He saw Peter as a "great rarity in the streets of London during the reign of James the First; and as he walked, the women with curiosity, peeped through cracks of the front doors, and children went before, and followed his steps, their mouths agape with astonishment" (Neill, 1871: 12). Peter's arrival in London was consistent with the demographics of Tudor times. With more deaths than births in England, ranks of tailors, gun-makers, dyers, weavers, needle-manufacturers and labourers came to be constituted by the French, Dutch, Danish, North Africans and even Indians (Ackroyd 96). Peter was brought over by Patrick Copland, the East India Company's Chaplain at Masulipatam. In a slightly altered version, Peter was first brought to London by one Captain Best and left in the care of Copland, around 1614, for the boy to be

“taught and instructed in religion, that hereafter he might upon occasion be sent unto his country, where God may be pleased to make him an instrument in converting some of his nation” (Neill, 1984: 375).

In either case, Peter was in “the heart of Britannia as a prospective *cavea porcellus* to test the effects of the fruits of its civilisation” (Chatterjee, 2021: 91). Under Copland’s training, he learned to “to speake, to reade and write the English tongue and hand, both Romane and Secretary, within less than the space of a yeare” (Copland 29). In early 1615, Copland approached the Company for Peter’s baptism to cultivate him as one of the “first-fruits of India” (Neill, 1871: 11). Neill was prompt to make the connection between Peter and Caliban. “Dead or alive?” asks Trinculo, looking at Shakespeare’s *savage*, in *The Tempest*. “A fish. He smells like a fish, a very ancient and fish-like smell, a kind of not-of-the-newest poor-john. A strange fish!” Without necessarily dehumanising Peter, Neill quotes this passage, describing the response of an Elizabethan crowd to an alien Asiatic. Tellingly, the subaltern in this story can not only *not speak* but also be *not named* except as a metaphor. Upon seeing Caliban in Prospero’s island, Trinculo determines that if he was in England, no man would shy away from giving “a piece of silver” just to have a glimpse of this “strange beast” or “dead Indian” (Shakespeare 34). Peter too, in one manner of speaking, was a dead Indian, reborn as Anglican. His Anglican name was not his own. If we assume his baptism was carried with his best spiritual interests in the Company’s heart—though contemporary historians can hardly be persuaded to—his Christianised name was a metaphor or vehicle in service of the Church. Even if we assume that the Church was a benevolent institution in his life, we find him called in subhuman metaphors—fruit or fish—but certainly not endearments.

Fractals of Peter’s life begin and end pretty much at Fenchurch Street. He stayed on in London for a year, following which he returned to India with Copland, in 1617, aboard the ship *Royal James*, fortuitously named after his own name-giver. Copland came back to England in 1621, before preaching at the Virginia Council where he delivered the sermon *Virginia’s God Be Thanked*. This became the original source for Peter’s story. Copland showed the Council the letters written by Peter in Latin and English. Addressed to Sir Thomas Smith (a Company Governor) and Martin Pring (commander of the *Royal James*), and written between 1619 and 1620, the letters were indubitable signs of the first roots of English colonial education in an Indian mind. Equally indubitably, Peter’s baptism appears as an early experiment of British imperialism in its backyard, less than a mile from Leadenhall Street, where, on September 24, 1599, twenty-four British merchants had gathered in a decrepit building to form the East India Company to compete against Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese privateers. Unsurprisingly, Indian New Historicism has tried interpreting the dreamy imagery of an Indian boy “stol’n from an Indian King” and the “spiced Indian air by night” in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* as allegories of British

trade with Malabar and Bengal, where Ralph Fitch—the first recorded Englishman in India—visited in the 1580s (Desai 141-48). The allegorical reading has not gone unchallenged, since almost all Indian references in Shakespeare are stereotypically racist and gendered, although the unexceptional “exotic” and “undifferentiated” otherness of India, therein, transcends Eurocentric aesthetic hegemonies (Chaudhuri, 2005). But how do we interpret Peter’s role in it?

Peter was a docile subject of a future Empire, willingly tutored in the imperial languages, Latin and English. The disruptive element comes in his comparison with Caliban, a character known for swearing in the white man’s tongue, one who lives a deeply schizophrenic life in Shakespearean criticism, beginning as a sign of evil oppression and going on to be the posterchild of postcolonial, anticolonial and antiracial subjectivities. In Neill’s sketch, Peter’s baptism in London mimics Caliban’s abjection in Prospero’s island. Peter could have been a legendary symbol for marginalised voices under colonial rule; but he was not to be. Instead of asking what historical knowledge we can really glean from Peter’s episode, we should ask what can historical knowledge glean from it, besides asking, what psychological associations reminded Neill of *The Tempest* and Caliban while reconstructing Peter’s anecdote.

Shakespeare’s sister and Shakespeare’s descendant

Way back in March 1550, one Salamon Nurr (*conjec.* Suleman Noor) was interred at St Margaret’s in Westminster. On December 28, 1613, one Samuel Munsur, a “blackamour”, married a Jane Johnson at St Nicholas Church, in Deptford, less than five miles from Shakespeare’s Globe. More than fifteen Indian burials, baptisms or marriages in London populate the Company’s seventeenth-century records. As told by Patrick Copland in the title page of his book *Virginia’s God be Thanked* (1622), even in his time, Peter’s baptism was considered to have been held “in a famous assembly.” But the evangelism of the Company would soon be overshadowed by the traffic of Indian lascars, servants and even slaves. Eighteenth-century diplomat and diarist William Hickey brought over his servant William Munnew, from Calcutta. In 1737, a “Black” Indian boy, Pompey, was brought from Bengal by Captain Benfield and kept as a slave by Major Woodford of the Virginia Company. Even in Victorian London, the Countess of Londesborough of Mayfair bought an Indian servant called Bimbi. She dressed him in motley costumes and a pink turban, forcing him to dance before her guests.

In 1720, a sixteen-year-old Indian lad, stolen from his family in Madras and brought to London by Captain Dawes, was given to Elizabeth Turner and rechristened as “Julian”. He ran away on August 8, 1724, after stealing

20 guineas and setting the house on fire. After being arrested, Julian confessed to his crime, pleading, however, that he had been tortured for several years and forced to provide *Calibanesque* entertainment. Mrs Turner's refutation of these allegations was given more credence than her servant, and Julian was publicly hanged at Tyburn, although not before he was baptised as "John". In 1795, the spring issue of the *Morning Chronicle* published the report of Hyder, a fourteen-year-old Bengali servant employed by Mrs Ramus of 58 Baker Street, Portman Square. He too had stolen items from his lady's boudoir. Unlike Julian, he was spared hanging. It was not uncommon to wake up in eighteenth-century London to the news of runaway Indian servants, such as: "a Slender middle-sized India Black, in a dark grey Livery with Brass Buttons", fled from Mrs Thwait's home in Stepney (Taylor 159). And it was commonplace knowledge that Indian servants and slaves haunted the upscale neighbourhoods of Hampstead, Highgate, Tottenham, Tooting, Stepney, Marylebone, Whitechapel, Essex, Greenwich or Lewisham.

Virginia Woolf's fictional creation of Judith—William Shakespeare's sister—in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), may not have relied on many historical records other than Professor Trevelyan's *History of England* (1926), but was an uncanny recapitulation of the story of an Indian servant girl lost in London. Woolf's story went thus. Like William Shakespeare, Judith was "extraordinarily talented and gifted", though unrecognised. Judith travelled to London from Stratford upon Avon and, in her teens, she became the mistress of the actor-manager Nick Greene, mothering his child, forced into anonymity, destitution and finally "buried at some cross-roads where the omnibuses now stop outside the Elephant and Castle" (Woolf 71-73). Judith's fictional life points to a deep sociological tragedy—gender, class and religious hierarchies pitted against the artistic development of the spirit of genius. Catherine Bengall's anecdote singularly reinforces Woolf's invention, but only to ultimately challenge it. Catherine reached London in the 1740s, being purchased at the age of ten in Bengal by Suthern Davies and presented to Ann Suthern. She was baptised on November 26, 1745, at St James Church in Westminster. Unexpectedly freed by the Sutherns, Catherine's life imitated Judith's, as she became the mistress of one William Lloyd. In September 1746, she gave birth to a son at the parish workhouse of St Martin in the Fields. He was named William after his father—coincidentally the namesake of Judith's famous brother—before both mother and son vanished from the registers of the Company, like Judith herself had in the previous century. Catherine's unfinished tale compels us to surmise that for every Judith, who was a victim of gender oppression, there must also have been a Mrs Turner, propagating racial and class hierarchies, as witnessed in the large number of reports of runaway Indian servants. Hidden behind the backdrop to gender hierarchies in Shakespearean England were informal and formal systems of slave trade between Europe and the East.

Turning to India, we find that though Shakespeare's plays had developed a niche by the second half of the eighteenth century, his life was not necessarily well known. Following Dr Samuel Johnson's *The Plays of William Shakespeare* (1765)—an early watershed in the canon of Shakespearean studies—the bard's posthumous life ran parallel to the colonisation of India. The eighteenth-century British administration in India was more in tune with William Jones' philology and Orientalist outlook, which involved rapaciously translating Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit texts into English. When Jones called Kalidasa "the Shakespeare of India," after translating *Abhijnan Shakuntalam* in 1789, it was arguably a mutual elevation of both poets. Much less known is the fact that, in Calcutta's South Park Street cemetery, Jones and many other unremembered Orientalists and Britons from the time lie buried beside two Shakespear tombs, one of which is of John Talbot Shakespear, the forgotten descendant of William Shakespeare. Born to John and Mary Shakespear in 1783, John Talbot arrived in India from England as a low-ranking East India Company official in Calcutta, in the early 1800s. He married Emily Amelia Thackeray—the eldest daughter of William Makepeace Thackeray, a British collector who made his fortune trading elephants and ivory from Sylhet. After retiring in 1776, Thackeray was so rich that, for at least three generations, no one in his family needed to work. He had even sued the East India Company for £3,700—about £.7 million today—over the death of his smuggled elephants.

Compared to the Thackerays, John Talbot Shakespear is of very marginal interest today, if at all, and only for antiquarian reasons. His literary lineage had little or no bearing on his career. We cannot ascertain if his Shakespearean lineage even mattered to the East India Company. Shakespear's link to the bard of Avon was first established by the Victorian antiquarian, George Russel French, in his book *Shakspeareana Genealogica* (1869), and reaffirmed in Charlotte Carmichael Stopes' *Shakspeare's Family* (1901). According to French, John Talbot's line branched out of the Shakespears of Stepney (or Shadwell), who probably descended from Gilbert or Thomas Shakespeare, the bard's brother and uncle, respectively. French acquired the genealogical details from John Talbot's nephew, Lieutenant Colonel John Davenport Shakespear. A crucial evidence linking Shakespeare and Shakespear was the artefact in the possession of John Davenport: "a drawing on a parchment of a coat of arms, pronounced by an eminent herald ... more than 200 years old, which is precisely the same ... as the coat of arms granted to the Poet's father in 1596" (French 546).

The sixth son of Thackeray the senior, Rev Francis Thackeray, married Shakespear's sister, Marianne. Francis' elder brother and secretary to the Board of Revenue, Richmond Thackeray, married Anne Becher of Bath. Anne had been falsely informed by her grandmother that her fiancé, Lieutenant Henry Carmichael-Smyth, had died of a lingering fever. Had Anne not been thus

deceived, her son William Makepeace Thackeray—born in 1811 at Thackeray House in Calcutta’s Alipore—may have never stepped into literary society, or indeed the mortal world. Then, a dramatic irony followed. While Anne’s lover was very much alive back in England, her husband died of lingering fever in 1815, and was buried at the North Park Street Cemetery. Richmond was a patron to John Talbot, having appointed him as assistant collector in Birbhum. The deceased Richmond’s name inspired the name of John Talbot and Emily Shakespear’s youngest son, Sir Richmond Campbell Shakespear, who later became an agent to the Governor General of Central India and was awarded Companion of the Bath in 1860. John Talbot’s second son was named William Makepeace Shakespear after the child’s maternal grandfather and the most famous William in John Talbot’s lineage, William Shakespeare himself. After a quiet career, John Talbot Shakespear died by drowning in 1825, during a voyage to Cape Town, within a year of his wife’s death due to a fever she had contracted in the Calcutta summer.

The memory of the line of John Talbot and Emily Shakespear—the Indian branch of Shakespeares—was overshadowed by larger discourses of imperialism until, in 2014, when, British and Indian newspapers euphorically reported that British Prime Minister David Cameron was the great great grandson of John Talbot Shakespear.

Fractalising the Shakespearean legacy

John Talbot Shakespear’s oblivion implicates the elites of British Calcutta, who were more interested in building a commercial enterprise than in Shakespearean genealogy or literature. In 1807, Charles Lamb, who wanted to have his name talked of in China and the East, together with his sister Mary Lamb, published the *Tales from Shakespeare*, which played a major role in disseminating Shakespeare in the Orient (Dai 2019). Even prior to Lamb, Shakespeare’s plays were well known in eighteenth-century Bengal. Before the Battle of Plassey, British delegates had built a playhouse in Calcutta, in 1753. The Calcutta Theatre came up in 1775 and ran for three decades. By the 1780s, Bengal was exposed to a new culture of periodicals, with *The Bengal Gazette* and *The Indian Gazette* carrying theatre reviews, which included the performances of *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Richard III*. And, then, in November 1813, the famous Chowringhee Theatre was founded (Dahiya 2018).

Calcutta’s Hindu College, established in 1817, which later became the Presidency College, also marked a turning point in Shakespearean performances in British India. A growing bourgeois intelligentsia—pioneered by the young poet Henry Louis Vivian Derozio—took to reviewing, editing, translating and propagating Shakespearean theatre in Bengal. Around the time of Macaulay’s

infamous minute and the English Education Act of 1835, missionaries and Company officials realised the importance of a secular English studies curriculum in India, which could be spearheaded by Shakespeare owing to the implicit streak of Protestant ideals in his works (Viswanathan 80-81). The theatre of Bengali Renaissance derived immensely from Shakespeare's plays as theatre exponents like Michael Madhusudhan Dutta, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Haralal Ray Ardhendu Shekar Mustafi, Amar Datta, Sisir Kumar Bhaduri and Ahindra Chaudh went on adapting Shakespeare into Bengali. Indian Shakespeareanism was a deeply heterogeneous and mimetic phenomenon, reflecting larger discourses of British imperialism and bourgeois Indian nationalism in Victorian and Edwardian times (Bhattacharyya, 1964; Chatterjee, 1995; Sarkar, 2016; Marcus, 2017). Although Shakespeareanism began as a colonising and civilising mission in India, Shakespearean hybridity fostered a new Bengali sense of cultural and national identity which could muzzle the hegemony of British aesthetic sensibilities, the binary of tradition versus modernity, and the colonial falsehood of India's cultural inferiority (Singh 139-146).

Seen in a postcolonial framework, Shakespearean appropriations in colonial India were bound to overshadow the importance of John Talbot Shakespear. Even in his lifetime, John Talbot was surrounded by the more powerful Thackerays, who had much firmer grip over imperial matters and Victorian literary tastes. Shakespeare's genealogy was not altogether unknown to Victorian England, given the stature of French, who had earlier written commanding ancestries of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and that of Nelson and Wellington beginning from King Edward I. Neill, whom we must thank for Peter's anecdote, was also an influential scholar, having authored over ten volumes of ecclesiastical histories. In recent times, Peter Pope's baptism and Catherine Bengall's disappearance have become the subjects of historical inquiry, if only in a miniscule capacity compared to the kind of critical attention that British generals, Indian nationalism or Shakespearean theatre have enjoyed (Visram, 2002; Fisher, 2006; Habib, 2008). If we ask, why the anecdotes of Peter, Catherine and Shakespear are abject outliers in this history, the obvious answer is that they are the casualties of a bifurcated historicisation of Shakespeare. On the one hand was the cultural hegemony that the Company wanted to secure in colonial Calcutta. On the other, is the combine of anticolonial and New Historicist historiographies that have joined forces since the 1980s (Parvini, 2017). Besides Neill's appropriation of the *Calibanesque* in recording Peter's baptism, the racist discourse of Caliban being the evolutionary missing link between primitive apes and homo sapiens also thrived in Victorian England (Wilson, 1873). Taking *The Tempest* to illustrate the Shakespeare debates of the last fort years, we find that despite celebrations of Shakespeare and Prospero as master designers and architects (Comito, 1981), there have been sustained New Historicist attacks on Shakespeareanism for

peddling Renaissance prototypes of imperialist ideologies and godlike attributes of the imperial ruler (Brown, 1985; Flagstad, 1986; Skura, 1989).

There has been painstaking historiography on the evolution of the meanings and attributes of *Calibanesque*, which emerged in Victorian times as the name for the *dehumanising* force of monarchic and autocratic regimes of Europe and Russia, going on to refer to the *dehumanised* condition of members of the African diaspora, Latin American countries and other postcolonial nations reeling under imperial oppression and cultural annihilation (Vaughan, 1988). There has also been equally eloquent criticism on the New Historicist project—that set out to dismantle Shakespeare’s camouflaged imperialism and racism—over its selectivity and interpretations through analogies and metaphors (Willis, 1989). Meanwhile, New Historicists like Greenblatt have been criticised for not being *radical* enough and, by and large, appropriating so-called anecdotal *historemes* into grand historical discourses (Veenstra, 1995). Simultaneously, there have been influential efforts to recuperate New Historicism as a literary styled archive which brings historiography closer to literary criticism (Laden, 2004). Finally, somewhat ironically, it is Greenblatt who himself writes that although we may choose to see Prospero as Shakespeare himself, what Shakespeare “chooses to do—at least by the standards of Renaissance princes and playwrights alike—is next to nothing. For *The Tempest* is a play not about possessing absolute power but about giving it up” (2005: 374).

Although not a betrayal of New Historicism, Greenblatt’s radically honest admission about Prospero and Shakespeare does go against the more extreme political factions of New Historicist scholars. These contradictions open a gulf between Shakespeareanism (sociological epiphenomena) and Shakespeare (the man himself). At a time when authorial intention is considered irrelevant, asking one to go back to what Shakespeare truly *intended* in his plays is reductive, besides seemingly fallacious. Various political, racist, imperialist, anticolonial and anti-imperialist symbols of Shakespeareanism are all too well-entrenched by now. We cannot ignore, however, that even by the end of the eighteenth century, Shakespeare was not a recognizably individual author in India, not by the standards of the East India Company, but rather a fragment in a dominant imperial discourse. Indians like Joseph Emin (1919), Mirza Abu Taleb Khan (1810) and Sake Deen Mahomet (1794), who visited England in the 1700s and were deeply influenced by English culture, made no mention of Shakespeare in their accounts, although they acknowledged John Milton and Edmund Burke. Whether or not Shakespeare anticipated imperialist appropriations of Caliban, the genius of *The Tempest* was covertly exploited by the Company in its mission of *civilising* Indians, and more overtly by Neill in his recapitulation of Peter’s baptism scene from 1616. Although Shakespeareanism gave Woolf the opportunity to invent Judith, examples like those of Catherine challenge such models of Eurocentric feminisms, which, while examining

histories of gender oppression, tend to overlook their racial aspects. Finally, it is next to impossible to historically evaluate the fragments of John Talbot Shakespear's life as that of a Shakespeare descendant, since his genealogy is overwhelmed and confounded by genealogy of the Thackerays, before being eclipsed by the histories of British Bengal.

Colonial and postcolonial appropriations of Shakespeareanism are both examples of causal or teleological historiography which assume that historical building blocks are geared towards a grand narrative. To see anecdotes as *histoemes* misleads us to think that putting together enough number of them could generate something resembling historical matter, or that history unfolds with a predetermined political and narrative rationale. On the other hand, seeing the anecdotes of Peter, Catherine, Shakespear and even Judith as synchronic fractals, embraces a deeper psychological and narratorial truth. Jung saw synchronicity as a manifestation of the underlying principle of universal unity—*Unus Mundus*—and of the collective unconscious. Synchronous events are those “‘coincidences’ which were connected so meaningfully that their ‘chance’ concurrence would represent a degree of improbability that would have to be expressed by an astronomical figure” (Jung 339). Further, an underlying principle of mathematical unity informed Mandelbrot's definition of fractals as the self-organising and self-duplicating rough edges of natural objects or irregular geometries, that manifested cryptic intelligence in forms of emergent reality. Highly structured anecdotes tend to be appropriated by historical establishmentarianism into anthologies and popular memory, while loose or unstructured ones—such as those in this study—get excluded from authorised histories as irrelevant to contemporary worldviews (Gossman, 2003). If historiography were informed by the insights of Jung and Mandelbrot, the lives of Caliban, Peter, Catherine and Judith—lying between Shakespeare and Shakespear—would appear entangled across space and time. This emergent reality is nothing but a synchronic manifestation of fractal-like behaviour of anecdotes around real or fictional lives. If we compel these anecdotes in causal and teleological history, we end up producing no intelligible discourse but—what may be dismissed by historians across as—*Calibanesque* gibberish. However, taking the anecdotes of Caliban, Peter, Catherine, Judith, Shakespeare and Shakespear as fractals, we find wilful lacunae in conventional historiographical attempts to incorporate them into established historical frameworks. If New Historicism intended to bridge historiography and the literary, its implicit motive was to expose dominant historical discourses as imprecise approximations. The abject place in history of the actors ranging between Shakespeare and Shakespear reveals that denouncing the approximations and exclusions of imperialist historiography was also based on approximations and exclusions.

For causal historians, meanwhile, three distinct tasks emerge. A preliminary re-examination of Shakespearean historiography should attempt to trace possible sources behind Woolf's creation of Judith and see if these correlate to histories of black and Indian women in England around Shakespeare's time. One should also attempt to explain the extraordinary coincidence between an Indian spiritually *reborn* in London as Peter in the year of Shakespeare's *death*, and his name being invoked over a hundred and fifty years later by an American ecclesiastical historian in Minnesota, only to be recast into oblivion for another century. Finally, if genealogical links do exist between David Cameron and John Talbot Shakespear, as between Shakespear and Shakespeare, antiquarians would do well to establish the line from the bard of Avon to Britain's Brexit Prime Minister, paving the way for explaining what this may mean for Shakespearean history, hermeneutics and literary criticism to come.

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From Social Justice to Metaphor: The Whitening of Othello in the Russian Imagination¹

Abstract: *Othello* was the most often-staged Shakespeare play on early Soviet stages, to a large extent because of its ideological utility. Interpreted with close attention to racial conflict, this play came to symbolize, for Soviet theatres and audiences, the destructive racism of the West in contrast with Soviet egalitarianism. In the first decades of the twenty-first century, however, it is not unusual for Russian theatres to stage *Othello* as a white character, thus eliminating the theme of race from the productions. To make sense of the change in the Russian tradition of staging *Othello*, this article traces the interpretations and metatheatrical uses of this character from the early Soviet period to the present day. I argue that the Soviet tradition of staging *Othello* in blackface effectively prevented the use of the play for exploring the racial tensions within the Soviet Union itself, and gradually transformed the protagonist's blackness into a generalized metaphor of oppression. As post-collapse Russia embraced whiteness as a category, *Othello*'s blackness became a prop that was entirely decoupled from race and made available for appropriation by ethnically Slavic actors and characters. The case of Russia demonstrates that staging *Othello* in blackface, even when the initial stated goals are those of racial equality, can serve a cultural fantasy of blackness as a versatile and disposable mask placed over a white face.

Keywords: *Othello*, blackface, Russian theatre, Russian film, Soviet theatre, Soviet film, adaptation, translation, Sergei Iutkevich, Eldar Riazanov, Aleksei Zernov, Nikolai Koliada, Petr Gladilin, Vahram Papazian

On December 12, 2020, a new production of *Othello* directed by Andrei Goncharov opened at Moscow's famous Taganka Theatre. The production cast the white Russian actor Roman Kolotukhin to play *Othello* as a white man, claiming to have removed the unnecessary "theme of race conflict" ("V novom

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‘Othello’”).² As startling as Goncharov’s staging decision might be for the Western audience, Othello’s whiteness has been, by now, normalized on Russian stages. Othello was white, blond, and dressed in a uniform “vaguely reminiscent of neo-Nazism,” in a 2000 production at the Vakhtangov Theatre in Moscow (Romantsova); he was also presented as a white character at the Kazan Theatre for Young Audiences in 2011 (“V TIUZE novyi ‘Othello’”) and at the Regional Drama Theatre in Khabarovsk in 2013 (Rosliakova). Over the last decade, Russian theatre directors have also increasingly argued for the historical accuracy of such casting. Khabarovsk’s Vladimir Orenov relied on the familiar argument that the part of Othello had been intended for white actors, explaining in an interview, “In the first productions, Othello was not black. Then, in the twentieth century, during the times of Ku-Klux-Klan, this part started to be performed by black actors” (Rosliakova). Looking back at the white performers of the early modern English theatre, this explanation, paradoxically, imagines Othello’s blackness as a cultural consequence of American racism and therefore unnecessary in Russia. The Kazan Theatre for Young Audiences and, most recently, the Taganka Theatre have asserted in their press releases that the prototype for Shakespeare’s protagonist was an Italian by the name of Maurizio Othello, and his blackness in the play resulted from a misinterpretation of “Maurizio” as “Moor.”³

Taken together, these recent Russian productions show a tendency to exorcise the spectre of blackness from *Othello*, claiming the protagonist as a European whose narrative can be unproblematically appropriated by white actors. This tendency is particularly incongruous considering the significance of Othello as a black character for Russia’s much-publicized anti-racism stance throughout its Soviet past. To make sense of the change in the Russian tradition of staging Othello, this article traces the interpretations and metatheatrical uses of this character from the early Soviet period to the present day. I argue that the Soviet tradition of staging Othello in blackface effectively prevented the use of the play for exploring the racial tensions within the Soviet Union itself, and gradually transformed the protagonist’s blackness into a generalized metaphor of oppression, un-moored from race. The case of Russia ultimately demonstrates

² All translations from Russian are mine unless otherwise indicated. This paper uses the Cambridge University Library version of the ALA-LC transliteration scheme, unless an accepted spelling already exists for Russian names.

³ This belief, so popular in Russia that it is reflected in the Russian Wikipedia’s entry on *Othello*, seems to be a garbled hybrid of two Western attempts to find a white prototype for the protagonist: St. Vincent Troubridge’s “distinguished Venetian soldier called Maurizio Othello, who migrated to Hungary, where he was known as Othello Mor, Mor being the Hungarian for Maurizio” (Ackermann 485) and Rawdon Brown’s Cristoforo Moro, a Venetian lieutenant who served in Cyprus (Ruskin 353).

that staging *Othello* in blackface, even when the initial stated goals are those of racial equality, can serve a cultural fantasy of blackness as an artificial and disposable mask placed over a white face.

Othello and racial oppression: Embracing blackness in Soviet Russia

Othello was the most frequently performed of all Shakespeare plays during the early Soviet period, ranked the most-staged play in the Soviet Union in 1939 (Kruti 2). An important part of the play's appeal was the possibility of reading it as a tragic narrative of the protagonist's extreme marginalization by the Western world. As a review of Sergei Radlov's 1935 *Othello* at the Maly Theatre explains, the black protagonist should be seen as "entangled in the civilized world's deceit and hypocrisy" and, consequently, as experiencing "resentment and hatred of a person belonging to an oppressed race [...] surrounded by enemies" (Alpers 314). The murder of Desdemona is viewed as a means to "restore the disrupted justice" and take "revenge for the deceit, for the black guile of the honey-tongued people with white skin and predatorial claws" (Alpers 315). Emerging from the Soviet Union's own embattled position in relation to the capitalist West, this reading created an opportunity for Soviet audiences to reflect on their own mythologized rise against oppression in order to build a just world of socialism. The review, accordingly, notes that interpreting *Othello* through the lens of race made the protagonist "wonderfully relatable for the Soviet audience" (Alpers 315).

Discussing the Western "critical and cultural fixation on Shakespeare's tragedy of inter-racial marriage," Celia Daileader introduces the term *Othellophilia* in reference to the play's use as a cautionary tale to white women and as an instrument of assuaging the collective sexual guilt after the abolition of slavery (6 and 8-9). While the Soviet Union similarly fixated on the play, Othello's blackness became a signifier for a marginalized individual's struggle for justice and against social oppression, with the death of Desdemona usually presented as an inevitable casualty on the path toward future equality. This reading of *Othello* was closely intertwined with the scientific discussion of race, and with the Soviet Union's self-proclaimed status as a multi-ethnic state of fraternal nations. In the 1930s, Soviet scientists took a stand opposing the theories of racial essentialism that were being developed by Hitler's Germany (Hirsch 263-264). They saw physiological distinctions between races as generated by distinct geographical conditions and destined to disappear through the intermarriage that would become more frequent as social development progressed (Hirsch 264-265). By expressing its approval for intermarriage, promoting equality for all peoples inhabiting its territory (Martin), and extending

support to racialized groups around the world, including the United States and Africa, the Soviet Union both claimed for itself a position of greater social advancement within the Marxist view of history and undermined the strident German claim to cultural superiority. When staged with appropriate attention to race and racial tensions, *Othello* thus became a useful propaganda piece depicting the evils of racism in countries that held to the belief of biological determinism, and simultaneously highlighting the virtue of Soviet egalitarianism.

Despite the Soviet theatre's lofty aspirations, the part of Othello continued to be performed almost exclusively in blackface, and Aleksandr Ostuzhev, a Russian actor who played the protagonist in Radlov's 1935 production, was no exception. There were several reasons for this. Russia had no significant history of racialized slavery, although it was not unusual for wealthy families, including the royal household, to include some black employees, some of them originally brought in through the slave trade (Gnamankou 67-70). Russian serfs had no freedom of movement, were routinely bought and sold, and suffered violence—including sexual violence—without redress, but it was class rather than skin colour that separated the serfs from their owners. Accordingly, blackface minstrelsy and burlesque representations of black Shakespearean actors were absent from the nineteenth-century Russian theatrical tradition.⁴ Face-painting was therefore assumed to be a viable and neutral approach to playing a character of different race; indeed, Ira Aldridge's use of whiteface to play Macbeth, King Lear, and Richard III while touring Russia was accepted without question (Kujawinska Courtney 114-116). This assumption was coupled, in the 1930s, with a shortage of black actors capable of speaking Russian with the fluency necessary for delivering Shakespearean text. The one exception was Wayland Rudd, a black American actor with previous experience of playing Othello who made his way to Moscow in 1932 as part of the group invited to work on the film *Black and White*. Although the film was never made, and most of the cast members left the Soviet Union, Rudd stayed behind, taking part in a number of plays and films over the years. As a new Russian speaker, he was not entrusted with the part of Othello until much later. On February 6, 1945, Nikolai Mordvinov, celebrated for his Othello at the Mossovet Theatre, recorded in his diary that the theatre had just hired Rudd for the part, adding: "Well, so be it, this is interesting. Perhaps he will give me tips on how to play [this character]." Notably, Mordvinov's rueful remark acknowledges the possibility of Rudd's greater suitability for playing a black character but does not interrogate his own position as a white actor, assuming that with some "tips" he will be able to mount a persuasive performance of Othello's blackness.

⁴ For comparison, see Robert Hornback's instructive discussion of blackface minstrelsy on American stages and of burlesques aimed at black actors playing Shakespeare (chapters 4 and 7), as well as Kris Collins.

An additional motivation for Soviet theatre's embrace of blackface in staging *Othello*, even as it denounced the Venetian characters' racism, was its reluctance to recognize the racial or ethnic tensions within the Soviet Union itself. While actors belonging to the so-called "national minorities" across the Soviet territory often played the part, they did so in black make-up, thus emphasizing that the play's conflict could not be linked to the group which they represented. Vahram Papazian, the Soviet Armenian actor internationally known for his Othello, is a case in point. Papazian toured Moscow and Leningrad in the late 1920s with a performance that pioneered a race-oriented reading of *Othello* on the Soviet stage. In the interviews printed in Russian periodicals, Papazian identified as a national minority (1928, 417) and, in his later autobiography, described having to wear face-paint, a blond wig and false beard, and an artificial nose in order to play a Russian character while in Constantinople (1937, 216). But despite the actor's racialized status as an Armenian in a cultural space that was almost entirely ethnically Slavic, Papazian played Othello under a thick layer of dark paint. The use of blackface created the illusion, however unstable, that the conflict addressed in the play had no equivalent in the Soviet Union, and that the actor's body under this disguise was shaped only by his Soviet subjecthood, not by racial history or ethnic roots.

The 1955 film adaptation of *Othello*, directed by Grigori Kozintsev's erstwhile collaborator Sergei Iutkevich in 1955, recorded the Soviet vision of the protagonist's struggle for freedom and his suffering humanity performed by a white Russian actor in startlingly unrealistic blackface.⁵ Upon completing the film, Iutkevich produced a lengthy essay that castigates the Western academia and theatre for reducing the play's plot to an allegorical struggle between good and evil, and for attempting either to "whiten" Othello or to use race as an explanation for his downfall (98-99 and 103-104). Iutkevich argues, on the contrary, that "Othello is deliberately introduced by the playwright as an *outsider* character" and thereby freed from all feudal duties and bonds that would have otherwise restricted his growth (100). Prudently referencing Marx and Engels, this reading establishes Othello as "the humanist ideal that Shakespeare was seeking," and interprets his "military biography" as evidence of "social usefulness" and of his position "as an active life-builder [zhiznestroitel']" (101). In Iutkevich's *Othello*, the protagonist's blackness, highlighted throughout the film, functions as a marker of his inner freedom: as the director notes, "Our film opens with Othello's black hand resting on a globe..." (131). This artificial blackness is almost immediately associated with communist symbolism, as Othello then appears in Desdemona's mind's eye clad

⁵ See a recent re-evaluation of the film by Boris Gaydin.

in vibrant red.⁶ The visual association with communist struggle is reinforced as the figure of Othello is repeatedly coupled with the red Venetian flag during the opening sequence. He first brandishes it while fighting Turks, and then is proudly positioned on the prow of his ship for a long shot against the red background of the flag. In the visual logic of the film, the protagonist's blackness is made meaningful when framed in the red of the communist struggle and performed by a Soviet actor. This framing is reiterated in Iutkevich's decision to make the handkerchief black and red. The audience first sees it clearly as it is pressed by Desdemona's hand against the shoulder of her husband, as a visual echo of his black cloak with bright-red lining. As "a material or textile body" (Smith 4), Iutkevich's black-and-red handkerchief calls into being an ideological fantasy of the hybrid black-and-Soviet body.

Iutkevich's film's treatment of Act 5, scene 2, emphasizes the injury done to Othello and his subsequent suffering rather than Desdemona's death, and insists on the protagonist's victory rather than downfall, in line with the director's argument that the "immediate emotional outcome of this tragedy consists in the *pathos of fighting for truth*" (96, emphasis in the original). The film works to exonerate the protagonist and to confirm his value for the Soviet culture. Accordingly, Desdemona's death is not shown to the audience: after Othello places a pillow on his wife's face, the shot changes immediately to show a candle blowing out and then willow branches blowing tempestuously against a dark sky. As Othello cautiously emerges from the bed in the next shot, the view of Desdemona's body is blocked by a heavy brocade curtain. Throughout the scene, Othello and then Emilia draw the curtain aside to look at the bed, but an "ocular proof" of the unjust murder is withheld from the audience except for a brief glimpse of Desdemona laid out in the manner of a tomb effigy.⁷ The transformation of Desdemona's body into a funereal image is completed when, after the revelation of Iago's crime, Othello carries the corpse of his wife to the roof of the castle and lays her out on a stone slab. Sitting at her feet, Othello is presented not as a murderer but as a mourner grieving his loss—an impression that is strengthened by his hair turning completely white during the time that has elapsed since the murder. The dying Othello's proud silhouette, looking out from the roof's edge and framed by the dawn, becomes the embodiment of what Iutkevich saw as the play's prophetic "*protest against deceit, against all untruth, and all hypocrisy*" (96, emphasis in the original).

⁶ Iutkevich speaks of "red, black, white" as the three main visual themes of the film (132). In the epilogue, Othello, as he is laid out on Lodovico's ship about to be transported to Venice, is again dressed in red.

⁷ The film, probably unknowingly, reproduces some of the post-Restoration attempts to emphasize Othello's nobility on stage, described by James R. Siemon.

Metatheatrical Othello: Blackness as a metaphor

Iutkevich's film delivered what, by the 1950s, had become a recognizable Soviet vision of Othello: the white actor's blackface signifying a struggle for liberty and for social justice. However, so palpable were the director's efforts to map the play on the Marxist vision of history and on the Soviet foreign policy, that the protagonist's blackness no longer served to represent racialized bodies and instead functioned as a discernibly artificial vehicle for social messaging. By the last decades of the Soviet regime, ideological readings of the play made Othello's blackness available as a metaphor of striving for personal agency and recognition within an openly hostile society. In Eldar Riazanov's cult film *Speak on Behalf of the Poor Hussar* (O bednom gusare zamolvite slovo, 1981), playing Othello in blackface is already used as a marker of searching for personal dignity in a police state. Safely set in the 1840s, Riazanov's film explores the abuses of power, judicial failures, and political paranoia in Tsarist Russia to obliquely satirize the suffocating atmosphere of the Soviet Union shortly before the perestroika. The film's initial conflict is set in motion during a performance of *Othello* at a provincial theatre in nineteenth-century Russia, as a young hussar besotted with Desdemona makes his way first backstage and then into the prompter's box. Unused to theatrical illusion, the hussar initially assumes that Bubentsov—the actor who plays Othello—is black, and cuts into the conversation between the actors with a dismissive, "Excuse me, *arap*." The word *arap*, in nineteenth-century Russia, was an equivalent of the early modern "blackamoor" but with implications of both exoticism and servitude (see Novikova 571-576). In this case, it signals Bubentsov's comical inability to maintain control over the encounter, as he must now return to the stage for his next scene with an exclamation, "Haply, for I am black..." (3.3.267). This line had previously assumed profound significance in Soviet engagement with the play, and was customarily used to draw the audience's attention to the protagonist's awareness of his own race. In 1935, Ostuzhev famously uttered it while studying his own hands, and Iutkevich's Othello looked at his own reflection in a pool of water (Iutkevich 124-125). Here, instead, Bubentsov's assertion of blackness initiates the slapstick deterioration of the blackface, as, in making a series of desperate efforts to eject the hussar from the prompter's box, the actor loses his curly wig, much of his dark face paint, and all of his noble bearing. In this failed performance of *Othello*, Bubentsov's supposed blackness is revealed to be a flawed mask that draws the audience's attention to his disempowered position as a white subject in Tsarist Russia and foreshadows his eventual self-sacrifice in service of greater justice.

In post-Soviet Russia, the shaping of Othello's blackness as a prop that was available for use by ethnically Russian characters aligned with the progressive racialization and criminalization of non-Slavic people, especially in

cultural centres (Roman). Despite Russia's insistence that it was entirely free of racism, the post-collapse decades saw an increasing popular impulse to define Russian people as Slavic or "white," and to position non-Slavic migrants, regardless of their ethnicity, as "black" and potentially threatening (Zakharov ch. 5; Roman 2). Rather than finding their way into this complex conversation, post-Soviet metatheatrical engagements with *Othello* adopted blackface as a metaphor that was uncoupled from any concern with race and served, instead, to produce sympathy for the Slavic protagonist's aspirations and plight. The three cases I examine in the subsequent pages demonstrate this metaphorical use of blackface by revealing its instability and self-consciously focusing on the moment of its creation to mobilize the set of cultural meanings associated with Othello's fate.

In Petr Gladilin's *The Moth* (Motylek, 2001), set in a military garrison in northern Russia, an excerpt from *Othello* is staged by the garrison's middle-aged commander and a new conscript Lebedushkin, who has purportedly transformed into a woman overnight.⁸ Played by Polina Kutepova, Lebedushkin remains gender-ambiguous throughout the play, using masculine-inflected verbs to refer to their actions, while describing themselves as female. Situating this gender ambiguity in a military context, *The Moth* interrogates Russia's cult of military masculinity with its focus on preparing for a potential war rather than on developing an emotional life or building a peaceful nation (Eichler). Perhaps the clearest example of this underlying theme appears in Act 3, when the commander attempts to undermine Lebedushkin's supposedly effeminate interest in theatre by commenting: "Tomorrow, we'll be learning how to dig trenches in frozen ground. Tomorrow you will defend your Motherland!" To the conscript's objection that there is no war on, the commander forcefully responds, "That doesn't matter! There will be. Some day, there will be a war." This permanent expectation of war, and the labour associated with it, transforms male bodies into military machines, discouraging close bonds, expressions of emotion, or interest in cultural pursuits. As "a real man," the commander is not permitted to feel grief and regret, or to shed tears; by his own admission, he did not cry when his mother died, when his wife left, or when his best friend was torn into pieces by a mortar-gun. Lebedushkin's very existence, in other words, challenges the view of masculinity in which all self-expression that cannot be construed as military efficiency is dismissed as effeminate.

The re-enactment of Othello and Desdemona's emotion-charged encounter from Act 4, scene 2, further challenges the rigid boundaries of military masculinity and enables the commander to push against the narrow limits of permitted self-expression. The potential for this challenge is established

⁸ This paper discusses the play text as it appeared in the 2002 production directed by Evgenii Kamenkovich at the Pyotr Fomenko Workshop Theatre.

in advance, when the commander balks at being asked to portray Othello weeping at Desdemona's imagined infidelity. In the ensuing debate, Othello—who, as Lebedushkin notes, outranks the commander—becomes a model of military masculinity that, nonetheless, allows for empathy and grieving. The commander argues, "He is a Moor, dammit! He is a black-skinned... a southern person," foregrounding blackface as an absolute necessity in the project of being liberated from the demands and expectations placed by the Motherland on his own white, "northern" body. In Act 4 of *The Moth*, the commander puts on the black paint gradually, beginning with several long strokes that leave him looking eerily like a *commedia dell'arte* character. Pausing, he stares fixedly in a mirror and mutters, "Who am I, dammit?" On the one hand, this question seems rhetorical and serves to highlight the absurdity of the situation. On the other hand, it marks the beginning of an identity shift initiated by the application of black make-up. The production makes no pretense of aiming for realism: the commander's blackface remains incomplete and mask-like, ending abruptly in the middle of his forehead, and with unpainted spaces around his eyes and mouth. It does not seek to imitate Othello's black skin per se but rather exempts its wearer from the constraints of being ethnically Russian and therefore forced to shoulder the burden of national responsibility. Having been marked, through the application of blackface, as ethnically and geographically foreign, the commander is permitted affect, tears, and human touch, even after the paint has been removed. In Act 5—now fully revealed as the protagonist of the play—the commander is able to grieve and even shed tears for the dead Lebedushkin, tragically struck down by a military car during a training drill. For the first time in his life, the commander is also empowered to rebel against the army's dispassionate treatment of soldiers' death as mere loss of resources, exclaiming, "No, no, we shouldn't do it this way, this is inhuman [ne po-liudski]."

In Aleksei Zernov's comedy film *Things Undreamt of by Shakespeare* (Shekspiru i ne snilos, 2007), a staging of *Othello* extends an offer of social recognition to a group of outcasts. The main plot, set in nineteenth-century Russia, focuses on three small-time swindlers: Lizon, Mavrodii, and Altyn (the least recognized and respected member of the group). While on the run from the enraged mob and local policemen, the trio are mistaken for a group of famous actors on their way to perform *Othello* in another town and roped into putting on a production of their own. They are assisted in this undertaking by a Shakespeare-loving theatre ticket seller Serafima, a single mother who is only too happy to become Desdemona for an evening. Although this film is intended as light entertainment, much of its plot is predicated on the recognition of systematic inequality and disenfranchisement. The Tsarist police, closely focused on protecting the interests of wealthy landowners, is quickly revealed as brutal and operating with deeply held class bias. The swindler trio are excluded from the social hierarchy and consigned to a life of invisibility, unless perceived as a direct threat to the social order.

However, in taking on the part of Othello, Altyn is invested with the protagonist's power of storytelling and his ability to invoke sympathy by narrating his travails and oppressions. Indeed, Altyn's use of blackface—artificial, startling, and demanding interrogation—is explicitly presented as a symbol for active marginalization. Upon first encountering his co-conspirator in blackface, Mavrodii—set to play Iago—screams in terror, causing Altyn to comment morosely: “See what fate has done to me.” As with *The Moth*, the audience's attention is directed to the construction of his blackface. In a glimpse of the changing room, we see Altyn fussily touching up the paint while Serafima, rehearsing Desdemona's lines in Act 3, scene 3, addresses the following question to him: “I love you, my dread lord, / But why is your face not light?” Serafima is speaking in iambic pentameter and, supposedly, reading from the copy of *Othello* in her hand, but these lines have no equivalent in Shakespeare's English text and do not appear in Boris Pasternak's Soviet-period translation of *Othello* which the film—anachronistically—uses. Presumably, the reference to Othello's face was inserted to indicate Serafima's emerging affection for Altyn, but also for its dubious pun value, since in Russian speaking of one's face being light or dark is a reference to the person's mood. The audience is expected to derive amusement from the tension between the idiomatic expression and the literal dark paint on Altyn's face. This moment, however, also serves to position blackness on the Russian stage as a culturally produced marker for the protagonist's loss of control: Serafima's future lord is dark of face because the combined pressures of police pursuit and his companions' insistence on going ahead with the performance have forced him to blacken himself.

One might say that Altyn's fears come true, since the performance predictably dissolves into chaos, but instead of disaster, his blackface—and its instability—produce a series of revelations and a cathartic reconciliation. As Serafima-as-Desdemona is working around the gaps in Altyn-as-Othello's delivery and attempting to feed him lines, he is undone by the tenderness she expresses both as a character and as an actor. Speaking in iambic pentameter, Altyn is emboldened to narrate his past travails: “Usually, everyone mocks me [...] Oh, how much I've suffered, Desdemona!” Even going off-script, Altyn is mobilizing the cluster of associations linked to the character of Othello; the admission of suffering directly alludes to the widely known Russian translation of Othello's line, “She loved me for the dangers I had passed” (1.3.168).⁹ When

⁹ The best-known version of this line in Russian, which has by now gained the status of an aphorism, derives from Petr Veinberg's 1850s translation: “Ona menia za muki poliubila” (she fell in love with me for my sufferings). This line's popularity has been, no doubt, aided by the cultural perception of Othello as a spectacularly persecuted character.

Serafima responds with sympathy and affection, Altyn is emboldened to further imitate his character's tales of "pilgrimage" and "of some distressful stroke" that won Desdemona's heart (1.3.154, 158). In order to do so, Altyn must formally acknowledge the constructed nature of his blackness and its symbolic function. Declaring his desire to confess all, he slowly unbuttons his shirt to reveal pale skin, in sharp contrast with the dark paint on his face, and takes off his curly wig. "I am not Othello," he says and, after a pause, adds, "And not even Altyn. I'm Evstignei Shumilov." What begins as a seemingly naïve distinction between character and actor, rooted in the recognizable artificiality of the actor's blackface, is quickly clarified as a deeply emotional and potentially dangerous disclosure of Altyn's real name, followed by further revelations of his criminal past. This bold disclosure of Altyn's outsider status is made coherent and acceptable by the framing device of blackface, now entirely governed by the demands of the white character. When confronted by the terrified Mavrodii-as-Iago, Altyn declares, "You cannot fool us, my fine fellow. / Othello is finally, for the first time in his life, happy," and replaces the wig on his head, signalling a renewal of his performance of blackness. Altyn's ability to make his distinguished audience weep in sympathy and forgiveness, as well as his insistence on deserving truth and happiness, hinges on the blackface as a visual allusion to Othello. But while invoking Othello's outsider status and longing for social acceptance, the film erases race and racial conflict as a theme. A smudge left by Altyn's blackface on Serafima's cheek—which in the Western conversation has been interpreted as an expression of anxiety about racial contagion (Menzer ch. 2)—here functions to mark Serafima as one of the dispossessed white subjects and, consequently, as deserving of recognition and reward.

Also produced in 2007, under the direction of Galina Volchek at the Sovremennik Theatre, Nikolai Koliada's play *The Rabbit. Love story* (Zaiats. Love story) makes this point with acerbic clarity, working to uncouple blackface from racial identity and African roots, and mounting it as an allegory of social and cultural alienation. The play's metatheatrical performance of *Othello* is limited to a single monologue in blackface—Othello's final speech, beginning with, "I pray you, in your letters..." (5.2.338)—and serves to appropriate the narrative of black people's oppression for the white actor playing a white character. *The Rabbit* takes place in a dingy provincial hotel room and depicts a confrontation between two characters: Tania, a professionally trained actor in her sixties who is eking out a living as an entertainer in Moscow, and her ex-husband Misha, formerly also an actor, whom she had long believed to be dead. Their conversation is structured as a series of mournful revelations—that Misha is not dead but has been living a life of quiet alcoholism in a small town, that Tania's career has turned into a humiliating sale of her talent to rich clients, that they still love one another, and that it is too late for them to revive this love.

The premise for their meeting is that Tania has been invited to this nameless provincial town in order to impersonate a black singer who had not been able to fly in for her concert. Accordingly, throughout the play, the actor playing Tania appears in blackface and a gaudy “African” outfit, both of which, throughout, signify her perceived dehumanization and lack of personal agency. In a particularly dramatic monologue, she asks, rhetorically, “And why did I even need this life, if I am a black, a blackamoor, a black-assed Papuan [papuaska chernozadaia], and not a human being; if I had lived my whole life in a ghetto, on a reservation for the blackest of the black.” Tania’s question invokes the familiar Soviet association of blackness with oppression and marginalization in order to lament her own existence, with blackface serving as a visual signifier for the post-collapse degradation of white Russians. Within Koliada’s play, invocations of racial difference are meaningful only insofar as they are applied to white individuals within an endless homogeneous expanse of the Russian cultural space.

With on-stage blackness and references to race thus emptied out of meaning, the play’s metatheatrical use of *Othello* opens up the Soviet narrative of the racialized protagonist’s struggle for liberty and truth to the white citizens of twenty-first century Russia. Notably, the first version of this play, entitled *The Elderly She-Rabbit* (Staraiia zaichikha), published in 2006, did not reference *Othello*. The Shakespearean allusion was introduced when the Sovremennik Theatre gave the part of Misha to Valentin Gaft, a well-known Russian actor who had previously played Othello in blackface in Anatoly Efros’s highly publicized 1978-1979 production at the Theatre on Malaia Bronnaia. The image of Gaft blacking up on stage in 2007 was inevitably haunted or ghosted, as Marvin Carlson might have put it, by his previous performance of Othello in pre-collapse Russia. Gaft’s delivery of a speech from his former role strengthens the Soviet Othello’s ghostly presence but, at the same time, reveals the Soviet version of this character to be a disembodied construct, whittled down to a mere touch of black paint on white skin. Indeed, Pasternak’s translation cited in the production uses a metaphor of painting in its rendering of Othello’s plea that the Venetians “nothing extenuate, / Nor set down aught in malice” (5.2.340-341). Pasternak’s Othello instructs, “There is no need to use / Dark shading, no need to tone down the hue,” implying, through this idiomatic expression, that the path toward recapturing the protagonist’s experience lies in finding the right colour rather than fitting words. Gaft-as-Misha explicitly sets out to appropriate the longing for truth and freedom associated with the Soviet Othello through his on-stage creation of blackface; in the lead-up to his delivery of Othello’s speech, he declares that he would also like to be “a black” and repeats several times, in higher and higher tones, “What a black I am going to be!” The nominal blackface Misha constructs—two hasty smudges on his cheeks—becomes a visual declaration of his affinity with Tania, as well as his claim to the pathos

of Othello's heroic downfall. By creating the right "hue" through his nominal blackface and through Othello's death speech, Misha is able to lay claim to the protagonist's cathartic self-destruction in service of his love and his indifferent country. Acknowledging this claim, Tania addresses him, post-speech, "Othello! Haply you are black," and sums up their joined downfall by adding, "We have both grown so old. Two old, mangy blacks."

Conclusion

In examining the changing approaches to staging the figure of Othello in Russia over the past century, this article interrogates the implications of blackface performance in a cultural space where few black actors are available. Despite the early Soviet ideological attention to the racial tensions in *Othello*, the protagonist's blackface ultimately served as a device that deflected all questions raised by the play to the West while purportedly testifying for the absence of racism in Soviet Russia. To use Ayanna Thompson's terminology, Soviet theatre never attempted to instrumentalize blackface performance by querying "the relationship between practice, intention, and reception" (450). Soviet directors and actors assumed that their stated intention—to denounce Western racism—would translate into on-stage blackface as a spectacle of Soviet egalitarianism and be understood as such by the audience. Instead, as metatheatrical uses of *Othello* in late Soviet and post-Soviet Russia suggest, blackface came to be understood as a prop that had no immediate semiotic connection to race. The Soviet vision of Othello as suffering from marginalization and alienation while continuing a doomed, poignant struggle for truth and justice survives in Russia to the present day. However, this vision is no longer tied to Othello's racialized status; rather, his blackness has become a disguise that an actor might or might not wish to adopt. So, in Yury Butusov's *Othello*, which has been running at Moscow's Satirikon Theatre since 2013, characters assume blackface in the course of the performance to explore what the director calls "the black depths of the human subconscious" ("Otello").

Russia has consistently defended its right to use blackface in performance, insisting that, in a country that supposedly had no history of racial discrimination, blackface had no potential for doing harm.¹⁰ But, as this article suggests, the insidious threat of blackface in Russian culture lies precisely in its potential for obscuring racial tensions—and, paradoxically, for obscuring race altogether. In a very real sense, for decades now Russian culture has viewed the

¹⁰ See, for example, the statement on social media made by Margarita Simonyan, a journalist and powerful media figure in Putin's Russia, in defense of blackface used on her husband Tigran Keosayan's comedy show.

character of Othello as a white man who wore blackface as a more or less arbitrary signifier of his outsider status. His concerns and aims, as well as obstacles he encountered, were understood to be those of Everyman—or, more specifically, of a white Russian man operating in a cultural space also assumed to be homogenously white. The recent tendency to remove Othello's blackness altogether, sometimes citing the invented figure of Maurizio Othello, is simply the next—not entirely unexpected—stage of appropriation by a culture that refuses to examine its own history of racial and ethnic tensions.

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Aabrita Dutta Gupta* 

Crossings with *Jatra*: Bengali Folk-theatre Elements in a Transcultural Representation of Lady Macbeth

Abstract: This paper examines a transcultural dance-theatre focusing on Lady Macbeth, through the lens of eastern Indian Bengali folk-theatre tradition, *jatra*. The wide range of experimentation with Shakespeare notwithstanding, the idea of an all-female representation is often considered a travesty. Only a few such explorations have earned recognition in contemporary times. One such is the Indian theatre-dance production *Crossings: Exploring the facets of Lady Macbeth* by Vikram Iyenger, first performed in 2004. Four women representing four facets of Lady Macbeth explore the layered nuances that constitute her through the medium of Indian classical dance and music juxtaposed with Shakespearean dialogues from *Macbeth*. This paper will argue the possibilities posited by this transgressive re-reading of a major Shakespearean tragedy by concentrating on a possible understanding through a Hindu religious sect—Vaishnavism, as embodied through the medium of *jatra*. To form a radically new stage narrative in order to bring into focus the dilemma and claustrophobia of Lady Macbeth is perhaps the beginning of a new generation of Shakespeare explorations. Iyenger's production not only dramatizes the tragedy of Lady Macbeth through folk dramatic tradition, dance and music, but also Indianises it with associations drawn from Indian mythological women like Putana (demoness) and Shakti (sacred feminine).

Keywords: Jatra, Lady Macbeth, Vaishnavism, Shakespeare adaptation, Crossings by Iyenger

Introduction

This paper examines a culturally hybrid theatre-dance adaption of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* by Vikram Iyenger titled, *Crossings: Facets of Lady Macbeth*, through the perspective of *jatra*, an Indic Bengali folk-theatrical practice. *Crossings* depicts four externalized personas of Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth through the medium of Indian classical dance and music. Vikram Iyenger is a Kolkata-based dancer, director and choreographer. *Crossings* has been under constant revival after its first performance in 2004 by Iyenger's group *Ranan*. It was originally

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a part of Iyenger's Junior fellowship at Sangeet Natak Akademi (set-up by Ministry of Culture, Government of India). It is an ongoing production, having won accolades worldwide with its national and international performances in Kolkata, Delhi, Kerala, and the UK.

Indian theatre is a contested field owing to its large variety and the political influence exerted upon it. With the development of western theatre in India in the late 18th and 19th centuries, local theatrical traditions had nearly disappeared. And in the later years, several indigenous folk-theatre traditions have lost their existence due to lack of patronage and funding. The few that survive have undergone inter-cultural mingling—both geographically across India, and historically, from the confluence between Western and Oriental performing traditions—and have lost their authenticity. Therefore, to trace a correct trajectory for theatre historiography is almost impossible. Poonam Trivedi, in her essay “Garrison Theatre in Colonial India: Issues of Valuation” (2016), identifies one reason behind the non-linearity of Indian theatre historiography:

Historiography of the theatre has also not been helped by the continuation of an ideological contestation, a politics between what is seen as a revivalist nationalist perspective which would erase the impact of the West in favour of an idealised indigenous continuity of theatre forms, and the purveyors of modernity who ignore the ancient past and see only irreversible transformation in them. (104)

However, in the past few decades there has been a revival of interest in indigenous folklore and cultural traditions in literature and performing arts. Ancient folk-theatre traditions like *Yakshagana*, *Tamasha*, *Ras Lila*, *Nautanki*, *Bhavai*, *Jatra*, and *Khyal* (Hansen 77), that have their roots in Indic dramaturgy, have now been used in modern theatre. Speaking about the history of Indian drama, Trivedi points out:

Indian theatre has its own complex and unusual development. It began with Sanskrit drama, which flourished from around 200 BCE to 1000 CE and was followed by a period of folk theatres, mainly in the oral and mythological traditions—performed outdoors, non-illusionistic with song and dance—many of which were also concurrent with later stages of Sanskrit drama. (105-106)

Recently, Government support and Sangeet Natak Akademies (The National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama) of the states offer grants-in-aid (like, Sangeet Natak Akademies Scheme of Financial Assistance to Cultural Institutions) to various folk cultural institutions to uplift artists with better work opportunities. These traditions now have much more theatrical presence in urban areas than previously.

***Jatra*: the Bengali folk theatre tradition**

Jatra is a folk-theatrical musical drama performance tradition known to have originated and developed primarily in undivided Bengal and also in the neighbouring eastern Indian states of Orissa, Bihar, Assam, and Tripura. It is not considered as ancient as other similar folk performance genres, say, *Yakshagana*, to have attained the stature of a classic. Some theatre historians are of the view that *jatra*'s development in its most mature state took shape after the religious Chaitanya¹ movement in 16th century Bengal. Pabitra Sarkar emphasizes that *jatra* had lacked a congruent form before the advent of Chaitanya movement. He argues that this kind of theatre must have existed as lyrical performance loosely connected by song and dance and without any prominent "plot" or "storyline". He writes:

There must have been earlier compositions which are long extinct. It is certain that the earliest *palas*, very much a part of the oral literary tradition of pre-British Bengal, were never written down and so were gradually lost to us. (87)

The Bengali word *jatra* means "travel"; the noun refers to the performances by travelling devotees of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu chanting and dancing to the mythological stories of Krishna:

These performer-devotees initiated acting in *jatra* or *jatrabhinoy* or *jatra*-acting. *Jatrabhinoy* involved mainly singing, with a few dialogues here and there in praise of the worshipped deity. *Jatrabhinoy* was also known as *gitinat* or *natgiti*, which literally would mean 'singing-acting' or 'acting-singing' (Sarmistha Saha 19).

Jatra, in the pre-Chaitanya movement phase, was generally a body of lyrical oral poetry and dance performance that was too loose and undefined to allow accommodation within any generic category of the performing arts. But in the later phase, the idea of *bhakti* built in it a concrete structure of religious oral lyrical-music-dance form that had a specific pattern and religious ideology of celebrating the mythological stories of Krishna, his consort Radhika, and overall uplifting of the ideals of Vaishnavism. The definition of *bhakti* is as elusive as the line "Shantih Shantih Shantih" at the end of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*

¹ Chaitanya Movement, also called the Gaudiya-Vaishnava movement, is a revolutionary devotional movement in Hinduism which was spearheaded by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1534) in 16th century. It offers an emotional and unrestricted form of *sadhana* (worship) towards Krishna and Radha, the God and Goddess of spiritual and emotional love. Chaitanya developed *bhakti* cult as a defense against religious fanaticism and casteism by the orthodox religious communities of the time. For a detailed understanding of the background and future development see, Rai Bahadur Dinesh Chandra Sen, *Chaitanya and His Age : Ramtanu Lahiri Fellowship Lectures*. See also *The Chaitanya movement : A Study of the Vaishnavism of Bengal*, Kennedy, Melville T. 1925.

(1922), both having sources in the *Bhagawat Gita*, the holy book of the Hindus. *Bhakti* is a Hindu concept that preaches mutual unconditional attachment to an Ideal on the part of a devotee irrespective of their personal identities, and *vice versa*. It opens up the idea of worship to a more self-dissolving prayer to absolve oneself of any discriminatory notions. To put it in Saha's (103) words, "the notion of *bhakti* within the public sphere has not only been an expression of devotedness to a god, but it has been used to denote 'a movement' of social protest against caste, class, religious, or gender inequities' as early as the sixteenth century."

Cross-cultural intersections of *Jatra* with *Crossings*

It is in this context that Iyenger's *Crossings* needs to be discussed. He uses a religious theatrical-dance tradition, with three most elevated forms of classical dance in India out of eight, recognized by the Sangeet Natak Akademi (The National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama)—Kathak, Bharatnatyam and Manipuri—to project the overwhelming ambition of Shakespeare's *Lady Macbeth*. This makes the performance an interesting attempt to project the subversion of the traditional notions of good and evil in *Macbeth*. *Crossings* begins with a jubilant *Lady Macbeth* re-reading the letter received from *Macbeth*, which reignites in her the idea of killing Duncan. Unlike *jatra* where the performance runs through a storyline that intends to indulge the audience in a purging sense of *bhakti*, *Lady Macbeth* prepares herself for regicide and damnation in a fashion as religious as *jatra*. Iyenger achieves this by splitting the character of *Lady Macbeth* into three dancers and an actor. The three dancers entice the actor to shun the "milk of human kindness" (1:5:17) in her and acquire the power to perform "the deed" (1:7:14). Interestingly, Iyenger re-reads the original Shakespearean text by dispensing off all male characters in the play, including *Macbeth*, conferring the autonomy of violence upon *Lady Macbeth*. One gesture of articulating *bhakti* in *jatra* is the use of repetitive words or phrases to indicate absorption in the thought of the Ideal. As Saha points out,

For example, when Ramakrishna² suggested to the actress Binodini³ to repeat the name of Hari (an avatar of Krishna), it was in order to perform *bhakti* or

² Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886), born as Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya, was a nineteenth century mystic and philosopher who followed several religious traditions believing that there is no one way to reach God. He believed in the principles of "Tantra, Vaishnavism, Vedanta, Muslim and Christian religions and realized God. He came to the conclusion that all religions were true." (*Biography of Sri Ramakrishna*).

³ Binodini Dasi (1864-1941), popularly known as Notee Binodini, was a thespian and theatre entrepreneur of undivided Bengal in the nineteenth century. She is notable for

bring the feeling of *bhakti* (*bhakti-bodh* where *bodh* could mean sense, feeling, experience, etc.) that would purge her from all evil that lay within her as it were. Many audience members/devotees/*bhaktas* would often bend down their heads, cry, etc. feeling a sense of connectedness/oneness as a result of *bhakti-bodh*. This is a very common practice known as *darshan*, which is visual contact with the deity. Essentially the *bhakta* within the performative space (or ritual space?) of the *jatra* experiences a divine view of the one he or she is a *bhakta* of, turning it into a holy ritualistic space. (103)

In Iyenger's production, several phrases repeat themselves in various stages of the performance, indicating various phases of development in the character of Lady Macbeth. In the beginning, she repeats "my husband", who is honoured profusely, and this shows her apparently undaunted devotion towards her husband. A little later into the performance, when the "actor" Lady Macbeth ("conscious self") has grown aware, if not fully convinced, of her power to murder, one of the dancers ("vile self") repeats exasperatedly "come, unsex me here" (Figure 1) and thereby unlocks herself to the evil spirits. The music here



Figure 1: "Crossings: Facets of Lady Macbeth"
Direction, Concept and Design: Vikram Iyenger
Premiere UMA Gallery, Calcutta March-April 2004, Revival: Gyan Manch, Calcutta.
April 2016, Produced by Ranan (Calcutta, India)

her contribution to modern Bengali theatre. She also introduced new styles of theatre makeup and broke all established constraints on femininity of that period (see Susie and Tharu).

turns upbeat, coming to a sudden halt when her transformation is complete. The moment is as intense as one might imagine in a *jatra* when the audience is drawn into the vortex of an invigorating chanting ritual to awaken their spirits.

The idea of *Darshan*, inherent in the philosophy of Vaishnavism can also be traced in *Crossings*. Here *darshan* (God appearing in front of His disciple) occurs in the dance-drama production when three personas of Lady Macbeth observe the transformation of the fourth persona into *Shakti*, the goddess of cosmic energy and nature's elemental forces. But while *Shakti* is a revered goddess in the Hindu pantheon, in *Crossings* her *darshan* or purpose of appearance may invite comparison with that of the goddess of witchcraft Hecate. The myths and tales of *Shakti* are an integral part of the Bharatnatyam repertoire. This classical dance tradition often interprets tales from the epics and represents the power of *Shakti* in new and innovative understandings of feminine strength and triumph over evil. The usual pose that indicates *Shakti* in Bharatnatyam is one leg lifted in a position that suggests that *Asura* (the demon) is pinned to the ground, one of the hands lifted upward and the other drawn diagonally downward to suggest the *trishula* or trident with which she vanquishes the terrorizing reign of *Mahisasura* (demon). Here in this production (Figure 2) the Bharatnatyam dancer (one of the four personas of Lady Macbeth), along with the Kathak performer, performs a similar gesture to indicate the



Figure 2: “Crossings: Facets of Lady Macbeth”
 Direction, Concept and Design: Vikram Iyenger
 Premiere UMA Gallery, Calcutta March-April 2004, Revival: Gyan Manch, Calcutta.
 April 2016, Produced by Ranan (Calcutta, India)

triumph of her devilish ambition over her “conscious”, “humanly” self. The idea of two performers repeating the action creates an odd sense of unity in the fragmented psyche of Lady Macbeth.

In Iyenger’s words, the dance-forms are used, “to bring the vocabularies of text and dance together to initiate a conversation and develop a dialogue” (qtd. in Paromita Chakraborty and Swati Ganguly 2). In the oldest surviving Indian classical treatise on performing arts, *The Natyasastra*,⁴ dance is an integral part of drama. Kathak is a traditional courtly dance form connected with the “story-tellers” or bards of northern India who narrated mythological stories from the Indian epics the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. It also expresses the love of Radha and Krishna through hand gestures, musical articulations and intense rhythmic dance movements, as does the second one, Manipuri, a dance from the north-eastern Indian states of Manipur, Mizoram and Assam, depicting stories of the love of Radha and Krishna. And the third one is Bharatnatyam, a classical dance from the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu that uses intense body movements and choreography to depict themes of the epics and Vaishnavism and other traditions. These dance-forms are thoroughly theatrical, often performed by a solo performer who represents one or many characters just by changing dance gestures. These dance-forms represent a dialogic space between theatre (*Natyam*) and dance (*Nritya*) in the manner described in the *Natya-Shastra*. The idea of *Nritya* and *Natyam* are forms of expression that Iyenger intelligently uses to embellish Lady Macbeth’s most important soliloquy “Come... unsex me here” (1:5:40-41) and her majestic metamorphosis into the Goddess of power, *Shakti*. *Nritya* means “to dance; to act on stage” (Williams 568) and *Natya* means “...dramatic element of a stage performance... a mimicry of the exploits of gods and asuras (demons), kings as well as of householders of this world” (Massey 33). The sequence where Lady Macbeth commits the murder is thoroughly choreographed as a *nritya-natya* with props that bear thorough religious connotations, as observed by Chakraborty and Ganguly:

This marking out of space is an integral aspect of the invocations in all Indian classical dance forms. This sequence uses props imbued with sacral significance like a brass urn, marigold petals and the dhunuchi exuding camphor-laden smoke. The scene starts on a muted tone with a soothing Kanara

⁴ *The Natyasastra* is the oldest surviving Sanskrit treatise on performing arts in India attributed to sage Bharata Muni. It is notable for the development of the aesthetic theory of *Rasa* that advocates that spiritual self-recognition, not entertainment, is the primary aim of performing arts. Susan Schwartz (12) calls it “part theatrical manual, part philosophy of aesthetics, part mythological history, part theology.... Its goals include providing a precise description of stage construction and equally precise guidelines for the movements, facial expressions, and *mudras* (often used synonymously with the term *hastas*) or hand gestures to be used in performance.”

alaap in the background which abruptly shifts to the Hindol, the dancer dips a marigold in liquid vermillion (sindoor) and draws a 'blood line' on the floor. This single gesture changes the mood into one of ominous unease. This "supernatural soliciting" (Macbeth.1.3 129) is watched by the other two performers, one staunchly convinced of right and wrong and unshakeable in her morals, the other tempted and confused responding to the power of the invocation and the promise of greatness it held out to her but at the same time uncertain of the morality of such an act. (7-8)

Iyenger's use of religious tropes as the backdrop of this production amplifies the suggestion of foulness in the original text making "Fair is foul, and foul is fair:" (1:1:9) a lived experience throughout its stage-time. He brings before its audience a murderess, a great schemer, with a broken, divided consciousness; an infanticidal mother with a strong motherly instinct who gesticulates the desire for power, and the power of desire. In *jatra* and the indigenous traditions the celebration of Krishna's childhood and his powers as an *avatar* of *Vishnu*⁵ are a recurrent theme. One important episode that celebrates the power of Krishna is his conquest of the demoness *Putana* who tried to kill him by suckling him poisonous milk from her breasts. Lady Macbeth is equated with *Putana* and she is seen to suckle her child reminding the audience of her most poignant words "I have given suck" (1:7:54) but instead of milk which is the sign of motherliness poison spills out and that threatens her. *Putana* was the *rakshashi* or demoness mentioned in the *Mahabharata* who served king *Kansa*. *Kansa* feared the divine prophecy that his sister's eighth child would be the cause of his death. Therefore, he sought to eliminate every child from the holy cities of Vrindaban and Mathura. *Putana* was appointed for this job and she entered Gokula in the disguise of a beautiful woman and began to suckle young Krishna, unaware of who the child was.

tām tīkṣṇa-cittām ati-vāma-ceṣṭitām
vīkṣyāntarā koṣa-paricchadāsi-vat
vara-striyam tat-prabhayā ca dharṣite
nirīkṣyamāṇe jananī hy atiṣṭhatām

Though she looked like a very affectionate mother, *Putana*'s heart was fierce and cruel. Thus she resembled a sharp sword in a soft sheath. Although they saw her in the room with the child, *Yashoda* (*Krishna*'s foster-mother) and *Rohini* did not stop her but remained silent; overwhelmed by her beauty and seeing her apparent motherly affection. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.6.9 qtd. and trans. in Srila Sukadeva Goswami)

⁵ Vishnu is one of the Hindu trinity Gods along with Shiva and Brahma. He is worshipped as 'The Preserver' and as the supreme by followers of Vaishnavism.

Krishna feigning innocence had allowed her to give him suck. Putana was devoid of any humanly affection while killing the babies by poisoning her breast-milk. But when it came to Krishna she felt an unwavering sense of maternal instinct flooding through her veins, making milk gush out of her breasts.

pūtanā loka-bāla-ghnī
rākṣasī rudhirāśanā
jighāmsayāpi haraye
stanam dattvāpa sad-gatim

Putana was always hankering for the blood of human children, and with that desire she came to kill Krishna; but because she offered her breast to the Lord, she attained the greatest achievement. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.6.35 qtd. and trans. in Goswami)

Lady Macbeth in *Crossings* keeps failing in her intention of acquiring evil strength to commit regicide apparently because of her maternal instincts that pull her to her supposed child. She does eventually kill the supposed child to advance in her murderous design but the presence of this gesture-image of the child nurtures the possibility of going beyond “I have given suck” (1:7:54). It encourages the audience to visualize the rest of the speech—how she plucks the child from her nipple and dashes its brains out.

What Shakespeare wrote for Lady Macbeth’s soliloquy—“The raven himself is hoarse... To cry ‘Hold, hold!’” (1:5:38–54)—Iyenger breaks down into episodes to minutely delve into the internal battle of Lady Macbeth, using Kathak movements and parts of the dialogues to be repeated as phrases. The Kathak performer makes rapid hand movements that are not attuned to the thudding music in the background, perhaps indicating the unnaturalness of her prayer, while the repetition of the dialogue resonates in Lady Macbeth’s mind.

In Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, the use of the idea of nourishment (milk) in the lines,

Come to my woman’s breasts,
 And take my milk for gall, ... (1:5:47-48)

may imply the presence of her basic humanly instinct. She calls upon malevolent forces to change her “milk” to poison unnaturally, thereby altering her femininity/humanity to an unfeeling inhumanity. The altering of body fluids to highlight the dichotomy between human and beast is present in Indian mythological stories as well, *Putana* being its chief example,

...since milk is good, an evil woman has either no milk or else poison in her breasts, like Pūtanā. Poison as the inverse of Soma appears throughout the mythology; a fiery poison is said to devour the world—like the doomsday fire—in contrast with Soma or milk, that is itself devoured (O’Flaherty 54).

The soliloquy “Glamis thou art...To have thee crowned withal” (1.5.15-30) is shown through dance choreographies, through imitating hand gestures, and whispering among the four split characters of Lady Macbeth. But interestingly, she gradually shifts her attention to herself from her husband. She frees herself from desiring for her husband and begins to desire for herself. She encourages herself with Macduff’s famous enumeration of “king-becoming graces”,

As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude (4:3:91-94)
You have it all (Iyenger’s addition)

Her desire to go beyond her designed idea of femininity makes her challenge the notion of womanly benevolence; in this sense, her idea to acquire kingship is not just to acquire power to rule but also to acquaint herself with the role of a masculine ruler. The essence of this choreography lies in the interspersed episodes of Lady Macbeth’s faltering, scared reveries and in her personality clashes.

There are moments when the facets strive to defeminize themselves to foreground their potency towards violence; at one point one of the personas claims, “What man dare, I dare” (3:4:97), albeit in a different context and significance than in Shakespeare’s play. But at other times they acquire strength through their inherent eroticism and sensuality. This duality perhaps is a direct reference to the duality within Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare. That a woman’s eroticism is a threat to the moral standards and ethics of a society is present both in the Shakespearean *Macbeth* and is also played upon in this Indian adaptation of *Macbeth*. O’Flaherty observes:

Poison is also thought to reside in the genitals of the destructive erotic woman, the poison damsel...Snakes (often symbolizing women) perform an alchemy in which milk is transmuted into poison, the inverse of that alchemy that women perform by turning blood into milk (54)

This observation gives the idea that a negative female character is always looked down upon from a puritanical perspective. Quite so, and Lady Macbeth uses her eroticism to seduce Macbeth into doing the deed and she speaks about being “the serpent under’t” (1:5:66) in the Shakespearean text. Iyenger translates this dichotomy by altering all the sanctimonious rituals associated with eroticism in

Hindu religion including *sringar*. In a theatrical sense, *sringar* signifies erotic love between a man and a woman that, in turn, signifies the *Nara-Narayana* relationship which is amorous love between the soul and the divine. *The Natyasastra* categorises *sringar* as one of the most important eight Rasas. It consists of facial expressions and physical gestures that translate into myriad emotions like compassion, physical intimacy, jealousy, fear, and anger. However, in *Crossings*, Lady Macbeth articulates gestures that imitate the *sringar* rasa method while conveying the ominous. Culturally, outside the theatrical stage, sandalwood and sindoor (vermillion) were two of the main ingredients among wives of kings in their bath and decking up (also called *sringar*) while they awaited their husbands' return from war. Both sandalwood and sindoor are essential components in daily sanctimonious rituals and worships. They signify purity, victory and anything auspicious. Sindoor is also a marker of marriage and romantic love in Indian culture. Iyenger disrupts these religious understandings of the holy and the auspicious by twisting the significance of these cultural markers to signify the vocabulary of murder and blood. He reorganizes Shakespeare's play text into a pattern of symbolic visuals. While Lady Macbeth's "good soul" is unaware of the travesties of the other halves they perform a ritualistic *puja* (worship) and *sringar* (beautification) to enwrap themselves within the clutches of their ambition until all their hands are painted in red vermillion that signifies blood. They smear sandalwood on their breasts (Figure 3) as a sign of poisoning



Figure 3: "Crossings: Facets of Lady Macbeth"
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 April 2016, Produced by Ranan (Calcutta, India)

their milk, or, in other words, the altering of their essential bodily fluid, their femininity and their human spirit, likening the character of Lady Macbeth to the demoness Putana.

On stage, modern performances of *jatra* often use cloth and lighting to demonstrate fire when referring to *yajna* (worship) in any scene from the epics that demands it. In Indian rituals fire constitutes one of the most essential elements of worship as a source of energy and purification. Fire is the symbol of God and purified soul in the Indian view. In Vaishnavism fire refers to God's Oneness with human soul:

jīvera 'svarūpa' haya — kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa'
 kṛṣṇera 'taṭasthā-śakti' 'bhedābheda-prakāśa'
 sūryāmśa-kiraṇa, yaiche agni-jvālā-caya
 svābhāvika kṛṣṇera tina-prakāra 'śakti' haya (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-
 līlā 20. 108-109 qtd. in Prabhupada)

which is translated to

It is the living entity's constitutional position to be an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa because he is the marginal energy of Kṛṣṇa and a manifestation simultaneously one with and different from the Lord, like a molecular particle of sunshine or fire. Kṛṣṇa has three varieties of energy. (trans. by Prabhupada)

The philosophy propagated through this is *achintya bheda abheda*. *Achinta* means "unthinkable", *bheda* means "difference", *abheda* "identical" (Dasgupta 398, 153). This philosophy is at the centre of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings. It celebrates the idea of a soul's oneness and difference with God. According to the school of Sri Chaitanya, "Transcendence and Immanence are made the associated aspects of an abiding unity in God..." (Kapoor 152). The following verse is worth considering:

gītā-śāstre jīva-rūpa 'śakti' kari' māne
 hena jīve 'bheda' kara īśvarera sane (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta 6.163 qtd. in
 Prabhupada)

which translates to

In the Bhagavad-gītā the living entity is established as the marginal potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Yet you say that the living entity is completely different from the Lord. (trans. by Prabhupada)

In *Crossings*, Iyenger alters the connotation of the holy fire to signify the impurity of the soul instead of purification. Lady Macbeth religiously calls upon the supernatural beings to alter her bodily fluid and make her a non-human entity

who may commit regicide by chanting the prayer-like incantations “come unsex me here” in front of a burning candle on stage (Figure 1). It is important to note here that while Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* has very little reference to light—most of the play is set in darkness and both the central characters Macbeth and Lady Macbeth speak of “darkness”, “hell”, “murkiness”—*Crossings* is choreographed mostly in bright filtered light or in front of live fire, perhaps implying the idea of darkness more as a psychological state than as an antithesis to illumination. It is also worth noting that fire may here be a direct reference to the “taper” (5:1 *stage direction*) in Lady Macbeth’s bedchamber in the sleepwalking scene and also to Macbeth’s “Out, out, brief candle,” (5:5:22) soliloquy that is here placed in the mouth of Lady Macbeth alongside many other dialogues uttered by other characters in Shakespeare’s play. Towards the end of the play, a Manipuri dancer (the character who also played the “human” self of Lady Macbeth) enters the stage to project the guilt-ridden loneliness of Lady Macbeth. Light becomes an important signifier in this case too. The Manipuri dancer holds a lamp and gradually takes in all the separated selves of Lady Macbeth under her long veil. She is then able to stand up on her feet when all her segregated selves form a single structure as if to mend the damage Lady Macbeth had caused by splitting her soul into four parts. The sequence may reflect the craving for light in her otherwise dark psychological sphere; it may also reflect the reintroduction of her essential feminine self that she had forsaken for her “fell purpose” (1:5:46). Given the grace and poise of Manipuri dance and the thoroughly significant mythological associations of Manipuri performing arts, the scene may intend to portray the cosmic source of redemption and rebirth that Lady Macbeth needed. But she fails. Iyenger also adds the reference to Michelangelo’s *The Creation of Adam* (1512) fresco that bears strong religious iconography (Figure 4) to achieve the desired effect and create a direct allusion to the re-birth.

However, Lady Macbeth’s malevolence and her madness make her such an ambiguous character. To allow her a specific source of regeneration based on a sympathetic approach to her, ironically, will deny her character full development and the possibility to outrun patriarchal ideologies, as William C. Carroll says,

This focus on Lady Macbeth’s maternity also emphatically reinscribes her in patriarchal discourse, since the activities of her womb constitute her primary identity, and that womb is dysfunctional, capable only of miscarriages and deformity when not simply barren. This move, too, devalues or deflates the agency Shakespeare grants her in the play; it is a horrific power, and it crumbles into nothingness, but it belongs to *her*.

The end of *Crossings* portrays the pitiful condition of a mother, a wife of royalty pining away at the pyre of her own self-destructive ambition. She burns the letter that had enkindled in her the desire to kill in an attempt to redefine her lost past



Figure 4: “Crossings: Facets of Lady Macbeth”
 Direction, Concept and Design Vikram Iyenger
 Premiere UMA Gallery, Calcutta March-April 2004, Revival: Gyan Manch, Calcutta.
 April 2016, Produced by Ranan (Calcutta, India)

while repeating its contents. The sound of the ripping of the letter is an intelligent use of sound to suggest the ripping apart of her soul. Live music is an integral part of all folk traditions. Beginning with an *alap* (introduction or beginning), the music by live performers rise in a crescendo to the *jhala* (climax). Music builds up the religious context of the theatre-dance performances to an extent that it lends the performance an atmosphere of spiritual ecstasy. In several phases of *Crossings*, the music stops to intensify the absence of sound that elevates the chaotic exuberance of Lady Macbeth’s troubled psyche. The scene building up to the regicide, accompanied by rapid drumbeats, is first followed by an intense scene of killing the supposed child of Lady Macbeth that had earlier pulled her back from her desire to murder. The vocalist uses a variety of classical vocal renditions that resonate with each stage of Lady Macbeth’s character development whereas classical instrumental music, especially *tabla*, is used as an accompaniment to every dramatic action.

Iyenger, who was inspired by an opera performance of a Chinese solo artist performing Lady Macbeth, has followed a long tradition of Shakespeare adaptations in India. Several productions adapting Shakespeare to the traditions of indigenous folk-theater have paved the challenging path for post-colonial readings of Shakespeare. Utpal Dutt (1929-1993), a celebrated thespian of Bengal, adapted *Macbeth* in the *jatra* form. Breaking away from the enclosed walls of a theatre-stage, Dutt organized public theatres where he staged *Macbeth*

in 1975. With the large-scale development of western proscenium-style theatre in the modern Indian theatrical milieu in the post-independence period, *jatra* began to lose its stature and popularity among the rising intellectual class. A gradually declining demand and lack of innovative scripts relegated *jatra* to being a rural form of entertainment only. However, it never lost its appeal among the simple rural population who did not know about Shakespeare or other such canonical authors but drew pleasure from popular forms of entertainment. Utpal Dutt's *jatra* production of *Macbeth* (1975) was an iconoclastic step in the history of Indian theatre. His Little Theatre Group produced *Macbeth* ninety-eight times, a landmark contribution to the development of Dutt's formula for a "revolutionary theatre". Dutt describes revolutionary theatre in the following words:

Revolutionary theatre is essentially people's theatre, which means it must be played before the masses. The audience is our first concern; matters of form and content come second" (Dutt qtd. in Dharwadker 114)

and

The Revolutionary theatre must by definition, preach revolution, a radical overthrow of the political power of the bourgeois-feudal forces, a thorough destruction of their state-machine. (Dutt qtd. in Naina Dey 193)

Even before him, a significant number of adaptations of Shakespeare into indigenous forms were made that had broken, in post-independence India, the tradition of simple mimicry of European dramatic forms; for example, *Barnam Vana* (Birnam Forest, 1979) based on *Macbeth*, *King Lear* in Kathakali (1989) and *Othello* (1996). *Kamdeo ka Apna Basant Ritu ka Sapna* (The Love God's Own, a Spring Reverie, 1993) based on *The Midsummer Night's Dream* was directed by Habib Tanvir (Panja 17). A 1982 production of *Macbeth* by B.V. Karanth in the *Yakshagana* mode was also phenomenal in the way it brought classical folk dance improvisations into the Hindi verse translation of *Macbeth*. The adaptation of a Shakespearean text through the use of indigenous religious theatre traditions opens up the field for experiments and newer understanding of possibilities. As Trivedi points out, a multicultural approach to Shakespeare breaks the binary of the "self" and the "other" and creates a co-inhabitable space for reevaluating cultural signification:

The post-colonial Indian theatre critic is particularly challenged with a responsibility towards knowing the 'other'.... Here the 'other' is not the subordinated native, but a representative of the ruling power, who is to be subjected to re-examination from a post-colonial perspective. This is not merely a question of reversing the 'gaze', as it were, of 'provincialising' English theatre history, but is rather to attend closely to the knottedness and the many interstices in this cultural formation. (106)

Conclusion

Iyenger's production makes a transfusion of Indian folk and dance-theatre gestures into Shakespearean dialogues. He challenges cultural prejudices regarding post-colonial remakings of Shakespeare by synthesizing the marginalized "rural/local" or "*deshi*" (indigenous) theatre traditions with the form of an apparently "elite" *videshi* (foreign) text. Adapting Shakespeare to the currents of a folk theatre tradition always runs a chance of being ostracized from the academic circle by critics who, in the words of Trivedi ("Folk Shakespeare" 155) disparage it as "not Shakespeare". She writes:

This high-minded, colonially inflected, critical discourse created a myopia: indigenized Shakespeare was marginalized as both textually and morally "inauthentic." It resulted in a lack of intervention in mainstream Shakespeare studies and, more damagingly, prevented the development of an indigenous critical idiom. Adaptative folk performances still meet with either an uncertainty or a predictable fixity of response. They are rejected on both nativist and radicalizing grounds for either not being true to the spirit of the folk form, that is, not "pure" enough, or for not being interventionist, that is, adaptative enough. (Trivedi and Bartholomeusz 155)


Crossings gives ample scope to view it from the perspective of the form and ideology of *jatra*. Through the powerful rhetoric of dance and *jatra*, *Crossings* can easily be accommodated into an important theatre tradition, and also provide the foundational politico-religious sentiment behind the subversions that Iyenger so skilfully blends. The production takes up the enormous challenge of presenting an all-female *Macbeth*, without a trace or need for a masculine character. It does question the autonomy of "masculine" violence, and a further subversion of overtly religious connotations implies that Iyenger is bent on walking against the original/hybrid dichotomy usually associated with intercultural approaches to Shakespeare.

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The Shakespeare Brand in Contemporary “Fair Verona”

Abstract: The idea that Shakespeare belongs to the world is certainly not new. From the beginning of his afterlife as a dramatist two issues have been consistently put forward by his contemporaries: 1) his art’s universality—for Ben Jonson, Shakespeare was the one “To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe”—and 2) his ability in appropriating foreign exotic environments which have notoriously characterised most of his plays. The value of such claims, which seem to be so present to us, helped to identify Shakespeare as an ‘universal’ icon whose work transcends time and space, gradually fostering, in and outside Britain, the so-called ‘Bardification of culture’, a phenomenon which persists, even more powerfully, nowadays. This study examines the different ways through which Verona has contributed in popularizing and elaborating the myth of Romeo and Juliet into a variety of formats suitable for the tourism market. By taking into account the so-called ‘Shakespace’ phenomenon, it focuses on what I have labelled as the ‘R&J-influenced spaces’ which account for a number of civic, cultural, and narrative spaces generated by and constructed upon the myth of the Veronese lovers.

Keywords: Branding Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, Letters to Juliet, Verona

Shakespeare’s plays have been constantly staged, filmed, translated, discussed re- or deconstructed and not only in Europe but globally. Their dissemination across time and space has encouraged, even outside the academic boundaries, alternative opportunities for re-appropriating his works, frequently in ways that blur the divisions between highbrow and lowbrow, minority and mass culture. This has gradually enhanced, in and outside Britain, the so-called “Bardification of culture” (Kennedy 175), a phenomenon which persists, even more powerfully, nowadays and which casts Shakespeare as an example of the marketplace grabbing “any pre-tested public domain property with instant name recognition” (O’Brien 11).

Throughout history, and especially in twenty-first century, Shakespeare’s enduring high-cultural status has coexisted with a series of multiply-mediated

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“Shakespeares” (Lainer, *Drowning the Book*, 188) who continue to trace the path of Shakespeare’s globalization.¹ This has made Shakespeare an adaptable cultural resource used in theatrical and cinematic adaptations, but also in visual iconography, tourist itineraries, recreational activities and products, such as, for instance, ‘Playing Shakespeare’ and ‘Karaoke Shakespeare’. The fact that Shakespeare is identified as, among other things, marvellous dramatist, cultural icon, and ideological symbol engages us with the phenomenon of what Bryan Reynolds refers to as “Shakespace,” a term that encompasses the “plurality of Shakespeare-related [...] spaces and the time, speed, and force at which they transmit and replicate” (7) through places, cultures, and times. In such a context, Shakespace comes to be related to the different ways in which Shakespeare has been consumed and reinvented around the world.² His cultural iconicity, which could arguably be identified nowadays as a *brand*, has been appropriated and exploited, for instance, in digital and virtual re-narrations³ or in a wide range of commercial products.

¹ The fact that Shakespeare has been turned into a sort of brand is undeniable and many scholars have focused on this topic: Robert, Shaughnessy. Introduction. In *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture*. Ed. Robert Shaughnessy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008: 1-5. Manfred, Pfister. “In states unborn and accents yet unknown: Shakespeare and European Canon.” In *Shifting the Scene. Shakespeare in European Culture*. Ed. Lambert, Bezzola and Brian Engler. Newark: Delaware University Press, 2004: 41-66. Douglas, Lainer. *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Kate, McLuskie, and Kate, Rumbold. “Branding Shakespeare.” In *Cultural value in twenty-first-century England: The Case of Shakespeare*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015: 210-240.

² Recent studies have focused on the intercultural negotiation through Shakespeare and the consideration of spatial studies of Shakespeare: Robert, Sawyer and Varsha Panjwani. “Shakespeare in Cross-Cultural Spaces.” *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance* 15.1 (2017): 9-14. Ina, Habermann, and Michelle, Witen. *Shakespeare and Space: Theatrical Explorations of the Spatial Paradigm*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. For a detailed study on *Romeo and Juliet* as an integral part of Europe’s cultural heritage see Juan F. Cerdá, Dirk Delabastita and Keith Gregor, eds. *Romeo and Juliet in European Culture*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2017.

³ For an account on the tragedy’s digital and virtual re-mediations and re-appropriations see, for instance, Maurizio, Calbi. “He speaks ... or rather ... He tweets.” *Spectral Shakespeares: Media Adaptations in the Twenty-First Century*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013: 137-160. Eleni, Timplalexi. “Shakespeare in Digital Games and Virtual Worlds.” *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance* 18.33 (2018): 129-144. Pietro Luigi, Iaia. “Riformulazioni e Reinterpretazioni Transmediali di *Romeo and Juliet*.” *Lingue e Linguaggi* 27 (2018): 263-283.

Inspired by the reverberating power of the Shakespace phenomenon is what I would label as R&J-influenced spaces which account for a number of civic, cultural, and narrative *spaces* generated by and, often fictitiously, constructed upon the myth of these “star-crossed lovers” for whom, as Romeo suggests, “There is no world without Verona walls” (3: 3: 17).

Within the walls of Verona, today, the name of Romeo and Juliet resounds in various forms and manifestations: their image becomes a public good to be used not only in theatrical performances and festivals but also in celebratory monuments, civic ceremonies, tourist itineraries, recreational and social activities as well as sports events. Verona, in fact, presents a ‘Shakespeare’ that has crossed over from high art representation to the realm of commodified icon and image available to all consumers. *Romeo and Juliet* has significantly increased the city’s allure and mystique and Verona, in turn, constructed its fortune and fame thanks to its fabricated buildings devoted to Shakespeare’s Veronese lovers.

The universal nature of the plot makes the play “eminently adaptable and imaginable” in different geographical, cultural and performative *spaces* casting *Romeo and Juliet* as “matrix” capable of accommodating and fostering many specific “versions that creatively reimagine characters, events and settings” (Cerdá, Delabastita and Gregor 4). In Verona, Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* is often re-appropriated into a variety of formats functioning as a highly commercial crowd pleaser. In the light of the number of cultural, social and discursive practises constructed upon the R&J-influenced spaces, the city itself displays a sort of topography of civic inventiveness which ‘dislocates’ and re-elaborates the characters’ mythical allure for the tourism market.⁴

Verona’s celebratory monuments are especially devoted to Juliet whose influenced-civic spaces provide a sense of physical continuity between past and present making her myth as essential part of the urban territory. Juliet’s house (*Casa di Giulietta*), located in Via Cappello 23, had always belonged to the Dal Cappello family, commonly known as the Cappelletti. This was so similar to the name of Juliet’s family, the Capulets, that the house became her family home in everyone’s imagination and this positively gave a great boost to Verona’s tourist industry. To such a significant association was given extra weight by the convenient fact that, in 1905, only after the purchase of the ‘stallo’ of the Dal Cappello family by the municipality, the director of the Verona Museums, Antonio Avena, placed a balcony in the courtyard of the tower-house. The city council decided to turn the building into a museum: thus, Juliet’s house was born.

⁴ This study is a revised and extended version of a paper I have presented at the international symposium on *Romeo and Juliet: Within Whose Scope of Choice? From Renaissance to Contemporary Civic Crisis and Reconciliation*, University of Verona, 12 April 2013.

The house is characterised by elegant interiors decorated with furniture and costumes that resemble the Renaissance style. Besides the balcony, one of the prized pieces of furniture inside the celebratory monument is Juliet's bed, that is, the actual bed used in Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 film adaptation of the tragedy.

In addition, the house's courtyard visually mirrors the sanctuary-like style of the interiors where thousands of tourists go there 'on pilgrimage' every day. By translating the words of Juliet's father into action, "For I will raise a statue of pure glad | That whiles Verona by that name is known" (5: 3: 298-299), on the 8th of April 1972 the city council placed in the courtyard the house's most famous sacred object: the bronze statue of Juliet by sculptor Nereo Costantini. Unfortunately, in 2014, the conservation conditions of Costantini's sculpture, badly affected by decades of exposure to tourists and visitors, especially as a result of their good-luck ritual of love in taking pictures and touching Juliet's breast, made it necessary to replace the statue with a replica. In line with the mystical mode of each holy place, the courtyard also features a gift shop that is the crowning glory of the devotional vibe to Juliet, while the walls beneath the balcony are completely covered by graffiti scribbles and notes from visitors asking for guidance in love or praising her with love messages.

The city also provides a fictitious architectural form to Juliet's tomb (*Tomba di Giulietta*) which is located just a ten-minute walk from 'her' house, outside of the city walls. A simple marble sarcophagus lies empty in an atmospheric crypt below the former Franciscan monastery, San Francesco al Corso, in Via Luigi da Porto, 5. At the end of the nineteenth century, the site was transformed into a museum where the frescoed facades of Renaissance buildings of Verona and other works of art were recovered. The grave has an anteroom with walls covered, likewise those of the house, by love phrases, while on the wall outside the crypt is placed a slab of marble engraved with Romeo's lines: "A grave? O, no; a lantern [...] this vault a feasting presence full of light." (5: 3: 83-6). Thus, in such fabricated celebratory settings, where hyperreality and reality are constantly renegotiated, both Juliet's house and tomb embody a process of de-realisation of reality that merges into what Baudrillard defines as the third order of *simulacra*: that is a phase of simulation in which the hyperreal becomes more real than reality itself.⁵

The highly commercial and touristic impact of such civic spaces is widely supported by the fact that tourists can get married there. Civil unions, in fact, are held both in the main hall of Juliet's house and in Sala Guarienti, a dreamy and elegant room located on the first floor of the museum hosting the

⁵ See Jean Baudrillard's elaboration of the ideas of hyperreality and simulacrum that characterise today's global consumer culture. "Simulacra and Simulation." In *Selected Writings*. Ed. Mark Poster. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988: 166-184.

‘grave’. In Verona, Romeo and Juliet are turned into commodified icons whose name serves to advertise local products, such as the chocolate sweets Juliet’s kisses (*Baci di Giulietta*) and more importantly, cultural, sport and civic events for which tourists come from all over the world. In 1993, the Verona city council began to organise a one-day civic festival with dancers, musicians, performers, and players dressed as Romeo and Juliet processing through the city streets. On this occasion an open air painting marathon was also organised where one hundred artists, were invited to complete in just one day a painting devoted to Romeo and Juliet. In recent years, this civic festival turned into a one day-celebration devoted to Juliet with musicians, dancers, public readings and productions of *Romeo and Juliet*. This cultural event usually takes place on Mid-September, a date that supposedly coincides with Juliet’s birthday as suggested by Matteo Bandello’s *Novelle* (1554), that is, one of the tragedy’s sources.⁶

Among all the Veronese civic celebrations surrounding the name of the two ‘star-crossed lovers’, ‘Verona in Love’, a cultural event that takes place on the second week of February, is certainly the most famous one. On these days, the touring visitor, walking the streets, is cheered by an ‘urban itinerary of love’ with the historic city centre adorned with lights and heart-shaped decorations meant to celebrate and visually enhance the romantic allure that surrounds each event. During the festival, a full programme of activities and celebrations is devised to entertain visitors: a local sport event called ‘Giulietta e Romeo Half-Marathon’,⁷ a prize for the best love letter sent to Juliet,⁸ itinerant performances, such as a masque-like entertainment entitled ‘Shakespeare and Love’ which brings together theatre, dance, and music, as well as walking tours from Juliet’s house to Juliet’s tomb.

This year, ‘Verona in Love 2020’ was characterised by a flowering of civic inventiveness⁹ in the name of Romeo and Juliet whose commodity marketization¹⁰ was significantly highlighted by the slogan associated to the event itself: ‘Se ami qualcuno portalo a Verona!’.¹¹

⁶ “Ella a questa santa Eufemia che viene compirà i suoi diciotto anni” (On Saint Euphemia’s day she will turn eighteen *my trans.*) The feast day of Saint Euphemia is celebrated on September 16th. Matteo, Bandello. *Novelle Novella IX*. Ed. Delmo Maestri. 4 vols. Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 1992-1996: 390.

⁷ See the official website: <https://giuliettaeromeohalfmarathon.it/en/> [23/02/2020].

⁸ See the official website: <http://www.julietclub.com/en/premio-cara-giulietta-2020/> [23/02/2020].

⁹ <https://www.dolcementeinlove.com/> [23/02/2020].

¹⁰ Non-official websites also advertise the Veronese festival as a unique and romantic touristic experience: “Verona in Love 2020 awaits to fill the hearts of amusement. The holiday of ‘love programme’ continues up to Sunday 16 February.” <https://www.themayor.eu/lt/bring-your-love-to-verona-this-weekend> [23/02/2020] “Verona has been synonymous with love for centuries. The Verona in Love event is four full days of

The so-called ‘Market in Love’, in Piazza dei Signori, arranged in the shape of a giant heart, offers stalls which sell typical Veronese products, cooking shows and romantic gift ideas such as the ‘Seal of Love’ on which an image of Romeo and Juliet is depicted. Moving to Piazza Bra, tourists can embark on an exciting experience on the ‘Air Balloon of Love’ and enjoy an amazing view of the city. On Saint Valentine’s Day, they can walk through the ‘Green Labyrinth of Love’: a path through which lovers eventually meet at the centre of the labyrinth, facing the reproduction of Juliet’s balcony.

To the numerous forms through which Verona has contributed in popularizing and elaborating the myth of Romeo and Juliet belongs the epistolary phenomenon ‘letters to Juliet’ which, since the early twentieth century, has turned Shakespeare’s heroine into the addressee of an untold number of epistles written by people all over the world. The dreamy custom of writing letters to Juliet inspired the equally dreamy Hollywood film *Letters to Juliet* (2010), which tells the story of an American tourist who finds and replies to a long love letter sent to Juliet fifty years before.

The story of this letter-writing phenomenon dates back to 1937 when visitors to Juliet’s tomb started to leave messages to Juliet after completing the so-called ‘ritual of love’ devised by Ettore Solimani, the former custodian of the tomb. He invited couples, married or not, to follow him into the crypt and to stand one on either side of the tomb: “Hold hands, he would say, and think of a *pensiero d’amore* and exchange a kiss”¹² (Friedman and Friedman 51). Solimani reported a key-episode about an oddly formal young couple who visited the site and after completing the ritual of love asked him if they could leave a ‘letter for Juliet’. Obviously, he said yes. From then on, tourists began to leave spontaneous thoughts that Solimani strategically placed on a large stand at the tomb’s entrance. However, not all messages were composed on the spot. Letters, frequently addressed simply ‘Juliet, Verona’, arrived from far away writers inspired by articles on ‘the city of love’.¹³ Later on, Solimani began replying to the numerous messages he received and eventually writers addressed their mail directly to him or, rather, to ‘the Secretary of Juliet’. This established

cultural events. Visitors can spend unforgettable days listening to live music, attending book presentations and theatrical performances, or visiting the most romantic parts of the city of Romeo and Juliet.” <https://magazine.dooid.it/23/02/2020>].

¹¹ ‘If you love someone, take them to Verona!’ *my trans.*

¹² ‘Love thought’ *my trans.*

¹³ For a detailed account on Solimani as ‘Secretary of Juliet’ see Lise, Friedman and Ceil, Friedman. “The Letters Begin.” In *Letters to Juliet: Celebrating Shakespeare’s Greatest Heroine, the Magical City of Verona, and the Power of Love*. New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 2006: 47-66.

tradition of writing to Juliet is still alive today. Since 1985 the activity of replying to all messages is coordinated by the Juliet Club, an organization founded by Giulio Tamassia, who, with a group of volunteers has devised a meticulous registration system to ensure that every letter is logged in, answered and preserved. At the Club, letters continued to arrive, increasing in number and languages and captivating the attention of the international press.

Given the widespread crisis dramatized in Shakespeare's tragedy as a starting point, the letters written to Juliet deserve to be explored in the light of the different types of crisis, or 'tensions', they comprise in the same literal and metaphorical *space*. Special attention will be given to those tensions that govern the relationship between culture and market and characterise this ongoing tradition of writing to Juliet, as well as to the existing social/family/individual crisis the letters themselves thematise.

The shifting relationship between mass culture and high culture is embodied within this epistolary phenomenon which finds its origin in the commodification of a literary myth, as Shakespeare's heroine is turned into an imaginary 'pen-friend' who provides fictitious answers to her numerous correspondents. All the letters collected by the Juliet Club, in fact, represent an interesting example of how popular culture re-appropriates Shakespeare's work, since they are part of those alternative narratives around his plays which have flourished independently of scholarly concerns and whose analysis may help to understand the extent to which the contents of these writings might affect, and even inflect, Shakespeare's value.

The insidious crisis thematised and dramatized in *Romeo and Juliet* has been considered, by some scholars, as mirroring a changing society undergoing contemporary social tensions.¹⁴ The years between 1594 and 1597 are often identified by historians as the sharpest flashpoint of violent tensions in class relations that affected the city of London. The London rebellions of 1595, in particular, can be considered as the most dangerous and prolonged urban uprising in England, which served as a resonant context for Shakespeare's tragedy. The play, in fact, is permeated by such a turbulence, inscribed in class antagonism, which eventually leads to the lovers' death, a tragic means meant to symbolically punish and, at the same time, expiate their fathers' guilt. But, in the play, the question of crisis is also extended to the individual who experiences a 'crisis of the self', or self-loss. Altered by some inordinate passions, in Thomas

¹⁴ Jill Levenson has highlighted the importance of violence in the drama suggesting that: "With its feud, street fight, dueling, casualties, and deployment of combat imagery, *Romeo and Juliet* offers a panoramic view [...] of violence in Elizabethan England." Jill, Levenson. "'Alla stoccado carries it away': Codes of Violence in *Romeo and Juliet*." In *Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: Texts, Contexts, and Interpretation*. Ed. Jay L. Halio, London: Associated University Presses, 1995: 86.

Wright's words, Romeo displays symptoms of solitary melancholy¹⁵—"I have lost myself", he claims, "I am not here: This is not Romeo, he's some other where" (1: 2: 188-9). He defines love as a form of mental derangement, "a madness most discreet" (1: 2: 191), which eventually brings him, and Juliet, to a progressive emotional, spiritual and physical isolation from a community that fails to heed their cry for help.

While Romeo first displays a potentially "Black [...] humour", described by his father as "artificial" (1: 2: 132), he later discloses a fear of being defeated by the oppressive atmosphere of Veronese society, conceived as a destroying agent. *Romeo and Juliet*, in fact, can only conceptualize a place for themselves distant from the city's cultural codes.

Defiance towards an environment perceived as hostile, is a recurrent theme in Juliet's letters in which the tensions they thematise most frequently arise from the clash between ethnic groups or religions. In the corpus of letters taken into account, which cover a period between 1998 to present days, there are indeed numerous instances of letters addressing issues of conflict between families, communities and generations described as the chief enemies to the writer's love-story. A letter from a man writing from Uzbekistan complains about an arranged marriage: "Dear Juliet, right now I am with the love of my life. We have been going out secretly for three years. I have made up my mind to ask her to marry me but her parents have already fixed a marriage. Her parents will never let her agree to marry me since I don't have much money" (348/2011)¹⁶. In seeking Juliet's advice, letter-writers often refer to their story as a forbidden love confined within the social and moral boundaries of a community often exhausted by a cycle of violence, revenge, and religious tensions which mirrors to some extent those represented by the play's best-known modern musical and film adaptations. In 1960, in fact, directors began to re-elaborate the story of *Romeo and Juliet* "in order to explore social problems" (Bloom 7). *West Side Story* (1961) replaced the families' "ancient grudge" (*Prologue*, 3) with feuding gangs while Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) stressed the generation gap in the social world of the play presenting a couple unwillingly caught up in a war initiated by their parents. Later on, Buz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet* (1997) updated the conflict by setting the play in what can be read as a contemporary Los Angeles or Miami, casting Shakespeare's characters into a modern urban atmosphere of frantic excess, with pounding music, drug trips, and gunfight. As for the directors' readings, the

¹⁵ In his renowned treatise *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1601), Thomas, Wright offered a compelling definition of the passions of the mind by underlining that they could distract and affect both body and language.

¹⁶ For each letter quoted, I report its registration number and date according to the registration system given by the Juliet Club where I personally collected all the letters.

letters sent to Juliet tend to focus on what seems particularly threatening in the modern world, addressing issues of contemporary social, religious and family conflicts.

While they recontextualize and appropriate the tensions dramatized in *Romeo and Juliet*, these narratives give voice to a cultural phenomenon which is neither English nor Italian, but global: “Dear Juliet, What do you do if you can’t love in this world full of hate? Everywhere around the world I see and hear rude and non-loving people” (1055/2010). In a similar fashion, a young man writing from Iraq expresses his complaint about the widespread violence surrounding his country and conveys his message of hope and love to Juliet, pretending to write to his beloved: “Please, tell me this will end one day, I am so lost in your love, You have come into my life and made me hope” (629/2007). For him, Juliet evokes an image of ideal love and becomes the ideal referent to whom he can overtly confess his feelings. This letter to some extent can be regarded as a ‘testamentary document’ of the conflicting love dramatized in *Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad*, an Arabic re-writing of the play staged at the World Shakespeare Festival a few years ago and which casts the ‘star-crossed lovers’ in a modern day Baghdad divided by Sunni and Shiite sectarian strife.

Many letters to Juliet also speak of personal crisis as symptomatic of the social and moral degeneration that afflicts contemporary life. The emotional landscape of these writings is one of deep hopelessness and psychological distress in which the play’s images of romantic fulfilment carry great importance: “Juliet, please tell me how to fill my hours of loneliness and unhappiness. Do gentlemen like Romeo still exist? Does true love still happen?” (604/2002). Similarly, a young lady declares “I feel flawed and damaged, I want to love again, Juliet. How did you know Romeo was the right one?” (1030/2007). Such instances clearly suggest that letter-writers turn Juliet into a contemporary recognizable cultural object shaped by the culture in which they are immersed. They make up Juliet’s image in a way that radically transforms her into a popular icon who can embody different ‘roles’ at once. Her reframed image becomes indeed instrumental to their needs as she can be, at the same time, the letter-writer’s unique confidant—“I have no friends, so I think I may receive an answer from distant Italy” (74/2005)—, his/her ideal guide—“Dear Juliet, you know about love and loss. [...] This is why I’m writing” (2155/2009), “Juliet, you are an example of true and sincere love” (498/2011)—or even his/her spiritual protector: “Please give your blessing on my friends’ marriage” (654/2012) or, again, “Dear Juliet, [...] I just want you to pray for my beloved husband who is very ill. I know if he has lots of prayers he will get well. Please pray” (918/2004).

In the light of such alarming claims, a sociological approach towards these writings may help to understand the overall import of this epistolary phenomenon that involves individuals of different age, social class, ethnicity and

education. Although it is hard to sketch, at least in topographic terms, the letter-writer profile, as most of the messages today are directly sent by email, his/her claim for help gives evidence of the troubled social and cultural background in which he/she is confined. Most of the letters voice the anxieties of individuals struggling for racial and religious discrimination as well as parental oppression, while others display instances of identity crisis which, according to sociologists like Berger and Kellner, permanently afflicts individuals living in a modern society: for them, in fact, modern identity is “open-ended, transitory, and liable to ongoing change” (64).

Given this context, one question should be put forward: which is the reason behind the letter-writers’ choice to convey their messages to Juliet? One possible answer can be found in what Kenneth Burke refers to as sociological criticism of literature which casts “Art forms, like ‘tragedy or ‘comedy’” as a mode of social grounding: literary works are, in Burke’s words, “equipment for living” (10) within which individuals re-situate the self by sizing up situations in various ways. In doing so, they re-appropriate the contextual frameworks of literary works in order to face reality and find a strategy to take on and react to their own problematic situations. In the context of this ongoing tradition of writing to Juliet, letter-writers realign their life experience to that of a literary character, Juliet, casting her as a qualified problem solver.

Writing to Juliet helps them to cope with their mundane anxieties and, at the same time, becomes a strategy for socializing losses, for easy consolation, for warding off evil eye. In constructing multiple images of Juliet, letter-writers cast Shakespeare’s character as an adaptable, changeable and flexible resource which can be appropriated according to the their needs. In such a context, these letters become a radical site of misrecognition in which Juliet’s image comes to be dislocated from her literary framework.

For those who write, and even for those who reply, she is no more Shakespeare’s Juliet, but an imaginary and ideal pen pal willing to listen without judging and to offer comfort to lovelorn teenagers and troubled adults: writing to Juliet thus is much like a psychotherapy treatment free of charge, no matter how much successfully it works. Yet, the alarming impact of the letters’ contents, of course, poses questions on the way in which addressees deal with them and on the fact that they take up the responsibility of giving responses, a task which involves, albeit in an indirect way, the city itself. Its external image indeed may be potentially affected by these answers, as the letters’ respondents acts, after all, on behalf of the Veronese community and, accordingly, on behalf of the Verona city council. This finds confirmation in the fact that, a few years ago, some municipal officers asked the Juliet Club’s staff to bring the letters to the city’s cultural affairs office where two city secretaries, with a good knowledge of English, began to read and respond to the missives. Taking on this task on the top of their usual jobs was a difficult enterprise and soon after the letters

returned to the Club. With the letters now in the city’s possession, the staff of the cultural affair office perhaps found the way of escape from the difficult task of dealing with the letters’ controversial contents. The municipal secretaries, in fact, were instructed to write their responses by exclusively using lines from Shakespeare’s play. By contrast, the Club’s secretaries provide answers that can be, to some extent, compared to those of the ‘agony column’ in newspapers and magazines, even if they usually share letters and consult one another about their responses. Particularly troubling letters are referred to one of the Club’s volunteer, who has a background in applied psychology. All the secretaries, however, agree that “Sometimes, it is enough to be listened to, not to get practical advice. They just need to let it out, to tell their story”.¹⁷ Nevertheless, in telling their story, letter-writers occasionally ignore and even mistake the name of their addressee. Oddly enough, they refer to this epistolary practice as universally performed and thus as an efficient ‘remedy’—“Dear *Julia*, [...] When I saw the article about all these people writing to *Julia*, I decided to do it as well, Why not? Maybe she will help me?” (709/2008)—while others merely link her name to that of the invented Shakespearean site in Verona: “Dear Juliet, I fell in love with the whole idea of *Casa di Giulietta* and how millions of people write to her about love” (1340/2010).

In recent years, this letter-writing phenomenon notably increased thanks to the filmic adaptation *Letters to Juliet* (2010) which constructs its plot on the Juliet Club’s activity. It deals with the story of a young American tourist who meets the volunteers who respond to the letters and then stumbles on one such missive shoved behind a loose brick in the courtyard of Juliet’s house. She discovers that it was written by a lady more than fifty years before and expresses sorrow and regret that she left behind a handsome young Italian, Lorenzo, to return home to England. The tourist answers the letter and is stunned when the same lady arrives in Italy to find her long lost love amid the hills and villages of Tuscany.

From 2010 onwards, the same year in which the film was released, the amount of letters became increasingly numerous and writers began to refer to the film itself and its fascinating setting as the reason behind their impulse to write: “I just finished watching the movie *Letters to Juliet*. [...] I remember visiting Juliet’s balcony and the feeling of hopefulness of the future.” Both the title and conception of the film derive from this letter-writing phenomenon which is taken as a clue profitably to commodify Shakespeare’s tragedy. Gary Winick’s film, in fact, counts as an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* in a more radical sense, since, while borrowing elements of a passionate, troubled love-story and setting from Shakespeare, it nevertheless invents a new plot which represents an alternative narrative fabricated out of Shakespeare’s play. There is indeed an impulse to

¹⁷ My interview [March 2013].

simplify, sentimentalize and commodify the story of the ‘star-crossed lovers’ which is equally inscribed in most of the letters that everyday reach Verona. Set in the historical centre of Verona, Winick’s film notably partakes of the tourist experience, serving as a good advertisement for the city’s main attractions. Both the film and the city’s topographic reality, in fact, are engaged in an ‘archaeological approach’ to Shakespeare that functions as a highly commercial crowd pleaser.

At the same time, references to Verona as a must-see location are also considerably numerous in the letters addressed to Juliet: “Dear Juliet, [...] how wonderful it could be to see the place recognized as a symbol of great and all-winning love” (506/2002); another writer also expresses his desire to visit Juliet’s house: “Dear Juliet, [...] I wish to visit your home, one day. If I only could be there, at the balcony, standing and dreaming, for a moment” (973/2003).

Letters are also imbued with references to Verona as a sacred locale where tourists should undertake their pilgrimage: “Dreaming to visit Verona since 1968. Many times in my dreams I was walking along the Veronese streets, bringing flowers to those lovers”. This epistolary phenomenon, much like Winick’s film, can be seen as, in the words of Dennis Kennedy, instances of “cultural tourism” (175) which strategically turn art into a profitable entertainment. These alternative narratives around the play suggest that, in the twenty-first century, Shakespeare comes to be a repository of meanings transferable to other fields of cultural production depending upon the needs and purposes of the user.

Thus, as attested by these narratives, Verona’s civic spaces are part of a fruitful pilgrimage-like experience where visitors come to pay tribute addressing Juliet as a sanctified entity. At the same time, the tragedy’s sense of a place with its own rules and rituals is vividly mirrored in today’s social and cultural practises as well as in tourist itineraries which seem, albeit not intentionally, oriented to restore the urban violence projected in the play, presenting a setting, Verona, halfway between a theme park and a sacred site.

Also in theatre, Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* has become experimental and even interactive by means of alternative re-writings such as *Such Tweet Sorrow*, a production devised by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2010 which was enacted over five weeks, mainly on Twitter. Anyone with access to the internet or, at least, anyone who was Twitter-literate could become involved with *Such Tweet Sorrow*. Rather than passively observing the action, the Twitter audience could leave comments, re-tweet sections of the dialogue and post videos and photos on the profiles of the characters. If, in the twenty-first century, Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* can be represented in 140-word tweets and its characters turned into imaginary pen-pal friends, then the meaning and value of Shakespeare today needs to be interrogated.

Today Shakespeare functions with a plurality and flexibility that mirrors culture in general, with his plays often re-appropriated, even hyper-appropriated, into a variety of formats, for purely instrumental means suitable for the world wide web or the tourist market. While this ongoing culturally-inflected process of ‘re-inventing’ and re-appropriating Shakespeare is characterised by the strategically related *languages* of art and marketing, bardolatry and business, it also celebrates Shakespeare’s flexibility as a cultural object which can be simultaneously local and global, elitist and popular, real and hyperreal, traditional and innovative, all in the same moment.

Within the ‘wall of the fair Verona’ there is *space* for intertwined performative, civic and narrative *spaces* which *place* Shakespeare as a commodified icon for the city’s self-fashioning. These instances, while pointing to a plurality of remediations that have deterritorialized Shakespeare and shifted him away from the stage, they simultaneously cast Verona as a potential locus of reactualization and ritualization of the tragedy’s dramatic core.

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Figure 1: Juliet statue, Verona – Photograph by Eleonora Oggiano



Figure 2: Juliet’s house, Verona – Photograph by Eleonora Oggiano



Figure 3: *Verona in Love*, Verona – Photograph by Eleonora Oggiano



Figure 4: Letterbox at Juliet’s house – Photograph by Eleonora Oggiano

Mahdi Javidshad* 

Individualization and Oedipalization in Reza Servati's Adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: An Expressionist Reworking

Abstract: This article investigates Reza Servati's *Macbeth*, an Iranian prize-winning adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, to discuss the way the adaptor prunes the source text aiming at presenting his distinctive reading of Shakespeare's play. First, this study is concerned with the way Servati minimalizes the source text and how the process of minimalization serves the adaptor's preoccupation with the psychological complexities of the characters. Second, it is discussed how Servati's changes to the source text takes the Renaissance inclination for individualism a step forward. Third, it is argued that the individualism in Servati's adaptation is aimed at Oedipalization of the play, an attempt that shows the influence of Freudian psychoanalysis. Finally, this article investigates the way Servati's adaptation can be considered as an expressionist reworking of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* by making the individualization of the plot subservient to the expression of the typical course that everyman goes through.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Servati, adaptation, minimalism, Expressionism.

Introduction

In the last decade, there has appeared a number of adaptations of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in Iran that each infuses a certain philosophy to the source text. Amir Dezhakam's *Macbeth* (2019) mixes body language with dialogue to present a new narrative of the source text. In this work, Dezhakam incorporates the voices of new characters like commoners whose narratives have been overshadowed by Macbeth's metanarrative (With Amir Dezhakam's Explication). Amin Akbari Nasab's performance of *Macbeth* in 2018 is a faithful approach to Shakespeare's play, but the source text is abridged. The transformation of the witches to servants is one of Akbari Nasab's rare experimentations with Shakespeare's text (A Conversation with Amin Akbari Nasab).

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Ebrahim Poshte Kouhi's *Macbeth Zaar*, performed in 2012, 2017 and 2019, narrates the story of Macbeth in Hormuz Island where he murders Duncan, the chief organizer of a ritual called *Babazar* so as to become the king of those possessed by the evil spirits called *Ahl-e Hava*. Performed for more than 100 times in the last ten years in various cities in Iran, *Macbeth Zaar* has also been internationally staged in Germany, Russia, Armenia and India (Ebrahim Poshte Kouhi to Stage "Macbeth Zaar"). Behrouz Gharibpour's *Macbeth*, performed in 2007, 2014 and 2018, narrates Shakespeare's play through an opera puppet show in twenty scenes with indigenizing elements (Aran to perform "Macbeth" Opera Puppet Show).

Majid Beshkal presents another puppet show of *Macbeth* in 2018, using native symbols and signs of Bandar Abbas. Discussing indigenizing elements, Beshkal points out, "These indigenous symbols and signs serve novel analysis and ideas, and they are not decorative at all [...] in the design of the mask. I used the form of native trees with a dramatic and non-dramatic emphasis" (We All Have a Macbeth Inside Us). Masoud Tayyebi's *When Hamlet Was Killed by Macbeth's Witches* (2017) creates an intertextual relationship between *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, requiring previous knowledge of the two plays. Tayyebi's adaptation recounts the death of the witches in *Macbeth* who following spoiling the eponymous character go to Hamlet to similarly destroy him (Masoud Tayyebi's New Play Is Staged).

Neda Hengami's *Midday of Scotland* (2016) is a psychological reworking of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. To represent the psychological complexities of Lady Macbeth from different perspectives, Hengami considers five players who simultaneously play this role (Innovation Labelling). Ehsan Zivaralam's *Should Have Died Hereafter* (2017), directed by Seyyed Reza Mousavi, is a character-oriented adaptation in which music, physical movements and special techniques in body performance are considered as the novelty of the undertaking (Macbeth Adaptation on Stage). Asghar Nouri's *Macbeth by Construction Worker* (2014) is an Iranianized account of Macbeth. Directed by Kamran Ghorbani, the adaptation was an Iranian representative in a French festival on Shakespeare (Macbeth through an Iranian Account). And, Hossein Noshir's *Macbeth* (2015) adds Iranian theatrical traditions to the narrative of the source text (Eastern Poetry Beside Scottish Violence).

Among the Iranian adaptations of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Reza Servati's *Macbeth* (first performed in 2010) has found a special place in that it could receive the Special Jury Award from the International Section of the 28th Fajr International Theater Festival in 2010. In addition, the play won the Best Director Award and the Best Costume and Stage Awards at the 12th International University Theater Festival. Servati's adaptation has also been staged internationally in Italy, Georgia, and Russia, and it was awarded the prize for the best show in the Theater for Children and Youth Category at the

19th International Theater Festival 'The Rainbow' held in Saint Petersburg, Russia ('Macbeth' Awarded in Russia). In his interviews, the adaptor describes the play as "a nonlinear narrative of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' in a nightmarish atmosphere which depicts Sisyphus' eternal punishment for Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in a minimalistic performance and acting style" (Servati to Stage Iranian Adaptation).

Born in Tehran in 1983, Servati is an MA graduate of directing from Tarbiat Modares University. A prolific adaptor, he has produced many plays including *Inexhausted*, *Wonder of Creatures*, *Impression of Howling Wind Sound*, *Woyzeck*, *The List of the Dead*, *Body Wash*, and *Crime and Punishment*. For some of them, Servati has been awarded national and international prizes the most important of which are the Special Awards of the 29th and 31th Fajr International Theater Festival respectively for *Wonder of Creatures* and *Woyzeck* (German Duologue; Thirty-First Fajr Theater Festival). Servati's *Macbeth* keeps to be the most award-winning of his productions and of all Iranian adaptations of Shakespeare's play.

Servati's adaptation is worth studying as the adaptor imposes his unique philosophy on the source text. Though Servati seemingly considers Shakespearean tradition a monument that should continue to be upheld, he is perceptive and creative enough to seek out his own reading of it. Such a creation shows itself in the minimalization of the plot and character to not only suit the adaptation to the taste and tolerance of contemporary audience, but to turn the Shakespearean play into an expressionist production. In fact, a remarkable feature of Servati's undertaking is its advancement of individualism in the plot and the character, while simultaneously it gives the final product a universal aspect by representing the collective psychological courses that all humans experience.

Minimalism

Due to the political theme and the dramatization of the effective overthrow of the tyrant in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the play has been abundantly performed and adapted. *Macbeth* is the story of unbridled ambitions, temptations, murders, and revenge. It begins with temptation and the resultant loss of hierarchy, concluding with the restoration of hierarchy. Tempted by the prophecies of three witches, Macbeth murders King Duncan and becomes a tyrant compelled to commit a series of other murders to keep his illegitimate throne. Macbeth's wife, Lady Macbeth, is one of the sources of temptation for regicide. She who tries to stifle Macbeth's pangs of conscience before and immediately after the murder ends up with suicide as a result of the very voice of conscience. In addition to these characters, there are many other ones including Malcolm, Donalbain, Banquo, Fleance, Macduff, Lady Macduff, Siward, Hecate, Captain, etc. all of

whom contribute to Macbeth's story in their own ways. While studying a given adaptation like Servati's, the first issue coming to mind is to investigate how the adaptor treats this large number of characters.

Compared with its Shakespearean counterpart, Servati's *Macbeth* is both faithful and unfaithful to the source text. On the one hand, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth meticulously articulate the poetic dialogues of the source text. On the other hand, some characters and subplots are omitted from the production. In fact, the adaptor tries to prune the source text by focusing on some scenes with the final aim of minimalizing the production to be aligned with the patience of the modern audience and of expressing his distinctive reading of the play.

One of the eye-catching aspects of Servati's adaptation is the question of language, which is as poetic and musical as possible. As Kenneth Portnoy (106) points out, "The greatest problem with a Shakespearean adaptation is poetic language. Some adaptors have attempted to deal with the language by updating it to make it more accessible to a mass audience. For the most part, these adaptations have failed." The risk of updating language is possibly rooted in the audience's expectation of classical aura while watching classics. Unlike many of his fellow Iranian adaptors, Servati does not embrace the risk of updating language and goes to one of the most poetic translations of *Macbeth*.

Among the prominent translations of *Macbeth* by such translators as Farangis Shademan, Alaeddin Pazargadi, Abdolrahim Ahmadi, and Dariush Ashouri, Servati's adaptation uses Ashouri's translation because it is the most poetic translation of the work available in Persian. Though Servati's production is classified as adaptation, the play's faithfulness to the linguistic features of the source text gives it an orthodox aspect and characterizes it as a conservative deviation. Moreover, the application of the poetic language suggests that Servati is not interested in infusing his production with social or political topicality. Thus, one cannot expect to have a realistically rendered Macbeth; rather, the audience come across an adaptation whose adaptive nature is to be looked for in the alterations it makes in pruning the source text. In other words, while the presence of Ashouri's translation in Servati's production keeps the adaptation within Shakespearean traditional aura, an investigation of the way the source text is pruned leads one to see how the adaptor presents his distinctive reading of *Macbeth*.

Servati prunes a great deal of plot and characters, and at times displaces the sequence of events of the source text. In addition, some parts of the adaptation such as its opening are creative additions of the adaptor. The play opens with a narrator who, with a candle in hands, remarks:

What bloods weren't shed before this in the olden days, before when human custom gave men human temperament. What crimes weren't committed, the ones one cannot bear to hear. Once upon a time, once a man was beheaded, he would

die. But, now he rises again with twenty prominent scars on head to rouse us. This is more astonishing than the crime. (A conversation with Reza Servati)

Simultaneously, behind the narrator, two similar characters lying on a bed struggle to come out of a cover that has enclosed them. When his monologue ends, the narrator goes to them and unzips the cover, letting them come out. One of the two lying characters, who is later shown to be Lady Macbeth, rises and in a sleepwalking manner moves ahead. The other character, who turns out to be Macbeth, remains in the bed and addresses the narrator:

MACBETH. Treat him! Treat him, doctor!

NARRATOR. This is the malady that the patient should treat by himself.

MACBETH. So, throw you medicine to the dogs. If you could detect and treat the malady of my country, I would give such a big clap for you that its echo would linger on in the air.

NARRATOR. I'm not a doctor. (Servati)

Then, the narrator raises an axe and beheads Macbeth. While the head remains on the bed, the trembling body helped by the narrator rises and, while clapping, moves towards the Lady. This creatively opening, dramatic scene prepares the audience for the centrality of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in the play.

In most parts of the adaptation, it is Macbeth and the Lady who are on the stage. The opening scenes of the source text in which Duncan, Malcolm, Captain, Banquo, and Ross are included are all omitted in Servati's adaptation. Such an omission divests the political aspect of the source text, shedding light on its psychological significance. Among the included characters are the three witches of the source text who have turned into male characters wearing military costumes, one of whom acts also as the narrator in the opening scene. In marching movements, they utter some of the witches' dialogues and when Macbeth appears they honor and coronate him in military manners. Duncan whose royal power is an object of desire and temptation is mentioned in the play, but never appears on the stage. Thus, what is present on the stage is Macbeth and his Lady with the temptation for power.

From the very opening when Macbeth and the Lady struggle under the cover on the bed, the audience come to realize the striking similarity between the two: both are bald and the two strongly resemble each other in height and physique. These similarities become more eye-catching when the audience see that Lady Macbeth is a man. The two's clothing characterized by minimalism is also to some extent similar. Both are clothed with simple, torn garments, with the difference being in Lady's thick unitard covering her entire shape under the torn costume. The similarity between Macbeth and the Lady is further emphasized in the scene Lady Macbeth reads Macbeth's letter:

[Enter LADY MACBETH, reading a letter]

'They met me in the day of success: and I have learn'd by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me 'Thane of Cawdor;' by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with 'Hail, king that shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.'

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
 What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature;
 It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
 To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;
 Art not without ambition, but without
 The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,
 That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
 And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou'ldst have, great Glamis,
 That which cries 'Thus thou must do, if thou have it;
 And that which rather thou dost fear to do
 Than wishest should be undone.' Hie thee hither,
 That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;
 And chastise with the valour of my tongue
 All that impedes thee from the golden round,
 Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
 To have thee crown'd withal. (1:5:1-29)

Unlike the source text in which Lady Macbeth reads the letter, Servati's play involves both Macbeth and Lady in the reading of the letter. At first, Macbeth is shown preparing to write the letter by spreading a sheet with a quill in hand. Remarkably, the ink by which he writes is actually Macbeth's blood. Before starting to write, Macbeth pierces his wrist with a dagger, using the blood coming out as the ink to write. However, the process is shown metaphorically. The dagger is made of glass and the blood does not stream down, but the eruption is communicated through the reddening of the spot on which Macbeth lies to write. This and other similar metaphorical representations seem to be preparing the audience to consider Lady Macbeth not as a distinct entity, but as a metaphorical character who is in fact a part of Macbeth. Macbeth begins reading aloud the opening lines of the letter, then Lady Macbeth repeats what he

reads, and finally it is only Lady Macbeth that reads the letter. The shift in reading is emphasized by stage lighting. When Macbeth prepares and begins to read, lighting is focused on him. When Lady Macbeth begins to repeat, light is shed on both of them. And when Lady becomes the sole reader, the lighting focus is removed from Macbeth and is solely shed on Lady.

Through emphasizing Macbeth and Lady's similarity in appearance and also applying the lighting techniques, Servati's *Macbeth* seems to be indicating that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are actually two outward manifestations of a single character. The fact that the two share reading a passage that belongs to Lady Macbeth in the source text and that the letter is written by Macbeth's blood, which suggests a close bond between the two, adds to the likelihood of considering the two as one. The unification of Macbeth and Lady as well as the omission of such important characters as Duncan, Malcolm, and Banquo in Servati's adaptation suggest that the adaptor prunes the source text to primarily focus on the character of Macbeth. Thus, minimalism practiced in various aspects including the plot, the costumes and lighting aims to underline the psychological complexities of the central character.

Collective versus individual

The minimalism politics adopted by Servati is in fact an extraction of a distinctive story from the source text. This is clearly stated by the adaptor in his interview: "Regarding the text, I've had a minimalist approach because the modern audience is not patient enough to watch the five acts of *Macbeth* in its classical form. I've extracted a summary from the text which emphasizes the two central characters: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth" (A conversation with Reza Servati). The summary Servati extracts from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is predominantly focused on Macbeth and the lady, and since these two can be taken as the two sides of a single character, it is possible to argue that Servati's adaptation takes the Renaissance inclination for individualism a step forward.

The spirit of the age in the Renaissance compelled authors to resist the kind of characterization in the Middle Ages that saw humans more as types than individuals. The Protestant Reformation and the rise of Humanism paved the way for greater personal experience in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Martin Luther's rebellion against the Roman Catholic Church and its imposition of strictly official guidelines for the achievement of salvation led to a greater level of individualistic religious experience. Emphasizing a firsthand experience of the Bible through reading it in native languages, not in Latin, the official language of the Church, Luther struggled to dissociate Christianity from the oppressive institutionalism of the church to finally argue that each individual had a unique relationship with God and that salvation could be achieved only

through each individual's faith (Semenza vii-viii). As religion enjoyed a high status in the sixteenth century, the transition in the outlook on humanity from institutionalism to individualism was extended to literature.

One of the manifestations of the transition in literature can be found in Shakespeare's oeuvre. Having such plays as *Everyman* and *Mankind*, whose titles indicate conventionality and typicality, as their predecessors, Shakespeare's plays were struggling to be disentangled from institutionalism by being concerned with the psychological complexities of individual characters. As such titles as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear* indicate, Shakespeare contributed to the Renaissance project of furthering individualism through creating individualistically complex characters who had unique concerns and distinctive means of expressing themselves. Thus, unlike their predecessors, Shakespeare's plays were not blatantly religious and allegorical; rather, they were seemingly conscious attempts on the part of the playwright to extract individuality from topicality.

Shakespeare's celebration of individualism was among beginning instigators of a process that continues to be developed and evolved to date. As Gregory M. Colón Semenza (xii) in *Encyclopedia of British Writers, 16th, 17th, and 18th Centuries* points out, "Between the Renaissance and the 21st century, English literature and philosophy is defined by a gradual turn inward—away from the necessity of comprehending God as a completely sovereign being and toward the god in man (and, eventually, in woman)." Though Shakespeare's contribution was a significant step forward in implementing individualism in literature, it was still far from the ideal in that the playwright's characters, though characterized by unique personalities, were conventionally members of royalty.

It was in the Romantic era that individualism came to its acme through the dethronement of omnipresent royal characters from their rank in literature. The titles and content of such Romantic poems as "The Solitary Reaper," "Lucy Gray" and "Michael" testify to the individualistic project that William Wordsworth (935) one of the greatest theoreticians of Romanticism, tried to advance in literature: "to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men." The Romantic individualism was furthered through the efforts of modernist and postmodernist writers. As classic works of modernist literature, James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) were so individualistic in characterization that they depicted a single day in the lives of their characters. Postmodernism has been the final blow to the inclination for institutionalism and typicality by extending the idea of individualism in literary characterization to the consideration of readers as important contributors to the process of interpretation. The often-quoted proclamation "death of the author" best exemplifies this inclination for giving

centrality to individual readers. Considering this centuries-long course of evolutionary individualism, the question that might arise is whether Shakespeare's plays would be written in their present structure if the playwright was a twentieth-century writer. The answer is somehow guessable: most probably no.

Servati seems to be having this idea of evolutionary individualism in mind when he decides to adapt Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The way he prunes the source text indicates that the adaptor evolves its individualism into a modernist one. In fact, Servati turns Shakespeare's play into a twentieth-century text in which the central character's psychological complexities are the sole concern. This is why Lady Macbeth needs to be taken as a part of Macbeth, not as a distinct character. This appropriation of Lady Macbeth for the representation of Macbeth's psychological complexities is seen in other occasions. For instance, in his monologue following the witches' disappearance, Macbeth utters Banquo's dialogue: "The earth hath bubbles, as the water has, / And these are of them.—Whither are they vanish'd?" (1:3:79-80) Or, some of the dialogues uttered by the omitted characters of the source text are articulated by witches, who themselves are the outward manifestations of Macbeth's temptations. In fact, it is possible to argue that all characters in the source text are appositely appropriated to serve Macbeth's individuality.

The aforementioned instances indicate that there is a close relationship between minimalism and individualism in Servati's *Macbeth*. Appearing in different facets including plot, characterization, scenery, and costume, minimalism is exercised by Servati to modernize Shakespeare's play and adapt it to the current philosophical approaches to man. Though the play creates a conventional and institutional mood by alluding to nobility, it undermines it through exercising minimalism in costume. Servati's Macbeth is not clothed proportionately to an army general or the king of Scotland, and his Lady Macbeth does not wear her formal outfit. Though she changes her outfit following Duncan's murder, her outfit is a simple cape with no royal splendor which is apparently intended to act a sign to indicate that Macbeth is now the king. The simple, torn garments are actually indications of the realities under the royal costumes. The cuts on the two's cloths signify the psychological shortcomings that may be hidden under majestic appearances. Thus, minimalism in costume design is another attempt at furthering the ideal of individualism.

In Servati's *Macbeth*, the relationship between minimalism and individuality is also demonstrated in a specific use of scenery. In most parts of the play when Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, whether alone or together, are on the stage, light is merely shed on them while there is no decoration around. Since the scene is predominantly dark except for the place where the two stand, the audience can focus primarily on actions and reactions of the characters. The audience are driven to the conclusion that there is nothing but the central

characters on stage and that the two are the only source of entertainment and contemplation. In fact, the minimalism acted upon the scenery is another contribution to the achievement of individualism in the play.

Oedipalization of plot

Servati's minimalism serves the inclination for individualism, and in turn the individualism in question serves the reworking of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in psychological terms. Due to the way Servati prunes the text and also the way he adds some creative scenes, one can argue that the adaptor's minimalism sheds a greater deal of light on the psychological concerns of the source text. In the source text, Macbeth's insatiable thirst for power is represented through the regicide he commits. Being the most horrible of all the possible crimes Macbeth could commit, regicide is informed by some Oedipal motivation. If Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are taken to be the two sides of a single character, Lady's apprehensive words in the following monologue suggest the Oedipal aspect of the regicide:

Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,
And 'tis not done. The attempt and not the deed
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't. (2:2:9-13)

This is further substantiated by Macbeth's use of the word "parricide" in his denunciation of the murder when he projects his own Oedipal impulses onto Duncan's sons Malcolm and Donalbain (Reid 120). Considering the murder of Duncan as "little else than parricide," prominent psychoanalysts Otto Rank, Sigmund Freud, and Ludwig Jekels unanimously equal Macbeth with Oedipus (Marino 225). Bloom (4) observes that Macbeth is "troublingly sympathetic" because "he represents our own Oedipal ambitions." Though Macbeth is responsible for a succession of other murders including those of the king's guards, Banquo, Lady Macduff and her family and household, and Young Siward, it is the murder of Duncan that can be regarded as Oedipal. Robert Lanter Reid (118), referring to L. Veszy-Wagner, "Macbeth: 'Fair is Foul and Foul is Fair'" (1968), classifies Macbeth's murders in terms of human bond, associating his murder of Duncan with the elimination of father figure: "Macbeth murders first a politically authoritative *parental ruler*, then a *brotherly friend* (his "chiefest friend" according to Holinshed), and finally a *mother and her children*." Faced with these significant murders, Servati's adaptation

excludes two of the three to be focused primarily on Macbeth's dealings with the "parental ruler."

The emphasis on the murder of the "parental ruler" in Servati's *Macbeth* means that the adaptor further Oedipalizes the plot. Though the plot of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is characterized by Oedipalization, Servati's minimalism and the resultant individualization make the theme stick out. It is most probably due to this emphasis that Servati insists on striking similarities between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to indicate that the two are in fact one. It is remarkable that Freud in his critical study of *Macbeth* points to this unity. In his article entitled "Some Character-Types Met within Psycho-Analytic Work" (1916), Freud (165) refers to Jekels' insightful comment about Shakespearean characterization and applies it to Macbeth and Lady:

Ludwig Jekels, in a recent Shakespearean study, thinks he has discovered a particular technique of the poet's, and this might apply to *Macbeth*. He believes that Shakespeare often splits a character up into two personages, which, taken separately, are not completely understandable and do not become so until they are brought together once more into a unity. This might be so with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. In that case it would of course be pointless to regard her as an independent character and seek to discover the motives for her change, without considering the Macbeth who completes her.

Considering Lady Macbeth's reluctance to kill Duncan because the king resembles her father, Freud's consideration of the two as one further supports the claim of Oedipal relationship in the play. Also, Macbeth's accusation of Malcolm and Donalbain through the expression "cruel parricide" (3:1:33) is a defense mechanism that refers to his inner turmoil coming from the violation of paternal rules. Since the defense mechanism in question appears in the form of projection, one can see how other characters in general reflect the psychological complexities of Macbeth. This interpersonal association is in some cases detectable between Macbeth and other male characters such as Banquo, Malcolm and Donalbain, but comes to its acme between Macbeth and Lady to the point that it finds intrapersonal significance. Concerned with the complementary role and intrapersonal relationship of Lady Macbeth with Macbeth, Freud (165-166) proceeds to elaborate on it by referring to the events of the play:

the germs of fear which break out in Macbeth on the night of the murder do not develop further in *him* but in *her*. It is he who has the hallucination of the dagger before the crime; but it is she who afterwards falls ill of a mental disorder. It is he who after the murder hears the cry in the house: 'Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep . . .' and so 'Macbeth shall sleep no more'; but we never hear that *he* slept no more. while the Queen, as we see, rises from

her bed and, talking in her sleep, betrays her guilt. It is he who stands helpless with bloody hands, lamenting that ‘all great Neptune’s ocean’ will not wash them clean. While she comforts him: ‘A little water clears us of this deed’; but later it is she who washes her hands for a quarter of an hour and cannot get rid of the bloodstains: ‘All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.’ Thus what he feared in his pangs of conscience is fulfilled in her; she becomes all remorse and he all defiance. Together they exhaust the possibilities of reaction to the crime, like two disunited parts of a single psychological individuality, and it may be that they are both copied from a single prototype.

Servati seems to be a true disciple of Freud in that he apparently finds it futile to regard Lady and Macbeth as independent characters. Knowing that the true psychological message of *Macbeth* is communicated through seeing Macbeth and Lady as two sides of a single character, Servati minimalizes the source text to present a Freudian reading of the play. In Servati’s play, when Macbeth’s voice is merged with Lady’s through reading aloud Macbeth’s letter, the unification of the two that Freud envisages is symbolically achieved. Also, when the audience come across the fact that against their expectations a man plays the role of a woman, they undergo the experience of defamiliarization, and as a result they are invited to contemplate and participate in the process of interpretation.

Remarkably, the play begins with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth lying on a bed and ends with the two talking in bed. This dreamlike opening and closing inside which the story is narrated is another indication that the adaptor aims to have a psychoanalytic reading of the source text. In an often-quoted statement, Freud (qtd. in Lear 90) argues: “The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind.” This presupposes that dreams are a place where unconscious desires and anxieties are manifest. Since Servati opens up a view of the unconscious world of the protagonists, he is further authorized to represent characters psychoanalytically and take the two to be one. Presenting the unconscious world on stage, Servati takes Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to be the animus and anima of one another and juxtaposes the two sides to reveal the psychological complexities of an individual man on stage.

Though Servati’s *Macbeth* is highly individualized, the individual character on stage has a collective message as he represents collective desires and anxieties of all humans. Taking Macbeth’s regicide as parricide, the story of Macbeth and his apprehensive struggle against the paternal power is in fact the story of all humans. Servati’s minimalism to finally unify Macbeth and Lady Macbeth leads to an emphasis on such a struggle. Even in the source text the Oedipal struggle is evident, though it may be somehow overshadowed by political discussions and the relatively large number of characters on stage. Discussing the parental violation in the play, Reid (121) argues:

By furtively killing the king they not only destroy the bond with this androgynous parent, they also violate the illuminating and consolidating powers of their own superego, or conscience, inducing a deeper regression into self-divisive and annihilative ego defenses.

Reid's argument, like that of Freud, sees the Oedipal relationship between Macbeth and Duncan as happening within the aggressor's unconscious. Such commentaries are actually critical attempts to shed light on an aspect of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, namely psychoanalysis. Servati brings such commentaries to his dramaturgy to highlight the psychoanalytic aspects of the source text and to further emphasize that the struggle the audience see is not merely the one between a general and a king, but the one between all humans and parental power existing in their unconscious mind.

Thus, the nightmarish opening and closing scenes of Servati's *Macbeth* suggest the nightmarish life that everyman may have from his or her beginning to end. Servati's emphasis on the nightmarish Oedipal sufferings everyman may experience makes it possible to regard his adaptation as an expressionistic production. Defining the term, Stanley Hochman (234-235) points out:

The expressionists took a highly subjective view of reality, attempting in their dramas to capture man's subconscious reality in terms of dramatic images, no matter how distorted and grotesque [...] The expressionist playwright, whose viewpoint is first and foremost subjective, also tends to give only the main character, his spokesman, any psychological depth; the other characters are seen only through the hero's eyes and are therefore distorted.

The characteristics Hochman enumerates are all present in Servati's adaptation. Servati's subjectification of plot serves its Oedipalization to finally provide psychological depth to the central character. Also the emphasis Servati puts on the Sisyphean nature of his adaptation suggests the repetition of Macbeth throughout history. As it was aforementioned, Macbeth and his other half, Lady Macbeth, struggle under a cover to be let out. When the cover is unzipped, they are actually reborn into the world. Since the concluding scene is similar to the opening one in that the protagonists begin and end in bed, it is possible to conclude that the dreamlike nature of the adaptation aims to expose the cyclic nature of the collective unconscious. This issue is mentioned by Servati (Reza Servati: *Our Macbeth*) in an interview:

We have a nightmarish approach to the performance. All through, it focuses on presenting a nonlinear narrative of a play about punishment, death, and the repetition of the punishment in a nightmarish and absolutely expressionist atmosphere. What the characters did was in vain, and if the whole play was in vain, we wouldn't stage it! This cycle should be seen in order that criminals appear in front of the audience.

Servati's *Macbeth* and Lady Macbeth are a single entity capable of being repeated throughout ages. Though Servati convincingly argues that his nightmarish adaptation repeats criminals on the stage, due to the emphasis on the individualized power relations between the protagonist and father figure, Servati's unique *Macbeth* represent the story of everyman. In fact, *Macbeth* and Lady Macbeth are minimalized to have a further universal aspect and they are repeated on stage to reflect the collective psychological complexities of man including the unbridled thirst for power and the resultant anxieties and consequences.

Conclusion

Servati's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is an expressionist reworking of the source text to emphasize the psychological complexities of the central character. Servati detects and extracts a distinctive text from the source text to delve into Macbeth's unconscious world. As a result, the adaptor makes everything, even Lady Macbeth, subservient to this representation. The minimalism exercised on the source text and the resultant individualism is an attempt to achieve the extraction in question. Lady Macbeth is represented as a male character bearing facial and bodily resemblance to Macbeth to communicate the idea that she is a part existing in Macbeth's psyche. However, the emphasis on the cyclic nature of the tragedy that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth experience removes any local relevance, giving the individualized text a universal aspect and a global audience. Thus, Servati's *Macbeth* can be taken as the nightmarish story of everyman involved in a power struggle against authority of all kinds.

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James Dale* 

‘How can you say to me I am a King?’: New Historicism and its (Re)interpretations of the Design of Kingly Figures in Shakespeare’s History Plays

Abstract: The 1980’s saw the emergence of New Historicist criticism, particularly through Stephen Greenblatt’s work. Its legacy remains influential, particularly on Shakespearean Studies. I wish to outline New Historicist methodological insights, comment on some of its criticisms and provide analytical comments on the changing approach to historical plays, asking “What has New Historicism brought into our understanding of historical plays and the way(s) of designing kingly power?” Examining Shakespeare’s second tetralogy, I will review Greenblatt’s contention that these plays largely focus on kingly power and its relationship to “subversion” and “containment”. I intend to focus on aspects of the plays that I believe have not received enough attention through New Historicism; particularly the design of the kingly figures.

Keywords: New Historicism, Shakespeare history plays, power, disguise, estrangement, ritualism

New historicism and Shakespeare studies

If you closely examine the relationship of literary theory to Shakespeare studies during the last four decades, no theory can be credited with more impact than that of New Historicism. This approach brought to the discipline a wealth of valuable studies and irrevocably altered the historical sensitivity of all Shakespearean scholars, including those working with alternative methodological frameworks. Nevertheless, New Historicism (and New Historicists) have provoked vehement criticism¹, which however, has only served to deepen our

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¹ Regarding Shakespearean studies, some of these criticisms arose within New Historicists themselves, such as Lee Patterson (xi), seeking to reject the assimilation of the historical into the textual, which I shall shortly outline. Latter day opponents include the Presentist movement who believe that criticism should not only consider

understanding of the complexity of literature read against its (new) historical context. Furthermore, it is with the passing of time that has enabled us to better see the historical positioning of New Historicism itself, for example, its ideological debts to earlier approaches or doctrines (Marxism in particular) and its relation to latter day inquiries, such as post-postmodernism and meta-modernism. Consequently, viewed through the lenses of the twenty-first century, New Historicism appears to be a “complete” methodology when it comes to defining its aims, methods and ultimate results.² This is also why the contribution of New Historicism to contemporary understanding of some specific aspects of Shakespeare's oeuvre can be better seen and more accurately assessed.

When assessing a literary work, New Historicists insist that attention be given to the historical context that governs the works' composition. Their analysis subsequently centres around a set of fundamental premises.³ Firstly, their way of understanding literature is solely through the cultural and societal circumstances which enable that work to be written, or as H. Aram Veeseer states when assessing New Historicism's “key assumptions,” that “every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices” (xi). Literature cannot also be seen as something that exists independently of history; they nonetheless reference each other, as Louis Montrose notes: “the newer historical criticism is *new* in its unproblematized distinctions between ‘literature’ and ‘history’” (18). New Historicism also acknowledges that societal, cultural and political forces are responsible for the construction of human identity. Furthermore, human nature cannot be viewed as something which “rises above” history. This means that there can be no diachronic assessment of human nature between a man of the sixteenth century, for example, and ourselves as contemporary readers. History is therefore viewed as a sequence of divisions, a synchronic assessment between each era of humankind. Finally, as Louis Montrose notes, New

a literary text's past but equally refer to the critics present time in which the text is being analysed (see Hawkes and O'Grady Ed., 2006). Neema Parvini (*Shakespeare and New Historicist Theory* 115-132) provides a comprehensive assessment of these opponents.

² Some New Historicists themselves have debated whether New Historicism can be regarded as a complete methodology (see Greenblatt and Gallagher, 1-19). Furthermore, Michael Payne and Jessica Rae Barbera (484) claim that New Historicism has been unable to clearly define its aims. Despite such questioning, what is important to consider is the view, supported by Parvini, that New Historicism does have value as a critical mode (*Shakespeares History Plays* 29). What I believe is the key appeal of New Historicism, is the impressive collection of the often provocative and unexpected readings it has achieved.

³ I am indebted to H. Aram Veeseer's assessment of New Historicism (ix-xvi).

Historicism is concerned with what he calls “*the textuality of history*,” which he goes on to describe as a situation where “we can have no access to a full and authentic past, a lived material existence, unmediated by the surviving textual traces of the society in question” (20). This means that a historian is forever located within their own ‘historicity’ and that a contemporary reader cannot possibly appreciate a text in the same manner as the text’s initial readership appreciated it.

It is Catherine Belsey who takes New Historicism to task for this belief in ‘historicity.’ Subsequently, she believes that the most a New Historicist analysis of literature can aspire to is to “use the text as a basis for the reconstruction of an ideology” (*Critical Practice*, 144). Nonetheless, it is this early declaration by Belsey which points to the desires of those contemporary New Historicist scholars to discover, formulate and illuminate the ideologies of the cultural and societal milieu within which writers and poets, such as Shakespeare, had worked.

New Historicist criticism has particularly flourished within the field of Shakespearean Studies⁴ and it is Stephen Greenblatt’s work that I feel is of important relevance to my investigation of the playwright’s historical plays. Noted for his seminal work *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (1980), I would specifically like to draw attention to the essay “Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion”—first appearing in 1981 and revised in 1985 and 1988⁵—an examination of Shakespeare’s second tetralogy of history plays from *Richard II* through to *Henry IV Parts 1* and *2*, and finally, to *Henry V*. Here, Greenblatt emphasises his belief that these plays deal with kingly power and the relationship of power with notions of “subversion” and “containment”. Therefore, historical plays, he insists, are not merely “a perfectly orthodox celebration of legitimacy and order” (“The Power

⁴ See Louis Montrose’s *The Purpose of Playing Shakespeare and the cultural politics of the Elizabethan theatre* (1996), and his analysis of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Also see Stephen Orgel’s *Authentic Shakespeare* (2002), exploring the idea of understanding Shakespeare less as a genius than as a clue to the conjunction of the world of the English Renaissance theatre and the complex social politics of the time, asking us to consider what the authentic text of a Shakespeare play really represents.

⁵ See S. Greenblatt, “Invisible Bullets: Renaissance authority and its Subversion,” *Glyph* 8 (1981): 40-60. Then, “Invisible Bullets: Renaissance authority and its subversion, *Henry IV* and *Henry V*” in *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*. Ed. J. Dollimore and A. Sinfield. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985: 18-47. Finally, see “Invisible Bullets,” in S. Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1988: 21-65.

of Forms”, 1444). Kingship continually involves the creation of subversion and disorder to contain and maintain power over its subjects.

In my desire to ask, “What has New Historicism brought into our understanding of historical plays and the way(s) of designing kingly power?”, I am also drawn to the critical reaction towards Greenblatt’s observations and interpretations.⁶ It is my belief that these critics do not actually reject Greenblatt’s views because their own construction of their readings of the second tetralogy use the same ideological message as Greenblatt, often using the same passages from these plays to clarify their views. Therefore, I believe that these responses can be incorporated into an analysis of Shakespeare’s historical plays, making my essay not only a recapitulation of Greenblatt’s contribution but also an overview of the critical response to the plays in the wake of Greenblatt’s analyses.

My analysis focuses, too, on one of the effects of Greenblatt’s emphasis on subversiveness, which is the consistent critical focus on the modes of presenting the king in relation to his subjects. Subsequently, I wish to show how the audience’s design of a model of kingship contains the modes of ritualism, estrangement (by the use of soliloquy) and disguise (used to emphasise the desire for true interaction between a king and his subjects) that characterise the relationship of the kings to his subjects.

⁶ As this essay focuses on Greenblatt’s initial readings of the Second Tetralogy and assessing how those critical responses embraced these readings, I also acknowledge Greenblatt’s later examination of *Henry V* in “Shakespeare and the ethics of authority.” *Shakespeare’s Freedom* (2012, 74-94) where he contends that *Henry V* is probably the closest Shakespeare ever came to representing the authority of the ruler as divinely sanctioned. Regarding the critical reaction, David Kastan argues that “neither the history play nor history itself in fact gives much evidence that containment is ever as efficient or complete as [Greenblatt’s] reading insists. If subversion were always produced by and for power, power would always remain unchallenged and intact; but Henry IV’s very presence on the throne argues otherwise” (38). Catherine Belsey advocates that such theories of subversion and containment “take account of the possibility of resistance, not simply as power’s legitimation, its justification or glorification, as the new historicists seem so often to argue, but as its defining, differentiating other, the condition of its existence precisely as power” (*Shakespeare in Theory and Practice* 136). Terence Hawkes also summarises the tensions within New Historicists coming to terms with the theory of subversion and containment, noting their reluctance to accept containment as a “generalized condition of power” but rather opting for an “ideological containment” working in “such a paradoxical and cunning fashion in some local and historically specific instances.” (*Alternative Shakespeares*, 27).

An enfeebled state

In “Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion”, Greenblatt introduces the concept of subversion and containment as an instrument of power by focusing on Thomas Harriot’s report made in 1588, *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*. This report, Greenblatt claims, is professing quite an “orthodox religious faith” (21). However, he then questions Harriot’s orthodoxy by referring to his reputation of being an atheist. While being unable to prove this, Greenblatt remains confident that the connection between Harriot’s professed orthodoxy and his reputation for subversive atheistic practices are evidenced in the report itself. It is through understanding this connection, Greenblatt adds, that has important relevance in our understanding of the history plays of Shakespeare (23).

A brief examination is then conducted of the differing ideological “strategies” that have been historically attributed to Shakespeare’s history plays. It is these strategies, Greenblatt adds, that “fashion Shakespeare’s history plays [which] help in turn to fashion the conflicting readings of the plays’ politics” (23). Such blueprints, he continues, are evident in Harriot’s report, where we witness “the discourse of authority,” containing within it “a powerful logic [which] governs the relation between orthodoxy and subversion” (23).

Greenblatt goes on to point out the ambiguous status of Harriot in contemporary culture, examining rumours of the mathematician’s atheism and being a “juggler”, a member of a conspiracy imposing a new religion (41). A description is given by Greenblatt of the misinterpretations by the Indians of the power and status of the invaders and the way these subversive accounts are “contained” by making, for example, the overall technological superiority of the Europeans an expression of God’s will. Such misinterpretations are therefore used to manipulate the Indians into believing in the divinity of those who possess it. This, for Greenblatt, is the first strategy of “the *testing* of a subversive interpretation of the dominant culture” (35). Greenblatt then describes how the Indians tried to account for the occurrences perpetuated by the newcomers’ presence, looking at, for instance, the spread of disease and the resulting death of the tribes. This strategy he calls “the *recording* of alien voices or more precisely, of alien interpretations” (35). Greenblatt contends that both strategies are at work in Shakespeare’s histories which make them reinforce the Tudor orthodoxy and—at the same time - appear dangerously radical.⁷ This theory, Greenblatt adds, immediately implies maliciousness and Machiavellian callousness but this is not always the case, and he takes pains to stress that Harriot may not have been acting maliciously. Hence, we arrive at how Greenblatt named his essay,

⁷ Jonathan Bate believes that Greenblatt’s analysis is somewhat flawed and “flattens” the complexity of the political and religious upheavals of the Tudor dynasty (341).

derived from Harriot's report and referring to "the invisible bullets", for instance, the way the English inflicted diseases and misfortune on the hostile tribes. Originally the expression was to render the unexplainable nature of the weapons used by the newcomers. Paradoxically, however, modern knowledge about the spread of viruses and bacteria renders this comparison very accurate.

In his attempt to theorize this mechanism and arrive at the general dictum that subversion is invisible to the targeted audience, Greenblatt states that Shakespeare's history plays are "centrally, repeatedly concerned with the production and containment of subversion and disorder" (40). With these views in mind, I shall now begin my investigation of one of the plays that focuses on the consolidation of state power, *Richard II*. This will include an assessment of Greenblatt's comments on the play which I believe clarify his own position on the nature of this king's power and authority.

There is a further conviction that "the representation of a self-undermining authority" is the predominant issue of *Richard II* ("Invisible Bullets," 40). Greenblatt is responding here to the concept of (sacred) kingship in *Richard II* which had already received much critical attention, further augmented by the work of Ernst Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies* (1957).⁸ However, it is the potentially subversive nature of Richard's auto-reflexive comments and intimate confessions, followed by various containment strategies which are the focal point of Greenblatt's inquiry. Traces of similar emphasis on the oscillation between subversion and containment can be also found in the critical commentaries of other scholars, writing in the wake of Greenblatt's analysis.

From the outset, as Charles Forker notices, we are made aware of Richard's volatile personality (180). This king has difficulty identifying who he is, from the pronoun "Tell *me* moreover" (1:1:8) to "Yet one but flatters *us*" (1:1:25). Nonetheless, there is already a system at play where this king can be designed—through systematic, ritualistic ruling routines. The argument between Bollingbroke and Mowbray is testament to this ritualism, where soldiers' gloves (or gages) are repeatedly thrown to the floor, signifying challenges to each other's beliefs. Richard himself uses a kingly tool through which he believes can exercise power, and indeed, grant privileges to his subjects:

KING RICHARD: Now, by my sceptre's awe, I make a vow
Such neighbour nearness to our sacred blood
Should nothing privilege him nor partialize
The unstooping firmness of my upright soul.
He is our subject, Mowbray; so art thou
Free speech and fearless I to thee allow. (1:1:118-123)

⁸ See *The Shakespeare: King Richard II*, Kantorowicz, 1957. 24-41.

What is striking about this passage is that the entire scene—with the aggravating conflict of Bolingbroke and Mowbray—signals the inevitable beginning of Richard's downfall. Bolingbroke attacks Mowbray for what Richard had done to Gloucester, whereas the only way for Mowbray to defend himself is to reveal Richard's guilt. Thus the scene is subversive because it shows how the king (guilty of what he is accused of) defends himself with a recourse to ritualism (evoking the concept of sacred blood, threatening Bolingbroke for the sake of royal justice, and projecting the image of a benign and fair ruler, for example, to speak freely, be fearless) while in fact he wants both of them to be silent. Exposing the hypocrisy of the ruler is potentially subversive and discredits the arguments and formulas used by Richard. And yet, this subversiveness is also contained (similarly as in the case of Harriot's justification of deluding the Indians) by the ultimate course of history: the rebellion leads to Richard's deposition, the deposition to his murder, and his murder to the war of the roses, and therefore to the destruction of many lives and the ruin of the country.

Richard's superiority lies exclusively in his language which renders most of the arguments he uses about sacred kingship entirely empty, a claim particularly risky from the point of view of Tudor royalist doctrines. Again, the subversive, radical nature of this reading is counterbalanced by the portrayal of Henry IV and his sense of guilty conscience. Neema Parvini, conducting his own reading of *Richard II* very much in line with Greenblatt's general assumption about the recurrent pattern of subversion and containment, states that if Richard means to exercise power, to contain it through such ritualism, we cannot ignore Richard's method of asserting that ritualistic grasp of power through language. This is exemplified, Parvini adds, in Richard dictating the poetic form of the language to control his subjects (*Shakespeare's History Plays*, 184). This is achieved when the king breaks Mowbray's use of rhyming couplets:

MOWBRAY: In haste whereof most heartily I pray
 Your highness to assign our trial day.
KING RICHARD: Wrath-kindled gentleman, be ruled by me.
 Let's purge this choler without letting blood. (1:1:150-153)

It is through, however, such beliefs in ritualistic power and this conception of language which bring about this king's "undoing". As Parvini notes while aligning himself to Greenblatt's view that Richard self-undermines his authority, the king becomes over-reliant on his convictions of power and language which later emphasises his inability to act, showing how ideology becomes ineffective if not supported by physical action (*Shakespeare's History Plays*, 190).

Soon, Richard begins to strip away his royal vestige, his protections, rituals and theatricalities and confront the bare reality of his existence:

KING RICHARD: ...Throw away respect,
 Tradition, form and ceremonious duty
 For you have mistook me all this while.
 I live with bread like you, feel want,
 Taste grief, need friends. Subjected thus,
 How can you say to me I am a king ? (3:2:172-177)

From a very public design of the king, we become witness to Richard's more private thoughts while in captivity, typifying his estrangement from his subjects, his state, and indeed, his self. This leads to a greater, more intimate relationship in the sharing of a "kingly" consciousness (albeit a deposed one) with the audience. In the use of soliloquy, Richard begins to achieve a degree of self-awareness:

KING RICHARD: Learn, good soul,
 To think our former state a happy dream,
 From which we awaked, the truth of what we are
 Shows us but this. (5:1:17-20)

In undermining his own authority, Richard becomes a personification of Greenblatt's idea of a power producing its own subversion and yet we see a king becoming more identifiable as a subject playing the king. We are privy to his weaknesses and in being so, we bring a king (and his thoughts) much closer to the thoughts of us, the audience, more than ever before.

The usurper King and his prodigal son

As Neema Parvini notes, Henry Bollingbroke at the beginning of *Henry IV Part 1* is not particularly fond of the ritualism of Richard II's court, but rather, a more systematic, indeed "business-like" approach to power, reflected in a language underpinned by expediency (*Shakespeare's History Plays*, 191). Such an example is exhibited in Bollingbroke's desire for the Crusade to Jerusalem:

KING: Cousin, on Wednesday next our Council we
 Will hold at Windsor. So inform the Lords.
 But come yourself with speed to us again.
 For more is to be said and to be done
 Than out of anger can be uttered. (1:2:100-106)

Ultimately, the King seems to create an ideology that creates virtue out of action. This view is enforced later in *Henry IV Part 2*, when he advises his son:

KING: ...to busy giddy minds
With foreign quarrels, that action hence borne out
May waste the memory of the former days. (4:5:213-215)

And yet it is his son, Hal, who Greenblatt believes provides the means to solidify authority, to reclaim it from an enfeebled and self-undermining state ("Invisible Bullets", 40-41). His image, Greenblatt contends, "involves as its positive condition the constant production of its own radical subversion and the powerful containment of that subversion." (41) Furthermore, Hal has a clear strategy in his method of kingly design. It is laid out in his soliloquy, a feigned plan of estrangement from how a future king should typically behave:

PRINCE: I know you all, and will uphold
The unyoked humour of your idleness.
Yet herein will I imitate the sun. (1:2:185-187)

As Richard II was able to do, Hal is also able to share his intimate thoughts with the audience, revealing his estrangement (whether real or feigned). In addition, we see an identification between the two protagonists as role-players, the actor who would be king (Hal) and the former actor king (Richard).

To achieve and solidify power around himself, Greenblatt contends that Hal must "record" the discourses of those he socialises with in the London taverns (45), and this is encapsulated in his relationship with Sir Jack Falstaff. David Kastan believes the old knight to be a threat, again conjured by the "juggler" Hal, "to necessitate the exercise of rule", where Hal is demonstrating a use of power to compel others without apparent coercion, to serve "the interests of the dominant power" (Kastan 36). And so, Hal and Falstaff play out an extraordinary scene intended to amuse themselves, becoming largely comedic to the audience, seemingly demonstrating this exercise of rule.⁹ As the scene climaxes, Hal chillingly responds to Falstaff, confirming this Prince's intention to redeem himself to the legitimacy of his regal role:

FALSTAFF: ... valiant Jack Falstaff, [...] banish not him thy Harry's
company. [...] Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.
[...]
PRINCE: I do; I will. (2:4:463-467)

⁹ Edward Pechter is among those critics who feel that Falstaff deserves greater consideration in the second tetralogy. Noting Greenblatt's avoidance of the character as one of the play's "other voices," it is Falstaff's, Pechter contends, which is "part of [*Henry IV Part 1*'s] insistence" (294). Were it the playwright's intention in doing this, it could be argued that it is Falstaff himself who is containing Hal in this scene and not vice versa. David Kastan also adopts a similar view and I will introduce this in my conclusion here.

Daniel Colvin reminds us that Hal is not only a master role-player but also uses the function of disguise to great effect, representing another mode which initially aids Hal in his redemptive strategy (49). Colvin asks us to view Hal's role-playing and disguise with Greenblatt's own theory of "self-fashioning", a term introduced in his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980), used to describe the process of constructing one's identity and public persona, usually by society's upper-classes, according to a set of socially acceptable standards (53). Hal's disguise is noted in the Gadshill robbery, where himself, Falstaff and Poins, conspire to rob some travellers, providing the means for further revels and mischief. Previously objecting to the idea, Hal later agrees to Poins' practical joke to rob the robbers. Hal enjoys the robbery as the joke is realised. As Colvin notices, this enjoyment also underlines Hal's "ability to fashion himself in whatever disguise he wishes" (53). Indeed, Hal is far from discarding his uses of disguise as we later see when assuming the crown.

In the meantime, as King Henry draws his armies towards the Battle of Shrewsbury, we finally see a king and his errant son on stage together. Hal is clearly intent on revealing his redemptive strategy, promising to banish his dubious past and to be "more myself" (3:2:95). Colvin notices, though, that all of Hal's roleplaying has taken its toll; "the pattern of disguise presented in the play subverts the audience's ability to believe in an essential identity in Hal. Strip off all his layers of disguise, of self-fashioning, and there would be no Hal." (54) You begin to wonder the nature of the self-identity Hal desires and what indeed the audience is also attempting to reconstruct, of a would-be king.

Hal himself, as Greenblatt notes, is less calculating in *Henry IV Part 2* ("Invisible Bullets", 48). There is no need for him to return to his redemptive strategy as he had already revealed it in pledging allegiance to his father. Nevertheless, the propensity to role-play, to disguise, are still evident. This is typified when Hal and Poins plan to reveal themselves to Falstaff in Eastcheap, concealed as drawers. When Hal eventually does so, enraged by Falstaff's less than flattering description of the Prince, we are further reminded that the authority is seemingly producing and containing the subversion:

PRINCE: I shall drive you to then confess the wilful abuse,
And then I know how to handle you.
FALSTAFF: No abuse, Hal, o' mine honour, no abuse.
PRINCE: Not ?—to dispraise me, and call me pantler, and
Bread-chipper [...] ? (2:4:308-312)

Witnessing his dying father, Hal returns to soliloquy, a moment where Greenblatt contends, the future king is "seeking to merge his body into the body of the state" (55). It is a moment which also confirms an estrangement from his father as he focuses on designs of obtaining the crown:

PRINCE: My due from thee is the imperial crown,
Which, as immediate from thy place and blood,
Derives itself to me. [Putting it on his head] Lo where it sits,
Which God shall guard; and put the world's whole strength
Into one giant arm. (4:5:40-44)

Hal takes the crown and soon, the dying King realises it is missing. This event confounds his belief that his son has honourable intentions, clearly dismayed that he has already sought advances on the crown. In his own soliloquy his estrangement from the truth of his son's intentions, is marked in:

KING: ...see, sons, what things you are,
How quickly nature falls into revolt
When gold becomes their object ! (4:5:64-66)

In his final moments, we are witness to Henry's abdication, almost the antithesis to the theatricality and poetry of Richard's self 'un-kinging'. One cannot help but feel, as Neema Parvini suggests (*Shakespeares History Plays*, 202), that the King has no control over language, no ear for the poetical forces of language which have failed him in his struggle to exercise rule:

KING: Give that which gave thee life unto the worms;
Pluck down my officers: break my decrees;
For now a time is come to mock at form—
Henry the Fifth is crown'd ! (4:5:115-119)

The newly-crowned King is quick to rid himself of his former retinue, achieved in a dramatic fashion by his rejection of Falstaff, one prophesied, as we saw, in the Eastcheap play extempore:

KING: Presume not that I am the thing I was:
For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
That I have turn'd away my former self;
So will I those that kept me company. (5:5:56-59)

Hal as King is still alluding to his penchant for roleplaying and disguise as he embraces his kingly role. At this point, Greenblatt feels, perhaps as the audience does, dissatisfaction at the conclusion of the play ("Invisible Bullets," 55-56). And yet, he adds, this dissatisfaction is indicative of "a carefully plotted official strategy" whereby subversive impressions are immediately generated and "contained" (56). This is exemplified when Hal states:

KING: ...I survive,
 To mock the expectation of the world,
 To frustrate prophecies, and to raze out
 Rotten opinion. (5:2:125-128)

In this sense it is the kingly ability to alter and sustain his own design(s) as a figure of power which ensures the effectiveness of exercising authority.

The King unified in body and state

Greenblatt feels that *Henry IV* compels the audience, likened to those native Indians referred to in Harriott's account, "to pay homage to a system of beliefs whose fraudulence only confirms their power, authenticity and truth" (56). In *Henry V*, however, Greenblatt contends we are now no longer worshipping that system but are somewhat infused into it, realizing we "have all along been both colonizer and colonized, king and subject" (56). The play begins with a prologue, which Greenblatt feels not only outlines Hal's claim to the throne, but also an "ideological justification of English policy" (60). The succeeding Choruses also serve to enforce Greenblatt's contention that understanding a historical play involves the audience's active imagination in reconstructing it:

CHORUS: And let us, ciphers to this great account,
 On your imaginary forces work. (Prologue: 37-38)

Furthermore, Greenblatt contends that the play tests the idea that competent rule depends as much on "demonic violence" as sacredness. This is achieved in "the context of a celebration, a collective panegyric to 'This Star of England'" (56). We should not be surprised that Hal is capable of being part of this celebration, for creating it, as he has been the supreme role-player all along. Daniel Colvin reminds us, invoking Greenblatt's theory, that while becoming Henry V, Hal has achieved this through self-fashioning (53).¹⁰ Hal's

¹⁰ Colvin's analysis of Hal/Henry V's self-fashioning is far from comprehensive and he is quite dismissive of Greenblatt's contention that self-fashioning resides in language (53). Rather than simply acknowledging Hal's self-fashioning mainly through a use of attire, as Colvin does, this is a character who is also fashioned through his hubristic and often violent rhetoric. There also needs to be an embracing of the vulnerability of the Prince/King as a self-fashioning subject, taking on these rhetorical modes. I have undertaken a greater study of Hal and his self-fashioning as part of my doctoral thesis (Dale, James. "Incognitos: Shakespeare's Uses of Disguise in the Light of New Historicism and Its Legacy." Diss. University of Warsaw, 2021).

kingly self is seemingly a forthright, hubristic and ultra-confident one, providing authority which Richard II had lost and certitude in the face of Henry IV's equivocation. It marks the apotheosis of Greenblatt's earlier claim for Hal that the future king's appearance begins to mark the consolidation of the King's reclaimed authority.

Greenblatt wishes to remind us of Hal's cold-bloodiness as the new King rejects his old Eastcheap companions. Bardolph, is summoned to execution and the most notable, Falstaff, is dealt with, Greenblatt contends, "as the climatic manifestation of [Hal's] virtues." ("Invisible Bullets", 58). He notices that the very utterance of the old knight triggers the triumphal entrance of the new King to become symbolic of "a potential discourse being absorbed into a charismatic celebration" (58). For Greenblatt, such betrayal only helps preserve the status quo of moral authority, together with its network of power relations. That authority, he adds, "is precisely the ability to betray your friends without stain" (58). However, it is not conclusive in my view whether we can consider Falstaff as Hal's friend, as Greenblatt asserts. Hal never makes any vows of friendship and in this 'play extempore,' Hal—in the role of his father, or King—rejects Falstaff.

Nonetheless, the compelling spectacle of power, its theatricality, solidified in what seems a strident, confident king, receives its apotheosis in his battle of Agincourt's war-cry:

KING: [...] when the blast of the war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger,
Stiffen the sinews, conjure up the blood.
Disguise fair nature with hard favoured-rage. (3:1:4-8)

"Disguise", "imitate", "conjure up", remind us that our role-player Prince is still very much now the role-player King, advising his subjects to self-fashion their way as victorious warriors.

Later, in a bid to rally his beleaguered men, and to seek a truer interaction with his subjects, Hal dons disguise once more, borrowing the cloak of Sir Thomas Empingham to gauge his soldiers' mood. He encounters Bates and Williams and provides them with an opinion of the one disguised:

KING: I think the King is but a man, as I am:
The violet smells to him as it doth to me; the element
Shows to him as it doth to me; all his senses have but
Human conditions. (4:1:102-105)

In the desire to truly interact with his subjects, Hal, as he did in Eastcheap, is trying to record the prose discourse that the two soldiers speak.

Hal later acknowledges that Richard II's ingratiating ritualism proved worthless, the ideals of such a system estranged from not only himself but the everyday realities of his subjects:

KING: I am a king that find thee and I know
 'Tis not the balm, the sceptre and the ball,
 [...]
 Not all these, laid in bed majestical,
 Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave,
 Who with a body filled and vacant mind
 Gets him to rest. (4:1:256-266)

Greenblatt concludes his assessment of *Henry V* by saying that an ideal king "must be in large part the invention of the audience" (63) and that power belongs to people who can command and profit from the exercising of their imagination (64). At the completion of the cycle of the second tetralogy, the design of its kings, the construct of the audience's imagination, attains its final draft. Greenblatt's conclusion here points to the belief that this king is best able to identify with his country, his subjects, more than his predecessors.

Greenblatt and New Historicism has brought into our understanding of historical plays that they are not merely a traditional celebration of a legitimate law and order, but rather, continually involve the creation of subversion and disorder to contain and maintain power over its subjects. As Greenblatt has also recognised, a New Historicist examination of these history plays has revealed that the construct of the king has been down to the invention of the audience themselves. Significantly enough, the audience's design of a model of kingship, contains the modes of ritualism, estrangement and disguise that tend to characterise the relationship of the kings to his subjects. In addition, two of Shakespeare's kings, Richard II and Henry V, revel in being actors themselves, and reveal their acting potential through a continuous juggling of the three modes of kingly design. The other king, Henry IV, in contrast, is clearly not the consummate actor and lacks the poetical forces of language while performing his role. The design of this king is largely characterised by estrangement from his subjects, his role, his nation and his son. Through soliloquy, Bollingbroke's private manifestations are felt directly by the audience, making them construct and revise their ideas of kingship, thereby seeing through public designs of royal greatness.

In accepting, like Greenblatt, that a construct of our Kings in the second tetralogy can only be an artificial one, Neema Parvini is seen to conduct, as other critics have done, a reading of the plays through Greenblatt's framework of subversion and containment, a restatement of the same ideological message. However, what Parvini goes onto stress are other factors which point beyond this

reading of Shakespeare. One concerns this scholar's refutation of the New Historicist belief in anti-humanism (*Shakespeares History Plays*, 52-71), as we view our construction of Kings within the Second tetralogy on parts very much played by humans. Parvini also raises the concern that New Historicism overlooks the formal and linguistic features of these plays, wanting to uphold Shakespeare's creative independency, seeking to challenge Greenblatt's idea that Shakespeare's plays were not merely a production of Elizabethan culture and the time in which Shakespeare wrote (209).

It is these concerns that perhaps find their embodiment in the one character that Greenblatt believes has been contained all along, Sir Jack Falstaff. David Kastan believes that Falstaff does not submit to Hal, he is "the play's mark of resistance to the totalizations of power" (Kastan 43). If there is any submission on Falstaff's part, it is only to, as Kastan (43) remarks:

FALSTAFF: our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose
Countenance we steal. (*Henry IV Part 1*: 1:2:26-28)

The evident, ebullient humanism and champion of the cut-purse, embracing all those corners of life, is perhaps the one thorn in Greenblatt's side for it may show that the overpowering celebration of life in one man cannot be contained by either the stage or the minds of the audience constructing his very presence.

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The Inverted Initiation Rituals in Shakespeare with a Special Emphasis on *Hamlet*

Abstract: The article deals the possibility of applying Vladimir Propp's, basically anthropological idea of "the inverted ritual" to the interpretation of certain plays by William Shakespeare, particularly *Hamlet*. The said inversion concerns three rituals: the sacrificial ritual, where the passive and obedient victim suddenly rebels, or at least becomes difficult to control (which is the case, for example, of Ophelia in *Hamlet*); of the initiatory ritual, where the apparently benevolent master of the characters initiation is shown as a monster (which can be exemplified by Claudius, Hamlet's uncle); and of the matrimonial ritual, where the theoretically loving husband (more rarely wife), or lover, is revealed as a highly malicious and unpredictable creature, an example of which can be Hamlet himself. The article makes use of the work of such critics as G.K. Wilson, Harold Bloom, Vladimir Propp, René Girard, and Mircea Eliade.

Keywords: Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, initiation, ritual, reversal, myth, folktale.

Introduction

When we speak about the matter of initiation, we mean, first of all, the problem of the generation gap and the traditional ways of solving it. There is little doubt that the motif of a difficult relationship between the father and the son, in some cases also the daughter, is an important moment in all of Shakespeare's works. It is possible to look at this relationship in a rather placid way:

A father's goal is for his son to surpass him or simply carry on the honor of the family name. To try and avoid any mishaps, fathers advise their sons using the experience they have gained throughout their own lifetimes.

The same, it seems, is true of royalty, except that it is not only the family name on the line, but that of the entire country. In William Shakespeare's *Richard II*, the father figures of Gaunt and York, try to persuade Richard to set things straight in England again.

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In *Henry IV*, it is Bolingbroke himself that bestows guidance upon his estranged son, Prince Henry, who seems to prefer the company of drunks and thieves to those in the court. His speech, delivered after he finds out about the Percy family rebellion, is intended to get his son to assume his responsibilities in a time of great need. (N.B. 1)

In this passage, it is tacitly assumed that fathers, or father figures, in Shakespeare are benevolent, and if they appear stern and censorious, it is for the good of the wayward son. Richard II represents a member of the younger generation, who foolishly assumes that he knows better—specifically, better than his uncles, John of Gaunt and Edmund of Langley, Duke of York, who act as not very empathetic, but still well-meaning counsellors and father substitutes—and, as a result, he loses everything. Prince Henry in *Henry IV*, on the other hand, finally listens to the voice of his royal father, and becomes a dutiful son, and later, after his father's death, a very serious and efficient, though short-lived, ruler.

In *Richard II*, however, York becomes ultimately disloyal to Richard: he takes up the cause of the rebel duke Henry Bolingbroke, who later becomes Henry IV. John of Gaunt, had he lived, might well have done the same, for after all he was Henry Bolingbroke's father. York's treacherousness does not prevent him from assuming a self-righteous attitude towards his own son, the Duke of Aumerle, whom he denounces as a traitor, for conspiring against the new king, and, had it not been for the intervention of his wife, the Duchess of York, he might have engineered his son's death. Thus, York is not only ineffective and unreliable as Richard's substitute father; he also shows that he can be his own son's worst enemy. To interpret him as a positive father-figure becomes almost impossible.

This role is certainly better performed in *Henry IV* by King Henry IV in relation to his son Prince Hal, later Henry V. But "better" hardly means "well" in this case. The king has to watch his son becoming a kind of gangster, who, without becoming implicated in any openly subversive activity, is still completely dismissive of his duties as the crown prince. Besides, the king, having been a rebel himself, and the person responsible for the death of his legal sovereign, Richard II, is hardly in a position to give lessons in loyalty to his own son. Henry IV's rebellious past casts a long shadow of illegitimacy over his, and not only his, reign. Logically, Henry V, as the son of a usurper, who profits from his usurpation, is a usurper, too. Later the problem of Henry IV's weak claim to the crown will lead to the outbreak of the tragic War of the Roses, which, being a civil war, caused a general collapse of public order in England.

Here we see that even in the early plays of Shakespeare, the problem of the real or substitute father's relation to his son is emphasized and shown in a light that is hardly idealistic.

The mechanism of the inversion

My argument is that in Shakespeare, especially in his later plays, we come across something similar to what Vladimir Propp described as “inversion of the ritual” [*Обращение обряда*], which he defined in the following terms:

Formerly it was customary to kill aged people, but the wondertale narrates how an old man was spared. During the time that this custom existed, a person who showed mercy to the old man would have been held up to ridicule, perhaps castigated, or even punished; in the wondertale, the person who shows mercy to the old man is depicted as praiseworthy hero who acts wisely. Similarly, it was customary to sacrifice a virgin to the river whose flood ensured good crops. This would be done at the beginning of sowing and was supposed to facilitate the growth of the vegetation. But in the wondertale, the maiden is rescued from the monster by the hero. As long as the ritual existed, such a “liberator” would have been torn to pieces as the greatest of profaners. as one who jeopardized the well-being of the people, the crops. ... But with the decay of the once sacred system, the custom in which the virgin went (sometimes willingly) to her death became needless and repugnant, and the role of the protagonist switched to the former profaner who interfered with the sacrifice. (Propp, 1984: 101)

The ritual referred to here is clearly that of human sacrifice. This ritual was widely practised in Europe and in the Mediterranean in the Neolithic age, later to be replaced by animal sacrifice, as is graphically represented in the well-known Biblical story of Abraham’s interrupted sacrifice of his son Isaac.

The quotation given above comes from Propp’s book *Historical Roots of the Wondertale*, which is largely concerned with deriving the wondertale (known also as the fairy tale, or the tale of magic) from the ritual of initiation rather than the sacrificial ritual. The basic form of the initiation ritual is well known and there is no need to go into too much detail here. The two figures on whom this ritual is based are, first, the initiate, or initiand, who undergoes the rite of passage, (initiation), as result of which he or she is “reborn” and accepted in a new social role, and, second, the master of the initiation (*guru*), clearly a father figure, who plays the role of teacher and examiner, somebody who is often demanding, but generally benevolent, and who is glad at the initiate’s final success in carrying out a series of difficult tasks.

Propp’s idea of inversion applies also, or even best, to the ritual of initiation:

Between the ritual and the wondertale there is one important difference. In the ritual it is the youth’s eyes that are plastered with a sticky substance, in the wondertale the same happens to the hag, or other similar characters. In other words, the myth or the wonder tale represents a precise inversion of the ritual. Why has such an inversion taken place?

The ritual was something terrible and dreadful for children and their mothers, but it was regarded as necessary, which is why the one who took part in it gained something that could be called the magic power over the animal, the ritual was thus characteristic of the primitive hunting. The moment, however, the weapons became more accomplished, and agriculture was introduced, the new system of social organization made the old cruel rituals appear unnecessary and accursed, they turn, as it were, against their own perpetrators. If, during the ritual, the youth was blinded by the creature that tortures him and threatens to devour him, the myth, liberated from the ritual, becomes a means of protest. Something similar takes place in the case of the motif of burning, in the ritual, the children are being “burned”, while in the wondertale, it is the children that burn the hag. (Propp, 2003: 74)

It follows, then, that the original master of the initiation, who had fulfilled the role of a stern but benevolent examiner, underwent a transformation into an enemy. Propp speaks, for example, about the early form of the fairy tale fiery dragon, the classic enemy of the hero, which had been originally a positive and helpful character (see Propp, 2003: 309-310). The psychological mechanism of this transformation is readily understandable, for almost every student feels occasionally that the examiner is, or could be, malicious or prejudiced. But in terms of the history of culture, in the fairy tale we find something more serious, a tendency to look at the ritual, both the initiatory and the sacrificial, from the point of view of the one who suffers, or the one who has been given a difficult task. Hence, the act of saving a prospective victim is no longer counted as spoiling the ceremony, but rather as a heroic feat; likewise the figure who assigns difficult tasks to the hero is no longer a respectable guru but rather an enemy who should be eliminated. It is not for nothing that fairy-tales are regarded as part of children’s literature. They may not deal with childish matters, or in a childish way, but they resolutely side with the younger generation.

Consequently, we have to do here with two states of affairs, the more archaic one corresponding to the ritual, the other characteristic of myths and folktales, which are often rooted in the ritual, but essentially different from it. In the former, the initiate is under the supervision of the master, a spiritual guide, in whose interest it is to lead the initiate successfully through the process of initiation. But in the latter, the original meaning of the ritual is forgotten and often no longer makes sense. It is replaced with what might be called the hero’s warpath, which leads towards the final success, often expressed in an advantageous marriage.

It is possible to establish a logical link between the ritual of initiation and the sacrificial ritual. Initiation was often logically connected with sacrifice because the conductor of the sacrifice had to be a worthy person, perhaps

a qualified priest; that is, someone who had successfully undergone the ritual of initiation. For example,

In the Vedic cult, the sacrificer and his wife were required to undergo an initiation (*diksha*) involving ritual bathing, seclusion, fasting, and prayer, the purpose of which was to remove them from the profane world and to purify them for contact with the sacred world.” (Faherty 2)

Both rituals may become inverted, so that the benevolent master of the initiation changes into a malicious enemy, while the ritual of sacrifice is no longer expected to be fulfilled but rather aborted, and the sacrificial animal, or person, escapes fate.

Mircea Eliade distinguished three types of initiation ritual. The first is the most widespread and concerns the process of becoming mature, and joining the society of grown-ups. The second is focused on secret societies of all kinds, and the third is what might be called priestly initiation, at the end of which the initiate becomes a priest, shaman, or medicine man. Initiation was often logically connected with sacrifice. The two latter types are similar, the major difference being “the ecstatic element” in the shamanic initiation (Eliade 24-26).¹

Eliade draws our attention to an important aspect of the historical perception of initiation rituals:

We should not forget that the triumph of Christianity and its becoming a universal religion was exactly due to its having distanced itself from the climate of the Greek and Oriental mysteries, and its advertising itself as a religion of salvation, and this salvation being accessible to everybody. (Eliade 11)

“To everybody” means clearly: not only to the initiates. In other words, the foundations of Western civilization are connected with an act of rejecting a culture based on initiation, where what Max Weber called “salvation goods” can be acquired only by a narrow elite. As Eliade also notes, our culture is no longer dominated by Christianity and has become “radically desacralized” (Eliade 11). But the principle of free access to what should perhaps no longer be called “salvation goods”, but rather “culture goods”, has remained intact, even though “freely accessible” is not the same as “freely available”. In our post-Christian world we still believe in a society that is not dominated by some sectarian cliques, secret societies, or mafias, who reserve some special benefits for their members only. Whether our society really corresponds to those democratic, anti-elitist principles is another matter.

¹ The translation of all the passages from Eliade’s book from French into English is mine.

What, in this context, is the position of Shakespeare and his plays? He obviously must have known initiation mainly in the Christian context. The preparation for the Christian sacraments is here a case in point. Most of them have strongly initiatory aspects. But we should not forget that in Protestant England most sacraments, with the exception of Baptism and Holy Communion, were abolished. On the other hand, it is not at all clear to what extent Shakespeare identified himself with English Protestantism. It is, in my opinion, quite possible, though by no means certain, that he was, as some scholars suggest, a crypto-Catholic.² The rise of Freemasonry, not long after Shakespeare's death, shows that there was a need in Europe for a cultural formation strictly based on initiation, the initiation of what Eliade calls the second type, that is, the one connected with joining secret societies.

The idea of connecting Shakespeare's plays with ancient rituals and their anthropological interpretation is not exactly a new one. There is, for example, an interesting book, *Shakespeare's Comic Rites* by Edward Berry (1984). Berry concentrates on Shakespeare's comedies, especially comedies, such as *The Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*, that emphasize the motif of troubled courtship leading eventually to a marriage treated as the happy ending of the play. The ritual that is here analysed is that of marriage, which certainly may have some links with initiatory and sacrificial rituals, the most important of which is the structure of the rite of passage. There is also Naomi Conn Liebler's *Shakespeare's Festive Tragedy. The ritual foundations of genre* (2002), which I have found of considerable interest, especially because it focuses on the motif of the crisis of authority, even though the author does not interpret this crisis systematically in terms of the inversion of the ritual.

My contention then is that the negative characters in Shakespeare's plays, particularly in the tragedies, often can be profitably seen as derived from potentially positive figures through a mechanism similar to the inversion of the ritual. But the inversion in Shakespeare is far from complete: we are confronted with father (or mother) figures that are both demonic and benevolent, and quite often those two aspects may be represented by one and the same character. The same may be said as well of son (or daughter) figures, even though Shakespeare generally seems to side with the younger generation. The mechanism of inversion, it should be remembered, belongs not so much to the ritual itself but rather to those literary genres, such as the myth and the fairy-tale, that are based on it. And it is a regular feature of those genres that they side with the young hero, or heroine, rather than with, as Propp put it "accursed, old cruel rituals" (Propp 74), favouring stern, established patriarchal figures.

² The question of Shakespeare's religious views is competently dealt with in the chapter "What Form of Prayer Can Serve my Turn" (Bevington, 2008: 106-142).

The inversion of which rituals are we talking about here? There are, I think, three essential kinds: inversion of the sacrificial ritual, where the passive and obedient victim suddenly rebels; that of the initiatory ritual, where the originally benevolent master of the hero's (or heroine's) initiation is shown to be a monster, or at least potentially a monster; and that of the matrimonial ritual, where the supposedly loving husband (more rarely wife), or lover, is revealed as a highly malicious and unpredictable creature.

The very fact that Shakespeare perverts ancient rituals has long been recognised. Naomi Conn Liebler says: "The absence, misconstruction, or perversion of necessary ritual is a hallmark of Shakesperaeian tragedy" (Liebler 25). She goes on to say that:

What these tragedies celebrate, what makes them "festive," is the heroic effort of the protagonist, involving some recognition of ritualistic action at some point in the play, to hold the edges of the world together, to keep Nature's molds from cracking, and all germains from spilling at once, to set right disjointed time. ... In tragedy, of course, the attempt does not work, and the crisis is not averted" (25).

The above quotation is no doubt inspired by Hamlet's famous declaration: "The time is out of joint; O curs'd spite, / That ever I was born to set it right!" (1.5.188). What Liebler apparently fails to notice is that a perversion of the ritual may be itself conducive to regeneration, albeit an imperfect one.

Hamlet's paradoxical initiation

The most obvious example of the inverted initiation ritual is probably *Hamlet*, a play in which the hero is confronted with two father figures, his biological father and his stepfather, who is at the same time his uncle. Hamlet ostensibly loves his father and hates his uncle, treating the latter as a grotesque parody of the former, but his relationship with both is in fact much more complicated. Harold Bloom argued that Hamlet's real father was the jester Yorick, while his relationship with the biological father (if the Old Hamlet really was his biological father) was rather cold:

The prince evidently will go to his death having kissed Yorick the king's jester, his substitute father, rather more often than he is likely to have kissed Gertrude or Ophelia, let alone his awesome warrior-father. ... Whose son was Hamlet? ... 'What is really unique about Hamlet is not his unconscious wish to be patricidal and incestuous, but rather his conscious refusal to actually become patricidal and incestuous.' Gertrude dies with Hamlet (and with Claudius and Laertes), but it is remarkable that Hamlet will not kill Claudius until he knows that he himself is dying, and that his mother is already dead. (Bloom, 1998: 418-419)

Bloom clearly represents Hamlet as an Oedipus manqué, which in this case means a more conscious version of Oedipus, that is, someone who realizes that he is being cornered in an Oedipal situation and knows that he can extricate himself from it, while fulfilling the task of an avenger, only at the cost of his own death. Like a true Oedipal character, he pretends to be going to avenge his father, while in fact he can kill Claudius only as an avenger of his mother and not before the guilt of his uncle for her death is obvious. Moreover, even though the play contains no overt criticism of the principle of revenge, it is remarkable that Hamlet can carry out his act of revenge only in a fit of passion, and never in cold blood.

Bloom seems to be suggesting that Hamlet cleverly contrives to die in order to avoid Oedipus' opprobrium of being accused of parricide and suspected of incest. Without, however, going into the intricacies of a Freudian interpretation of the play, what remains obvious enough is the crisis of Hamlet's "sonship," his inability to call anybody his true father. This might be called the inversion of the initiatory ritual in Hamlet's case. He cannot rely on father figures (and apart from Claudius, Old Hamlet, and Yorick, there is also the Player King, and even Fortinbras who may be considered as potential father figures): he has to be his own master of initiation.

This is clearly a tall order; in an extremely difficult situation he has nobody to rely on. His best friend Horatio is usually absent, his girlfriend Ophelia is a tool in the hands of his enemies, while his mother is presumably the loving wife of his worst enemy. He summarizes this situation in the well-known phrase: "The time is out of joint; O curs'd spite, / That ever I was born to set it right!" (1.5.189-190).³

Piotr Mróz, in his *Corridors of Power*, claims that Hamlet is potentially "an Erasmian ruler", who follows (or rather is prepared to follow, as he never takes the throne) the enlightened rules prescribed for a ruler by Erasmus of Rotterdam (Mróz 1992: 100). As such he is supposed to be the opposite of the Machiavellian ruler, who, like Richard III, is prepared to trample on all moral principles if it suits his interests. This would mean that Hamlet, even though he may count on little help or understanding in his social environment, is strong enough to do without a spiritual father, a master of initiation, because he can draw inspiration, and the necessary moral strength, from his vast erudition, understandable in someone who was a "student of the most renowned medieval European university" (Mróz 101), namely Wittenberg. Actually, the University of Wittenberg was founded in 1502, so it can hardly be called a medieval university. Its reputation was closely connected with the person of Martin Luther, who had been a lecturer there, so it was famous rather as a seedbed for radical, particularly religious, ideas than for purely academic excellence.

³ Citations from *Hamlet* come from Lott's edition of the play.

From Mróz we additionally learn that Hamlet was “a true Erasmian pacifist” and that “Hamlet renounces the *raison d’être* of war” (Mróz 104), which claim is illustrated by the quotation:

Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour’s at the stake. (4.4.53-56)

But clearly, this is a misunderstanding. Hamlet’s statement is not that of a pacifist, on the contrary. Bernard Lott paraphrases it, and comments on it, in the following way:

It is not a mark of true greatness to take offence without good reason, but (it is a mark of greatness) to dispute over a trivial matter if it is a question of honour. —Hamlet thinks that the reason for Fortinbras’s expedition is utterly insignificant, and again realizes to his shame that his own honour is by contrast genuinely at stake. There can be no excuse whatever for his inactivity. (Lott, 1993: 160n.)

Indeed, Hamlet shows himself here to be deeply ashamed of his inactivity. But what does the proper activity consist in? The answer is obvious enough: it consists in killing Claudius, the king of Denmark—hardly a manifestation of pacifism. But even the passage about “being great” is far from being an explicit condemnation of war. It defines moral greatness as readiness to fight, even for an apparently flimsy reason, the moment one feels that one’s sense of honour has been wounded.

This definition is naturally a recipe for endless war and rampant militarism. This kind of thinking we would be rather inclined to associate with Hamlet’s father, apparently an old fashioned chivalric ruler, who completely embraces the military code that is based on the notion of revenge. His son, however, is famous for his reluctance to accept this code, even though he never openly rejects it.

As Harold Bloom puts it:

Shakespeare, with great care, even guile, gives us a father and a son totally unlike each other, the elder Hamlet and the prince. Of King Hamlet we know that he was a formidable fighter and war leader, much in love (or lust) with his wife. Of the qualities that make the prince so remarkable, the warrior father seems to have possessed none whatsoever. (Bloom, 1998: 390)

If then the young Hamlet uses the kind of language that would have suited his father, we may assume that he is being ironical. So maybe Piotr Mróz is, after

all, right, and Hamlet may be interpreted as a pacifist. But I would insist he is a pacifist of a peculiar and paradoxical kind. The way he gets rid of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern shows that he did not value highly the life of those whom he perceived as enemies, even though he had used to think of them as friends. Fortinbras, whose name means “strong in arm”, is another candidate for a father (rather than a brother) figure in relation to Hamlet. He has the determination and purposefulness that Hamlet lacks so woefully. Hamlet admires him, even though, or perhaps because, Fortinbras is a militarist par excellence. It is hard to say that Fortinbras is a Machiavellian ruler, but we would not be surprised if he were to develop into one. And we seem to like Hamlet better for not being similar to Fortinbras.

Another interesting problem, in this context, is the comparison of Hamlet and Richard III, Erasmian and Machiavellian rulers. They can, no doubt, be contrasted with each other, and yet, in some respects, they are similar enough to each other. Richard, especially when seen as Richard of Gloucester in *Henry VI*, is in a sense an early version of Claudius:

Richard:

Why, I can smile, and murder while I smile
And cry „Content” to that which grieves my heart,

...

I can add colours to the chameleon
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages (*Henry VI, Part Three* 3.2. 182-192)⁴

Hamlet:

O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain!
My tables—meet it is I set it down
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain—
At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark. (1.5.105-109)

But the Protean character, which sits so well with the Machiavellian prince,⁵ is also an aspect of Hamlet’s own character. One might even suspect that in describing Claudius in this way, he describes himself, even though, instead of smiling, he seems more fond of mocking and scoffing. He describes himself, in front of Ophelia, in the following way:

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

⁴ Citations from *Henry VI. Parts One, Two, and Three* come from Bevington’s edition (1988).

⁵ Lauro Martines calls Machiavelli a Protean figure of Florence (TLS, August 18-25, 2017).

them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven?
We are arrant knaves, all. Believe none of us. (3.1.125-129)

It is indeed remarkable that here Hamlet reproaches himself for being revengeful, in spite of complaining on so many other occasions of his inability to translate into action his “dull revenge” (4.4.33). The negative aspects of Hamlet have been thoroughly discussed and emphasized, perhaps over-emphasized, by G. Wilson Knight, who said of Hamlet: “He is the ambassador of death walking amid life” (Wilson Knight, 2001: 35), an inhuman monster who is “spreading Hell on earth” (Wilson Knight 42). These are epithets that might well be applied to Richard III and indeed Harold Bloom notices, though with a certain understandable reluctance, an affinity between the two characters: “Nor is our intimacy with Richard more than a foreboding of Hamlet’s comprehensive ability to turn the entire audience into so many Horatios” (Bloom 71). It is certainly true that both Hamlet and Richard allow us to get an insight into their minds, and what we find there, in both cases, is extreme bitterness towards themselves and the world, accompanied by the realization that the world may appear different to those with a less pessimistic turn of mind:

Richard:

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks
Nor made to court an amorous looking glass
... I, in this weak piping time of peace
Have no delight to pass away the time
Unless to see my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity. (1.1.14-27)⁶

Hamlet:

What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty!
In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel, in
apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world. The paragon of animals.
And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me. No, nor
woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so. (2.2.296-303)

What does the peculiar development of Hamlet’s personality mean from the point of view of the ritual of initiation? Wilson Knight says:

contrast points the relative significance of the King and his court to Hamlet. They are of the world—with their crimes, their follies, their shallowness, their pomp and glitter, they are of humanity, with all its failings, it is true, but yet of humanity. They assert the importance of human life. They believe in it, in themselves. Whereas Hamlet is inhuman, since he has seen through the tinsel of

⁶ Citations from *Richard III* come from Bevington’s edition (1988).

life and love, he believes in nothing, not even himself, except the memory of a ghost, and his black-robed presence is a reminder to everyone of the fact of death. (Wilson Knight 37)

Mircea Eliade characterizes the result of a successful initiation in the following way:

It is almost possible to say that, in the primitive world, it is the initiation that makes human beings human; before the initiation they do not yet partake in the human condition just because they do not have access to religious life. (Eliade 27)

If Wilson Knight is right, we have to do, in the case of Hamlet, with what might be called the process of anti-initiation. Hamlet has a chance to develop under the tutelage of Claudius, a real king, a person who is a pragmatic politician, but unlike Shakespeare's Macbeth, for example, he shows no propensity to become a ruthless tyrant. He later does turn against Hamlet, but he has no choice; the prince, with his wild behaviour, starts to pose danger to the stability of the state. This is because Hamlet prefers to develop towards death, rather than life, towards inhumanity, rather than humanity, and appropriately enough, since he is under the tutelage of a corpse, or rather a bodiless ghost. On the other hand, it may easily be argued that the "human life" represented by Claudius and his court is based on sham, falsehood and hypocrisy, so what Hamlet really chooses is some deeper, more authentic life, but at a very high price that both he and those dear to him have to pay. It can also be pointed out that basically Hamlet is interested in the death of only one person, his murderous uncle. As he says himself: "Those that are married already, all but one, shall live" (3.1.147-148), so to call him "the ambassador of death" may be an exaggeration.

To be fair to Wilson Knight, I should perhaps emphasize that his theory, if accepted at face value, explains quite neatly why, on the one hand, Hamlet constantly delays his revenge, but on the other never questions either his duty to take revenge or the idea of revenge as such, which he could have easily done by referring to the Christian values of mercy and forgiveness, which is something that Prospero, in a way, does in *The Tempest*. Wilson Knight's Hamlet seems to put off his revenge for no idealistic reasons, but rather with the truly devilish intention of involving the greatest number of people in it, that is, in order to organize a genuine bloodbath, a festival of death—the killing of just one person is too little for him. Indeed, the scene of the duel, in Act 5 of the play, leads to the almost simultaneous death of four important characters, including Hamlet himself, but it can naturally be argued that Hamlet is responsible there only for one death, that of the king.

René Girard claims that *Hamlet* was written against the idea of revenge, and the fact that nobody in the play criticizes the model of culture based on

revenge can be attributed to the rules of the genre: a revenge tragedy, in his opinion, is not a proper place for harangues directed against the notion of revenge (Girard, 1996: 355). But he believes that this void in the conceptual centre of the play, the very absence of arguments against revenge, combined with Hamlet's postponement of his revenge, problematizes and calls into question the ethics based on revenge.

I do not oppose this way of thinking, indeed I regard it as entirely plausible, but I would argue that another way of dealing with the question of revenge in *Hamlet* is exactly to look at it as an initiation play, where the main task of the hero is not so much to take revenge on his uncle, as to go through a series of difficult tasks contributing to the truly Herculean task of "setting the time right" (1.5.190), and of achieving some kind of self-purification and rebirth. Perhaps Hamlet is indeed a figure remotely similar to Hercules, who performs his twelve labours in the service of the king Eurystheus, who is shown to be a miserable and cowardly character, and who invents difficult tasks for the hero hoping to cause his death. There is strong mutual hatred between Eurystheus and Hercules, who does not kill the king himself, but kills three of his sons, and after Hercules' death, which has no connection with the labours, Eurystheus is killed by Hyllus, a son of Hercules, according to some accounts. An additional analogy consists here in the fact that from Hercules' point of view at least, Eurystheus is a usurper who is sitting on a throne that properly should be held by Hercules. Hercules and Eurystheus are also quite closely related to each other, because Eurystheus is the son of Alcmena's uncle, and Alcmena is Hercules' mother (Grimal, 1997: 95, 384). The story of Hercules and Eurystheus, in the context of *Hamlet*, has the virtue of containing the motif of revenge, but at the same time decentering it and treating it almost as an afterthought. Hercules also resembles Hamlet in being a fundamentally positive hero, but one who is characterized by fits of foul and nasty temper, which even approaches madness. As it is a pagan myth, we should not naturally expect the legend of Hercules to question the principle of revenge. Hamlet makes in fact an allusion to Hercules and to the first of his labours just before his conversation with the Ghost, which also marks the beginning of Hamlet's "labours":

My fate cries out
And makes each petty artery of this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve. (1.5.82-84)

The Nemean lion was killed by Hercules, but with great difficulty, showing the lion to be almost Heracles' equal; and later Hercules graphically identified with that lion by wearing his skin as a suit of armour.

The first allusion to Heracles in *Hamlet* comes earlier in the second scene of the same act: "My father's brother, but no more like my father / Than

I to Hercules!” (1.2.152-153). Hamlet emphasizes here that he is not a Hercules, but, on the other hand, he indicates that his father could be likened to Hercules, which makes it more natural for him to think of Herculean strength with reference to himself when he sees the ghost of his father. Finally, there is a reference to Hercules in Act 5: “Let Hercules himself do what he may, / The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.” (5.1.271-273).

It seems customary to interpret these enigmatic lines as saying that Hercules here is Laertes, who is putting on heroic airs as an avenger of his father and sister, while the “dog” is Hamlet, who will have his “day”, that is, his revenge (in G.R. Hibbard 334n.); but it makes more sense, in my opinion, to think of Hamlet as the Hercules who realizes that his efforts to end the crisis in Denmark (a crisis partly of his own making), even though they may be close to a successful conclusion, are not going to change much in the long run. We may be seeing here, indeed, a covert criticism of the ethics of revenge and its futility.

The most successful of Hamlet’s initiatory “labours” (which naturally have the structure of a rite of passage that may easily end in the death of the initiand) is no doubt his avoidance of the trap set for him by Claudius in sending him to England. Claudius’s ingenious arrangements to make sure that Hamlet will die as a result of his English mission end in complete failure. Hamlet manages to turn the tables on his enemies, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who have pretended to be friends, and returns to England not only unscathed but much more strongly determined to bring his scheme to fruition. This “fruition” does not only involve his killing of Claudius. Hamlet, returning to Denmark at the beginning of Act 5, seems also determined to make peace with Ophelia, Laertes, and the Queen, his mother. In a sense, Hamlet descends into an Otherworld and emerges from it, that is he survives his own death, which is the property only of the greatest cultural heroes, such as Gilgamesh, Odysseus, Aeneas, Theseus, and Hercules.

The singularity and irony of Hamlet’s fate consists in the fact that he achieves his goal only to die soon afterwards. This may also be regarded as a peculiar inversion of the ritual, different from the one envisaged by Propp. In Propp, as we remember, we have been invited to consider two inversions: the sacrificial victim is saved, instead of being sacrificed, and the master of the initiation, also called the initiator, is no longer represented as a benevolent figure, “the Wise Old Man” of the myths, but rather as a monster that needs to be killed by the hero. In other words, those who can be expected to die live on, while those who can be expected to assert their domination are put to death. In *Hamlet*, however, almost everybody dies: the victims, such as Ophelia, the heroes, such as Hamlet and Laertes, the wicked masters, such as Claudius, and also the supposedly virtuous ones, such as the Old Hamlet. It seems deeply ironical that the character who survives and becomes “the winner that takes it

all” is Fortinbras, who is not even a proper hero, from the point of view of traditional patterns, because he does not seem to go through a near-death experience, that is, through a properly developed rite of passage that could be interpreted as a rebirth. As Joseph Campbell puts it: “Within the soul, within the body social, there must be, if we are to experience long survival—a continuous ‘recurrence of birth’ (*palingenesia*) to nullify the unremitting recurrences of death” (Campbell 16).

Ophelia’s victimisation

In the case of Ophelia, we seem to encounter a travesty of another ritual, that which involves live sacrifice. The difference between the sacrificial and initiatory rituals need not be great because quite often initiates would fall victim to excessively harsh treatment and die during the ritual (Eliade 86-87). Northrop Frye says the following concerning Ophelia: “Claudius says of the mad Ophelia that without our reason we are mere “pictures”, or else beasts, and as Ophelia isn’t a beast she must be a picture, a terrible but quite recognizable picture of what she could have been” (Frye 94).

In this way he alludes to the statement made by Claudius on seeing the mad Ophelia:

Poor Ophelia,
Divided from herself and her fair judgement
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts. (4.5.80-82)

It may be claimed, however, that Ophelia becomes both a picture and a beast. In other words, she becomes a sacrificial animal which was often decorated and adorned with ribbons (Hubert & Mauss 40): “There with fantastic garlands did she come” (4.7.169), before it was ceremoniously killed. Ophelia is not, strictly speaking, killed, but she is often said to have committed suicide, induced to do so by the cruelty and insensitivity of her social environment. On the other hand, the Queen, who was apparently the only eye-witness of Ophelia’s death, represents it unequivocally as an unfortunate accident. Bernard Lott remarks: “But one naturally asks why, if the Queen saw all this, she and others did not do something to rescue Ophelia from death by drowning” (Lott 186n.). If Ophelia is considered as a sacrificial victim then the inactivity of the Queen and her entourage can be easily explained. She might be thought of as the high priestess, and, at the same time, Ophelia’s demonic, though only potential, mother-in-law, who carries out the act of sacrifice. Eliade, in fact, mentions that a boy, in primitive societies, would be initiated by his potential father-in-law (Eliade 28), and Gertrude certainly is Ophelia’s potential mother-in-law. At the same time,

however, there is no denying that Gertrude looks on Ophelia with great pity and sympathy, as can be seen, for example, when she bids farewell to her at her funeral:

Farewell! I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,
And not to have strewed thy grave. (5.1.224-227)

The element of inversion in Ophelia's sacrifice is perceptible in the contrast between her being almost a perfect insider—she tries hard not to distinguish herself in any way, as a dutiful daughter and a loyal lover, and a conventional member of the upper class—and the brutal treatment that she receives and which she is not prepared for. If she were a mythical or fairy tale figure she might have easily reconciled herself to her fate; the inversion consists there in a female victim being saved at the last moment by the unexpected intervention of a male hero, who becomes, naturally, the victim's husband. But Ophelia does not wait for a male saviour; she inverts the ritual herself by going mad and causing trouble to those around her. Sacrificial animals were supposed to accept their death resignedly (Hubert & Mauss 41). A male saviour does appear, in fact two of them, Ophelia's brother Laertes and her lover Hamlet, but, ironically, not at the last moment, only a while too late, they both jump into her grave protesting their great love for her and solidarity with her, which they apparently had never had time to show when she was alive.

Ophelia illustrates also a cruel inversion of a matrimonial ritual, as far as we think of the ideal marriage conceived as a harmonious union of husband and wife, though in fact the institution of marriage is traditionally associated with the notion of crisis: "Anthropological literature on rituals places marriage in the category of life crises because it marks a transition from one phase of life to another. Indeed, in many cultures it is the most important rite of passage into adulthood." (Kärkkäinen Terian 230). Indeed, the man Ophelia loves turns out to be, in a sense, her worst enemy, first as the murderer of her father, but also as someone who treats her with a curious, and no doubt very painful to her, mixture of malice and indifference. This is at least what we see in the play, though it may be imagined that Hamlet's behaviour towards Ophelia has not always been so off-putting. The conversation between Ophelia and her brother Laertes in Act 1, Scene 3, clearly indicates that Hamlet used to court Ophelia quite assiduously:

Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmastered importunity. (1.3.29-32)

Hamlet's later apparent change of heart and brutality may make us think of a similar motif appearing in the fairy tales about supernatural husbands, the best known literary version of which is probably Apuleius's *Cupid and Psyche* (see Apuleius 114-157), where the husband turns against his wife the moment he discovers that she has violated, under the influence of her envious sisters, his prohibition and has had a look at him, even though he insisted that he would visit her only at night without being seen. Ophelia may be accused of having committed a similar trespass in allowing Polonius, Claudius and Gertrude to spy on the conversation she has with Hamlet in Act 3, Scene 1. And it is in this scene that Hamlet treats Ophelia particularly harshly in telling her to go to a "nunnery", a female monastery,⁷ which is remarkable in a play that otherwise mentions no religious institutions and refrains from making it clear whether the characters appearing in it are Christians or not.⁸

The obvious difference between the story of Hamlet and Ophelia and that of Cupid and Psyche is that in the former the couple are reconciled and reunited only in a metaphorical and rather heavily ironical sense in the scene of Ophelia's funeral in scene 1 of Act 5. Hamlet's gesture of repudiating Ophelia in the nunnery scene is something more than Cupid's taking offence at his wayward wife; he apparently excludes any possibility of healing his relationship with Ophelia. Another difference is that Ophelia does not break any prohibition imposed on her by Hamlet; as a dutiful daughter she simply gives preference to her filial loyalty to Polonius over her erotic loyalty to Hamlet, without even apparently experiencing this choice as a conflict of loyalties. Presumably, she feels that in obeying her father she acts also in Hamlet's best interest. She could have been right in thinking so if only Hamlet showed himself as being in love with her.

Toxic relationships in Shakespeare's late plays

Hamlet seems to cast a shadow over the "post-Hamletian" Shakespeare plays. The motif of what might be called "maris fatals" (lethal husbands, by analogy to "femmes fatales"), who break their relations with the women who love them for

⁷ It is true that the word "nunnery" could in Elizabethan English refer also to a brothel, but it seems that this not the meaning that Hamlet has in mind, as is also confirmed by G.R.Hibbard edition of *Hamlet* (1998: 243 n.).

⁸ There is, I realize, another clear, though rather marginal, allusion to Christian, or even Catholic, culture in the words of the Ghost when he speaks about his sudden death for which he could not prepare by taking the sacraments: "Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled; // No reckoning made ... (1.5.77-78). There is also Act 3, scene 3, where Hamlet decides not to kill the king seeing that he is at prayer, where the Christian context is obvious enough, even though Hamlet's scruples are not motivated by Christian mercy, far from it.

reasons that are even more flimsy than Hamlet's, is quite persistent in Shakespeare's late plays, not only the so-called Late Romances. I mean the relationship between Othello and Desdemona, Posthumus Leonatus and Imogen (in *Cymbeline*), and Leontes and Hermione (in *The Winter's Tale*), but also, in a sense, that between Pericles and Thaisa in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, and Palamon and the Jailer's Daughter from *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. They are accompanied by a series "pères fatals" (lethal fathers), who might be called unnatural fathers and who partly coincide with the previous list of unnatural husbands and lovers. These can be seen exerting a pernicious influence usually on daughters, occasionally also on sons. Here belong Old Hamlet and Claudius (as Hamlet's murderous stepfather). Then we have King Lear, in relation first of all to Cordelia, Leontes and Perdita (in *The Winter's Tale*), Pericles and Marina, and finally, Prospero and Miranda. In the case of *Macbeth*, we are confronted with Lady Macbeth and her husband, who may be said to destroy each other, a "femme fatale" and a "mari fatal".

A special case is that of King Antiochus, from *Pericles*, who belongs on both lists, because he is both the father and the (incestuous) husband of his unnamed daughter. Their relationship stinks (literally) to high heaven so much that they are both destroyed by a thunderbolt: „A fire from heaven came and shriveled up / Those bodies even to loathing; for they so stunk ...” (2.4.9-10).⁹ Leontes also belongs on both lists because he tries, unsuccessfully, to kill both his wife and his daughter, even though eventually he becomes reconciled with both. Antiochus, unlike Leontes, loves his daughter very much, indeed too much, and, as a result, destroys both his daughter, who is, at the same time, his illicit wife, and himself. However, before he comes to this sorry end, he manages to bring about the death of a great number of his daughter's unfortunate suitors. Naturally also Hamlet cultivates lethal relations as a lover, a son, and a step-son, but he is also a victim of two particularly lethal fathers, his biological father and his stepfather.

Conclusion

In all the above cases, the figures of fathers and husbands turn out to be inadequate, and they refuse to fulfill their conventional functions. It seems possible to talk about this crisis, the most obvious example of which is found in *Hamlet*, in terms of the inversion of the initiatory ritual, though not necessarily in the way this inversion is discussed and understood in the works of Vladimir Propp. If the initiation is basically a life enhancing experience, even though it

⁹ Citations from *Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest* come from Bevington's edition (1988).

often contains a brush with death, the inverted initiation, observable in Shakespeare's plays, especially in his tragedies, might sometimes be called a death enhancing experience; but still some initiation, in the positive sense of the word, does take place. The process of the hero's or heroine's maturation involves the killing, or getting rid, of a figure that is the father, or that usurps the father's place.

It is naturally a motif which is, to some extent, derivable from the Senecan model of the revenge tragedy, well known for having influenced the Western Renaissance playwrights. We find there a number of motifs analogous to Shakespeare's tragedies. I ventured to compare Hamlet to Hercules (who is the protagonist of Seneca's *Hercules Furens*), but Hamlet is usually compared to Orestes (who appears in Seneca's *Agamemnon*), who avenges the murder of his father Agamemnon for which his mother and her lover Aegisthus are responsible.¹⁰ Unlike those classical analogies, Hamlet is much more than just a fictional hero from the history of literature. Even G. Wilson—Knight talks of Hamlet as, potentially, "the possessor of spiritual harmony" who could have "restored perfect health to Denmark" (Wilson Knight 48).

As I argue elsewhere (Wicher, 1999: 43-58), Shakespeare's *Hamlet* may be related to Male Cinderella figures in the tales of magic. As such, he is, like all Cinderellas, who are usually female, a powerful mediator, who can act as an intermediary between this world and the other and between various modes of existence. Hamlet is constantly changing masks, and pretending that he is somebody else, and only at the very end does he reveal his true dignity, or rather this dignity is expressed by his friend Horatio: "Now cracks a noble heart. —Good night, sweet prince; / And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!" (5.2. 341-42). The same, to a lesser extent, is true of other Shakespearean characters, structurally similar to Hamlet, but all female, such as Cordelia, Perdita, Marina, and Miranda, who also achieve an inversion of the ritual; they seem doomed and lost, but later they come into their own, though in the case of Cordelia this means only a moment of triumph, followed by death. They are beset with problem fathers, such as Lear, Leontes, Pericles and Prospero, who are not necessarily evil because, after all, Shakespeare's plays are not fairy tales or

¹⁰ Aegisthus is Agamemnon's first cousin, a son of his uncle Thyestes, so almost as in the case of Claudius and Old Hamlet, the murderer is the murdered king's close relation. But one might connect Hamlet also with Aegisthus himself, who kills his uncle Atreus, apart from also killing his uncle's son Agamemnon, in order to avenge his father Thyestes, who, admittedly, was not killed by Atreus, but Atreus killed Thyestes' three sons and served them to his brother as a meal. Therefore Aegisthus is also avenging his brothers, or rather half-brothers, because his mother is Thyestes' own daughter, so he is a fruit of an incestuous relationship, and his mother is also his half-sister.

myths, so his characters display often a complexity beyond the reach of simpler narrative forms.

Edward Berry observes that “In Shakespearean comedy the crucial obstacles are usually psychological, not social or metaphysical” (Berry 9). The problem is that sometimes it is difficult, especially In Shakespearean tragedies, to separate psychological obstacles from social ones. Hamlet and Cordelia’s refusal to accept the roles imposed on them may be attributed to their stubborn and egotistic characters, but their rebellion reveals also a longing for a better social order, less dominated by hypocrisy and the desire to keep up appearances. As has been observed by Liebler:

Tragedy manifests the decentering of authority, it is the image of authority in crisis. The problem of sovereign (central, supreme, ordering) authority is enacted in the crisis faced by the tragic protagonist whose behavior reflects a disruption or discontinuity, both producing and produced by that behavior. (Liebler 8)

Such protagonists can be said to have inverted a ritual that deserved to be inverted, and the very gesture of inversion had a liberating quality, even though it had dire consequences for the personal lives of the protagonists and those around them.

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The Medievalism of Emotions in *King Lear*

Abstract: *King Lear* exemplifies two cultures of feeling, the medieval and the early modern one. Even though the humoral theory lay at the heart of the medieval and the early modern understanding of emotions, there was a sudden change in the understanding of specific medieval emotions in Renaissance England, such as honour as an emotional disposition. Emotional expression also changed, since the late Middle Ages favoured vehement emotional expression, while in early modern England curtailment of any affective responses was advocated. Early modern England cut itself off from its medieval past in this manner and saw itself as “civilized” due to this restraint. Also some medieval courtly rituals were rejected. Expression of anger was no longer seen as natural and socially necessary. Shame started to be perceived as a private emotion and was not related to public shaming. The meaning of pride was discussed and love was separated from the medieval concept of charity. In contrast, in *King Lear* the question of embodiment of emotions is seen from a perspective similar to the medieval one. The article analyzes medievalism in terms of affections and studies the shift from the medieval ideas about them to the early modern ones.

Keywords: medievalism, emotions in Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Reformation in England, humoral theory.

King Lear, a medievalist play that has as its source an episode from Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regnum Britanniae* (c. 1136) (Geoffrey of Monmouth 81-87), is a text where two cultures meet. Shakespeare returns to emotions that were important in the medieval literary texts and he simultaneously distances himself from the world of the medieval past. Here medievalism is going to be understood in the formulation T.A. Shippey gave it: as “responses to the Middle Ages at all periods since a sense of the mediaeval began to develop” (Matthews 1). The turn away from the medieval was characteristic of Reformation England, particularly due to the Protestantization of England during the reign of Elizabeth I (Bagchi 47), since English culture tried to separate itself from its Roman Catholic past by casting off the medieval.¹ Mike Rodman Jones notes, however,

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¹ At the same time, such critics as E.M.W. Tillyard saw the early modern period as a continuation of the Middle Ages in its various manifestations (Tillyard 1959).

that the early modern period was marked by simultaneous rejection of the medieval, visible in the Dissolution (of monasteries), and reworking of the medieval, which he calls “the first post-medieval medievalism” (93). Early modern medievalism “existed in a kind of tension between destruction and generation, inspiration and adaptation” (Jones 90). The culture of feeling was inspired by medieval emotions, even if it rejected or criticized some of them. It adapted emotions (or emotional dispositions) such as honour for its own purposes. Furthermore, *King Lear* represents the two cultures of feeling in terms of the emotional expression in them: the medieval culture where emotions need to be expressed in order to be noticed, and the early modern perspective, where the expression of feelings should be restrained. The curtailment of emotional display was favoured in the English Renaissance for religious reasons (Karant-Nunn 2010). Even though *King Lear* is a medievalist play, Shakespeare distances himself from medievalist emotions and demonstrates some of the emotional differences between the medieval and the early modern cultures. The medievalist emotions of honour, anger, shame, and pride are the ones that Shakespeare addresses in *King Lear*. They are different from the historical and literary emotions usually found in the studies of early modern England. For example, Bradley J. Irish’s *Emotion in the Tudor Court: Literature, History, and Early Modern Feeling* is focused on disgust, envy, rejection, and dread as expressed in literary and historical texts about specific members of the Tudor court. He traces disgust in the literary and historical accounts of Cardinal Wolsey, envy in those of the Earl of Surrey, rejection in the case of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and Sir Phillip Sidney, and the dread and dreadfulness of the Earl of Essex (Irish). In *Being Protestant in Early Modern England*, Alec Ryrie (17-98) discusses such early modern emotions inspired by Protestantism as despair, mourning, desire, and joy. In *King Lear* Shakespeare, however, is concerned with those emotions that used to be central to the medieval culture.

This analysis needs to be performed from the perspective of the history of emotions. Around twenty-five years ago, the so-called affective turn started to be noticeable in the humanities (Eustace et al. 1486-1531; Trigg 3-15). An interest grew in how emotions were expressed and verbalized in the past and how they are noticeable in human physiology. There were reassessments of Charles Darwin’s theorization of how emotions are expressed on a human face (Rosenwein and Cristiani 12, 80), William James’s interest in how the body itself experiences emotions (Rosenwein and Cristiani 14-15), the cognitivist and social constructionist approaches, and Sigmund Freud’s hydraulic model of emotions, in which the drives build until they find an outlet (Rosenwein and Cristiani 10) and which was similar to the early modern understanding of how the soul works (Park 469). Literary studies have also been influenced by this turn, but the matter of emotions became complicated in the case of studying literary texts from the past. It started to be debated whether emotions from the past could ever be analyzed in the manner in which the modern feelings are.

The terminology of feeling that the history of emotions uses is also taken from the times when the medieval was transforming itself into the early modern. The hydraulic theory of emotions as something that is moved out of the body is much older than Freud's considerations, since the term derives from the Latin term *e-movere*, which means "to move outside." In fifteenth-century France the term *emotion* was used in the context of uprisings and popular revolts (Boquet and Nagy 6), but the idea of emotions as something that flows from the inside and moves outside had been used earlier. "Passion" was an older word, and at first it was used as a translation of the Greek *pathé* and was the same as the Latin *patior*, "to suffer patiently" (Meek and Sullivan 10).² In the sixteenth and seventeenth century the term *affections* followed, which could be used in specific contexts, but was also applicable to a myriad of feelings (Meek and Sullivan 11). *Sentiment* was a term that appeared later, in the context of the eighteenth-century culture of Sentimentalism, the first "affective turn" noted in the history of Western culture.³

Yet another term for feeling is "mood," and this is a word that can be situated within the ancient and medieval humoral theory of emotions. The Aristotelian and Galenic thinking about feeling related what was happening to the soul with the physiology of the human body. As Richard Meek and Erin Sullivan write about emotion in Shakespeare, "the immaterial soul injects its potent form" onto the material body and this is how "mental and emotional processes" can be explained (1). In Shakespeare's time the humoral theory may have been the main explanation for how emotion was embodied (Meek and Sullivan 1). In *King Lear* the terminology related to the ancient and the medieval theory of emotions is also present:

Kent:

. . . Such smiling rogues as these,
 Like rats, oft bite the holy cords atwain
 Which are too intrince t'unloose: smooth
 every passion
 That in the natures of their lords rebel,
 Bring oil to fire, snow to the colder *moods* [emphasis mine-A.C.];
 . . .
 (2:2:77-82)⁴

² Meek and Sullivan (10) refer to R.S. White's study "*False Friends*": *Affective Semantics in Shakespeare* for a discussion of the creative uses of the term *passion* in his plays (286-299).

³ For a discussion of the eighteenth century as the time of "sensibility" see, for example, Alex Wetmore's *Man of Feeling in Eighteenth-Century Literature* (1-25).

⁴ All the quotations are from *King Lear* from Duthie and Wilson's *The New Shakespeare* edition (Duthie and Wilson).

Here “passion” is not related to the ancient and medieval *pathé/patior*, but rather to the emotion that rebels in the lords’ inner self and should not be “smoothed,” but moved out in order to culminate in some action. The “smiling rogues,” such as Oswald, Goneril’s steward, exacerbate the humoral condition of their masters, which is compared to bringing “oil to fire, snow to the colder moods” (2:2:76). The humours, cold, hot, wet, and dry, are generated inside, but on the outside they should be tempered rather than made even more potent. The evildoers’ intention is to make worse what is already bad in their masters’ bodily fluids. They are like rats not only in offering all too easy solutions to complex problems, but also in encouraging the behaviour that has its source in the human temperament.

The humoral theory is both an instance of medievalism in the early modern period and a theory that was a cornerstone of thinking about emotions in Shakespeare’s time.⁵ The Aristotelian and Galenic humoral theory was believed in and practiced from antiquity through the Middle Ages to the early modern period, and this makes it exceptional among other concepts that will be discussed here.⁶ In general, in terms of the history of emotions in *King Lear* there appear elements that belong either to the Middle Ages, which makes them forms of medievalism, or are characteristic of early modern times. Emotions, or at least their expression and conceptualization, belong to various cultural periods and they have to be seen as distinct, depending on the period we are discussing. This is how the history of emotions goes against the premises of affect theory, which argues that emotions are inborn and unchangeable, regardless of the historical period one lives in. The term “affect” is used to denote both all emotions and one of the emotions that can be felt (Rosenwein and Cristiani 11). On the opposite pole of the unchangeable “affect” there lies social constructionism, which assumes that emotions are learned and therefore depend on the historical period one lives in. There is variation among them that is culturally determined. The social constructionism is useful in research on medieval and early modern emotions and it appears to be more relevant to them, since it focuses on emotions expressed and not on those that were felt, since the latter are impossible to retrieve.

Some of the emotions from older periods are not no longer identifiable as such. In 1985 Peter Stearns and Carol Stearns famously announced the advent of the discipline they termed “emotionology.” It was formulated in order to study what the Stearnses called “emotional standards” (813-836) as they

⁵ See, for example, Paster’s magisterial study (Paster).

⁶ Yet another influence that the ancient culture exerted on Shakespearian drama in terms of conceptualization of emotions was emotions in literature that were taught in the early modern period as a part of the grammar school education; Shakespeare also had access to this pedagogy of emotions and later used it in his plays (Enterline).

changed over time, hence this theory is still very much applicable to the study of, for example, medieval and early modern emotions. The Stearnses (813-836) accepted a division into six basic emotions (happiness, sadness, disgust, fear, surprise, anger), but the division proved to be unnecessary in the case of the older cultural periods. After all, both the Middle Ages and the early modern period are full of emotions that are no longer identifiable as types of feeling. For example, honour used to be seen as an emotion, while nowadays it is rather conceptualized as an emotional disposition. Ute Frevert (40) called honour one of the “lost emotions”, i.e. an emotion that is no longer recognizable to us. This is how honour features alongside love in *King Lear*:

Goneril:

Sir, I love you more than word can wield the matter;

Dearer than eyesight, space and liberty;

Beyond what can be valued rich and rare;

No less than life with grace, health, beauty, honour;

...

(1:1:54-57)

Among the values listed in this brief catalogue the only emotion is honour. Nowadays it is identified as an “emotional disposition” rather than an emotion *per se* (Frevert 41) The list of valuable things that Goneril voices may be telling in the light of what is going to happen in the plot: Gloucester and King Lear are going to lose their eyesight and they will lose everything else that is of real value. They will lose their liberty, the space they occupy will have to change due to their future exile, and they will have no share of grace, health, or beauty any longer. They both cherish the honour of medieval knighthood at the moment when King Lear organizes the contest for his daughters, but this honour will be lost for them as well. Rob Boddice argues that honour as an emotion was bound up with its expression in the social context:

[it was] bound up intimately and intrinsically with dynamics of power and social practice, where the outward display was the presence of these emotions as an essential component of a social relationship with power and the maintenance of social practice (90).

In *King Lear* some characters use the word “honour”, but it is no longer the chivalric value from the medieval world. The chivalric world is disintegrating before our eyes in Shakespeare’s play and what follows is a world of moral corruption and of people for whom honour is only an empty word. Even though Goneril is familiar with the need for social relationships and social practice, her swearing by honour is vacuous, since there is only the outward display of it and no inner feeling. She understands the need to talk about her love, even though

her version of love is perhaps closer to the need to use the father and reject him afterwards than to what is conventionally seen as filial love. When she talks about “A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable” (1:1:59), she contradicts herself, because she is able to speak when confessing love to her father. Shakespeare notices the importance of honour as something of medieval provenance, but writes about this emotion or emotional disposition as a value that is losing its importance.

The question of how emotions should be expressed becomes the site of conflict in the scene that is crucial for the plot: the scene when filial love is to be declared. The issue belongs both to the medieval past and to the early modern present of Shakespeare’s audience. Expression of emotions is medievalist in this scene since it refers to the courtly rituals and to a specific vision of the Middle Ages that historians of emotions, such as Johan Huizinga, held at the beginning of the twentieth century. Huizinga famously argued that medieval emotions were expressed very openly, especially in public. On the other hand, in early modern England the containment of emotions became a cultural norm. Emotions started to be expressed in restricted forms and at times indirectly, through some material rituals, such as the ringing of bells to announce the death of an important person (MacKinnon 169-181). This norm was shaped by political, social, and cultural factors. Excluding the period when religion was something merely political during the reign of Henry VIII and the return to Catholicism imposed by Mary Tudor, increasing Protestantization of England meant that the Protestant norms of behaviour and of emotional expression became accepted.⁷ The social norms started to follow Protestant patterns, since a religious discourse of emotional restraint was combined with the discourse of “civilization”, and being civilized meant that you were able to contain the expression of your affections.⁸ To quote Richard Strier, in *Renaissance England* “being ‘civilized’ is equated with being repressed rather than being ‘jocund’, ‘affable’ or ‘liberal’” (Strier 6). Repression of emotional expression became a societal and cultural norm. The consequences of the change were political, since through this emotional change England distanced itself from the Pope in Rome and from everything related to the times when it had still been a “papist” country. Steven Mullaney summarizes the process in *The Reformation of Emotions in the Age of Shakespeare*:

The Reformation in England sought . . . to make the break with the past a felt as well as a preached and proclaimed thing, an affective distantiating that would make theological and political reform more lastingly effective (3).

⁷ For a discussion of emotions in Luther’s writings see: Karant-Nunn (2018: 243-263).

⁸ The discourse of the progress of “civilization” was famously introduced by Norbert Elias in *The Civilizing Process* (Elias).

The changed expression of emotion was one of the elements that allowed England to separate itself from its own past. The “affective distantiation” (3) that Mullaney mentions in the Renaissance allowed early modern England to see itself as separate from its medieval antecedent.

The difficulty of expressing emotions that is portrayed in Shakespeare may be related to the new Protestant paradigm of emotional expression. If it is so, then Shakespeare breaks with the medieval standards of affectivity. In *King Lear* even if emotions are to be expressed, sometimes doing so is difficult. The question of emotional expression famously starts with Cordelia, who professes she cannot say what she feels for Lear:

Cordelia:
Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth. I love your Majesty
According to my bond, no more nor less.
(1:1:90-92)

David Bevington notes that “[f]rom Lear’s point of view, Cordelia’s silence is a truculent scanting of disobedience” since “what he devised is, after all, only a prearranged formality, with Cordelia to receive the richest third of England” (636). The expression of the love that she feels for her father should only be a courtly ritual, whose origin lies in the medieval culture where feelings had to be voiced. The elaborate expression of one’s attachment to the king, including the king who is one’s father, belongs to the courtly etiquette of the past and Cordelia rejects this standard of behaviour.

The entire situation can be read as medievalist. On the one hand, it points to medieval courtly manners and the requirements that the presence of the king imposed on his subjects. When the king demanded that the subjects should declare some emotions, they had no alternative but to do what they were asked to. On the other, the difficulty of emotive expression that Cordelia voices may be related to the affective reticence so much favoured in Reformation England. Shakespeare distances himself from the medieval world of courtly display of feelings by making the so-far exemplary daughter pronounce her refusal to participate in the ritual. This scene emblemizes the clash between the medieval and the early modern with their different perspectives on what should be expressed, especially in public.

Historians of emotions saw especially the late Middle Ages as a time when feeling was expressed vehemently in public, especially by the mob. Johan Huizinga famously argued that what he called “the autumn of the Middle Ages” was marked by a greater “distance between sadness and joy” than was the case in the early twentieth century, when he wrote this (1). Huizinga also notes about the late Middle Ages that “every event, every deed was defined in given and

expressive forms” (1), and expression of emotions is what makes Shakespeare’s world different from the one Huizinga described. What happens in *King Lear* is similar: Lear requires Cordelia to give her filial love an expressive form usual in the medieval courtly culture. Yet, in the early modern manner, she retorts that the difficulty she experiences makes her unable to speak.

Bevington asks rhetorically: “Cannot such a ceremony be answered with the conventional hyperbole of courtly language, to which the King’s ear is attuned?” (636) Lear’s expectations are medieval, but they can only be answered with Cordelia’s “Nothing” (1:1:89). As a character in the play she does not belong to the medieval world that Shakespeare recreates, but to the early modern one, where restraint in the expression of emotions is a part of being “civilized” and where specific emotions are expected in some social contexts, but not others.⁹ In contrast, *King Lear* often expresses the need to give vent to emotions in an open manner, as when he famously exclaims: “O, you are men of stones!” (5:3:257). Peter Holbrook argues that “there is something morally wrong with restraint of feeling at this dreadful moment” (264). At the same time, in Shakespeare’s England restraint of feelings was advisable and only the right feelings were to be displayed at the right moment. Perhaps *King Lear* belongs to the old world even with the expectations he has towards those who surround him: he wishes them to be expressive with their emotions, but this is not what such characters as Cordelia wish to do.

Anger is yet another emotion that could be expressed in accordance with the old, medieval, standards. Yet in the exchange quoted below Kent expresses his anger with some difficulty:

Cornwall: Why art thou angry?
 Kent: That such a slave as this should wear
 a sword,
 Who wears no honesty.
 (2:2:74-77)

Kent does not talk about his anger at first, but needs to be asked the question about the emotion in order to let the angry words out of himself. In the Middle Ages expression of anger was a force that acquired broad social acceptance. The idea of *ira regis* was a part of the repertoire of punishment one could get from the monarch. If the king was angry and expressed it, he meted out justice on his subjects in this manner (Althoff 59; Witalisz 124-127; Nash 251-271). Anger was noble if its function was to strengthen the social order. In Shakespeare

⁹ For example, Frederika Bain discusses “affective scripts”, by which she means the question of what emotions were staged by which participants of public executions in Renaissance England (Bain 221-240).

Kent's anger may also have this function, since he protests against Oswald's position as a knight. Even if it is generally appropriate for a steward, this position stands in opposition to Oswald's morals and behaviour. Kent shows through his anger a disapproval of the world he lives in, a world in which scoundrels still have the title of knights. Daniel Boquet and Piroska Nagy argue that in the medieval world anger "assume[d] a structural function in the sense that it reflected the political tensions of feudal societies" and where "the king's anger against his disloyal vassals demonstrated the strengthening of royal power" (125). Kent appears to be dreaming of the old medieval world, both with its political tensions and with the hierarchical order in which the expression of anger mattered, but he does not belong to this world as a character. Kent is not a king, but in the play there is no longer a king who is in charge. In contrast to medieval kings, who knew that their duty was to show wrath, Kent has some difficulties talking about his anger. Performing anger appears to have been more natural in medieval culture. In contrast, in the early modern world Kent needs to be asked first before he confesses how furious he feels about Oswald. Expressions of anger became less acceptable, since being "civilized" meant exerting self-control over one's emotions. Emotions were groomed and cultivated, and not expected to be freely given vent to.

The above does not mean that hierarchies disappeared in Renaissance England. In *Emotion in the Tudor Court* Irish writes about its culture as one "invested in the management of social, political, and spiritual hierarchies" (25). The term "management" seems to be the key to understanding the difference between the medieval and the early modern here. Medieval hierarchies were also central; yet they did not require so much management, but rather acceptance of the fixed order of things, visible in, for instance, the natural law, or the Great Chain of Being. Expression of emotions was something that related directly to one's social role. It appears that in the early modern culture there was more emphasis on regulating hierarchies and imposing very determined roles to all agents at, for example, the royal court. Emotions were assigned on the basis of one's role in the hierarchy and their control was crucial for the functioning of the society and the state. Early medieval emotions were also performed, but they were performed within the very strict limits imposed from the outside.

The new Protestant perspective led to a transformation of how the function of shame was understood. Shame is concomitant with honour as an emotional disposition.¹⁰ The loss of honour may bring about the emotion of shame. When one does not act honourably, shame is inevitable. Medieval shame was more related to public shaming and the expression of shame as something that needed to be performed. The medievalism of the play could entail the vision

¹⁰ For a discussion of the interplay of honour and shame in the late medieval society see, for example, Maddern (357-371).

of shame as something that would require performance. King Lear, however, discusses shame as an emotion that will come on its own, quietly, and the feeling will not require performance, but should rather provoke some inner change:

Lear:
 . . . Thou art a boil,
 A plague-sore, or embosséd carbuncle
 In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee:
 Let shame come when it will, I do not call it;
 I do not bid the thunder-bearer shot,
 Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove.
 (2:4:219-224)

In *Lear* shame is not related to any public shaming, but rather it is an emotion that is experienced in private and may be a source of suffering. The Protestant perspective entails private meditation and inner feeling, not public disgracing and the concomitant loss of honour, as it happened in the Middle Ages. Shame is seen as a source of inner torment and ultimately something that leads to a sense of loss, which may be related to, for example, the loss of honour. A different attitude was famously argued by Shakespeare in *Sonnet 129*, where “Th’expense of spirit in a waste of shame is lust in action” (Wilson 67). When the once-felt shame is lost due to lustful actions, it is a waste of spiritual energy. Shame is valuable here, since it prevents one from being lustful. According to J. Dover Wilson the “spirit” that is subject to expense refers here to the “vital spirits” (247). Shame may be felt at first, but it is lost as a result of the lust that is “perjured, murd’rous, bloody, full of blame,/savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust” (Wilson 67). When shame is wasted, spiritual waste is introduced, with the pun intended. Shame needs to disappear under the circumstances, but it is a value that is lost. While in *King Lear* shame only has to arrive, since people may lack it, in *Sonnet 129* shame has to be wasted, or lost, so that lust could take over in the human being.

Medieval shame had both negative aspects, since the public performance of the emotion meant that the subject of shaming could feel humiliation, and positive ones owing to the religious import of the emotion. On the one hand, Damien Boquet and Piroska Nagy write that

in societies where imperatives of honour were profoundly important, shame was often even more dreaded than physical suffering (2).

On the other, in Christian terms shame was thought to be indispensable: this is how humans realized they had done something wrong. God took away his grace from sinful humanity after the Fall, but he gave humans shame instead (Boquet and Nagy 28). Protestant shame was more private and such indeed was the

perspective in *King Lear*: there was no specific moment at which shame could begin, but it should come so that someone who felt it could grow spiritually. In Shakespeare shame is both to be dreaded and it is a possible source of illumination and inner change. Again, Shakespeare distances himself from the medieval perspective on emotions in this respect.

When Lear accuses Cordelia of pride, the accusation indicates that the medieval sin of *superbia* may be at play (McDaniel 95-110). *Superbia* is harmful for one's soul, in opposition to pride understood in modern terms, which is relatively noble, since it is attached to one's social position or the feeling of self-worth:

Lear:
 . . . Cornwall
 and Albany,
 With my two daughters' dowers digest the third;
 Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
 (1:1:125-128)

Again, Lear is more medieval in his thinking than Cordelia. He is attached to the medieval concept of *superbia*, while she favours "plainness", which may have Protestant overtones. In early modern England emotions and the motivations that stand behind them need to be disguised rather than performed, especially in public. Cordelia prefers to keep the expression of her feelings plain and conceal them from the public. Lear does not understand this, since he accuses Cordelia of practising *superbia* through her deliberate silence, while he himself is attached to medievalist rituals, which in the Protestant world could be seen as full of pride.

Instead of the medieval courtly expression of feeling, Cordelia chooses the "truth" of not demonstrating emotions in public, especially when she is ordered to do otherwise:

Lear: So young, and so untender?
 Cordelia: So young, my lord, and true.
 Lear: Let it be so; thy truth then be thy dower!
 (1:1:105-108)

Shakespeare is not medievalist in the same manner as some of his characters. For example, King Lear possesses the medievalist attitudes that are criticized. Shakespeare's medievalism consists in the criticism that he voices against the medieval open display of emotions. Cordelia is the one who is "true" in her reserve, as opposed to the falsehood of the declarations that Regan and Goneril make. Early modern medievalism involved some other discussion of truth and falsehood, with the former ascribed to Protestant culture and the latter to the

earlier Catholic one. The discourse of Protestantism as the one “true” religion was a part of Edmund Spenser’s complicated medievalism in *The Fairy Queene*. Spenser’s medievalism was critical, since he distanced himself from the historical and literary Middle Ages with its religion centered on Rome. Even though he placed “a gentle Knight . . . pricking on the plaine” (I: 1), who was the chivalric Red Cross or St George, in the centre of his epic narrative, he openly criticized the medieval church in England as Duessa, or falsehood, and praised the newly-emerged Anglican church as Una (Brooks-Davies 7). Like in *Fairy Queene*, medievalism percolates through *King Lear* and uses a propagandist idea of truthfulness in reference to the culture of the Reformation with its standards of emotional expression. Here “medieval” means obsolete and badly adjusted to the requirements of contemporary England.

The manner in which love is discussed is yet another instance of creating a distance between the medieval and the early modern in *King Lear*. The King of France defines love in a manner different from its medieval understanding, particularly the religious one. He sees love as affective involvement that does not include any reasoning:

France:
 . . . Love’s not love
 When it is mingled with regards that stands
 Aloof from th’entire point.
 (1:1:236-238)

Reasoning endows one with “regards that stands/ Aloof from th’entire point” (1:1:238). The King of France argues that love cannot be practiced in such detachment. Such a stance does not include love as involving charity. For medieval clerics love entailed not just showing affection and tenderness, but also compassion (Boquet and Nagy x). Charity was then an actual practice and the effect of using one’s reason, and not just what one felt inside for other fellow humans. In contrast, in the King of France’s words love entails complete involvement that excludes any rational approach. The earlier Christian practice of *caritas* had been more rational and its roots were philosophical and not merely emotive. The concept of love as involvement may belong more to the early modern sphere of emotions than to the earlier concept, which entailed both feeling and reason. The early modern perspective entails private feeling and not the public practice of charity.

There is one uncritically medievalist aspect of the representation of feelings in *King Lear*. The play makes a strong connection between emotions and embodiment. After all, in the early modern period emotions were treated as “part of the *fabric* of the body” (Paster 5). Language can be used to name

emotions and sometimes to misname them, but also to describe them as situated within the body as their site:

Lear:
... When the
mind's free,
The body's delicate; this tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there- filial ingratitude!
(3:4:11-15)

Here, the idea that feeling resides in the senses is openly medieval, and does not involve any critical medievalist distancing from the earlier cultural period. To quote Boddice, “the feelings and the senses have a history that is at once a history of culture and a history of the body” (133). Already in the Middle Ages all emotions were imagined as embodied. In *King Lear* the body is visualized as a frail site of the senses, since it is so delicate that the responses from the senses (and the effects of emotions) shake it. There is no Cartesian division into the body and the intellect yet (Boddice 138): the “tempest in [the] mind” takes the feeling from the senses, as the two, the “soul” and the body, are closely interconnected. Lear does not feel anything himself; instead, he senses that “filial ingratitude” is what dominates in the emotional life of both Regan and Goneril. The vision that presents emotions as embodied is Aristotelian, strengthened by Thomas Aquinas’s theory. In this theory emotions, which are called passions by Aquinas, reside in the soul and then move the body once they are stirred (Frevert, 2014: 17). The movement of the soul, and in Shakespeare of the senses, comes first, and then the whole body is agitated. For Huizinga the “life of the senses” was central to medieval civilization and emotions were believed to stem from the senses (Boquet and Nagy 3), which continued to be believed in in Shakespeare’s times.

In *King Lear* expression of feeling is famously debated and the emotions once focal to the medieval culture of feeling—honour, shame, pride, and love as *caritas* or as a private feeling—are reconsidered. All of the topics above, with the humoral theory that returns in various forms in this play and others by Shakespeare, can be treated as forms of medievalism, a phenomenon which was a recurrent trope in the early modern culture. After all, the late Middle Ages were already very much medievalist, which could be exemplified by the rewriting of the Arthurian legend (Lynch 227-244) or other narratives that repeated the earlier medieval tropes, but with a difference. *King Lear* includes criticism of medieval emotional forms and expression. Damien Boquet and Piroška Nagy suggested emotive “retrenchment during the Renaissance”, (250) which would ultimately distance it from the more expressive late Middle Ages.

In writing about emotions Shakespeare consistently sees his own culture as early modern rather than suffused with things medieval, even when he uses a plotline from medieval historiography, as happens in *King Lear*.

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The Readers of 17th-Century English Manuscript Commonplace Book *Hesperides, or the Muses' Garden*¹

Abstract: *Hesperides, or the Muses' Garden* is a 17th-century manuscript commonplace book known primarily for its Shakespearean connections. The readers of *Hesperides* generally combine reading and thinking, or reading and writing. Though few, *Hesperides* is not without its “fit audience.” In addition to the few modern scholars who have examined the manuscripts, the actual known readers of *Hesperides* include Humphrey Moseley the 17th-century publisher, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps in the Victorian period, and a late-18th-century anonymous reader. The last of this group copies Shakespearean and dramatic extracts into the commonplace book and is identified through internal evidence based on paleography. The intended readers of *Hesperides*, including the Courtier, would make use of it as a linguistic aid, to learn how to speak and write well from literary models. They take the commonplace book as a reference library.

Keywords: William Shakespeare, *Hesperides, or the Muses' Garden*, commonplace book, readers, Humphrey Moseley, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, manuscript study

John Evans compiled the manuscript commonplace book *Hesperides, or the Muses' Garden* in the 1650s and 1660s (Hao, 2009: 384). For modern scholars such as Gunnar Sorelius and Peter Beal, *Hesperides* is primarily a Shakespearean commonplace book. This essay focuses on the (potential) readers of *Hesperides*. First it is helpful to examine the compiler's attitudes toward reading and writing, which are reflected in his extracts under “Readeing” and “Writeing.” Evans often talks metaphorically of writing:

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Never were words more slowly married together. A
 Most blessed paper, w^{ch} shalt kiss y^t hand, to w^{ch} all blessednes in nature is
 a servant. A.
 Not hauing opportunity personally to kiss her hands: he sent this letter as his
 paper deputy to doe it for him. CA
 —As when Joves braine
 With Pallas swell'd, not to bring forth was paine. CP^s
 But like to Durers pencill, w^{ch} first knew
 The lawes of faces, & then faces drew
 The [sic] know'st y^e air, y^e colour, & y^e place
 The Symetry, w^{ch} giues y^e poem grace.
 Parts are so fitted unto parts as do
 Shew thou hadst wit & mathematicks too. CP^s (Evans 887)

Writing is compared to marriage, kissing, Pallas's birth, and Durer's drawing.
 The images associated with writing include bays (honor), muse (inspiration), and
 brass and marble (immortality).

Bee his owne lines his bayes. HW
 My greene muse, w^{ch} hath scarce yet displai'd her vernall blossomes. CA
 O for a muse of fire, y^t would ascend the brightest heaven of invention. H5
 —This booke
 When brass & marble fade, shall make thee looke
 ffresh to all ages. [L. Digges, front matter, Shakespeare's First Folio] (Evans
 887)

As for the famous Chinese novelist Cao Xueqin, who writes an elegy on the
 miserable fate of maidens in feudal times with tears and blood in *The Story of
 the Stone*, tears and blood can become ink for Western writers.

What though y^e muses springs are almost dry?
 Each h^t may finde a fountaine in his eye
 Wherein to dip its quill, & 'tis most fit
 To mourn, since death hath ov^rmastred wit. CP^s
 His passions can not be written of mee without flouds of teares (w^{ch} would wet
 the paper, & obliterate y^e relation) nor reade of you without <teares> grieffe. CA
 Write till your inke be dry, & with yo^t teares moist it againe: & frame some
 feeling line y^t may discouer such integrity— 2 G of V.
 Ile write, but in my bloud y^t he may see
 These lines come from my wounds but not from me. B^dA (Evans 887)

It is paramount for Evans that the heart guides and governs writing and reading.

If I should not teach my pen which is guided by my hart, to affirme. CA (887)
 Gently reade

This mourning in inke in w^{ch} my h^t doth bleed.
Let thy h^t take acquaintance of this stone. StT (Evans 628)

Reading should be combined with meditation. As Confucius says, “To learn without thinking is labor lost; to think without learning is perilous.”

Who readeth much, & never meditates
Is like a greedy eater of much food,
Who so surcloyes his stomack wth his cates
That commonly they do him little good. Q of P (Evans 628)

Evans himself unites reading with thinking, as we can see from the alterations he makes of his texts. He not only takes a lot of food, but also digests it. If there is good reading, then there is bad reading too, which is equated with murder and violence.

Philoxenus, passing by, & hearing some Masons, missensing his lines, with their ignorant sawing of them, falls to breaking their bricks amaine: They aske y^e cause, & he replies, They spoile his worke, & he theirs. R^s (Evans 628; Felltham, sig. P4)

It was a speech becoming an able poet of our owne, when a lord read his verses crookedly, & he besought his lordship, not to murder him in his owne lines. He y^t speakes false Latine breakes Priscians head, but he that repeates a verse ill, puts Homer out of joint. R^s (Evans 628; Felltham, sig. P4)

The misreading here refers to the performance of reading aloud. What are the purposes of reading? Owen Felltham (1602?-1668) answers with classical commonplaces: delight and instruction.

Some men reade Authors, as our Gentlemen use fflowers, onely for delight and smell: to please their fancy, & refine their tongues. Others, like y^e Bee extract only the honey, y^e wholesome precepts, and this alone they beare away, leaving y^e rest, as little worth of small value. R^s (Evans 628; Felltham, sigs. Aa1^v-Aa2)

The familiar metaphor of the bee pops up again. Felltham emphasizes moral instruction, though he cares for both. The opposition between instruction and delight, or *res* and *verba*, or matter and expression, or in Felltham’s own words, “conceit” and “words” (Felltham, sig. P3), is dialectical. The best reading and writing unify both. As Felltham describes, “A good *stile*, with *wholesome matter*, is a *faire Woman* with a *vertuous soule*” (sig. Aa2). Finally, reading and writing are inseparable.

Such as accustome themselues & are familiar wth y^e best Authors. Shall ever & anon, find somewhat of them in themselues: and in y^e expression of their minds

even when they feele it not, be able to utter somthing like theirs, w^{ch} hath an Authority aboue their owne. Dis. (628)

Here Ben Jonson (1572-1637) argues that for a man to write well, he must read the best authors. Where suitable, he can quote books as a higher authority. The process of reading and writing is a process of self-discovery. Evans's citation, "His worth commandeth my pen to waite on him" (887), implies that the authors he quotes are worthy ones, if not the "best Authors."

The readers of *Hesperides* generally combine reading and thinking, or reading and writing. Though few, *Hesperides* is not without its "fit audience" (Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 7.31). In addition to the few modern scholars who have looked at the manuscripts,² the actual known readers of *Hesperides* include Humphrey Moseley the publisher, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps (1820-1889) in the Victorian period, and a late-eighteenth-century anonymous reader. The last of this group is identified through internal evidence based on paleography, for he/she writes in the manuscript. The late-eighteenth-century hand in *Hesperides* foregrounds the central place of the play in the Evans-Moseley canon, for the four extracts it adds are all dramatic:

Oh twas a sight that might have bleached joys rosy cheek for ever, and strewed the snows of age upon youths auburn ringlets—Cas Spec (Evans 17, "Afraid")
Never trifle with the feelings of a woman nor act so unmanly a part as to become a Persecutor, when Nature meant you should be a Protector.
—Shipwreck (Evans 23, "Advise")

It is not always that the eye that pities is accompanied by the hand that bestows, some there are who can smile without friendship and weep without charity.
— (Evans 40, "Appearance")

Ethereal loveliness informs her frame
And beams in living glory from her eyes
Yet oer these charms sublime meek modesty
Draws a transparent veil of wandering Grace
As fleecy Clouds flit oer the noonday Sun— (Evans 63, "Beauty")

The first extract is from Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* (1798), the second from Samuel James Arnold's *The Shipwreck* (1797), the third from Richard Cumberland's *The Wheel of Fortune* (1795), and the fourth from Sophia Lee's *Almeyda, Queen of Granada* (1796). All the four plays were performed at the Theatre-Royal, Drury Lane. We might imagine a London theater-lover who frequented the Theatre-Royal, Drury Lane toward the end of the eighteenth

² These scholars are Gunnar Sorelius, Peter Beal, and me. Heidi Brayman Hackel cites Sorelius's research on *Hesperides* (151), and she might have been a reader of *Hesperides*.

century; he/she recognized the importance of *Hesperides* as a commonplace collection of plays and added dramatic extracts to it. He/she enjoyed theatrical performances and the reading of plays; in particular, he/she enjoyed reading *Hesperides* as a commonplace anthology of plays and continued the anthologizing, bringing it up-to-date. With his/her acts of reading and extracting, this late-eighteenth-century anthologist—presumably an owner of the manuscript of *Hesperides*—reminds us emphatically of the nature of *Hesperides* as a dramatic anthology. More important, the anthologist extracts in the fourth excerpt a tragedy by a woman playwright, thus expanding the canon into a new domain, for Evans does not cite a work by a woman writer.³ Evans's successor rectifies his one-sided masculine leaning.

A second hand that adds to *Hesperides* emphasizes Shakespeare's central status in the canon.

To morrow & to morrow & to morrow
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
 To y^e last Syllable of recorded time
 And all o^f yesterdays have lighted fools
 The way to dusty death. Shakesp: Macb: (Evans 184, "Death")
 Out, out, brief candle
 Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
 That struts & frets his hour upon y^e stage
 And then is heard no more. It is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
 Signifying nothing. Shakesp: Macbeth. (Evans 460, "Life")
 But reckning Time whose million accidents
 Creep in twixt vows, & change decrees of kings,
 Tan sacred beauty, blunt y^e sharpst intents,
 Divert strong minds to th' course of altring things.
 Shakespears Poems. p. 176. (Evans 775, "Time")

Following the page number in the last extract, I identify the source book as *The Poetical Works of Shakspeare. With the Life of the Author. Cooke's Edition. Embellished with Superb Engravings* (London, 1797). So this hand is also from the late eighteenth century at the earliest. One is tempted to think that it is the same hand as the above one, which is paleographically possible, i.e. the Shakespearean quotations are in the italic of the same hand. Life, death, and time—arguably, these are three most important universal subjects. No doubt, the

³ But see Hao, 2014: 172-173. Female dramatists before 1666 include Elizabeth Cary, Jane Lumley, Mary Sidney Herbert, Katherine Philips, and Margaret Cavendish. See Wilcox (ed.), 267-290. Early modern women poets include Mary Sidney Herbert, Anne Bradstreet, Aemilia Lanyer, Katherine Philips, and Margaret Cavendish. See Wilcox (ed.), 190-208.

additions are significant ones. This anthologist quotes from two genres: drama and poetry. Shakespeare occupies a central position in the seventeenth-century literary canon. In the Victorian age, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps's act of cutting a version of *Hesperides* into pieces for the Shakespearean extracts also sets off the central place of the Bard. Admittedly, this is a historical hindsight; with Evans himself, the Shakespearean center is only latent and incipient.⁴ By the end of the eighteenth century, Shakespeare emerged triumphantly as the national hero of English literature, as can be attested by the above entries by the anonymous reader.

If the anonymous reader is an amateur one, *Hesperides* has several scholarly readers, who base their scholarly writings on their research of the commonplace book. Among them, the Victorian Shakespearean scholar James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps occupies a special place. Halliwell-Phillipps was born Halliwell, who adopted the additional surname Phillipps in 1872, following the death of his father-in-law, Sir Thomas Phillipps. This is "an ironic tag, after a lifetime at bitter variance" (Freeman and Freeman). Halliwell-Phillipps is most widely known by that name, so I use it throughout my thesis. Samuel Schoenbaum, Shakespeare's modern biographer, provides an account of Halliwell-Phillipps's life as a Shakespearean scholar (282-308), and Marvin Spevack has produced a book-length biography of Halliwell-Phillipps as a Shakespearean scholar and bookman (2001). Unfortunately, however, neither deals specifically with Halliwell-Phillipps's relationship with the manuscript of *Hesperides* or with Halliwell-Phillipps as an editor of Shakespeare.

How the *Halliwell* version of *Hesperides* came into Halliwell-Phillipps's possession we do not know. As Sorelius has pointed out, as early as 1843 Halliwell-Phillipps mentions a few extracts from Shakespeare's plays which John Payne Collier had found in "an early manuscript common-place book" and thought of some importance (Sorelius 295; Halliwell, 1843: 22-23), but we are unsure whether this is *Hesperides* or not. If it is, then Halliwell-Phillipps must have acquired the commonplace book from Mr. Collier. Then he cut the manuscript into pieces with scissors for the Shakespearean extracts. These extracts he mounted into his scrapbooks, which are now held respectively in the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Shakespeare Birthplace Library. In his 1859 publication *A brief hand-list of books, manuscripts, &c., illustrative of the life and writings of Shakespeare; collected between the years 1842 and 1859*, Halliwell-Phillipps mentions the three Folger manuscripts: no 133 (V.a.75), no 173 (V.a.79), and no 313 (V.a.80). Thus we know for certain that *Halliwell*

⁴ In his *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) John Dryden describes Shakespeare as "the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets" (50). Dryden writes about the time when Evans has completed the compilation of *Hesperides* (1666).

somehow came into Halliwell-Phillipps's possession between 1842 and 1859. And Halliwell-Phillipps did not know the existence of *V.b.93*.

Why did Halliwell-Phillipps cut manuscripts and books into pieces? Schoenbaum thinks that the behavior "reflects a deep-seated aberration of character" (286). J. A. B. Somerset gives evidence that "other researchers [in the period also] indulged in the practice" (14). Spevack defends Halliwell-Phillipps's conduct: "The charge [of vandalism] is modern and myopic since it was not an unusual procedure in its time and none of Halliwell's friends and colleagues (who received gifts of single leaves) or enemies for that matter seemed to have objected. Besides, it is difficult to believe that Halliwell's passion for books was so unruly as to cause him to destroy anything but relatively worthless or defective copies" (2001, 590). Nonetheless, the once intact *Halliwell* version of *Hesperides* was not "relatively worthless or defective." In addition, Giles E. Dawson, former curator of manuscripts at the Folger Shakespeare Library, was able to identify an otherwise-perfect volume, the first edition of Raleigh's *History of the World*, from which a leaf is pasted in a Halliwell-Phillipps scrapbook (Schoenbaum 303n). And Peter W.M. Blayney's work proves that Halliwell-Phillipps cut over thirty-six hundred scraps from over eight hundred books (some of them very rare) printed before 1701, many of which were not defective before Halliwell-Phillipps's scissor-work (Alan Somerset 225). Without the modern technologies of scanning and photocopying available, and when the art of photography was inchoate and costly, Halliwell-Phillipps perhaps had to cut and scrap for his research work.

Halliwell-Phillipps cut *Hesperides* into pieces to help edit his folio edition of Shakespeare (1853-1865).⁵ He consistently recognizes the value of early manuscripts of Shakespeare for philological reasons: "It is reasonable to suppose that persons contemporary, or nearly so, with our great poet, were more likely to alter advisedly than modern editors, because they probably had a better knowledge of his language and allusions, if they were not so competent to judge of his excellencies."⁶ Early manuscript extracts can, claims Halliwell-Phillipps

⁵ In 1876 Halliwell-Phillipps produced his facsimile edition of the First Folio. Spevack notes in his *Classified Bibliography*, which is "really a chronological rather than a classified listing" (Alan Somerset 225), that the edition is "A reduced facsimile of the earlier one made by Staunton in 1866" (132). The information is inexact; according to Charlton Hinman, the Halliwell-Phillipps facsimile is based upon the No. 33 First Folio in the Folger collection, "and upon it alone, throughout the Comedies and from the beginning of the Histories through part of *1 Henry IV*. But from about the middle of *1 Henry IV*, throughout the rest of the Histories and all of the Tragedies, the facsimile is based exclusively upon the Staunton reproduction of 1866" (396).

⁶ Halliwell, 1843: 5-6. The same sentence appears in Halliwell, 1852: 74-75 with the ending word "excellences."

quoting Collier, “now and then throw light upon difficult and doubtful expressions” (1843, 23). But Halliwell-Phillipps is sensible enough to add that he does not claim for the manuscript “any additional value” (1843, 23). He uses a facsimile of the cut pieces of *Hesperides* in this way in his folio edition of Shakespeare: “curious, and worthy of notice,” but “generally of no real authority.”⁷ He usually calls the manuscript readings “unauthorized alterations,” “unauthorised and useless,” or even “corrupted.”⁸ The facsimile illustrates early modern adaptations of Shakespeare, but is no real textual authority. Unlike Edwin Wolf II, who advocates the textual importance of manuscript commonplace books, Halliwell-Phillipps tends to de-emphasize the textual importance of commonplace-book variants. And he does not recognize the significance of those variants for early modern reading practice.

Further, Halliwell-Phillipps points out that later writers alter the text of Shakespeare “to suit their own fancy.” Sometimes they alter “capriciously and absurdly.”⁹ Halliwell-Phillipps correctly notes that personal fancy and caprice often becomes the deciding factor in early modern textual variations.

Fancy also occupies a place in Humphrey Moseley’s reading of *Hesperides*. As we have discussed (Hao, 2014: 41-43), he entered the book into the Stationers’ Register in August 1655, and *Hesperides* appears in his publisher’s catalogues twice, in 1656 and 1660 respectively. The three are presented in similar terms; the last reads:

Hesperides, or the Muses’ Garden, stored with the choicest Flowers of Language and Learning, wherein grave and serious minds may tasthe [sic] Fruits of Philosophy, History and Cosmography with the sweets of Poetry, and the ceremonious Courtier, the passionate Amourist with his admired Lady, may gather Rarities suitable to their fancies, by *John Evans*, Gent. (Qtd. in Hao, 2014: 43)

Moseley properly regards *Hesperides*—the title is given by him—as a commonplace book (“being upon twelve hundred heads alphabetically digested”), a genre familiar to a man who has published *The English Treasury of Wit and Language* (May, 1655).¹⁰ As a commercial publisher and commissioner of the project, he stipulates the ideal readers of the book: “grave and serious minds,” and “the

⁷ *Works*, vol. 1, p. 395, n. 111.

⁸ “Unauthorized alterations:” *Works*, vol. 2, facing p. 177; vol. 3, facing p. 51, facing p. 133; vol. 4, facing p. 184; vol. 5, facing p. 308. “Unauthorised and useless:” vol. 2, p. 177, n. 10. “Corrupted:” vol. 7, facing p. 128.

⁹ *Works*, vol. 1, p. 395, n. 111; vol. 3, p. 133, n. 30.

¹⁰ For the publication date of *The English Treasury of Wit and Language* (no later than May 1st 1655), see Reed 111.

ceremonious Courtier, the passionate Amourist with his admired Lady.” The bipartite readership constitutes a neat contrast:

grave and serious minds	the ceremonious Courtier, the passionate Amourist with his admired Lady
Learning	Language
Philosophy, History and Cosmography	Poetry
tast[e]	gather
Fruits	Rarities suitable to their fancies

The dominating metaphor of the book’s title is the garden, and the two kinds of readers are both implied to be bees. Moseley’s literary reading captures his understanding of the content and the reading method of the commonplace book. The acts of “tasting” and “gathering” are suitable to *Hesperides*, for they point to the characteristic segmental reading which is particular to the genre (Hao, 2019). Since Learning and Language appeal to different faculties of human beings, we may extend the contrasts with an addition of reason vs. emotion. Moseley advertises a wide audience for his planned publication. Nearly every reader, serious or light, male or female, would be interested in this book. Appealingly, Moseley promises that the reader’s taste and fancy will be satisfied. We have a feel of the fashion language current on the mid-seventeenth-century book market. The advertisements show Moseley’s commercial acuity and compositional style.

Significantly, the intended readers of *Hesperides* include the “Courtier” (capitalized C). We immediately think of Baldassare Castiglione (1478-1529)’s *The Book of the Courtier*, “one of the most influential texts in Renaissance European culture” (Richards 43). Castiglione influenced early modern English culture mainly through Sir Thomas Hoby (1530-1566)’s translation (London, 1561).¹¹ The influence of this translation continued into the seventeenth century.¹² As Jennifer Richards observes, Hoby’s edition casts the *Courtier* as a manual of conduct by including marginal glosses for use as an index and appended summaries of the chief qualities desirable in the male and female courtiers (63), both of which are absent from modern editions such as the one translated by Charles Singleton. Although Castiglione’s original text is not prescriptive, the printing history of the English translation makes it a prescriptive text. In “A breef rehearsall of the chiefe conditions and qualities in

¹¹ I am aware of seventeenth-century English parallels to Castiglione such as Richard Brathwaite’s *The English Gentleman and the English Gentlewoman* (London, 1641). Evans cites this book. See Appendix I, 106, 107, 178, 324 in Hao 2009 or 2014.

¹² After the first edition three editions of this book were published in the early modern period: 1577, 1588, 1603.

a Courtier” (sigs. Yy4-Zz2^v), we find many do’s and don’t’s concerning a courtier’s speech:

Not to be womanish in his sayinges or doinges.
 Not to be ouerseene in speaking wordes otherwhile that may offende where he ment it not.
 Not to be a babbler, brauler or chatter, nor lauish of his tunge.
 No lyer.
 To be well spoken and faire languaged.
 To be wise and well seene in discourses vpon states.
 To speake and write the language that is most in vre emonge the commune people, without inuenting new woordes, inckhorn tearmes or straunge phrases, and such as be growen out of vse by long time.
 Not to be ill tunded, especiallie against his betters.
 To speake alwaies of matters likely, least he be counted a lyer in reporting of wonders & straunge miracles.
 To delite and refresh the hearers mindes in being pleasant, feat conceited, and a meerie talker, applyed to time and place.
 To consyder well what it is that he doeth or speaketh, where, in presence of whom, what time, why, his age, his profession, the ende, and the meanes.
 His conuersation with women to be alwayes gentle, sober, meeke, lowlie, modest, seruiceable, comelie, merie, not bitinge or sclaudering with iestes, nippes, frumpes, or railinges, the honesty of any.

The same with “Of the chief conditions and qualityes in a waytyng gentylvvoman” (sigs. Zz3-Zz4^v):

To haue a sweetenesse in language and a good vttrance to entertein all kinde of men with communication worth the hearing, honest, applyed to time and place and to the degree and disposition of the person whiche is her principall profession.
 Not to speake woordes of dishonestye and baudrye to showe her self pleasant, free and a good felowe.
 To be heedefull in her talke that she offend not where she ment it not.
 To beeware of praysinge her self vndiscreatlye, and of beeing to tedious and noysome in her talke.
 Not to mingle with graue and sad matters, meerie iestes and laughinge matters: nor with mirth, matters of grauitie.
 To shape him that is ouersaucie wyth her, or that hath small respecte in hys talke, suche an answere, that he maye well vnderstande she is offended wyth hym.
 To vse a somewhat more famylyar conuersation wyth men well growen in yeeres, then with yonge men.

If we use one word to catch the essence of all these rules, it is decorum. Decorum in speech is achieved through exercise; the presumption of a conduct manual is that the advocated virtue can be learned. In terms of exercise, speaking cannot be separated from writing:

wrytyng is nothings elles, but a maner of speache ... Therefore it is certain, whatsoeuer is allowed in writing, is also allowed in speaking: and that speache is moste beautifull that is like vnto beautifull writinges. (sigs. E4^v-F1)

Knowledge ensures the success of speaking and writing well:

That therefore which is y^e principal mater & necessary for a Courtyer to speak & write wel, I beleue is knowledge. (sig. F3^v)

Therefore a courtier must be learned. He learns how to speak and write through imitation.

Let him much exercise hym selfe in poets, and no lesse in Oratours and Historiographers, and also in writinge bothe rime and prose, and especiallye in this our vulgar tunge. For beside the contentation that he shall receiue thereby himselfe, he shall by this meanes neuer want pleasaunt interteinments with women which ordinarylye loue such matters. (sig. H4)

The courtier takes upon learning to please women.

His loue towarde women, not to be sensuall or fleshlie, but honest and godlye, and more ruled with reason, then appetyte: and to loue better the beawtye of the minde, then of the bodie. (sig. Zz2^v)

Platonic love is preferred (cf. “his admired Lady”). Woman is the cause of poetry (sig. Ii1^v).

Just as “[s]ixteenth-century English readers were interested in the *Courtier* as a conversational treatise” (Richards 46), the intended readers of *Hesperides* would make use of it as a linguistic aid, to learn how to speak and write well from literary models. They take *Hesperides* as a reference library.¹³ Edward Vaughan suggests in *Ten Introductions* (London, 1594) that the reader keep multiple commonplace books of the Bible, “and then you shall be able readily and roundly, to speake artificially and diuinely of all things necessarie to saluation” (sig. K5). As Dutch humanist Rudolph Agricola (1443/44-1485)

¹³ For a discussion of the Renaissance trope of the library, see Sherman 62-63. Cf. David Parker: “If the commonplace book is indeed a private library *in parvo*, then the texts within are analogous to the books in the library” (164).

advises, the commonplace book “gathers together whatever can build up the resources of the future speaker or writer” (qtd. in Sherman 61). It seems to be a commonplace in Renaissance culture that the commonplace book aids speaking and writing. As the *Courtier* makes clear, eloquence is based upon learning and imitation. Equipped with decorous eloquence, which is obtained from the models in the commonplace book, a variety of readers can discourse freely and fully on all subjects, including love.

Commonplacing has two senses: commonplace writing (e.g. Milton’s commonplacing) and commonplace digesting (e.g. Evans’s commonplacing). In both cases reading and writing are inseparable. A writer creates on the basis of his reading; readers read the compilation of a commonplace reader and learn how to speak and write from it. The actual and potential readers of *Hesperides* regularly combine writing with reading. A study of the readers of *Hesperides, or the Muses’ Garden* recovers some facets of the early modern rhetorical culture and reveals the educational value of the genre of the commonplace book.

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Book Reviews

Kinga Földvály, *Cowboy Hamlets and Zombie Romeos. Shakespeare in Genre Film*. Manchester University Press, 2020.

Reviewed by *Magdalena Cieślak** 

The position of Shakespearean films in adaptation and film discourses has always provoked a lot of controversies. Shakespeare has been with cinema since its inception and continues to fuel not only various cinematic narratives but also diverse research approaches. Although deeply rooted in the screen history, Shakespearean films have a complicated relationship with adaptation studies mainly due to the status of Shakespeare in literature and culture. A question often posed is where to situate Shakespeare on screen discourse—within literary studies, culture studies, film studies, adaptation studies, or media studies—and the answer frequently rests on the conclusion that it is a very interdisciplinary field of Shakespeare studies that best accommodates such research paths. Indeed, scholars who deal with screen Shakespeare mostly come from literary studies and tend to identify themselves as Shakespeareans, but are aware of the diversity of discourses that inform the reading of Shakespeare's work, and therefore necessarily search for perspectives and methodologies that would best help them read and understand the prolific field of Shakespearean screen adaptations. Kinga Földvály is among such interdisciplinary researchers and her book, *Cowboy Hamlets and Zombie Romeos. Shakespeare in Genre Film* (Manchester University Press, 2020), inspired by genre studies, offers a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to Shakespeare on screen.

The focus on genre in adaptation studies is a result of acknowledging the importance of medium specificity, and has been explored in various ways. Thomas Leitch (2008), for example, proposes to depart from looking at films in relation to the source texts they are based on, and treat adaptation as a cinematic genre itself. He identifies specific markers that, as he argues, would allow audiences to treat a film as an adaptation even if they do not recognize or know the film's hypotext(s). Földvály's book assumes a different perspective: she

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treats cinematic genre as a point of reference and examines each case as a genre film. Analysing a wide selection of films based on Shakespeare's plays she examines how they locate themselves in the cinematic tradition of the given genre, and how they adapt the Shakespearean elements to the specific film genre conventions. The book is divided into two parts, distinguishing between the understanding of film genre and popularity of particular genres in the classical Hollywood period, and in the contemporary cinematic landscape, beginning from the 1990s. Consequently, in Part I—Classical Hollywood Cinema—Földvary discusses Shakespearean films within the conventions of the western, melodrama and gangster *noir*, while in Part II—Contemporary Blockbusters—the genres in discussion are teen and horror films, as well as the biopic. An important aspect of the choice of material, apart from the genre axis, is the fact that all discussed films are appropriations, derivatives, or spin-offs, however one might wish to call them. These are films that do not use the language of Shakespeare's plays and freely adapt their literary source, which is why they can be seen as genre films just as much as they are Shakespeare films.

Cowboy Hamlets and Zombie Romeos treats the concept of genre film as its focal point, but effectively operates within adaptation discourse and relies on in-depth understanding of the literary background of the discussed films. It is a study that with an interdisciplinary ease shows how various discourses cross paths and allow to look at screen Shakespeare from diverse perspectives without being exclusive or limiting. What serves as a common denominator for the book is naturally the notion, or a phenomenon, as Földvary calls it, of the "Shakespeare film", something that has been investigated, explored, and even challenged by many critics. James Welsh, notably, contributing to the general polemics on what is what is not an adaptation, addresses the question of what a "Shakespeare film" is and, treating it as a genre of a kind, attempts to define the criteria that would qualify the given film as one. Földvary is aware that a "Shakespeare film" is a loaded term that triggers many expectations, and therefore approaches the specific status of such films within adaptation studies systematically and carefully, noting the complexity of genre studies within other related discourses, and avoiding the traps of the genre issue itself.

Cowboy Hamlets and Zombie Romeos is a book that discovers various dynamic patterns of the relationship between Shakespearean hypertext and genre within the context of how the selected Shakespeare genre films are immersed in other intertextual relations (some films being adaptations of novels that are based on Shakespearean plays, thus layering the references even more). Földvary is very sensitive to detect how genre specificity informs the way in which the Shakespearean text, however fragmented sometimes, is used, modified, quoted, or, as she puts it in the conclusion, decontextualized or recontextualized. At the same time, she excellently shows how Shakespeare blends into genre films, feeding the conventions, and comfortably nesting in

mainstream cinema. That is not to say that Földvály is not critical about some of the discussed films, whether as not terribly successful genre films, or as cases of exploitation of Shakespeare, but that kind of criticism is not at the heart of her book. She notes when the incompatibilities between certain plays and the cinematic genres they were adapted to can lead to poor reception or harsh criticism of the film, as in the case of Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres*, but that does not stop her from appreciating how even an unlikely Shakespeare text may find its way in an unlikely film genre. She specifically looks for ways in which the relationship of Shakespeare and genre works to interesting effects and, doing that, she proves how synergic this relationship is – the effect of the combination is more than the sum of its parts.

A vital strength of the book is that Földvály discovers quite a few films that so far have not received much critical attention as Shakespeare adaptations, appropriations, or derivatives. So even if you think you are genre sensitive, and can trace Shakespearean references in any film you watch, this volume will still surprise you, offering a discussion of films you have not thought about as Shakespearean. Importantly, this is a book that will interest a wide range of reader types—definitely Shakespeare nerds, but also cinema fans, whether those cherishing old-school Hollywood films, or those intrigued by recent zombie apocalypse flicks with the sympathetic undead. With a very well structured content the book works well as a comprehensive study of the importance of genre in Shakespeare films. At the same time, the individual film analysis formula allows to read it in chunks, and to use bits and pieces either for your own research, as I did, or for teaching (as well as studying!), or simply for the enjoyment of another take on the film you thought you saw through. Finally, Földvály's book offers more than academically solid and conceptually innovative insight into the relationship between Shakespeare film and genre. There is also the Author's fascination with the topics she is examining. Her passion for Shakespeare, film, and, genre is tangible, and contagious.

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Alexa Alice Joubin, *Shakespeare and East Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. Pp. 258).

Reviewed by *Jessica Chiba** 

Alexa Alice Joubin's broad-ranging work offers an overview of Shakespeare in East Asia, post-1950. It will be useful to those who are new to East Asian Shakespeare and to those who wish to have a broader contextual sense of how the different countries and linguistic communities are connected or differ in their approach to Shakespeare's works. While there have been many books on Shakespeare reception, performance, and film in Asia generally, a distinctive feature of Joubin's book is that it eschews "cultural profiling—the tendency to bracket, for example, 'Shakespeare in Japan' in isolation from other cultural influences" (8). The criticism downplays the usefulness of studies of Shakespeare in particular languages and cultures. However, according to Joubin, the critical penchant for isolating Shakespeare reception and performance according to geographical borders in Asia is symptomatic of what she calls "compulsory realpolitik": the way Asian productions are treated as political products that must be read in light of the socio-historical circumstances of that country rather than aesthetic pieces. Studying Shakespeare in a specific country suggests that these productions are specific to their location and culture rather than personal or artistic innovations with global relevance. In Joubin's words, "Anglophone Shakespeares are assumed to have broad theoretical applicability and aesthetic merits, whereas foreign Shakespeares—even when they focus on artistic innovation on a personal rather than an epic level—are compelled to prove their political worth" and are "compulsorily characterized as allegories of geopolitical issues" (8). Though there are exceptions, Joubin is no doubt right that "the critical tendency to prioritize realpolitik in non-Western works leads to blindspots in our understanding of the logic and significance of Asian Shakespeares" (10).

At the heart of Joubin's approach, then, is the aesthetics of performance, and interconnectivity: not just the connection between approaches to Shakespeare in Asia, but also between "Shakespeare" and Asia. The book is entitled *Shakespeare and East Asia* and not *Shakespeare in East Asia* "to signal the interplay between the two condensed cultural signifiers and to emphasize a shift away from the linear, one-way-street model of tracing the transplantation of a British 'giant' into a colonial cultural context" (6). Thus, Joubin reads Shakespeare adaptations and performances in East Asia through a "rhizomatic"

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lens, tracing horizontal relations between adaptations in a “postnational space of exchange” (12). Joubin’s interest in connection and boundary-breaking is also evident in her choice to “bring the genres of theatre and film to bear on each other rather than placing them in isolated silos” (13). As ambitious as it is to deal with the whole of East Asia and to tackle both film and theatre, Joubin’s case studies highlight some of the artistic cross-pollination that happens across genres as well as across borders.

One feature worth pointing out is that the book is structured around digital recordings available on the pages of *MIT Global Shakespeares* curated by Joubin herself. Scattered throughout the main text (rather than in the endnotes) are links to videos and clips of the productions under discussion. This makes *Shakespeare and East Asia* a valuable resource for teachers, though it may work better in a digital edition with hyperlinks and leaves some concern about the permanence of the links.

Shakespeare and East Asia is split into four sections. The first section is on Japanese adaptations and performances of Shakespeare, especially the works of Akira Kurosawa and Yukio Ninagawa. Joubin analyses how these directors’ productions localize Shakespeare’s plays, what they do with their western influences and, in turn, the influence they have had on directors around the world. This is, of course, a common approach to assessing Global Shakespeare. However, Joubin’s delineation of the difference between productions that are localizations, cultural catalysts or fusions presents a helpful way of looking at the innovations by these directors and situates them in the context of Japanese Shakespeare reception and the work of other Japanese Shakespeareans. One of Joubin’s contributions to the study of these famous directors is an extended analysis of sound and music, which proves a useful measure of what visual signifiers alone may not be able to convey, though Joubin does not ignore the visual either. The section ends by situating these directors’ plays and films in and outside Japan.

The second section analyses the “remedial function” of art and Shakespeare, or “the notion that performing the Shakespearean canon can improve not only local art forms [...] but also personal and social circumstances” (63). Joubin’s interest lies in the way “Shakespearean motifs and East Asian aesthetics are deployed as agents to cure each other’s perceived deficiencies, sometimes with a straight face, sometimes with parody” (64). Thus, Joubin examines what it means to call art recuperative through the ways Shakespeare has been used politically and personally around the world. Focusing on Sinophone productions, Joubin gives examples that sincerely trust in the remedial power of Shakespeare (and especially *King Lear*), as well as those that take a more cynical, parodic approach. Joubin’s first case studies are cinema adaptations of *Hamlet*: Feng Xiaogang’s Mandarin *The Banquet* and Sherwood Hu’s Tibetan *Prince of the Himalayas*, both of which provide “a redemptive arc

through the Ophelia character” (81). Turning to works that focus on personal healing through spirituality, Joubin analyses Wu Hsing-Kuo’s one-person *Lear is Here*, a Taiwanese play that draws on the conflicts between different forms of theatre as well as the personal effects of Japanese colonial rule and the tensions between Taiwan and China. True to her sense of the worldwide currency of Asian influences, Joubin does not ignore the fact that Asian spirituality has influenced Western directors such as Michael Almereyda (91). The book then looks at productions that satirize Shakespeare’s supposedly remedial potential through case studies of Anthony Chan’s film, *One Husband Too Many*—which revolves around a failed amateur production of *Romeo and Juliet* in backwater Hong Kong—and Lee Kuo-hsiu’s Taiwanese *Shamlet*—a parodic play about a fictional theatre troupe’s comically inept performance of *Hamlet*. As Joubin is careful to note, these comedic genres show confidence with the material they parody, commenting intertextually on canonical western films while taking part in global metatheatrical currents.

The third section uses the musical concept of “polyphony”, noting that “adapting Shakespeare as a practice contains and sustains multiple voices of the directors and critics without subordinating any one perspective” (106). Looking at South Korean productions, Joubin studies how adaptors include different cultural echoes in their productions by incorporating local folklore, what happens when East Asia productions tour the world and where such productions are performed. The first case study looks at Kim Myung-gon’s *King Uru*, which fuses the *King Lear* story with “Baridegu”, a Korean myth. The second case study is Lee Joon-ik’s South Korean blockbuster, *The King and the Clown*, which combines its multiple Shakespearean influences with Korean theatrical tradition. Joubin’s focus here is on the presentation of gender nonconformity and the way different audiences pick up on different strains of the polyphonic texture. The final case studies look at Oh Tae-suk’s *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Tempest* in relation to Umberto Eco’s theory of aberrant decoding—which “becomes a norm in intercultural contexts, where artists and audiences do not share the same cultural heritage” (120)—focusing on the ways audiences and critics responded to the touring productions. The chapter ends with a consideration of “non-western directors’ agency and the western media’s tendency to read Asian Shakespeares as political allegory” (134).

The final section is a culmination of Joubin’s effort to consider Shakespeares in “a postnational space of exchange” (12) centred on multicultural, multilingual and diasporic productions which make use of linguistic diversity and the fusion of different theatrical traditions. Joubin’s first case study is the collaborative bilingual *King Lear* by Hong Kong-British director David Tse Ka-shing which featured a diasporic English-speaking Cordelia unable to communicate effectively with her family in Shanghai. The second case study is CheeK’s *Chicken Rice War*, a Singaporean film based on

Romeo and Juliet, where the feud is transposed into a fight between two chicken rice stall owners. Joubin analyses the intergenerational differences exacerbated by the linguistic and cultural tensions between the Cantonese-speaking parents, the predominantly Singlish-speaking youth and the early modern English of the play the younger generation are staging. In this section, the final case studies are Ong Ken Sen's *Lear Dreaming*, *Desdemona* and *Search: Hamlet*—multilingual and multicultural plays that combine theatrical traditions and languages from across the world. Joubin shows how Ong's pieces have developed through the years and how they "problematize the assumption that Asian and Anglo-European cultures can be condensed into 'East' and 'West'" (180). Her chapter ends with an overview of multilingual Shakespeares and how they "counter the narratives about universal literary experience that are packaged and consumed at international festivals" (182).

Shakespeare and East Asia testifies to the fact that "neither Asia nor Shakespeare has an intrinsic, unified identity in any meaningful sense without context" (192) and provides a model for the kind of study that situates international performances in their local and global contexts. As Joubin says, "interpreting Shakespeare in a multilingual framework enriches our understanding of words that would have elided attention" (187). Though the case-study-based format of this book does not allow for much close language analysis, Joubin's approach lights the way for future studies that may build on the critical work she has done in tracing these broad networks across borders, cultures and languages.

Theatre Reviews

***Hamlet*. Dir. Bartosz Szydłowski. Juliusz Słowacki Theatre, Kraków, Poland.**

Reviewed by *Anna Kowalcze-Pawlik** 

“The end is exactly this / The hands lie apart”

[...] you lie on the stairs and see no more than a dead ant
nothing but black sun with broken rays
I could never think of your hands without smiling
and now that they lie on the stone like fallen nests
they are as defenceless as before The end is exactly this
The hands lie apart

Zbigniew Herbert, *Elegy of Fortinbras*,
trans. Czesław Miłosz and Peter Dale Scott

The most recent Polish production of *Hamlet* is the staging directed by the eminent Krakow-based director Bartosz Szydłowski, known internationally as the director of the Divine Comedy Festival. Designed as part of a larger project, which started in Szydłowski’s Łaźnia Nowa Theatre in Krakow, this *Hamlet*, just like his earlier *Przypadek* [*Coincidence*], *Konformista* [*Conformist*] and “*Waleśa w Kolonos*” [*Waleśa in Kolonos*], reflects on the overwhelming politicisation of life and uses theatre as a vehicle for a deeply troubling inquiry into the nature of politics in its most vulgar, populist mode. Szydłowski’s theatre, however, is not meant to be a mirror of reality, or a witness to its vile wiles; its position is to offer not only an encounter with, but also a counter-proposition to whatever ails the present. Such a theatre, understood as a challenge to the audience, is what Szydłowski has been eloquently defending since the 2015 move of the ruling party, Law and Justice (PiS), against the stage as a site of demoralisation and impudent questioning of authority, with directors sacked and replaced by individuals willing to control the repertoire and the ensembles.

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Heralded as “one of the most important stagings of Shakespeare’s tragedy after 1989” (Cieślak), Szydlowski’s production fails to please, as its purpose is to make the audience think, and do so hard and unapologetically.

The production premiered on 8 November 2019, is still running, and was on also during the consecutive lockdowns, as it went online and was streamed live during the Gdańsk Shakespeare Festival, moved to autumn 2020. The non-virtual site of the premiere is not without a consequence for the tenor of the whole production. The Słowacki Theatre in Krakow is, historically speaking, one of the oldest and most eminent Polish stages, operating continuously since its inception as Krakow’s Municipal Theatre in 1893. Its pediment, decorated with the inscription “Krakow for national art”, speaks volumes of the investment of Polish theatre in general and this venue in particular into the tasks suitable for the national stage: to provide a sense of historical and cultural continuity for the audience, to cultivate national identity through the arts, and to inspire desire for political independence. This political mission was perhaps most acutely felt and most provocatively undertaken by the Krakow visionary, artist and playwright Stanisław Wyspiański (1869-1907), whose lifelong professional and emotional connection with socially engaged theatre became one of the organisational pivots of Szydlowski’s *Hamlet*.

The production, which I saw on four different occasions, including the live streamed digital theatre experience in 2020, starts with a poetic *crescendo*: from the upper-gallery balcony Horatio (Krzysztof Piątkowski) booms at the audience, quoting an oblique, but ominously prophetic passage from an unfinished poem by Wyspiański. “Requiem” heralds the ruin and decay of the world as we know it: “in the old church [...] ruins of figures, remains of the altars [...] internal echoes, bodies rotting, skeletons drying up [...] the temple’s falling down, it will collapse—the horror” (Wyspiański, *Wiersze* 199, my translation). The end of things to come, the impending doom, but also the rise and fall of populist regimes are the leitmotifs of Szydlowski’s *Hamlet*, and these larger issues are contrasted from the very outset with the very intimate portrayal of Hamlet and Ophelia’s relationship as the only authentic connection worth fighting for. Horatio’s prophecy sounds out in the auditorium while the audience is looking at a video installation in lieu of the curtain, where the elaborate background is partly covered by a live stream close-up of Hamlet (Marcin Kalisz) and Ophelia (Agnieszka Judycka) hanging out together, with a copy of *Hamlet* tossed in the background and then perused by Ophelia. This initial video installation seems almost like a creed or a manifesto: to be private in the totalitarian world is to be political, as to be private together means rubbing that sense of togetherness in the face of the all-seeing state. The larger-than-life close-up reveals, however, the illusory nature of such a manifesto, as what resides within is also a horror. It is the *horror vacui* of the everyday, a fear of

loss coming with the realisation not voiced yet in 2019, but felt much more profoundly in 2020 and 2021, that we are the sum of our encounters with our significant others, those that are not afraid to breathe the same air we do. What happens when they are gone? Is it only a question of time before the unified front of two vulnerable individuals crumbles against the state violence masked as authority? Is the belief in *amor vincit omnia* the most tragic flaw of all? The answers to these questions loom heavily over the audience; when Marcin Kalisz delicately touches Agnieszka Judycka's belly, we begin to realise that the stakes in this game might indeed be high.

The subtle promise of the private bliss is marred by the occurrence of Hamlet's ghost outside the castle *a la* contemporary glass-walled condo, with Hamlet and Ophelia residing upstairs and Claudius (Wojciech Skibiński) and Gertrude (Hanna Bieluszko) staying downstairs. Hamlet meets the ghost in front of a gigantic hand, an open palm, positioned amidst pebbles in the foreground, as if it were a reminder of a more glorious past. The ghost is to be found on that open palm, an unexpected gift; he comes in the form of a young boy with a lisp (Tytus Grochal), dressed in a cowboy suit and with a sheriff's badge, a walking and talking topical allusion to the first free post-communist elections "Solidarity" poster, entitled "W samo południe 4 czerwca 1989" [High Noon 4 June 1989] (See Fig. 1). The boy ventriloquizes Hamlet as if the sweet prince were his puppet, teaching him to repeat his highly stylised words and gestures taken straight out of the western, the revenge narrative of the 20th century. As long as Ophelia is around, the ghost's allure is only temporary, but once she is gone, Hamlet becomes mesmerised, fully absorbed into the rebellion against the system, even though he, rather ironically, does not have a ready-made plan on how to proceed with his revolution. Hamlet's increasing readiness to give himself up to fulfilling the ghost's desire for vengeance (or is it justice?) is the Derridean impossible gift: "death [...] is the very circumstance that makes it possible to act ethically at all [...]. This readiness to die alone guarantees the ultimate disinterest of his [the ethical agent's] ethical gesture, since it would seem that a good one is prepared to die for cannot be the secret vehicle of one's own power or (presently enjoyed) glory. In this sense, readiness to die precludes the will to power" (Milbank 33). The acute realisation that to act ethically one needs to give up power turns out to be the Polish Hamlet's undoing.

From that strong prelude we move right into the ironic buffo of the courtroom process, where Claudius and Gertrude are presented to the entertainment of Polonius (Andrzej Grabowski) in a dancing row of courtiers, as puppets in the service of the master puppeteer. Polonius the tyrant is the one whose ring is kissed by the king and the queen at the start of the performance. Clad in his velvet pseudo-cardinal vestments, he assumes the chilling airs of a Machiavellian rhetorician; this ecclesiastical monarch rules his subjects

ruthlessly, and his cruelty is cloaked very thinly by outward gentleness. His unhealthy obsession with Ophelia is measured only by the contemptuous grandeur of his regal demeanour and the slavish loyalty of his son-in-law, as Laertes (Tomasz Augustynowicz) is another priest, following his principal unscrupulously and to the dot. The sole patron of Claudius and Gertrude's illicit love, he mortifies, humiliates and shames them, calling upon the royal couple unannounced, catching them in a private moment, only to use their toilet at his leisure, leaving them no illusion that they are to serve and obey. From the initial scene, in which he starts his (very cool) blues-like admonition, till the moment he delivers his cynical last monologue, he commands the stage, meeting a worthy adversary only in Ophelia and her protest songs. When in the closet scene he finally ends up eavesdropping on Gertrude and Hamlet, she mouths a silent cry for help, hands the gun over to her son and points to the target. Polonius's fall is again imbued with political significance that goes way beyond the purely aesthetic and existential reflection on the mechanisms of power. The cardinal's psychedelic speech in an intermedial infinity illusion close-up preceding the closet scene was taken straight from the sermon delivered a couple of months earlier by the Krakow Archbishop, Marek Jędraszewski, who, in his homily, shown on the Polish television channel TVN24, characterised the LGBTQ+ community as the "rainbow plague".¹ This dehumanising metaphor is repeated verbatim by Polonius, triumphant in this scene, but dead in another.

The painfully presentist connection between the theatrical and the political was further strengthened in the consecutive runs of the production, running parallel to the nationalist agenda of the Law and Justice government that used the pandemic to deal with the issues, institutions and groups that were deemed problematic for their project of "non-liberal democracy". Claudius's modelling on the person of the current Polish President, Andrzej Duda, started out as a rather subtle suggestion in 2019, but became a straightforward topical allusion in the performance I watched in 2020. Once Claudius is freed from Polonius's oppressive influence, he confronts Hamlet right after the "mousetrap" scene, and orchestrates a "TV Elsinore" first-rate, fully controlled reality show, in which Hamlet spectacularly fails in his mission and is publicly unmasked as a masturbating madman. When Claudius leaves his antagonist defeated on the stage, he crosses over his immobile body with contempt. In 2020, this victorious exit was accompanied by the phrase borrowed from the anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric of the Polish President, who, in the thick of the 2020 presidential campaign, addressed the LGBTQ+ community saying that "it's not people, it's ideology."

¹ On the situation of the LGBTQ+ community at the beginning of the 21st century, see Chowaniec, Mazierska and Mol; Bill and Stanley.

The ideological warfare on the Krakow stage did not fail to register also the mass anti-government protests in the Polish streets. The live streamed performance came in the thick of the protests against the abortion ban in Poland: Ophelia's black clothes acquired a new significance, as black was the colour of choice of the protesting women; the windows of Hamlet and Ophelia's apartment were adorned not only with a quote from Wyspiański, but also with red thunderbolts, a symbol of Polish women on strike, visible in the Polish streets throughout the mass protests in autumn and winter 2020. Ophelia's decision not to partake in the world anymore turned then into a political manifesto of a woman refusing to be implicated in a regime that condemns her and her unborn, expressed in the "to be, or not to be" speech delivered in a moving dialogue with Hamlet; an unrecognizable, but hauntingly beautiful version of Yoko Ono and John Lennon's "Imagine"; and, finally, through Wyspiański's final poem, "The Death of Ophelia". This Ophelia is never the pliable lady, a "poor Pole" from the earliest Polish translations; she is the ironic and vengeful Ophelia Furiosa, whose emergence was to be wished for and only expected, as the only force strong enough to break the patterns of violence in the increasingly totalitarian system. Without this Ophelia, defiant even after her death, Hamlet is lost, caught up into another of Wyspiański's intertexts, in which the Krakow playwright expressed his hypercriticism of the national dreams of freedom. Against the background of the monstrous hand, now erect and pointing to the skies, Kalisz ends up, Polish saber in hand, delivering a speech from Wyspiański's play *Wyzwolenie* [*Liberation*], whose action takes place on the stage of a Krakow—or, rather, *the* Krakow—theatre:

Alone on a great, empty stage.
 My thoughts are dust. [...]
 A slave of one great thought,
 in it my impotence and my strength.
 [...] I entered the dark Temple,
 was striving, but don't know whereto.
 I am alone—the shame burns my forehead:
 the only force, the arcane power.
 Tears, blood; curse tears! blood burns the temples—
 curse tears!—blood! (Wyspiański, *Wyzwolenie* 189-190, my translation)

Just as in the case of Wyspiański's *Liberation*, it is the overwhelming task of the audience to decide what that call really, awe-fully, means.

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Figure 1: "Solidarity" poster. File:PilsPlac51 DSC0844.JPG – Wikimedia Commons



Figure 2: Courtesy of the Słowacki Theatre



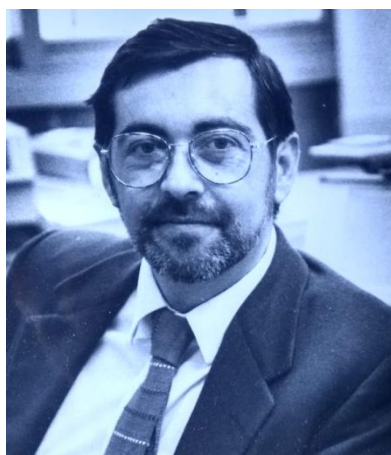
Figure 3: Courtesy of the Słowacki Theatre

Dr. Jose Saiz Molina*

In-MeMoriaM < Dr. Vicente Forés López >

Quite sure I am that he had loved this title to honour him because my mentor and colleague, Prof. Dr. Vicente Forés López, was a scholar and an artist in equal proportion. A polymath of great versatility obsessed with taking pictures of birds and clouds, possibly, to confirm he was a *rara avis* in an increasingly globalized world.

I can still remember watching this versatility when he was playing with two pieces of paper to explain what a *hypertext*, a *link*, a *website*, and a *textual fractal* were from the class platform. From my own experience, he seemed like a “*Man of Utopia*” leading a multimedia performance to seduce, at least, some sceptical spectators. An academic audience eager to learn 20th Century English Narrative that, suddenly, was compelled to face with his challenging idea of a “*pluperfect future*.” A pun close to *Sprechstimme*—in the form of a homepage—that apart from summarizing the many research fields he mastered, it was his peculiar way of welcoming you to both his critical thinking and his multiple dimensions. All this may seem rather but trivial, however you must take into account that accessing to the “*World Wide Web*” and coding *literary hypertexts* in the mid 1990s was a privilege of a few and, fortunately for us, Dr. Vicente Forés was among those pioneering spirits. This global and collaborative perspective made him appreciate well in advance some doubts, uncertainties and possibilities about situations that “*happened*” before another time in the “*future*” (his own *grandfather paradox*) and, as a good translator and communicator, he promptly mirrored those *www* into his famous *mmm* or “*Módulos Multi Media*.” A recurrent thinking, the motto of his native team, an interactive literary



* Somewhere in Cyberspace.

research environment, and an online backup that it still remains active at his home university to any person interested in knowing about the modular nature of this visionary scholar and trailblazer artist because, as he used to say: “*the backup of your History is your own Story.*”

A quick look at just a few of those projects gives a glimpse of their variety and their scope: lecturing at European and North-American universities; digital editor and webmaster; designer of an online archive on English Literature with his students; responsible for international or technological programmes in Higher Education; ICT Advisor for the Regional Council and Head of Service for Science Policy; researcher for European projects at EGRIS; poet, playwright, theatrical producer, founding member of the Spanish *Shakespeare Institute*, and Local Executive Director of the 7th *World Shakespeare Congress*; *netizen*, libretto editor and European promoter of the first opera in cyberspace that seduced *La Fura Dels Baus* and that led him to get a nomination for the *Global Bangemann Challenge*; Honorary Citizen of the City of Austin, Texas... to name a few. But above all of these facts, projects, successes and even failures, as ruling the rest, Dr. Vicente Forés López was a multicultural translator as adventurous as skilled, being able to get the best from Miguel de Cervantes, William Shakespeare, Margaret Cavendish, Cándido Pérez Gállego, Heiner Müller, Franz Zappa, Bertolt Brecht, Bernard Shaw, Derek Walcott, Friedrich Höldinger, Trakl, Stadler, Heym, Manovich, Shapiro... just to name a few authors, scholars and *Literatures*. So that, it was not a surprise listening in his class something like: “*It’s not that I have studied more than you... it’s that I KNOW more than you.*” Something totally understandable if you knew his personal background but that, as a counterpart, left nobody indifferent because with Dr. Vicente Forés there were no half measures. You either loved him or hated him.

To better understand why he was adopting such a provocative discourse, you must know that he was born in September 1954, into a large family in Valencia, Spain. Third of four children in a “baby boom” age, he had a migrant background because the 1957 Valencia flood led his father into bankrupt and they all moved to a small town somewhere between Hameln and Hannover in Niedersachsen, Germany. And it is right there where the *fluid* element gained both a negative and a positive prominence in his life. Leaving your safety zones as a child is not always easy and trauma will be more than an imaginary friend but a family, new friends, new environments and new opportunities in the *kindergarten* and in the *Schiller-Gymnasium* were waiting for him in multiple linguistic forms. In fact, he soon discovered his great ability for learning languages (he finally mastered, as he said, “seven tongues and a digital language”) and he became a referent for those who could not or did not know how. Those were his initial stages at the service of several communities in a fluid Europe and of his holistic identity. Needless to say that the next step

would be consuming vast quantities of “World Literature” in “source version” and in “multiple formats”—narrative, poetry, drama, comics, music, films, paintings, figures, pictures, etc.—because he confidently affirmed that this must help us become aware of those “different realities” that conform a “higher reality, and *that* should be not confused with fantasy.” Thus, sieving “the more information the merrier” acquired a key meaning among his academic habits.

After inhabiting and freely roaming around Europe in his youth, he returned to Spain to complete his mandatory military service. This experience allowed him connecting with emerging ICT technologies and creating close friendships and, it was partly for this reason, he decided to complete his university education in his native country. I can remember what he felt when talking about this because, for him, it had always been a bittersweet experience. On the one hand, he grew as a scholar and as an artist, developing his professional life in Valencia but due to the lack of primary textual sources—something essential for his critical approaches—he always felt his training was insufficient. This concern, together with his altruistic nature, his sense of tolerance and solidarity professional ethics directed him to become one of the greatest defenders of the “public domain”, leading by example and sharing large amount of digital resources with his global audience. Furthermore, his set of electronic devices (Apple Mac computers in running conditions) are currently featured in the IT Service’s *Museum of Computer Science* at the University of Valencia and his collection of multilingual comics (more than one thousand original copies) are going to be part of the first public *Museum of the Comic Art* in Spain, a public initiative promoted by this university and the city council that will be open the first quarter 2022.

As a founding member of the driving group of Shakespearean studies in Spain, he also applied the same philosophy and all his followers, whom I have the honour of representing, understood how to evaluate original sources, their limits and their history behind the scenes. He helped the public to reconsider what Shakespeare should be translated for new audiences and he taught us the importance of team works, the fluidity of dramaturgy, how to read both linguistic and bibliographic codes, and the value and usefulness of using multiple archives for improving these scores. He led the way for holding polite discussions with other texts, cultures, translators and scholars but first and foremost, he guided us for translating those emotions and sensations that, perhaps, only Dramatic Literature and Shakespeare can do. Beyond this, and as a designer of our working methodology and editorial policies, he always defended how generous we were when editing this author by making available two texts in a single volume but, with deep regret, he added that translating is not being considered an academic activity *per se...* yet. “*To be AND not to be*” a fruitful and open discussion to continue his legacy.

“*I’m going to live 120 years...*” he used to say but his departure was gentle and peaceful and his funeral, obviously, was as everyone expected: nobody wept, we all smiled; his wife, a charming North American woman, invited us to celebrate to have known him in life; his son read a warm “*I wish I had...*”; his daughter, as usual, danced; a friend of the family, sang a *capella* with her silky voice; and his brother, with a similar voice, recited a selection of his poems in several languages. And if you, eager Reader, want to meet Vicente, Look not on this textual Picture, but his *Works*.