

Book Reviews

Mitra, Sanat Kumar, *Shakespeare o Bangla Natak* [*Shakespeare and the Bengali Theatre*], Kolkata 1983, Pustak Bipani, 202 pages.

Reviewed by *Sarbani Putatunda*. Lecturer, Department of English East Calcutta Girls' College, Kolkata, India

The self-confessed theme of this book is the premise that “the history of Bengali theatre began both by following the traditions of Shakespearean plays and translating Shakespearean plays” (p. 44). Beginning with a chronological survey of the development of Bengali theatre and Shakespeare’s contribution, the author proceeds to make a brief but critical assessment of individual playwrights.¹ The brevity may be deliberate to allow greater space for the discussion of the development of Bengali theatre and Shakespeare’s cataclysmic role in it. However, the most invaluable documentary material provided by the author is the meticulous and detailed information about each performance of original Shakespearean plays in Bengal before modern Bengali playwrights started writing indigenous scripts. He also underscores the imperial agenda behind propagating Shakespeare, noting that not only the popular theatres alone but the newly constructed educational institutions for Indians by the British too, manifested a growing interest either in producing excerpts from or complete plays of Shakespeare. *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth* and *Othello* were the most popular along with a few comedies.

¹ The author was the Chair of the Department of Bengali, Acharya Prafulla Chandra College, New Barrackpore, West Bengal, India. He is the recipient of two prestigious awards – Griffith Memorial Award conferred by Calcutta University and Sir Ashotosh Mukherjee Memorial Gold Medal. This book was first presented as a research paper for the second award and was selected for it in 1980; later it was published as a book.

The author contextualises the arrival of the British merchants against the socio-political background of sixteenth century India. The process, though begun during the Elizabethan age, gained impetus only a century later, when whole settlements entrenched themselves in Sutanuti, Gobindopur and Calcutta (44). Almost immediately afterwards, the need for cultural diversions led the merchants to construct theaters and enact Shakespearean plays. Invited local elites enthusiastically enjoyed these performances. This acted as an initiative for the development of vernacular plays. Ironically, theatres constructed by the British soon faced closure for various reasons, and the elites, not loosing this opportunity constructed their own theaters and started performing. The growing popularity of these performances inspired Bengali playwrights to translate and adapt Shakespearean plays in their mother tongue. An interesting feature of this new found tradition was that most adapters felt the need to homogenise the plays by adding local color, hence either the names of the characters and titles of the plays were changed or certain scenes and acts were improvised. The next step in the apprenticeship was adapting Shakespearean themes to indigenous context. This continued till Bengali theatre achieved adulthood around the beginning of the twentieth century. The first section of the book thus provides a historical documentation of the foundation of both Kolkata and her famous theaters. However, Mitra's emphasis on the latter's indebtedness to Shakespeare results in an unfortunate undermining of the variegated native roots of Bengali theatre.

The author notes a decreasing interest in Shakespeare with the coming of age of the Bengali stage. He claims indirect inspiration of Shakespeare behind the profusion of popular Bengali plays of a lighter vein catering to contemporary taste. Shakespearean translations or close adaptations were engaged in primarily for academic and scholastic interests, hence many of these were not enacted. Those that did see the arc lights of the stage could not fill the coffers of the theatre owners. One notable exception was Girish Chandra Ghose's Bengali translation of *Macbeth*, first staged on 28 January 1893 at the Minerva Theatre in Kolkata, played to packed houses over a prolonged period. But even Girish Ghose – a legendary theatre person of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Bengal, – could not risk making a faithful translation; his directorial instinct led him to improvise extensively. A song, for instance, marked each entry of the witches, adding five songs to the play.

The second section of the book reviews the works of prominent Bengali playwrights, who, according to the author, wrote directly under the influence of Shakespeare. Many of them, suggests Mitra, merely adapted Shakespearean themes, while the more versatile absorbed the bard's technical skills as well. Taking too inclusive a view of Shakespearean themes and stagecraft, he

considers the plays of Michael Madhusudan Dutta (1824–73) Sanskrit in content, but Shakespearean in treatment. *Krishnkumari* (1861), in particular, is judged as Shakespearean on the basis of sub-plots, supernatural elements, and comic devices like disguise incorporated in the play. Dutta is also credited with introducing the Shakespearean blank verse to Bengali literature. The next important dramatist identified as Shakespearean is the committed member of the Bengal Renaissance.² Dinabondhu Mitra (1819–73), famous for *Neeldarpan* [*Indigo Mirror*] (1860) – a play that exposed the ruthless British exploitation of the indigo farmers. Mitra admits *Neeldarpan* to be an indigenous product, but traces distinctive Shakespearean influence in the playwright's satiric work, *Sadhabar Ekadashi* [*Married Woman's Widow-Rituals*] (1866). Particularly impressive is the unhesitating deployment of various tragic and comic devices of several Shakespearean plays, especially *Macbeth*, in *Sadhabar Ekadashi*. Jyotirindranath Tagore (1849–1925), the elder brother of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore (1862–1941), also began his literary career by translating Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

The two playwrights dealt in detail are Girish Chandra Ghose (1844–1911) and Dwijendralal Roy (1863–1913). Mitra rightly points out how, after many trials by different authors, an accurate method of translating and assimilating Shakespeare in Bengali was finally evolved by Girish Chandra Ghose, who acknowledged his indebtedness to Shakespeare with the following words: "Shakespeare is my model. I am following his footsteps" (Ghose 1957: 171, notes 1, 2). Ghose excelled in incorporating many Shakespearean plots and techniques in a single play. *Jana* (1893), for instance, combines various traits of Shakespearean characters and plots to heighten the tragic effect. These are explored systematically by Mitra to delineate specific borrowings. Jana's insane anger and *hubris* after loosing her son and husband closely echo Queen Margaret, Henry VI's widow in *Richard III*. Likewise Madanmanjari, Jana's widowed daughter-in-law bears a marked resemblance to Virgilia of *Coriolanus*. The poignant moment when she is afraid to send her husband to war parallels Virgilia's apprehensions in 1.3, just as Jana's words of solace to her are reminiscent of Volumina's assurances in the same scene. The peace attained at the end of the play is akin to the conclusion of *King Lear*. The supernatural elements in *Jana* replicate the

² Bengal Renaissance was a two-phase movement of the nineteenth century, which had far reaching political, social and cultural implications. Its impetus was the socio-political change brought about by British colonialisation. Social changes like the prohibition of *Sati* (widow burning), widow remarriage, monotheism, female education, popularising English etc., took place in the first half of the nineteenth century. The literary impact was felt directly after 1850 when authors started writing plays and novels for the first time in Bengali vernacular. The second half of the nineteenth century consequently, witnessed a spurt of new genres in Bengali literature – drama and novel.

supernatural creatures of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The character of *bidushak*, equivalent to the Elizabethan clown, is clearly influenced by Lear's fool. *Jana's* theme undoubtedly derives from *Mahabharata*, the great Indian epic, but Mitra conclusively traces the combination of different Shakespearean ingredients in it.

Dwijendralal Roy, the other important playwright whom the author discusses, is elsewhere equally candid about his indebtedness to Shakespeare: "Following Shakespeare I started writing plays in blank verse. I realised that in Shakespeare there is an admixture of both prose and poetry, yet the combination thus is in perfect harmony with the theme. I thought it wise to write plays in prose but I could not renounce completely my inclination for poetic language" (Roy 1964: 709–10). Shakespeare's thematic prioritising of man's inner conflict over his external struggle is reflected in almost all of Roy's plays. The use of Shakespearean soliloquy is particularly evident in *Nurjahan* (1908), a historical play on the wife of the Mughal emperor Jehangir. Mitra illustrates the playwright's heavy reliance on Lady Macbeth's *un-feminine* qualities and Shakespeare's Cleopatra while constructing the regal but ruthlessly ambitious Nurjahan.

The final section of the book devotes itself to Rabindranath Tagore's plays only to establish the fact that his plays are unique in form and content with little manifest influence of Shakespeare. As this is not quite relevant to the subject matter of the book one doubts the judiciousness of this inclusion. This apart, meticulous documentation, comparative approach and the lucid language of the book make up for the shortcomings in critical approach and provide informative reading.

Bibliography

- G h o s e, R., *Shakespeare – anubad o anubad samasya* [*Shakespeare – Translation and Problems of Translation*], Kolkata 1957, Pustak Bipani.
 R o y, D., "Amar Natyajiboner Arambha" ["The Beginning of Theatre Career"]. *Dwijendra Rachanaboli* [*Collected Works of Dwijendralal Roy*]. Kolkata 1964, Sahitya Sansad.

Stříbrný Zdeněk, *Shakespeare and Eastern Europe* Oxford Shakespeare Topics, Oxford 2000, Oxford University Press, 162 pages.

Reviewed by *Mark Sokolyansky*, Professor (Ret.), Department of Comparative Literature, University of Odessa, Ukraine, Russia

After the fall of the Iron Curtain the integrative process in the world Shakespeareana has strengthened. East European specialists, who always took an interest in the foremost achievements of Western Shakespeare studies, can now have wider access to foreign scholarly engagements. As far as their Western colleagues are concerned, they have only begun to acquaint themselves with East European contributions to Shakespeare studies and performance, which appear to be not in the least poor. In particular, at the end of the twentieth century, when the great playwright's works began more and more often to be appropriated for topical political interpretations, it became apparent that the experience of East European scholarship, theatre and cinematography in that field cannot be ignored.

One of the prominent Czech scholars, Zdenek Stříbrný, presents the history of Shakespeare appropriation in Eastern Europe for several centuries to the present-day Western scholars and students. In his own words, his "intention is to give Eastern Europe its due and thus contribute to a fuller survey of Shakespeare's impact on the whole of Europe" (p. 1). The author dates the first acquaintance of East Europeans with Shakespeare back to Shakespeare's lifetime. He writes about English troupes' first visits to the cities and towns of continental Europe such as Gdańsk, Elbing, Königsberg, Riga, Stettin, Rostock and others. Having briefly traced the history of those visits, Stříbrný comes to the conclusion, that "the impact of the English Comedians in Central and Eastern Europe was very strong and lasting, inspiring the development of the native theatre" (p. 24).

The second chapter, entitled "Shakespeare under Tsars", outlines the reception of Shakespeare in Russia since Sumarokov's *Hamlet* (1748) till the beginning of the twentieth century. The most successful translations and the important critical works on Shakespeare are examined here. Special attention is paid to Belinsky's and Turgenev's essays on Shakespeare and Lev Tolstoy's complicated attitude to the British bard. His good knowledge of Russian literature enables the Czech scholar to also touch upon the question of Shakespearean influence on Russian literature of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Of great interest are his insights on Pushkin's play *Boris Godunov*, Lermontov's tragedy *The Masquerade*, Shakespearean reminiscences in two novels by Dostoevsky and Chekhov's play *Ivanov* (pp. 47–48).

However, some assertions in this chapter are controversial. Stříbrný writes with confidence that the Russian play *Bajazed and Tamerlan* (between 1672 and 1676) „roughly derived from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*" (p. 26). This hypothesis begs critical debate. Even if Christopher Marlowe did mention Russia in his works more than once, his plays were, in fact,

unknown to Russia not only in the seventeenth century, but even at the beginning of the nineteenth century. As the most authoritative expert on Anglo-Russian literary relationships, Mikhail P. Alekseev has proved, Pushkin's acquaintance with Marlowe's works was impossible (1987: 425).

Discussing Lev Tolstoy's *crusade* against Shakespeare, the Czech investigator states: "While Shakespeare developed the traditions of native English drama with all its conventions readily accepted by his audiences, Tolstoy, a Russian aristocrat, was steeped in French culture, including the neo-classical ideals of order, naturalness, regularity, preciseness, clarity, verisimilitude and decorum" (p. 53). One can agree only with the first part of this risky judgement – about Shakespeare's relation to English native drama. As for Tolstoy, the author of *On Shakespeare and Drama*, in his last years he rejected all upper-class art, which was not intelligible to the Russian peasantry, including his own major works. He simultaneously rejected French neo-classical art in positive and unequivocal terms.

The third chapter – "Shakespeare and the National Revivals" – contains a brief but informative survey of the growing interest in Shakespeare in Poland, Czech lands, Hungary, Serbia, Croatia etc. in the nineteenth century. Among the *personages*, we meet famous authors (Polish Romantic poets Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki, Hungarian poets Sándor Petőfi and János Arany, Polish novelist and Nobel-prize winner Henryk Sienkiewicz), actors and actresses like Helena Modrzejewska of Poland and various composers (Czechs Antonín Dvořák and Bedřich Smetana, Hungarian pianist and composer Ferenc Liszt etc.). The brief passages about the awakening of Romanian and Bulgarian interest in Shakespeare can scarcely satisfy the specialists deeply concerned with such issues. However, we must not forget that the subject is huge, while the books in the Oxford Shakespeare series are relatively concise. Besides, Stříbrný's book is written for the Western audience, for the majority of whom the whole subject is *terra incognita*.

The chapter „Shakespeare after the Bolshevik Revolution” is rich in interesting facts. After providing succinct information about the productions of Russian directors Fyodor Komissarzhevsky and Mikhail Chekhov in the West, Stříbrný writes in detail about several famous performances of the 1920–30s in the USSR, considering not only Russian theatre. Unlike some of our colleagues, the author understands that the so-called Soviet theatre was an international one, and that is why he pays special attention to the really successful Shakespeare productions of Georgian, Armenian, Jewish (Yiddish), Uzbek and other national theatres. Besides, theatrical events are appropriately contextualised against national cultural traditions and the

dramatic political situation in the country. The book also includes a brief review of Shakespeare productions in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Latvia between the two World Wars (pp. 90–95). It is a pity that E. F. Burian's works in his avant-garde Prague theatre are cursorily discussed; the more so as Burian's closeness to Brecht's aesthetics helps to see the common features between his productions of Shakespeare's plays and several Western directors' search for a new form in the 1960s and 70s.

The chapter that follows has the meaningful title of "Shakespeare behind the Iron Curtain." Stříbrný culls precisely the most important phenomena of scholarly and theatrical Shakespeareana in the East European countries from the 1950s to the 70s. He quite rightly estimates highly the conceptual monographs of the late Moscow explorer Leonid Pinsky who, regretfully, "has remained unknown in the West" (98). Equally noteworthy are the informative pages on Boris Pasternak's translations, two relevant productions of *Hamlet* in the Soviet Union by Kozintsev and Okhlopkov in the middle of the 1950s, Roman Zavistovski's *Hamlet* in Cracow etc.

The pages about Grigorij Kozintsev's Shakespearean films and books are the highlights of Stříbrný's work. He catches in Kozintsev the dialectical tri-unity of the theatre director, the film director and the critical investigator. His exploration of the Russian roots of Kozintsev's *Hamlet* and the assimilation of the best features of Russian culture from the eighteenth century to Kozintsev's own time in the film are particularly rewarding. Stříbrný stresses the genuine topicality of the Russian director's works but is also right in stating that Kozintsev's "sensitivity to Shakespeare's poetry and the infinite variety of Shakespeare's characters prevented him from any simplified or violent modernization" (p. 106). Perhaps there is only one debatable remark on Kozintsev: "He was a Marxist, convinced of the justice and humanity of socialism, but, for that very reason, he became an anti-Stalinist" (p. 106). Of course, Kozintsev was a convinced anti-Stalinist, but the problem of his Marxist outlook is not so simple. Like every intellectual, Kozintsev was evolving for many years, and his political and aesthetic views at the last stage of his activity can not be defined as purely Marxist; on many basic issues he was close to thinkers like Leonid Pinsky, who was far from Marxist orthodoxy.

The pages devoted to the famous Polish critic Jan Kott's book, *Shakespeare: Our Contemporary* (p. 101–106), are distinctive in tone. If the overall manner of Stříbrný's discourse is marked by considered calmness, his discussion of Kott's views is highly polemical. Peter Brook's description of Jan Kott as „unique, learned, informed, serious, precise, and scholarly

without what we associate with scholarship,” is sharply countered by Stříbrný: „Unique Kott certainly was but not precise, or scholarly in any sense of the word” (p. 101). He draws attention to a whole series of factual errors in Kott’s book and attributes its popularity to the Polish critic’s close ties with the aesthetics of the theatre of the absurd, which was in fashion in the 1960s. Kott’s “poor knowledge of Shakespearean scholarship” and all other mistakes notwithstanding, Stříbrný himself does not forget that the Polish scholar’s general approach to Shakespeare was important “as a liberating incentive to overcome all forms of stagnation and dogmatism” (p. 105). Most readers will concur with this conclusion.

In the last chapters the author pays much attention to the prominent theatrical directors’ and companies’ search for new interpretations of Shakespeare’s plays. His meditations on the role of Brecht’s aesthetics and its impact on some Shakespeare productions in European theatre are incisive and insightful, specially his remarks on Shakespearean reminiscences in *Der Aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui* [*The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*] (pp. 124–126). There is also important information on Shakespeare productions of Andrzej Wajda and Robert Sturua, Yuriy Lyubimov and Alexander Tocilescu, Heiner Müller and Andrej Serban as well as their several Czechoslovakian and Hungarian colleagues.

The book impresses with its exactness of investigation and respect for literary fact. When Stříbrný writes, for instance, about Kott’s blunders, it is impossible to disagree with him. And this is precisely why the few errors and lacunae in the work seem to stand out. For instance, the famous Georgian poet of the twelfth century, Shota Rustaveli, is mentioned as “the eighteenth-century national poet” (p. 120). In his film *Hamlet* Kozintsev used Boris Pasternak’s translation, but this does not make Pasternak the “author of the screenplay” (p. 109), because the poet had died three years before Kozintsev began working on the film. Stříbrný writes that *King Lear* in the Moscow Jewish Theatre (Goset) was directed by Sergej Radlov (p. 85). But two directors were named in the playbill – Sergej Radlov and Solomon Mikhoels. As a matter of fact, Radlov only completed the task of the Ukrainian theatrical innovator Les’ Kurbas, who – invited by Mikhoels to direct the tragedy. While working on the project, he was arrested by NKVD a month before the first performance and later killed in the Soviet concentration camp on Solovetsky Islands. The history of Shakespeare productions in Moscow Art Theatre can not be reduced to two performances by Edward Gordon Craig, as is done in the book. Among the prominent translators and investigators of Shakespeare in Eastern Europe, the famous Bulgarian translator Valery Petrov, an outstanding Estonian translator and scholar Georg Meri, as well as some other well-known names, are not mentioned at all! Stříbrný regards the works of various Shakespeare scholars

with respect and refers to many of them, but some books of paramount importance are obviously unknown to him. So, he bypasses the fundamental monographs of Mikhail P. Alekseev and Yuri D. Levin about Shakespearean appropriations in Russia. The information about Shakespeare productions on the Soviet stage is taken by the Czech researcher from such unreliable sources as the out-of-date brochure of Mikhail Morozov and a very superficial essay by Roman Samarin and Alexander Nikolyukin. However, all these shortcomings are outweighed by the essential merits of Zdenek Střibrný's interesting book, which despite its laconic quality, covers wideranging facts and contains a number of original observations. It can initiate the Western scholars and students to East European Shakespeare negotiations and provoke further investigations.

Bibliography

Alekseev, M. P., *Pushkin i mirovaja literatura [Pushkin and the World Literature]*, Leningrad 1987, Nauka.

Géher István and Kiss Attila Attila (eds.) *Az értelmezés rejtett terei [The Hidden spaces of interpretation: emerging shakespearean scholarship in hungary]*, Kijarat Kiadó Budapest 2003, ISBN 963-9529-07-8. 157 pages.

Reviewed by *Katalin Tabi*, Department of English Studies Eötvös Loránd University (Elte), Budapest, Hungary, & *Jim Casey*, Instructor, English Department, Hudson Strode Program of Renaissance Studies, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, USA¹

Arsing from the October 2000 Szeged conference on "Szó és Kép" ["Word and Image"], this collection represents the work of emerging young scholars from Hungary's two major centers for doctoral studies in Baroque and Renaissance English literature: Eötvös Lóránd University (ELTE) in Budapest and József Attila University (JATE) in Szeged. Characterised by experimental rather than institutionalised academic scholarship, these articles epitomise the future of Shakespeare research in Hungary. As the editors emphasise in the preface, the essays do not belong to one single critical school; they are interested in "hidden spaces", areas which traditional

¹ All translations from the essays into English are by Katalin Tabi.

Hungarian Shakespeare scholarship has not yet discovered. Because none of the pieces is in English, the main goal of this review is to introduce each to the essays to a greater readership by providing short evaluative summaries of each.

Ildikó Oroszlán, "Mikor 'Vig a Játék?: a Komédiás Sikertelensége a Lóvátett Lovagokban" ["What Makes a Comedy?: the Comedian's Failure in *Loves Labour's Lost*"] pp. 9–27.

Examining the semiotics of theatre and the actor-role-spectator trinity, Oroszlán explores how *Loves Labour's Lost* is itself intensely meta-dramatic, concerned with the "methodology of how theatre works" (p. 17). Using Robert Weimann's distinction between the symbolic, fictional *locus*, and the *platea*, from which the actor might "step out" of the performance and make comments from within (1978: 211–12; 2000: 182), Oroszlán discusses Biron as a kind of outsider/insider who collaborates with the spectators in his asides. When watching the other men break their vows (4.3), he laughs at them as an outsider from the *platea* position, but is laughed at later in the *locus* position. Biron's ambiguous role, the two plays-within-the-play, and the ladies' exchanged masks all show that *Loves Labour's Lost* is more of a self-reflexive meta-theatrical piece than a failed comedy. The last scene, according to Oroszlán, should be read as a "struggle for concentration" (p. 23), in which the lords fail, and for which Biron, like all bad actors, blames the ladies, his audience (5.2: p. 747–51).² Oroszlán's own audience, unfortunately, is hypothetical, thus all her audience-response assertions are generalised and unsupported.

Ildiko Limpár, "Színjátszó Színdarab: Szerepek és Szerepzavarok a Szeget Szeggelben" ["Playing the Play: Roles and Mis-Roles in *Measure for Measure*"] pp. 29–41.

Limpár convincingly demonstrates that Shakespeare pairs well-known Biblical language with morally dubious situations as part of a strategy that confuses *Measure for Measure* textually and structurally. Limpár begins by

² All quotations from the play are cited from Wells and Taylor (1998).

drawing our attention to Isabella's ambiguous wording. While rejecting her would-be suitor, she simultaneously yields to him:

That is, were I under the terms of death,
Th' impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
And strip myself to death as to a bed
That longing have been sick for, ere I'd yield
My body up to shame... (2.4: 100–4)

The reference to the marks made by the whip calls forth the image of her naked body, which is reinforced by the mention of stripping. The same unnerving effect occurs on the level of structure, with the most well-known example being Claudio's and Angelo's analogous scenes. The play's structural principle, according to Limpár, is to turn conventional points of reference upside down, making the audience question their emblematic black and white associations.

Veronika Schandl, "A 'Bécsi Bácsi' a Legvidámabb Barakkban: a *Szeget Szeggel* Magyarországon, 1964–1985" ["the 'Viennese Vincentio' in the Happiest Barracks: *Measure for Measure* in Hungary, 1964–1985"] pp. 43–54.

Examining the critical reception of eight productions of *Measure for Measure* during the period of "goulash-communism" that followed the suppression of the 1956 revolt, Schandl tracks the reception and development of the play in Hungary when all aspects of culture were governed by Aczél György's 3T-principle – "támogatni, tqrni, tiltani" (endeavors "backed" by the government, "borderline" and so receiving no support, or "banned"]. Beginning with a 1964 university performance in which the bawdy comedy of the play was stressed, Schandl follows *Measure for Measure* full circle through the more daring and gradually darker interpretations of the 70s and the 80s, which map the shadows of the political system and dissect the function and responsibility of a leader in the society, to the newly sexualised 1985 production. Unlike the 1964 performance, however, which emphasised the sexual comedy to avoid political disapproval, Schandl argues that the 1985 play was produced by a people tired of politics and simply eager to enjoy life again.

Anna Szabó T., “Mit Jelent ez, Fölséges úr?: szó és Megjelenítés a *Hamletben*” [“What Means this, my Lord?: Word and Presentation in *Hamlet*”] pp. 55–63.

Drawing on the origin of the epic, said to be born from action verbalised, Szabó T.’s essay focuses on the action of mimes and their (mis)interpretation within the play: the guards’ description of Old Hamlet’s ghost; Hamlet’s interpretation of the ghost’s words; Ophelia description of Hamlet’s behavior and her father’s subsequent misunderstanding; and the multiple readings of the mousetrap-mime. After the last, Hamlet makes it clear to Claudius that just as the action of the mime is followed by words, words will be followed by action. Thus, Szabó T. asserts, the connection between action and word is extended into an action-word-action progression. In her exploration of the interrelationship between utterance and representation, Szabó T. makes some remarkable observations, but the overall structure of the essay is rather clumsy. There are too many ideas and most of them are not fully investigated. After exploring the semiotic significance of mimes and verbal interpretation, for example, Szabó T. shifts to the connection between painting and depiction in *The Rape of Lucrece*, and then to a brief comparison of Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet*. Although her observations are sometimes intriguing, they seem only vaguely relevant to the topic of speech and interpretation.

Zsolt Almási, “Hercules Alakváltozásai: Hercules-Utalások Shakespeare Hamletjében” [“Hercules’s Metamorphoses: Hercules-References in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*”] pp. 65–76.

In a playful and witty poststructuralist, psychoanalytical critique, Almási discusses the significance of the Hercules motif in *Hamlet* in relation to young Hamlet’s search for identity. Almási notes that the recurring association of Hamlet’s father with Hercules, coupled with young Hamlet’s claim that Claudius is no more like Old Hamlet than he himself is to Hercules (1.2: 152–3), creates an unfortunate parallel relationship in which Hamlet is analogous to Claudius, rather than his father. Rather than exploring the implications of this “interesting subconscious magnetic field” (p. 67) however, Almási quickly moves on to other Herculean connections. For example, by comparing himself to the Nemean lion (1.4: 58–60), which falls to Hercules and then provides him with invulnerability through its hide, Hamlet situates himself subconsciously as both old Hamlet’s prey and protector. Hercules

becomes a symbol then both for the paralysing father-image and for Hamlet's potential liberation. Noting the commonly held belief that the Hercules/Atlas allusion (2.2: 361–362) refers to the Globe and her actors, Almási shows how Hamlet corrupts the idea of Hercules as “the good actor” when he mocks Laertes in Act 5. Only by becoming “the bad actor” and alienating himself from his father's Hercules-image can Hamlet hope to act or gain independent autonomy. In the end, Almási rightly acknowledges that his examination ultimately brings us no closer to understanding the prince: knowing he is not Hercules/Old Hamlet still does not tell us who he is.

Ágnes Matuska, “Ontológiai Határsértés: Jago Mint Puszta Reprezentáció”
[“An Ontological Transgression: Iago as Representation in Its Pure Form”]
pp. 77–90.

Matuska examines the many similarities between Iago and the character of Vice found in the medieval morality plays: both act as the master of ceremony, both are dually spectators and participants in the performance, both interact with the audience, and both are simultaneously attractive and detestable. Iago differs greatly from Vice however, in that he refuses essentialisation – “I am not what I am” (1.1: 67) – and speaks with an unnerving moral relativism. Additionally, Shakespeare's *Everyman*, *Othello*, is not saved in the end. These and other differences, Matuska convincingly argues, mark not only an alteration in dramatic pattern, but the Foucauldian supplanting of the Classical world-view with an emergent Renaissance world-model.³

Kinga Földváry, “‘Félre Ezen Toldalékokkal’: A Ruha és a Ruhátlangság Motivuma Shakespeare Három Tragédiájában” [“‘Off, Off, You Lendings’: the Motif of Clothing and of the Lack of Clothing in Shakespeare's Tragedies”] pp. 93–109.

In perhaps the simplest essay in the collection, Földváry discusses the connection between raiment and personality in *Hamlet*, *Lear*, and *Macbeth*.

³ An English version of this article has been recently published in *The AnaChronist* 2003, pp. 46–64.

Her conclusions merely confirm conventional sartorial expectations: the wretched wear rags, the rich wear resplendent garments.

Natália Pikli, "Lear. a Karneválkirály" ["Lear, the Carnival-King"] 111–128.

Tracing the play's medieval roots, Pikli competently compares and contrasts Lear with the carnivalesque Fool-king, or Carnival-king. In Lear, she notes, the traditional subversion of social ranks is missing – a real king becomes the Carnival-king – and this complicates Lear's role. While both the Carnival-king and Lear are deprived of their clothes, for example, in the carnival this trickery brings forth a release of positive energies, while in the tragedy it reinforces and amplifies the tragic tone. Unlike the Carnival-king, who symbolically dies and gains re-birth by the end of the festival, Lear cannot resurrect himself. Thus, Lear is transformed from Carnival-king to Death-king, the leader of a sort of *danse macabre*.

Gabriella Reuss, "Viharos Sikerek, Sikeres Viharok: a Vigvégű és a Tragikus *Lear Király* Szin-Változási" ["Storm Successes, Successful Storms: Transformed Scenes of the Happy and Tragic *King Lear*"] pp. 129–142.

Through research at the Bodleian, Reuss has discovered a promptbook she believes to be the basis for Charles William Macready's 1834 *King Lear*. It was in this production, Reuss argues, and not the well-known 1838 performance, that Macready began the process of restoring the play from Nahum Tate's happy-ending Lear to Shakespeare's original text. Unfortunately, most of this essay simply summarises the Tate-version of the play (unavailable in Hungarian) and compares it to the Macready promptbook in light of Shakespeare's *Lear*. However, a more complete account of the textual/ bibliographic issues may be found in her previously published essay, "*Veritas Filia Temporis*, or Shakespeare Unveiled?: Charles William Macready's Restoration of Shakespeare's *King Lear* of 1834 According to His Unpublished Promptbook" in *The AnaChronist*, 2000: 88–101.

Tünde Incze, “Rejtett Terek a Macbethben” [“Hidden Spaces in *Macbeth*”]
pp. 143–157.

In the least scholarly of all the essays, Incze makes some interesting observations regarding the “hidden spaces” within the play and the nihilistic nature of *Macbeth*, but her numerous tangents and extra-textual commentary detract from the overall scholarly goals of this perhaps overly ambitious article.

Bibliography

- Wells, S. and Taylor, G. eds, *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1998.
- Weimann, R., *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theatre: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore-Maryland 1978.
- Weimann, R., *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2000.
- Reuss, G., “Veritas Filia Temporis, or Shakespeare Unveiled?: Charles William Macready's Restoration of Shakespeare's *King Lear* of 1834 According to His Unpublished Promptbook,” *The AnaChronist* 2000, 88–101.