



The Shakespearean International Yearbook

THE SHAKESPEAREAN INTERNATIONAL YEARBOOK

**DISABILITY PERFORMANCE AND GLOBAL
SHAKESPEARE**

Edited by
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Guest Editor
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Cardenio Project, in which distinctly “national” adaptations of the Cardenio story were played around the world from 2006 to 2014. Anzai takes issue with Greenblatt’s comment that he found the final reconciliation between Tadao and Machiko “strange and incomprehensible” (71) for its matter-of-factness. Despite Greenblatt’s concession that “cultural projection is not a one-way street” (71), the statement that he had experienced “the phenomenon of cultural mobility as misunderstanding” (87) privileges the Western scholar’s understanding of the material over the Japanese adaptor’s. Anzai’s riposte to Greenblatt combines a contextualization of the piece within recent Japanese “Quiet Theater” and a nuanced understanding of Japanese vernacular unavailable to an Anglophone scholar working in translation to challenge this anglocentric reading.

Andronicus Aden’s chapter on *Hamlet* in Nepal focuses primarily on the 1906 play *Shri Atal Bahadur*, a work that adapts both *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, repurposing them for political purposes, but his discussion ranges across time to pull in other *Hamlets* from the Himalayan region. Aden’s work thus not only calls attention to the under-researched topic of Shakespeare in Nepal but also demonstrates the prominence of Shakespeare as a cultural signifier in the country, expanding from a national perspective to a regional one.

As the title and concept suggest, Alexa Joubin and Victoria Bladen’s anthology, *Onscreen Allusions to Shakespeare: International Films, Television, and Theatre* is a heterogeneous collection. An allusion may be isolated and fleeting, or part of a sustained engagement with a hypotext; “international” might refer to post-colonial India, settler-colonial Australia, European countries, or their former colonies; the screens involved may range from the early silent films of the twentieth century to computer screens during the pandemic. The editors have chosen essays that adroitly represent both this geographic diversity and temporal range within specific countries.

Victoria Bladen’s chapter may be taken as paradigmatic. It traces the different roles played by Shakespearean allusions in three different Australian films that engage with their hypotext in three distinct ways. In the 1919 silent film *The Sentimental Bloke*, Raymond Longford and Lottie Lyell use intertextual allusions to *Romeo and Juliet* to highlight the depth of emotion experienced by their working-class hero, the Bloke, but also depict his uncouth reactions to live staging of the play. Bladen reads this as an early example of “Australian cultural interest in parodying its own perceived lack of cultural sophistication, its ‘cultural cringe’” (39).

The other two works considered by Bladen engage with Shakespeare to wildly divergent degrees. Peter Weir’s brief allusion to sonnet 18 in *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, she argues, establishes “confrontation ... between European culture ... and the sublime power and horror of a landscape that has purportedly been colonized, yet not understood or controlled” (41–42).

The protagonist in Jerzy Domaraszki's *Lilian's Story* expresses herself through extensive quotations from Shakespeare. Lilian's use of quotation enables her confrontation and engagement with a literal and a literary father, one "destructive and controlling" and one, Shakespeare, "nurturing" (49). Bladen demonstrates the multi-valent role Shakespeare plays in twentieth-century Australian film: a source of cultural capital, an anxiety-inducing suggestion of colonial inferiority, a reminder to settlers that they are foreign to the colonized land, and resource for modern-day self-fashioning.

As most chapters cover a number of works, and since "allusion" can operate in so many registers, readers may find the book most useful as a jumping-off point, a collection of insightful engagements that demand closer attention.

Nicoleta Cinpoș, Florence March, and Paul Prescott's *Shakespeare on European Festival Stages* features on its second page a map of Europe, marking the various performance sites covered in the collection. The image is at once a clear justification—if one were needed—of the need for such a "travel companion" (2), and an evocation of the environment in which much of the book was completed, as tourists, theater-goers, and scholars traveled more through online maps and videos than to actual festivals. A number of themes recur from chapter to chapter and festival to festival.

The first is the shared assumption or assertion of most festivals—and the book's editors—that Shakespeare can be endlessly co-opted by any artistic vision or national narrative that wishes to do so. As just one example, Filip Krajník and Eva Kyselová reflect on how Shakespeare has been a "symbol of cultural emancipation of Czechs" since the nineteenth century, and how that position as a "proxy for ... their political positions" (57) has evolved and adapted through the twentieth century to the fall of communism.

In considering the festival venues, the various authors are sensitive to the politics and economics of space. Krajník and Kyselová recognize the importance of Václav Havel's decision to open Prague Castle "to ordinary people once again, and to invest it with a new, democratic ethos" (56). The idea resurfaces in Lisanna Calvi and Maddalena Pennacchia's discussion of how repurposing the *Teatro Romano* in post-war Verona served in part as an act of reclaiming "a place that fascism had tried to overwrite in order to construct and celebrate its myths" (122). In terms of economics, Anne Sophie Refskou, citing Alexa Alice Joubin, carefully considers Kronborg castle in Helsingør's status as an "authentically fake site" (196). In the words of the editors, "the contemporary, restored version" of a castle or other historic setting "retains an early modern patina and affect" (11).

With close attention to the history, economics, and politics of each festival, along with thumbnail sketches of key productions, this collection is more than just the "Grand Tour of the exquisitely ephemeral" (1) described by its editors.

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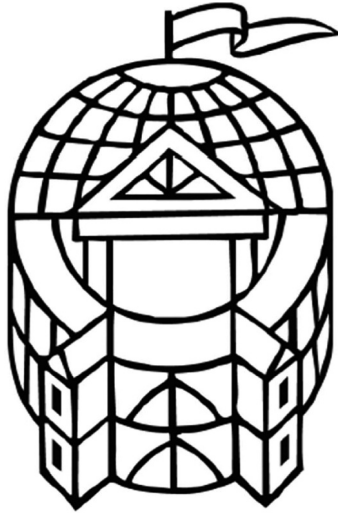
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