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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 Propps' 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.