

NARRATIVE STRATEGIES  
IN SHAKESPEAREAN PRODUCTIONS  
ON TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY  
EUROPEAN STAGES

by

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A thesis submitted to the  
University of Birmingham  
for the degree of  
MASTER OF LITERATURE

Shakespeare Institute  
School of English, Drama and American & Canadian Studies  
College of Arts and Law  
University of Birmingham  
December 2011

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## THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis is on the one hand part of the wider field of ‘European Shakespeare’ studies which have become more and more popular in recent years. On the other hand it attempts to propose a new way at researching ‘Shakespeare’ in such a context, thereby also trying to answer the ever persistent question of how much ‘Shakespeare’ is essential for a performance to be regarded as ‘Shakespearean’? There has been a constant striving for a more trans-national approach in this field –some successful, some futile– and therefore national borders have been disregarded in this research project. This thesis instead focuses on the different kinds of media or narrative strategies employed in theatre: each chapter is concerned with a change in narration. Special attention has been directed towards translations and adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays, on musical versions, on reworkings for children including a small excursion into puppet theatre, on theatrical productions of his poems, on otherness, such as a *King Lear* in sign language, and on selected productions from Shakespeare Festivals to try and raise awareness of the European Shakespeare Festival Network.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents  
and my grandmother as well as my late grandfather.  
Without them this research project would not have been possible at all.  
Words cannot express how grateful I am for their support.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without a number of people. First and foremost, it would not exist without my supervisors Dr Kathryn Prince, now Assistant Professor in the Department of Theatre at the University of Ottawa, with whom I started work on my research project in 2007, as well as Prof. Russell Jackson, Allardyce Nicoll Chair in Drama and Head of the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts at the University of Birmingham, who took over from Kathryn in 2008. Prof. Therese Seidel (now retired), former Head of Department for Early Modern and Modern English Literature at the Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf (Germany), as well as Dr Friedrich-Karl Unterweg, lecturer in the same department, raised my initial interest in Shakespeare considerably and as such started a process in 2003 which resulted in this piece of work. Prof. Eugene Giddens, Skinner-Young Professor in Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature and Faculty Director of Research in the Department for English, Communication, Film and Media at Anglia Ruskin University Chelmsford & Cambridge, who supervised me during my semester abroad at Anglia Ruskin, fully supported my plans to come back to the UK for a postgraduate degree at the Shakespeare Institute; to him I owe a sincere thank you as well.

In addition to all my friends in the UK and in Germany, who have been very supportive and interested in my work over the past years, another special thank you goes to everyone at the Institute and its library (both staff and students), in particular Dr Martin Wiggins, Rebecca White, Juliet Creese and Karin Brown who helped me through the different problems and crisis which arose in the course of my research. John Settle, the nicest and most wonderful colleague I could have wished for, read parts of this thesis. Thanks a lot for doing that, John! The Malone Society awarded me a bursary for research expenses from October 2007 to October 2010 in exchange for my assistance in selling their publications: thank you so much, I fully enjoyed working with the books and with all the people I met over the years.

Another special thank you goes to various people who kindly provided me with material for this thesis, did translations for me or generally allowed me to ask them about their work. They are Carla Dente and Sara Soncini, who sent me a complimentary copy of their *Crossing Time and Space*, András Szentpéteri from the Operettszínház in Budapest, who sent me recordings and subtitles of their Shakespearean musical versions, as well as Máté Vince, who translated some Hungarian texts for me, Prof. Emil Sirbulescu, Head of the Department for English & American Literature at the University of Craiova (Romania), who kindly offered me his 2010 program of the Shakespeare Festival there, Jerzy Limon, Professor of English at the English Institute, University of Gdansk, President of Theatrum Gendanense Foundation and Managing Director of the Gdansk Shakespeare Theatre, as well as Adelheid von Weiden and Philip Parr, who responded to my enquiries about some aspects of the European Shakespeare Festival Network and its member festivals in Gdansk, Neuss and Bath in particular. The actors Frances Barber, Tim Barlow, Richard Clifford, Martin Hutson and Adam Levy as well as the great director Peter Brook did not mind me asking questions in whatever place and situation I happened to approach them; their answers served to illuminate my own ideas about various practical aspects of my research and I am forever grateful to them for it.

Last but not at all least, I am very much indebted to Rev. Dr Paul Edmondson, Head of Research and Knowledge at The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, for his constant support since I first sent him an email in 2004; without him I would not have reached this stage in my life. Thank you so much, Paul!

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## 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This collection hopes to open a discourse for a subject much ignored by Anglo-centred Shakespearean commentators. As a first attempt, it cannot pretend to inclusive coverage, whether geographical or canonical, and I certainly do not wish to suggest that it somehow contains its topic. I have selected essays that are provocative in that they make different kinds of entrances. [...] What they do share is a concern for how Shakespeare appears and works on stage and in the mind in countries that lie beyond the usual exploration of critics and performance historians.  
Kennedy, *Foreign Shakespeares*, Preface, xvii

The above quote sums up the intentions with which this research project has been started, as it is similarly not intended to be fully exhaustive since too much material exists to analyse in the scope of one thesis. The topic *Narrative Strategies in Shakespearean Productions on 21<sup>st</sup>-century European Stages* arose from an interest in European Shakespeare as well as performance. Publication dates of various scholarly monographs and articles within this particular area of research since Kennedy's book was published in 1993 have been influential in choosing the timeframe for this topic: from 2000 up to today. As Portillo and Gómez-Lara have pointed out, Shakespeare's plays are 'a corpus that may be adjusted, adapted or reinterpreted by each generation depending on its social and cultural background' (Portillo/Gómez-Lara: 1994: p. 220) which is equally applicable to 'each country' within Europe as well as 'each generation'. Within the scholarly community in Great Britain and the USA the viewpoint for an analysis of Shakespearean productions outside of those geographical areas is most often that of the former coloniser. As such, the viewpoint of this thesis has been exclusively directed towards productions performed on the European mainland and in most cases also by companies based there.

Shakespeare seems to have become a household name nowadays, a phenomenon which has partly been analysed by Lanier in his monograph on *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* (Lanier: 2002). The English playwright is everywhere: his plays are alluded to either in fiction or in non-fictional contexts and have often been adapted to serve particular purposes, which occasionally went far beyond performances in theatres. He is and has been

used in many different ways in popular culture, such as filmic adaptations of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. In the recent BBC *Sherlock* for example, the young detective has a skull on his mantelpiece to which he talks like Hamlet to Yorick (a skull can be seen too in the Walt Disney *Great Mouse Detective*); in the black-and-white Basil Rathbone *The Secret Weapon* Holmes, disguised as a Swiss bookseller, refers to Shakespeare as 'Wilhelm Shakespeare, an all German writer', thereby taking up the well-known notion of Shakespeare as one of the three national poets of Germany, as detailed for example by Günther Erken (Erken: 2000: p. 636 and p. 653). In addition, as Douglas Lanier points out (Lanier: 2002: p. 1-2), he even made it into Star Trek when the Klingon Chancellor Gorkon says in the 1991 *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*, directed by Nicholas Meyer, 'You've not experienced Shakespeare until you've read him in the original Klingon!' after which his militaristic general Chang can't resist to quote 'taH pagh taHbe!' (to be or not to be) (Lanier: 2002: p. 2). For Lanier the question arises "What is Shakespeare doing in something so trivial as *Star Trek*?" and he provides the answer that '[this serves] to make the case that the relationship between Shakespeare and popular culture is a legitimate, even important area of study' (Lanier: 2002: p. 2). For me it also serves to illustrate how far the 'adoption' of his plays can go, even in fiction. In reality an example of another use in extremis is the following use of Shakespeare. He was inscribed so much as a symbol for national (or nationalistic) culture in Germany during the Third Reich that Adolf Hitler wrote in a short preface in the program of the 1939 Reichsfestspiele Heidelberg: 'Each form of true art is invigorating. As idiocy and injustice seem to rule the world, we call every German artist to defend the people of this nation in the proudest way possible by means of German art' (my translation). The Reichsfestspiele that year included Joseph von Eichendorff's *Die Freier* / *The Wooers*, Schillers' *Die Räuber* / *The Robbers* and Shakespeare's *Sommernachtstraum* / *A*

*Midsummer Night's Dream*, with a plot summary of each provided in the program in Italian, French, English and Dutch as well as German.

As Dirk Delabastita and Lieven D'Hulst have explained in their introduction of the influential *European Shakespeares* '[t]he rediscovery of the 'European Shakespeare' invites [them] to investigate systematically the routes along which the Bard became international, but not without assuming different roles according to local conditions' (Delabastita/ D'Hulst: 1993: p. 18), which is a similar approach to the direction the following research has taken. Parts of this thesis can also be regarded as an attempt to provide an exemplary answer to some of Ladina Bezzola Lambert and Balz Engler's questions in their introduction to *Shifting the Scene: Shakespeare in European Culture*

How does Shakespeare appear in various cultures and at different times; what does his figure stand for? How have Shakespeare's works been adapted in different genres? What notions of translation have been applied to Shakespeare? How has Shakespeare been adapted to serve various regional/local, political, and emotional needs? Are there European/national traditions of studying Shakespeare? What has Shakespeare's role been in shaping the academic traditions of various countries? What role has Shakespeare played in the schools of different countries? Which plays (if any) have been read? In the student's mother tongue or in English? What has the discussion of the plays focused on?

(Lambert/ Engler: 2002: p. 13)

By honouring Shakespeare's main role as a playwright, the various narrative strategies which exist in theatre have been used as a means to divide this thesis into different chapters: translations and adaptations, musicals, theatre for children and with puppets, performed versions of his poems, productions including "otherness" and finally festivals in Europe which are dedicated to Shakespeare. Each of these narrative strategies has a particular focus when it comes to adapting the plays. As such, theoretical underpinnings for the respective analyses and the chapters' particular focus have been provided each time in introductions.

Thomas Sorge pointed out that 'Shakespeare is preferred by directors these days because they can place their production of a play within or against a traditional theatrical

representations' (Sorge: 1994: p. 321-22). Therefore all chapters in this thesis are concerned with actual performances. The main focus has been directed towards any kind of differences between the original plays and the productions analysed. One of the main aims of this particular research project is to provide a possible answer to the question "How much of the original has to be recognizable in a production to call that production Shakespearean?" Changes to the original plot are sometimes necessitated through the adoption of a different theatrical narrative strategy than in normal spoken drama. In other instances, differences only exist because of other opinions about a play's plot and characters by directors and actors. This approach has been developed as a consequence of what John Joughin explained in his *Shakespeare and National Culture* when he states that 'for some 'Shakespeare' merely continues to signify 'Englishness', [but] the playwright has featured in the construction, refashioning and articulation of a diverse range of other cultures and identities, too. [...] Shakespeare has become the national poet of a variety of countries in particular forms' (Joughin: 1997: p. 1). Which forms he refers to can be glimpsed from the analysis of some of the productions included here.

With regard to the overall timeframe for this project the 21<sup>st</sup> century (from 2000 up to now) has been chosen as, judging by publication dates of scholarly writings in this field, quite a lot of attention has been focused so far on the 1989 divide in European history and the following years to 2000. There are not many publications in contrast which explore the most recent years although it is interesting to see what has been going on in the theatre world since 2000. Like Odette-Irenne Blumenfeld has explained: 'Shakespeare isn't our contemporary, but he is waiting for us to make him contemporary' (Blumenfeld: 1994: p. 232).

As mentioned above, this project has different subtopics –one in each chapter– which is in line with what Michael Bristol and Kathleen McLuskie have written in their *Shakespeare*

*and Modern Theatre* when they state that '[...] the same forms have different meanings in different environments' (Bristol/ McLuskie: 2001: p. 28).

As such the first chapter is focused on Shakespeare's plays in translation. There is an advantage of Shakespeare's plays in foreign countries and languages as Carla Dente has detailed in her introduction to *Crossing Time and Space: Shakespeare translations in present-day Europe* (Dente: 2008: p. 9-17). Putting on translated versions of his plays is probably the most common strategy employed in Europe: two examples from 2000 (Germany) and 2004/05 (Spain) as well as a translated playtext published in France in 1945 have been provided; the chosen piece from Shakespeare is Hamlet's famous monologue in Act 3 Scene 1 for each of these examples. The second chapter deals with plays which have been adapted from the original *Richard III*, *1 & 2 Henry IV*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Titus Andronicus*; the adaptations have been performed in Germany (*Richard III*: 2005/ *Titus Andronicus*: 2003), France (*1 & 2 Henry IV*: 2008) and Switzerland (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*: 2004). The third chapter includes analysis of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (Hungary, 2004), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Hungary, 2008) and *Hamlet* (Germany, 2008) in musical form. The following chapter is concerned with what happens to the originals if they get adapted for performances for children or for productions with puppets. Surprisingly enough two plays (*Othello*: 2001, *Henry V*: 2001) have been chosen for the first one of these particular narrative strategies. They do not seem very much like suitable candidates for a young audience in contrast to *The Winter's Tale* (2003). This particular play seems more like it might be fitting for children as it depicts children and later on young adults as well as their relationship with their parents to a large extent. Yet, a somewhat unusual approach has been taken with this play too. *Richard III* has been used for performances with puppets in both Finland (2006 and 2009) and Germany (2001) but the two are totally different. Where

does this difference come in when they are both based on the same play? It will be interesting to see how much of the original plot and the characters has been preserved. The sixth chapter deals with *Venus and Adonis* (2001) as well as *The Rape of Lucrece* (2006) and the *Sonnets* (2009) in performance. Both narrative poems have been combined with texts by other authors, although these are concerned with the same overall topic. The *Sonnets* have been put on stage in a collaborative effort by Robert Wilson and Rufus Wainwright with the Berliner Ensemble in 2009. The penultimate chapter is concerned with the motive of “otherness” in Shakespearean productions to question the notion of productions with Asian or postcolonial influences rightfully being the only ones to point out “the other”. This chapter will also try to answer the query if plays such as *Othello* or *The Tempest* with their inherent idea of at least two different cultures clashing with each other are a singular occurrence or if this notion rather depends on staging practices. As such each subchapter includes a special notion of otherness: the first one is an inclusion of neo-Nazis as actors (2001), another production has been put on by hearing and deaf actors (2007 and 2009) and a third one is a multilingual performance (2004). Others, such as a German *Cymbeline* in Romania (2004) and an African *Hamlet* (2004, 2006 and 2007), make use of different cultural circumstances than the country’s main culture. The last notion of otherness comes in due to the changed delivery type of two productions in an online theatre, namely *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* (this project was started in 2009 but no other date has been given for individual performances). The last chapter of this thesis provides an overview over the European Shakespeare Festival Network and its five founding members in Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania and England. In addition, selected performances from 2005 (Germany), 2006 (Poland), 2009 (Hungary), 2010 (England and Romania) have been included to show the international outlook of these festivals. The conclusion will take up the questions raised in this introduction and answer it on the basis of

the analysis in the different chapters. As mentioned above, the main question is: “How much of the original has to be recognizable in a production to call that production Shakespearean?”

#### Note on the editions used of William Shakespeare’s plays

If not noted otherwise in the different chapters, the editions used for comparative purposes have been:

- for *Coriolanus*: Shakespeare, William (2008), *Coriolanus*, ed. R. B. Parker (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- for *Cymbeline*: Shakespeare, William (2008), *Cymbeline*, ed. Roger Warren (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- for *Hamlet*: Shakespeare, William (2008), *Hamlet*, ed. G. R. Hibbard (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- for *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: Shakespeare, William (2001), *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, ed. Harold F. Brook (London: Thomson Learning).
- for *Richard III*: Shakespeare, William (2008), *Richard III*, ed. John Jowett (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- for *Romeo and Juliet*: Shakespeare, William (2008), *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. Jill. L. Levenson (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- for *The Winter’s Tale*: Shakespeare, William (1998), *The Winter’s Tale*, Ed. Stephen Orgel (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- for the *Sonnets*, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*: Shakespeare, William (2002), *Complete Sonnets and Poems*, ed. Colin Burrow (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- for *Titus Andronicus*: Shakespeare, William (2003), *Titus Andronicus*, ed. Jonathan Bate (London: Thomson Learning).
- for all other plays: Shakespeare, William (1997), *The Norton Shakespeare – Complete Edition*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus (London and New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.).

## 2. INTRODUCTION: SHAKESPEARE IN TRANSLATION

This chapter is concerned with a topic which has been called the ‘Cinderella’ of Shakespeare studies by Dirk Delabastita and Lieven D’Hulst in the introduction to their 1993 edition *European Shakespeares: Translating Shakespeare in the Romantic Age*: that of Shakespeare in translation (Delabastita/ D’Hulst: 1993: p. 9-24, here especially p. 12). Although its publication was almost two decades ago, according to Ton Hoenselaars’s view on the matter in his chapter on ‘Shakespeare and Translation’ in the 2003 *Oxford Guide to Shakespeare*, ‘[it] has not yet been fully recognized as one of the so-called alternative Shakespeares’ (Hoenselaars: 2003: p. 654): translation still seems to be a problematic field in this particular area of scholarly research.

In 1993 Delabastita and D’Hulst tried to explain this issue by stating that any translated version seems to be interesting to academics only because it allows for research into the ‘target culture’s beliefs and obsessions’ (Delabastita/ D’Hulst: 1993: p.12) and not because the translated texts might have any intrinsic value on their own. This seems to have changed in the meantime since many contemporary translators of Shakespeare’s oeuvre are also either scholars or at least write about their preoccupation with the texts: Jean-Michel Déprats (Déprats: 2001 and 2006) and Yves Bonnefoy (2004) for French, Maik Hamburger for German (Hamburger: 2004), Alessandro Serpieri for Italian (Serpieri: 2004 and 2006) or Angel-Luis Pujante (Pujante: 2007 and 2010) and Manuel Angel Conejero (Conejero: 1991) for Spanish. Nowadays however researchers like Ton Hoenselaars fear that the term or rather the concept of ‘Shakespeare in translation’ has become too widespread and therefore, though in a different direction, is in danger of losing focus again (Hoenselaars: 2008: p. 113). He states that an ‘attempt to re-focus on the linguistic experience of translation’ (Hoenselaars: 2008: p. 114) might prove necessary in future.



As a professional translator myself, this ‘linguistic experience’ has been one of my main aims for this chapter in combination with an enquiry about the use of translated texts in performance. I have therefore chosen to concentrate on an excerpt from two translations used for productions in Germany and Spain in 2000 and 2004 respectively: the play performed was *Hamlet* and the excerpt is his famous ‘To be or not to be’ monologue in the versions by August Wilhelm Schlegel (German) and Leandro Fernández de Moratín (Spanish). Incidentally, both translations were published shortly one after the other in 1797-8. To provide a contrast to these texts I have decided to include the non-performed French ‘To be or not to be’ in André Gide’s translation. It was published for the first time in 1945 in a bilingual French-English edition. Gide translated for performance whereas Moratín as well as Schlegel more or less intended their translations to be read. As such all three translations come with some necessary background, either about the performance (Germany) or the way the translator approached the text (Moratín and Gide), which are provided first in each sub-chapter before an analysis of the texts.

I would like to give an overview of some necessary theoretical underpinnings beforehand. According to Roman Jakobson (Jakobson quoted in Hoenselaars: 2003: p. 646) there are three different types of translation. The first is the intralingual translation process, which in the context of Shakespeare would mean a translation of his Elizabethan English into modern English for an easier understanding by a contemporary native speaker for example. The second type is the interlingual translation process, or ‘translation proper’: in the context of this particular chapter the translation of Hamlet’s monologue from English into other languages (German, French and Spanish). Finally, there is the intersemiotic translation: it signifies the transfer from word to image or gesture and from speech to acting for instance. This is important too for the following analysis since my attention is partly directed towards

the fact that two post-2000 productions have been combined with translations which were not intended for the stage. Is there anything in those particular texts which could possibly enhance a performance and might therefore explain their usage? To be able to answer this initial question the texts have been retranslated into English before they are compared with Hamlet's monologue; the reference point for this was the Oxford Shakespeare edition of the play for Schlegel and Moratín and the English text Gide decided to include for his translation.

It becomes apparent that there is another important theoretical background which should be considered here: that of the relation between the time when a translation has been made and when a play is staged, which is something for example Jean-Michel Déprats writes about in his 'Translation at the intersections of history' (Déprats: 2001: 75-92). When considering the inherent process from a purely linguistic point of view, it will hopefully be obvious that Shakespeare was writing his plays for a certain context: that of theatrical performance. When faced with such a text therefore, the translator has to decide first for which purpose he or she is translating. Is it a text to be staged or to be read? If the former, it is necessary to imbue the new text with a rhythm suitable for spoken language; if the latter, this necessity might prove a lesser problem than the style of the language used. When translated for reading in private the focus on style is more often than not greater than the preservation of speech patterns and natural rhythm which are important for performance. As such it is interesting to see what the three translators considered in this chapter made of Hamlet's monologue since only one of them has explicitly translated for the stage. The possible pitfall which arises as an important part of the initial 'for page or stage' question at the start of this paragraph is the kind of language used for a translation. Is an antiquated style still acceptable or is a more contemporary language the most suitable possibility to reproduce a text? According to Yves Bonnefoy, 'there is nothing more dangerous than dreaming of translating

Shakespeare [...] in an imitation of [one's] own language at the turn of the sixteenth century' (Bonney quoted in Déprats: 2001: p. 81-82) in order to give the same theatrical impression compared to how a contemporary native speaker might experience Shakespeare in Elizabethan English. There is a tendency today to commission new translations for performances to give them a modern feel and this is another reason why the productions considered in this chapter are particularly interesting. Schlegel's text has been a stalwart in theatre for more than 200 years but sounds sometimes as old-fashioned to German ears as Shakespeare's language does to a modern speaker. Moratín's text has never been staged until now as it was never intended to be performed whereas, as already mentioned above, Gide in turn translated for the stage. So how do their translations compare to Shakespeare's original text?

## 2.1. *HAMLET* AT THE BERLINER ENSEMBLE: MORE A CLOWN THAN A CONFUSED YOUNG MAN

This production of *Hamlet* was performed by the Berliner Ensemble at their theatre in Berlin and had its premiere on 28 February 2000. It was remarkable in so far as Ursula Höpfner, who played Gertrude, also doubled as Ophelia and Oliver Stern, who was Hamlet, portrayed the Ghost and Claudius as well. The underlying translation was, as already mentioned in the introduction, done by August Wilhelm Schlegel for the 9-volume edition of Shakespeare's oeuvre in German, published between 1797 and 1810 in Berlin. It was adapted for this production by Achim Freyer, who also was responsible for directing as well as scenery. The textual version ultimately used was printed in full in a so called 'Programmbuch' (program book; William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, as performed by the Berliner Ensemble, Berlin, 2000) which also included some photos, selected quotes from other writers and a short preface by Freyer.

It seems that Freyer used this preface to settle the reader of the program into his particular version of *Hamlet*. He explains that the protagonist has been born into a royal family and that his fate is determined by the death of his father at his uncle's hand and the marriage of his mother to said uncle (Freyer in program book: 2000: preface, p. 32). According to Freyer Hamlet's problem, which is at the core of the play, is based on a unity of four concepts: that of heaven (by which he means God), that of his father (the Ghost) and of his mother (saint and whore) as well as of his murderous uncle (who stands in for Hamlet himself). As these influence his perceptions of the female (his lover) and the male (his friends), Hamlet is lost somewhere in between (Freyer in program book: 2000: preface, p.32). He is obsessed with Claudius and it seems like Freyer takes recourse here to Freud's Oedipus complex to explain his decision to double Hamlet and Claudius as well as Gertrude and Ophelia. Hamlet loves his mother but as he cannot have her he woos Ophelia instead which however means that he attains the unattainable on two levels through the doubling. His mother is of course unavailable because she married his uncle but as Hamlet is also Claudius he can have her on this second level. As Maik Hamburger observed in his review of the play in the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 137, this is indeed Hamlet's main problem. He cannot rid himself of his 'objectified alter ego' (Hamburger: 2001: p. 169) and this proves to be his downfall. According to Freyer's preface (Freyer in program book: 2000: preface, p.32), this conflict can only be solved through 'the[ir] violent, joint death'. It might be a noble aim but Hamburger for example remarks that for some scenes the doubling did not work very well and on the whole the production as such was not as 'dense' (Hamburger: 2001: p. 170) as one might have expected. It was more fragmented than a coherent whole and the characters did not enter into any serious relations with each other, which occasionally made the whole production seem farce-like.

This effect was further supported through the use of a prologue, which was spoken by Maria Happel as a personification of Night; she also portrayed Horatio. The text used (Freyer in program book: 2000: p.35) comes from the prologue to the 1710 *Der bestrafte Brudermord* (*The Punished Fratricide*). Night is a kind of Chorus and introduces the audience into the play. She does not however explain or foreshadow the plot but rather her role. It is she who puts everything and everyone to sleep so that both good and bad things can happen: she uses her 'dark coat' to cover up everything and will present a play, *Der bestrafte Brudermord* to be precise, before Phoebus rises and brings light again. The basic function of *Der bestrafte Brudermord* in the particular context of Freyer's production seems to be the same as *Hamlet* does indeed start at night and then progresses from there. It seems like a framing device but as, at the end of this production, Horatio does not get to say "Good night, sweet prince" it seems like a beginning without an end somehow. Instead, this *Hamlet* cuts off with the protagonist asking Horatio to confer the crown of Denmark to Fortinbras before succumbing to the poison. Hamburger also observes that the last third of the performance seemed to drag on without any important underlying meaning: it seems, judging from the above, that Freyer tried to achieve too much and therefore lost out on inner coherency (Hamburger: 2001: p. 171).

The use of Schlegel's 200-year-old text for Hamlet's monologue in contrast to these modern, Freudian ideas adds a further jarring note, though Schlegel also took recourse to some kind of blank verse in his translation. Within the play this monologue still occurs in Act 3 Scene 1 after the conversations of Gertrude, Claudius, Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern about Hamlet and whether or not his love for Ophelia is the reason for his emotional upheaval and strange behaviour. The one non-textual element influencing the audience's perception of the main character in this moment is, because of the doubling, the

immediate change from King Claudius to Hamlet: this is achieved, as Hamburger observes, by Oliver Stern turning the black, inner side of his coat outside and the outer, golden layer inside as well as changing his felt crown to a ruff (Hamburger: 2001: p. 170). Effectively, he goes ‘offstage’ as Claudius on stage and comes back as Hamlet, all in full view of the audience.

For the following analysis a table has been provided with all three versions at the end of this sub-chapter as a reference point. The first column shows Schlegel’s translation in Freyer’s adaptation (the italics in all three indicate cut lines in this production), the middle column shows Shakespeare’s original text taken from the Oxford edition and the last column shows a retranslation of Schlegel’s text into English for comparative reasons, including the lines cut by Freyer. Although the aim was to give the retranslation a normal English flow, sometimes Schlegel’s structure has been preserved when it first seemed like a slight change in meaning had been the result of linguistic differences between English and German.

After the above mentioned character switch, Oliver Stern as Hamlet starts his monologue with the well-known words ‘To be or not to be’. The next half line includes a first slight change in meaning. Whereas the original only has ‘that is the question’ (3.1.57) Schlegel included a ‘here’ at this moment, which, together with Freyer’s doubling decision, drives home the point this Hamlet’s identity is fluent. Unlike in other productions and in contrast to the respective footnote in the Oxford edition (p. 239, footnote to line 57-89), this is a very clear reference to Hamlet as a character or to what he himself understands as his identity in this moment in contrast to mankind in general. The next line generally seems to divide textual scholars as it is not clear if it should be read ‘it’s ‘nobler in the mind’ to suffer’ with ‘nobler’ and ‘mind’ as one unity or if it should be ‘it’s nobler ‘in the mind to suffer’ with ‘mind’ and ‘suffer’ taken together (cp. p. 239, footnote to line 58 in Oxford edition). Schlegel

in contrast has made a very clear decision, which can be inferred from the way he used commas. His main phrase reads ‘Whether it’s nobler in the soul, [explanation of what might be happening in the soul], or, [explanation of how to resist against what], to end them through resisting’: for him the ‘nobler’ refers to the whole underlying action (suffer or resist) rather than either a ‘noble mind’ or ‘noble suffering’. It still is a question though. The following two exclamations, although once rendered as ‘No more’ and then as ‘Nothing more’ in Schlegel’s translation, have the same underlying meaning. Hamlet is meditating about life and death, meaning the natural sleep which is necessary for life versus the illusion of eternal sleep when one is dead. This is also the one moment when Freyer decided to cut some lines from the Schlegel version. They are relatively the same as in the original; the different wording in the retranslation arises from the fact Schlegel used words appropriate in his own time, which sound old-fashioned nowadays, though they carry the same meaning as Shakespeare’s original vocabulary. This cut part gives this monologue a slightly different feel however as it contains the reasons why one might wish for death. Yet in the light of this production, it is one of the moments when Hamlet might be reflecting on his relationship with Claudius as Freyer points out in the preface that one cannot be without the other unless both are dead (Freyer in program book: 2000: preface, p.32). By cutting these lines it seems that this Hamlet does not want to die as he would be forever haunted by his alter ego: he therefore tries to justify his choice for life over death to himself and by extension to the audience.

From this moment onwards, Schlegel’s and Shakespeare’s versions show almost no differences apart from nuances when it comes to sentence structure. These can be explained by general linguistic differences between German and English as such, for example positions of verbs in sentences, and also by the fact that Shakespeare lived about two hundred years earlier than Schlegel. This in turn necessitates an addition to the (dis-)unity of time of

translation and time of play discussed earlier in the introduction. In Shakespeare's time the English language was very much in flux and the playwright often coined words and phrases still in use today. Although German also has a rich linguistic history, by Schlegel's time many concepts and phrases have become fossilised and as such are no longer usable for double meanings, puns and wordplays that Shakespeare could use when he was writing his plays. In addition Schlegel was writing during the romantic period which had strong sensibilities when it came to certain matters: it is perhaps more indicative with regard to the unsuitability of Schlegel's translation for this production when considering a phrase Hamburger includes in his review of the play. He writes 'When this Ophelia sang: 'Before you joked with me, / you promised to wed me' for 'Before you tumbled me/ You promised me to wed,' , different worlds had been lost.' (Hamburger: 2001: p. 171).

Thinking back to especially Freyer's use of doubling, the Schlegel monologue in which Hamlet ponders about suicide while attempting to talk himself out of this idea seems relatively tame: it is not that much different from Shakespeare's original. The English writer turned him into an eloquent young man who is suffering from a very real cause in this moment despite his mad behaviour in the rest of the play. Yet, in Freyer's production it cannot be overlooked that this Hamlet is also Claudius and has therefore committed not only fratricide but also patricide. One might have wished rather than to reflect about suicide as if he were only one person, he would have reflected about the murders he has committed and for the language to support this. I therefore agree with Hamburger when he says that Schlegel's text and Freyer's adaptation portray Hamlet as a man who manages to turn Shakespeare's eloquent words into clumsy thoughts simply by uttering them within this setting (Hamburger: 2001: p. 169). One might have wished for another translation as Schlegel's text for this particular production.





<p>Wenn nicht die Furcht vor etwas nach dem Tod – Das unentdeckte Land, von dem Kein Wanderer wiederkehrt – den Willen schwächt, Dass wir die Übel, die wir haben, lieber Ertragen, als zu unbekannten fliehn. So macht Bewusstsein Feige aus uns allen; Die angeborne Farbe der Entschließung Wird durch des Gedankens Blässe angekränkt; Und größte Unternehmungen Geraten aus der Bahn. – Still! Die schöne Ophelia. – Nymph, schließ In dein Gebet all meine Sünden ein.</p>	<p>No traveller returns, puzzles the will, And makes us rather bear those ills we have Than fly to others that we know not of? Thus conscience does make cowards of us all; And thus the native hue of resolution Is sicklied o'er the pale cast of thought, And enterprises of great pith and moment With this regard their currents turn away And lose the name of action. – Soft you now, The fair Ophelia. – Nymph, in thy orisons Be all my sins remembered.</p>	<p>And sighs and sweats from weariness of life? If not the fear or something after death – The undiscovered country, from where No traveller returns – weakens the will, That we the miseries, which we have, rather Suffer than to flee to unknown things. In this way conscience makes us all to cowards; The inherent colour of decision Gets ill through the paleness of the thought; And the largest enterprises Are thrown off track. – Silent! The fair Ophelia. – Nymph, include In your prayer all my sins.</p>
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## 2.2. *HAMLET* IN ALMAGRO: NEVER BEFORE SEEN ON STAGE IN SPAIN

This version of *Hamlet* was performed for the first time on 8 July 2004 during the Festival de Teatro Clásico in Almagro and was put on in 2005 at the Teatro de La Abadía in Madrid. In this case ‘first time’ means both that it was the premiere of this particular production and also that it was the first time at all this translation had been used for a performance since its initial publication. It was a production by Noviembre Compañía de Teatro under the direction of Eduardo Vasco and the playwright and, for this piece, adaptor Yolanda Pallín. Unlike Freyer’s casting decision detailed in the previous chapter, there had been no doubling of the main characters. The company had decided to use a translation of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* by Leandro Fernández de Moratín, which was published in Spain in 1798, though initially under the pseudonym of Inarco Celenio. It is famous for being the first direct translation from the original English play into Spanish and is mostly in prose. Though there are direct references to Moratín’s dislike of Shakespeare’s style in his introduction as well as in extensive footnotes and comments, the theatre company and especially Pallín invoked the image of a translator who ‘was knocked off his feet, struck with love on reading it [= Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*]’ to justify their decision to do what nobody else had done before (quoted and translated by Pujante in Pujante: 2008: p. 50, footnote 8). Half of Moratín’s text was left out however, presumably in an attempt to break down the performance time to a more manageable length of little more than two hours. Particularly, to give one example, the actors’ scenes were radically cut so that the play-in-a-play was reduced to the dumb show only (2.2 and 3.2 in Shakespeare’s text), which in turn necessitated dropping Hamlet’s speech ‘what a rogue and peasant slave am I!’ (2.2.538-594 in Shakespeare’s text) as well. In addition, characters like Osric and Fortinbras were dropped: their actions and speeches were described or summarized by other characters.

Coming back to the initial idea of performing Moratín's version because he admired Shakespeare unconditionally, I agree with Angel-Luis Pujante that nothing could be further from the truth. Yet it seems as if this question of Moratín's (dis)like is more widespread. Juan-Jesús Zaro for example remarks on it too in his case study on Spanish translations of Shakespeare's plays in *Shakespeare en España* (Zaro: 2001: 71-91). He does not provide any concrete evidence in which way this admiration manifested itself however. The importance of Moratín's work for following generations is evident though in 33 subsequent re-publications of his translation until 1978 (Zaro: 2001: p. 76). His influence is still present too, according to Portillo and Salvador (Portillo/ Salvador: 2003: p. 181), in Spanish character names for modern *Hamlet* productions such as 'Ricardo' (Richard), 'Guillermo' (William) and 'La Sombra' (Shadow) for Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and the Ghost. It is likely that his initial motivation to attempt this particular translation was partly based on his own experience: Moratín saw part of Shakespeare's oeuvre in the theatre while he was in London 'as ambassador [sic] of Ferdinand VII, in 1798' and might have seen some plays too during an earlier stay in the country in 1792/93 (cp. the section on Moratín on the website of Basel University's SHINE project, <http://pages.unibas.ch/shine/home.html>, [last access: 22/09/2011]). In retrospection, he 'made an important difference not so much through his job as a translator but by being accompanied by the Shakespearean actor Kemble, who helped him and Spain better understand Shakespeare' (cp. the section on Moratín on the website of Basel University's SHINE project, <http://pages.unibas.ch/shine/home.html>, [last access: 22/09/2011]).

When looking at the translation itself it becomes obvious that Moratín did not admire Shakespeare like other translators for example Schlegel, but he still begrudgingly praised him occasionally, which is also demonstrated in the context of Hamlet's monologue. The Spanish

translator was influenced by the general neoclassical sentiment prevailing in many European countries at that time, most notably in France. As such, although it seems likely that he knew the French neoclassical Shakespeare adaptations by Ducis, a writer and ‘translator’ who without any knowledge of English adapted some plays for the stage, Moratín took recourse to an earlier French version, turning against the general neoclassical attitude in some respects. Instead, he consulted the *Hamlet* of Le Tourneur, whose translations were published in 20 volumes from 1776-83 in Paris (cp. the section on Moratín on the website of Basel University’s SHINE project, <http://pages.unibas.ch/shine/home.html>, [last access: 22/09/2011]). The Spanish felt on the one hand that Le Tourneur went too far with his desire to improve Shakespeare’s text, on the other hand he also copied some ‘improvements’ and adapted others. The only deliberate omission in Moratín’s translation is connected to sexual language: he rendered Hamlet’s line ‘That’s a fair thought to lie between maid’s legs’ (3.2.110) as ‘¡Qué dulce cosa es...’ (Act 3, Scene 6, ‘That’s a fair/sweet thing...’), followed by a footnote including the full line in English and explaining that he rendered only half of it ‘as its translation might offend the modesty of some readers’ (Moratín: no date given: p. 530, footnote 2). All in all, as Pujante puts it (Pujante: 2008: p. 55), Moratín rendered *Hamlet* more faithfully than Le Tourneur had done, though at least two times linguistic mistakes crept in too. The first one is connected to Hamlet’s line “Or that the Everlasting had not fixed/ His canon ‘gainst self-slaughter!” (1.2.131-132). It was rendered as, by misunderstanding ‘canon’ for ‘cannon’, ‘ó el Todopoderoso no asestara el canon contra el homicida de sí mismo’ (‘or that the Almighty will not point the cannon against a self-murderer’, Moratín: no date given: p. 475). The second one occurs in Hamlet’s famous monologue, which will be commented on in the following.

Hamlet's 'To be or not to be' speech in Moratín's version (included in a table at the end of this sub-chapter) is remarkable for several reasons. It starts not with a simple 'ser o no ser' which is the usual translation for 'to be or not to be': according to Pujante's research on Spanish *Hamlet* translations (Pujante: 2008: p. 49), Moratín's version is the only one which has 'existir' ('to exist'), thereby possibly rendering an even deeper meaning to this line than would normally be the case. As was his general custom throughout the text, the Spanish translator included a footnote here, in which he first gives a translation of Ben Jonson's explanation of Hamlet's speech (Moratín: no date given: p. 521, footnote 1) and then provides his own thoughts on this particular moment (Moratín: no date given: p. 521, footnote 1). It is too long to render it here in full but it is one of those moments when Moratín teeters on the brink between distaste and admiration. He states that 'this discourse of Hamlet is unsuitable for his current situation' and that 'this fear is unworthy of a noble soul'. Could it not be that 'the devil has created the apparition [= the Ghost]'? If that were the case, there should 'not be the necessity of doing anything at all', provided 'everything is just false appearances'. He also admits however that 'Hamlet's monologue is one of the most applauded passages of this tragedy and has fully earned this applause' (Moratín: no date given: footnote, p. 522).

The next line is similar to Schlegel's interpretation: Moratín's Hamlet wonders as well if it is nobler for the soul to suffer or to resist. What follows is however another instance when he misread Shakespeare's words: instead of translating 'arms' as 'weapons', he understood it as 'arms (and hands)', thereby using the Spanish equivalent 'brazos'. Though most probably unintentional, this linguistic blunder implies a more active personal resistance against the 'sea of troubles' than what 'arms/weapons' might stand for in Shakespeare's text. It seems more likely that Moratín's mistranslation refers to Hamlet himself and what he should do, rather than just detailing general thoughts about resistance against suffering and pain.

Another difference when compared to the original *Hamlet* is the change from ‘to die, to sleep [...] to die, to sleep. To sleep, perchance to dream.’ in Shakespeare’s text (3.1.61-65) to ‘To die is to sleep [...] to die is to sleep... and sometimes dream’ in Moratín’s text. It does not amount to such a great difference however since Moratín’s Hamlet also equates death with eternal sleep, asking himself if this might not be something desirable when suffering but then concludes that, since in that sleep there might be dreams too, it is not such a good idea after all to end one’s own life. It seems though that Moratín is deliberately using a more expressive language as if to clarify Hamlet’s thoughts for the reader without using too many images and metaphors like Shakespeare did.

What is more significant however is the question mark the Spanish used for ‘and by a sleep...that flesh is heir to’ (3.1.62-64). Whereas Shakespeare’s Hamlet says this line with some sort of conviction and only begins to think about the issue of dreaming when dead after he has pondered ‘to die, to sleep. To sleep, perchance to dream’, Moratín’s Hamlet already seems to suspect that there is more and questions this general assumption that death brings release of ‘heartache and [...] shocks’. This Hamlet seems like someone who has thought longer about this topic even before, which might also be supported by the initial ‘to exist or not to exist’, which points towards deeper lying ideas about one’s existence. The following lines are approximately the same in both the original (3.1.64-89) and the translation till the very end, discounting varieties due to linguistic reasons and the change from blank verse to prose. However, there is a tiny instance when Moratín seems to have added an explicative ‘if this [= consideration that dreams might occur after death] didn’t exist’ to make it clear that this is the one thought which is deterring Hamlet from committing suicide in this moment.

The last non-semantic deviation from the original occurs in the passage ‘For who would bear [...] / With a bare bodkin?’ (3.1.71-77 in Shakespeare’s text) although this

difference seems to offer no textual/situational explanation as to its reason. To use a shortened version of Shakespeare's words here to make it more obvious, Moratín's version reads 'law's delay, insolence of office, patient merit of the unworthy, pangs of disprized love, whips and scorns of time, oppressor's wrong, proud man's contumely'. Apart from the linguistic observation that the first six nouns used in the Spanish text are feminine and the last one is masculine, there is apparently no reason to justify this change. However, when considering the general context of the plot, it seems that Hamlet lists those concepts which have brought him to this point in a particular order: the law's delay in dealing with his father's murder, the pressure his uncle puts on everyone at court, the merit which is taken away from him as his father's intended successor, the inherent problems between him and Ophelia, the misery of time passing and the haughty attitude his uncle displays towards him. It might be that Moratín wanted to clarify this list for his readers as it goes from the most important reason in Hamlet's current situation to a very simple one. There is however no linguistic evidence in this passage to support this view.

On the whole one can see why this text would appeal to a theatre company for a production of *Hamlet*: the language is kept relatively simple and, through the use of prose, also easy to comprehend when spoken by an actor on stage. It certainly is not that old-fashioned as Schlegel's translation might seem like. Few words in this passage have an archaic ring to them and the overall structure is very similar to modern Spanish. The added short phrases to focus attention on the concepts Hamlet is thinking about are helpful for an audience. The passage displays a certain dramatic quality in how it is composed and as such the decision to finally use Moratín's version for a performance seems long overdue.



Leandro Fernández de Moratín	William Shakespeare	Re-translation
<p>Existir (1) ó no existir, esta es la cuestion. ¿Cuál es mas digna accion del ánimo, sufrir los tiros penetrantes de la fortuna injusta, ú oponer los brazos á este torrente de calamidades y darlas fin con atrevida resistencia ? Morir es dormir. ¿No mas ? ¿Y por un sueño, diremos, las afflicciones se acabaron y los dolores sin número, patrimonio de nuestra débil naturaleza ?... Este es término que deberiamos solicitar con ansia. Morir es dormir... y tal vez soñar. Si y ved aqui el grande obstáculo : porque el considerar qué sueños podrán ocurrir en el silencio del sepulcro, cuando hayamos abandonado este despojo mortal, es razon harto poderosa para detenernos. Esta es la consideracion que hace nuestra infelicidad tan larga. ¿Quien, si esto no fuese, aguantaria la lentitud de los tribunales, la insolencia de los empleados, las tropelías que recibe pacífico el mérito de los hombres mas indignos, las angustias de un mal pagado amor, las injurias y quebrantes de la edad, la violencia de los tiranos, el desprecio de los soberbios, cuando el que esto sufre pudiera procurar su quietud con solo un puñal ? ¿Quién podria tolerar tanta opresion, sudando, gimiendo bajo el peso de una vida molesta,</p>	<p>To be, or not to be – that is the question:  Whether ‘tis nobler in the mind to suffer  The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  And by opposing end them? To die, to sleep –  No more; and by a sleep to say we end  The heartache and the thousand natural shocks  That flesh is heir to – ‘tis a consummation  Devoutly to be wished: to die, to sleep.  To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there’s the  rub;  For in that sleep of death what dreams may  come,  When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  Must give us pause. There’s the respect  That makes calamity of so long life.  For who would bear the whips and scorns of  time,  The oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s  contumely,  The pangs of disprized love, the law’s delay,  The insolence of office, and the spurns  That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  When he himself might his quietus make  With a bare bodkin? Who would these fardels  bear,  To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  But that the dread of something after death,  The undiscovered country, from whose bourn</p>	<p>To exist or not to exist, that is the question.  Which is the nobler action of the soul, to  suffer the biting shots of unjust fortune, or  to put up arms against this stream of  catastrophes and end them with bold  resistance? To die is to sleep. Not more?  And for a dream, let’s say, the sorrows end  and the innumerable pains, heritage of our  fragile nature? ... This is an end which we  should desire with passion. To die is to  sleep... and sometimes dream. Yes, that is  the great obstacle: Because the  consideration which dreams can happen in  the silence of the tomb, when we have  abandoned this mortal remains, is reason  enough to pause. This is the consideration  which makes our misery that great. Who,  if this didn’t exist, would bear the laziness  of the juries, the arrogance of the officials,  the injustices which quietly receive the  merit of nobler men, the miseries of an  unrequited love, the abuse and sadness of  the age, the violence of tyrants, the scorn  of the arrogant, if he who suffers could  procure his quietus with a knife only? Who  could tolerate the weight of such  cumbrous life if there’s not this fear that  something exists beyond death (that  unknown country from whose borders no</p>

<p>si no fuese que el temor de que existe alguna cosa mas allá de la muerte (aquel país desconocido, de cuyos límites ningun caminante torna) nos embaraza en dudas y nos hace sufrir los males que nos cercan, ántes que ir á buscar otros de que no tenemos seguro conocimiento ? Esta prevision nos hace á todos cobardes : así la natural tintura del valor se debilita con los barnices pálidos de la prudencia ; las empresas de mayor importancia por esta sola consideracion mudan camino, no se ejecutan, y se reducan á designios vanos. Pero... ¡la hermosa Ofelia ! Graciosa niña, espero que mis defectos no serán olvidados en tus oraciones.</p>	<p>No traveller returns, puzzles the will, And makes us rather bear those ills we have That fly to others that we know not of? Thus conscience does make cowards of us all; And thus the native hue of resolution Is sicklied o'er the pale cast of thought, And enterprises of great pith and moment With this regard their currents turn away And lose the name of action. – Soft you now, The fair Ohelia. – Nymph, in thy orisons Be all my sins remembered.</p>	<p>travellers returns) which embraces us in doubt and makes us suffer these miseries which surround us, before we go and look for others which we don't have solid knowledge of? This vision turns us all into cowards. In this manner the natural colour of bravery weakens with the pale colour of care: the enterprises of major importance change direction for this consideration, they are not carried out and are reduced to vain designs. But...! Beautiful Ophelia! Gracious girl, I hope my flaws are not forgotten in your prayers!</p>
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### 2.3. ANDRÉ GIDE'S *HAMLET*: A STRONG SENSE OF CLARITY FOR PERFORMANCE PURPOSES

This French version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has not been recently used in performance although it was specifically translated for this purpose. André Gide himself regarded the performability of his text as his ultimate aim. His personal history with translating *Hamlet* in particular did not start well however and it took him more than twenty years and a lot of persuasion by Jean-Louis Barrault, the well-known French director, actor and mime artist, to take up this task again. Gide encountered Shakespeare first in translated versions as well as the theatre as member of the audience. His initial start in 1922 of translating the complete *Hamlet* had been curtailed by the difficulties he encountered in Shakespeare's language: Gide writes in the introduction to the 1945 bilingual English and French edition that '[The] first act wore [him] out! [He] put more effort into it alone than [he] did into all five acts of Antony and Cleopatra.' (Gide: 1945: preface, no pages given; translation by Heylen: 1993: p. 77). In fact, the only play to fare this badly in addition to *Hamlet* is *Troilus and Cressida* in his opinion. He did not attempt translating the rest of the play in 1922 although the first act was published in 1930. His exclamation and inherent criticism in the 1945 preface was not meant in a negative way: Gide admired Shakespeare deeply and was fully convinced that his works were 'the supreme incarnation of Romanticism' (Heylen: 1993: p. 77), thereby important for encouraging the French to look outside of their own culture and enlarge their perspective in the process. What was causing his problem with *Hamlet* was the inability to stay close to the original when it came to the inherent meaning and emotions and conveying them in contemporary French which could be understood by everyone. He tried to combine the playwright's language with classical French taste (Lieblein: 2004: p. 78) and failed miserably, as he admits. For Gide some of Shakespeare's language in *Hamlet* was even worse than the 'most enigmatic declamations in any of Corneille's texts' (Gide: 1945: preface, no pages

given). Although he gave up on this particular project in the end, he did not forget it all together nor, in addition, what made him attempt a translation in the first place.

Gide started to work on *Hamlet* again after a chance meeting with Jean-Louis Barrault in Marseille in 1942. The play now took on an additional layer of meaning for the two men and Gide translated and revised for almost six to eight hours per day for three months. Barrault had asked him to reconsider his initial project since he wanted to convey to a potential theatre audience ‘the truthful, realistic tone of Shakespearian poetry’ (Heylen: 1993: p. 80). He did not want the character’s romantic qualities, as overemphasised in his opinion in the translation of Guy de Pourtalès, to stand between the overall meaning and an ability to understand it, having performed Pourtalès’s version in 1923. Gide and Barrault believed that in war-torn France a Hamlet who overcomes his suicidal thoughts and offers up his life to enable a new way of existence for his people, could reassure the French that peace would come one day for them too. The finished translation, as already mentioned, was published in 1945 in a bilingual version and a year later was used by the Compagnie Madeleine Renaud/Jean-Louis Barrault for their inaugural performance on 17 October 1946 at the Théâtre Marigny in Paris.

In his preface Gide not only detailed the difficulties he encountered but also set out his aims and what he hoped to achieve, which can also be detected in Hamlet’s famous monologue. As the bilingual edition used for this analysis shows a different version than the Oxford Shakespeare edition used especially with regard to punctuation marks, it is included at the end of this sub-chapter as is Gide’s French text and its re-translation into English. His criticism of other translations also points towards what he wanted to achieve with his own: they were ‘difficult to use in performance, unbearable, full of cacophony, without rhyme, momentum and life, sometimes unintelligible without sustained attention, which an audience

in the theatre cannot pay to the text.’ (Gide: 1945: preface, no pages given). With his own version he wanted to achieve clarity for the audience’s sake and still offer enough of the rhythm and way of thinking of the original to enable performers to portray the characters in the best and most natural way possible. Nothing, ‘neither the text’s logical connections nor the poetry of the language’, should get lost (Gide: 1945: preface, no pages given).

In fact, when analysed on a purely semantic level, it becomes apparent that Gide’s translation and the original share the same images, symbols and metaphors. The main obvious difference between the two rather consists in the changed use of punctuation marks in the French version: whereas the English only has six question marks or full stops, the French has double that amount, even when disregarding those punctuation marks when Hamlet calls out to Ophelia. As a consequence, it is not the images that have been shifted around as suggested already but rather the way they are presented to the audience/reader. Hamlet’s monologue starts with the well-known question ‘to be or not to be: that is the question’ but where the English has a colon next, the French phrase ends with a full stop as if giving an actor a possibility to pause here, enabling him to seemingly develop the following thoughts in front of an audience. This is also supported by the question mark after the next sentence in both versions, but taken together with the previous colon the English version seems to combine the first and second sentence into one thought whereas the French separates the two quite clearly. Such a combination occurs again in the English version: here, the thought of ‘die, sleep, no more’ seems to be attached to the next sentence, which in turn is phrased as a statement. In the French version it is made explicit first that there is nothing more to ‘die, sleep’ –there are only those two alternatives–, but then the next sentence ends with a question mark. When regarded from a performative point of view this is a significant difference to the original which seems to function mostly through statements. By substituting the full stop for a

question mark the following thoughts about dieing and sleeping and when sleeping maybe also dreaming come across more naturally as thoughts, since they seem to be running through the actor's head while he utters them. The culmination point then is the next sentence: there might be dreams in this eternal sleep and that is indeed the catch. Afterwards, this Hamlet seems to think about the implications of dreaming while dead and then comes again to a conclusion when he stops himself with 'stand still', which in turn emphasises the following sentence about the calamities of long live. Although the English version follows the same argumentative pattern, the use of alternating colons and semi-colons turns these lines of Hamlet's monologue into a more wide-spread idea about life, death and suicide than the broken-down French version, which consists of several fragmented thoughts. This is apparent in the next phrase too when the French ends with a full stop to finish a particular idea. In contrast, the English has a semi-colon, thereby allowing the idea expressed in these lines to flow more freely into the next one which ends on a question mark in both versions. Who would commit suicide when there might be dreams after death? The next significant change occurs at 'puzzles the will,/ And makes us' when the English version shows a comma and the French version a question mark. In this case it is not only the punctuation mark but also the fact that the sentence which runs on in English till 'we know not of?' is cut off in French after 'puzzles the will' and the next part is taken up in a new sentence. Gide introduces '[...] the mystery' at this point in an attempt to clarify for an audience and probably also the actor's sake what is only implied in the English text, referring back to the idea of dreams after death. When this full stop is reached in the French version, the English version has the question mark instead. Finally, the last lines of Hamlet's monologue –though marked with ' , and' in English and ' ; c'est ainsi' in French– show the same rhythm and images in both languages before Hamlet notices Ophelia coming close to where he is.

In conclusion, it can be stated that, although the semantics of both texts are very much alike, a different use of punctuation marks can also change inherent connections between different thoughts and ideas expressed in this monologue. Gide did not deviate much from Shakespeare's metaphors and symbols, but he chose to structure the sentences more clearly and make them more accessible for an actor to experiment with by introducing much more natural possibilities for pausing for example. They are also much easier for an audience to follow as they do not go off in as many tangents as the original does, which makes it very clear why this would be a good translation for performance. Gide certainly has fulfilled his own aim of greater clarity for an audience's sake without taking anything away from the original. Since its publication, this text 'has managed to satisfy both literalists and theatre directors alike.' (Heylen: 1993: p. 90).

André Gide	William Shakespeare	Re-translation of Gide's text
<p>Etre ou ne pas être : telle est la question.  Y a-t-il pour l'âme plus de noblesse à endurer  les coups et les revers d'une injurieuse  fortune,  ou à s'armer contre elle pour mettre frein  à une marée de douleurs ? Mourir ; dormir ;  c'est tout. Calmer enfin, dit-on, dans le  sommeil  les affreux battements du cœur ; quelle  conclusion  des maux héréditaires serait plus dévotement  souhaitée ? Mourir, dormir ; dormir...  rêver peut-être. C'est la le hic ! Car, échappés  des liens charnels, si, dans ce sommeil du  trépas,  il nous vient des songes... halte-là ! Cette  considération prolonge la calamité de la vie.  Car, sinon, qui supporterait du sort les soufflets  et les avanies, les torts de l'oppresseur,  les outrages de l'orgueilleux, les affres  de l'amour dédaigné, les remises de la justice,  l'insolence des gens officiels, les rebuffades  que les méritants reçoivent auprès des  indignes,  alors qu'un petit coup de pointe donnerait  quitus  de tout cela ? Qui donc assumerait ces charges,  accepterait de geindre et de suer sous  le faix écrasant de la vie, s'il n'y avait  cette crainte de quelque chose après la mort,  mystérieuse contrée d'où nul voyageur ne</p>	<p>To be, or not to be: that is the question:  Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  And by opposing end them? To die, to sleep;  No more; and, by a sleep to say we end  The heartache and the thousand natural shocks  That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;  To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the  rub;  For in that sleep of death what dreams may  come  When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  Must give us pause. There's the respect  That makes calamity of so long life;  For who would bear the whips and scorns of  time,  The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's  contumely,  The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  The insolence of office, and the spurns  That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  When he himself might his quietus make  With a bare bodkin? who would these fardels  bear,  To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  But that the dread of something after death,  The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn  No traveller returns, puzzles the will,  And makes us rather bear those ills we have</p>	<p>To be or not to be: that is the question.  Is it nobler for the soul to suffer  The shocks and cruel strokes of an  offensive fortune,  Or to take up arms against it to slow  down  A sea of pain? To die, to sleep,  That's all. Calming down finally, one  says, in sleep  The terrible beating of the heart, which  solution  Of bad heritage is there to be more  devotedly  Desired? To die, to sleep; to sleep...  To dream perhaps. That is the catch!  Because, escaped  From corporeal bonds, if, in this sleep of  death,  Dreams come to us.... Stand still! These  Thoughts prolong the catastrophe of life.  Who, otherwise, would suffer the  affronts  And the humiliations, the wrongs of the  oppressor,  The insults of the arrogant, the pains  Of unrequited love, the delays of justice,  The disrespect of officials, the rebuffs  Which the worthy are confronted with  from the unworthy,  Although a small cut with a knife tip  gives an quietus</p>



<p>revient ?</p> <p>Voici l'énigme qui nous engage à supporter les maux présents, plutôt que de nous en échapper vers ces autres dont nous ne connaissons rien. Et c'est ainsi que la conscience fait de chacun de nous un peureux ; c'est ainsi que la verdeur première de nos résolutions s'étiole à l'ombre pâle de la pensée ; c'est ainsi que nos entreprises de grand essor et conséquences tournent leur courant de travers et se déroutent de l'action. Mais silence! La belle Ophélie ! O Nymph, intercédez pour mes péchés dans vos prières.</p>	<p>That fly to others that we know not of? Thus conscience does make cowards of us all; And thus the native hue of resolution Is sicklied o'er the pale cast of thought, And enterprises of great pith and moment With this regard their currents turn awry, And lose the name of action. Soft you now! The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons Be all my sins remember'd.</p>	<p>To all this. Who then would take up these charges, Accept these pains and sweat under The heavy weight of life, if there's not This fear of something after death, The undiscovered country from where no traveller returns? That is the mystery which engages us to bear These present miseries, instead of escaping to These others of which we don't know anything. And this is how conscience makes of each of us A frightened being; this is how the first force of Our decision weakens at the pale shadow of The thought; this is how our actions of great monumentum And consequence turn around their flow and Confuse their action. But silence! Beautiful Ophelia! O Nymph, put in a good word for my sins in your prayers.</p>
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### 3. INTRODUCTION: SHAKESPEAREAN ADAPTATIONS IN PERFORMANCE

This chapter is concerned with adaptations of Shakespeare's plays in continental European theatre. Before starting to analyse specific plays, some theoretical background to the term 'adaptation' should be established: its definition seems to depend on what respective scholars consider as 'adaptation' or, in a further step, as 'appropriation'. Almost all of them agree however that Shakespeare is one author whose works readily lend themselves to attempts of adaptations and appropriations as they are, on the one hand, in the public domain and no longer subject to copyright. On the other hand, he is such a global household name that almost everyone interested in literature has surely come across either his own work or rewritings, adaptations and other variations of his texts before, even if only by name.

For Julie Sanders in *Adaptation and Appropriation*, his '*oeuvre* functions in a remarkably similar way to the communal, shared, transcultural, and transhistorical art forms of myth and fairy tale' (her italics; Sanders: 2006: p. 45). It certainly serves to illuminate the importance of Shakespeare in this particular area of research but how does adaptation come into it? Sanders provides some helpful explanations as to what the term 'adaptation' might mean. She regards it as a frequent process of commenting on a source text which also involves the transition from one genre into another: drama into prose fiction, novels into film and others. Adaptations can take on many different guises, some of which are, according to her, 'imitation, pastiche, parody, forgery, travesty [or] echo' (Sanders: 2006: p. 18) of the underlying source. An appropriation of a given text in contrast transforms this text into something completely new. According to Sanders, the important difference between adaptation and appropriation is the recognizability of the underlying source, which –for an adaptation– always shines through but –for an appropriation– is not as clearly signalled or even acknowledged as in the adaptive process. An appropriation also does not necessarily

involve a shift in genre, so that for example an appropriated play text might still be a play text, albeit with a different focus. Although Sanders adds that ‘perhaps a useful way of beginning to think about adaptation is as a form of collaboration across time and sometimes across culture or language’ (Sanders: 2006: p. 47), her explanation of adaptation and appropriation does not directly account for the plays considered in this chapter. In the first place they are still play texts and as such would fit more readily into her definition of ‘appropriation’, which they cannot be at the same time according to her definition, as the underlying source texts –Shakespeare’s *Henry IV 1 and 2*, *Richard III*, *Titus Andronicus* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*– are still recognizable.

Margaret Jane Kidnie’s *Shakespeare and the Problem of Adaptation* in turn acknowledges the fact that, when talking of a theatrical production as an adaptation, there must be something to ‘determine what constitutes the text of *Hamlet*’ (Kidnie: 2009: p. 2) as the source for example since otherwise any performance could be called adaptation as all differ from the original written text per se. She analyses ‘how one determines in the first place adaptive production’ (Kidnie: 2009: p. 17), which is my concern in this particular chapter as well. Kidnie also provides terminology for her readers developed by other researchers like Ruby Cohn’s categories of reduction/emendation, adaptation and transformation to describe different offshoots from literary or theatrical sources (Cohn: 1976: p. 3-4). For Cohn reduction/emendation includes cut and altered lines, adaptation involves the addition of new material alongside what is already there and transformation is the most radical mode of innovating a source through a change in events (Cohn: 1976: p. 3-4). This in turn, as Kidnie suggests, implies that one would know what an adaptation is when one encounters it, but those categories do not provide any reference points as to a more detailed definition of the term. As such, these categories do not help to pinpoint what constitutes an adaptation. In a

similar vein, again criticized by Kidnie and not especially useful for this chapter, is Fischlin and Fortier's definition of 'adaptation as a material, [as] performance practice can involve both radical rewritings, and a range of directorial and theatrical practices' (Fischlin/ Fortier: 2000: p. 17). This definition is too inclusive and again implies that one somehow recognizes an adaptation when confronted with it. As Kidnie points out, 'collapsing adaptation into production neglects a crucial feature of the phenomenon – precisely the widespread critical ability to discriminate between Shakespeare and Shakespearean adaptation' (Kidnie: 2009: p. 5) in performance. Like her, I will challenge the assumption that adaptation is synonymous with performance (Kidnie: 2009: p. 5) as, in conclusion, every production of Shakespeare's plays would be an adaptation according to Fischlin and Fortier's example.

This chapter is therefore focused on the relation between the original Shakespearean text and what other writers might have done to it. 'Text' in this case does however not specifically refer to any printed version of his plays but rather their general plot. As an underlying ordering principle, Lanier's list of narrative variants (Lanier: 2002: p. 83) in the chapter on "Recasting the Plays: Homage, Adaptation, Parody" in his *Shakespeare and Popular Culture* (Lanier: 2002: p. 82-109) has proved very helpful as a theoretical framework from outside of the field of adaptation studies. He developed this list as a way to categorize different kinds of fan fiction based on Shakespeare's plays, which can be found on websites like the popular fanfiction.net. Fan fiction denotes stories, poems or even the odd play text by fans of Shakespeare's works who transform the original narratives into something new, taking up characters, undeveloped plotlines or seemingly underrated characters in their new narratives. Lanier differentiates between:

- *extrapolated narrative*, in which plot material is generated from events mentioned but not developed in the 'master' narrative; [...];
- *interpolated narrative*, in which new plot material is dovetailed with the plot of the narrative;

- *remotivated narrative*, in which the new narrative retains the basic plot line or situation of the source but changes the motivations of the characters;
- *revisionary narrative*, in which the new narrative begins with the characters and situation of the source but changes the plot;
- *reorientated narrative*, in which the narrative is told from a different point of view;
- *hybrid narrative*, in which narrative elements or characters from two or more Shakespearian plays are combined.

(his italics)

(Lanier: 2002: p. 83)

As the adaptations considered in this chapter are all not so far removed from Shakespeare's original narrative as to constitute proper appropriations, this list provides an objective basis on which to analyse adaptations, rewritings and appropriations, amongst others, without sticking closely to genres or media but rather focusing on what Kidnie has called the difference between 'Shakespeare and Shakespearean adaptation' (Kidnie: 2009: p. 5). However, as two of the four productions considered here –*Falstaf*e by Valère Novarina from France (2008), *Die Krönung Richards III* von Hans Henny Jahnn (2005) and *Anatomie Titus-Fall of Rome* by Heiner Müller (2003) from Germany, *Rose und Regen, Schwert und Wunde* by Beat Fäh from Switzerland (2004)– are long texts and as such are usually cut for performance, only selected scenes, one from each play, will be analysed as to their narrative difference when compared to Shakespeare's original texts.

### 3.1. HANS HENNY JAHNN'S *RICHARD III*: NOT A TWISTED BODY BUT A TORTURED SOUL

Hans Henny Jahnn was a German author who wrote his adaptation of Shakespeare's *Richard III* between 1917 and 1920 while in exile; its full title is *Die Krönung Richards III – Historische Tragödie* (*The Coronation of Richard III – Historical Tragedy*). This particular production had its premiere on 3 November 2005 at the Schauspielhaus in Hamburg and was directed by Sebastian Nübling. It was the first time, however, that Jahnn's play could be seen

in his hometown; the world premiere of *Die Krönung Richard III* had taken place in 1922 in Leipzig.

It is rarely performed, which can be explained partly by its length. In the A5 book version of the publisher Hoffmann and Campe it measures about 140 pages in doubled-paged print, which equals the 300-page single-page printed version or over three and a half hours of playing time as mentioned in Sprang and Stedman's review of the production in *Shakespeare Jahrbuch 143* (Sprang/ Stedman: 2007: p. 180-192). Nübling and the dramaturge Nicola Bramkamp had to make a lot of sensible cuts without reducing the text too much. In any case, this *Richard III* is very different from the original.

In contrast to Shakespeare's Richard III, Jahn's Richard III has his villainy forced on him by his duties: initially he already rules over the country, though only as some sort of prince regent (the German term used is 'Reichsverweser') instead of the young Prince Edward while his sister-in-law Elizabeth, widow of King Edward IV, is nominally still queen. Jahn's Richard is widowed too. In this version he has been married to Anne already (the wooing scene in 1.2. in Shakespeare's *Richard III* is in contrast to this version in this respect), who is long dead at the start of Jahn's play. Indeed, at first it seems that this play is not so much about Richard but about Queen Elizabeth. He enters for the first time only in Act 1 Scene 4, shortly before the second act begins, whereas she dominates the stage and the text up to that point, either by her actual presence or by the influence she has on other characters. These few facts make it clear already that this is an adaptation: in Lanier's classification (Lanier: 2002: p. 83) it would be regarded as a remotivated narrative as, although the plotline is mostly kept intact, the motivation of Richard has changed. He no longer seeks revenge but rather a general recognition of his duties, and as such he longs to be king. Yet, he does not die at the end of the play (in contrast to Shakespeare's Richard in 5.7) which also points towards this

adaptation as a revisionary narrative. Jahn's play includes most of the characters of the original in addition to others of his own invention but changes the plot in so far as there is no battle on Bosworth Field (in contrast to Shakespeare's play, 5.5 and 5.6). In addition, he also changes some family relationships as will become apparent later on.

Jahn's Richard is yearning for understanding of his role. According to online reviews of the production (cp. Michael Laages on *dradio.de*: 4/11/2005:

<http://www.dradio.de/dlf/sendungen/kulturheute/435381/> [last access: 12/11/2011] and MN in

*Welt* *Online*: 2/11/2005: [http://www.welt.de/print-](http://www.welt.de/print-welt/article174928/Jahn_Drama_Leicht_verspaetete_Hamburg_Premiere.html)

[welt/article174928/Jahn Drama Leicht verspaetete Hamburg Premiere.html](http://www.welt.de/print-welt/article174928/Jahn_Drama_Leicht_verspaetete_Hamburg_Premiere.html) [last access:

13/11/2011]), he turns more and more into a tortured soul ill at ease with himself and the

world. This effect was supported by the set-up of the stage: it was mostly black and bare, with

a whole wall-like structure of about eighty speakers stacked on top of each other as

background scenery. Especially when Richard seemed very vulnerable (MN in *Welt Online*: 2

November 2005: link to website see above [last access: 13/11/2011]) and could not come to

terms with his own thoughts and ideas, white noise was transmitted. His villainous deeds

happen as a consequence of his role, first as prince regent and then as king. This play

emphasizes more the possible abuse of power which arises from a ruling position in society as

well as the emergence of enemies and loyal subjects, with whom a king has to deal. This

Richard is bent on keeping the crown after having been crowned king and as such orders the

two princes murdered. However, he is not a bloodthirsty tyrant who delights in making people

suffer; he states in various ways throughout the play that God immediately punishes any kind

of bloodshed. He prefers to let Him deal the mortal blow: he orders the princes murdered by

having them buried alive, their only comfort consists in being forced by circumstances to

share a coffin (Jahn: 1994 : Act 3, p. 380).

As already mentioned, in contrast to Shakespeare's play *The Tragedy of Richard III*, the full title of Jahn's play is *Die Krönung Richards III – Historische Tragödie* (*The Coronation of Richard III – Historical Tragedy*). In line with the development of Richard's character in this adaptation, this title immediately draws attention to the reason why Richard is the way he is: it is not because of his deformed body but because of his status and duties as king. Jahn's Richard longs to be king to be able to share this burden with someone and as such decides to marry again for this particular purpose. In contrast to the wooing scene between Richard and Anne in Shakespeare's play, which takes place next to the coffin of her dead husband Edward, Prince of Wales (1.2.29-210), the wooing scene in Jahn's play between Richard and Elizabeth, the widow of King Edward IV, takes place in her bedchamber in Act 1. This is the first time the title character is present on stage, previously Elizabeth focused attention on herself, either through actually being present or when other characters talked about her. She still is queen and behaves as such although it is Richard who deals with the everyday work of ruling the kingdom. Up to this point this Elizabeth is as villainous as Shakespeare's Richard: in the opening scene she comforts Euryalus, a young pageboy, who seems to be ill but, as becomes apparent later, is to serve a particular purpose. After he has left her, Elizabeth deals with Paris, another pageboy, whom she orders punished: she accuses him of having stolen her necklace and he is castrated in the dungeons in her presence in the next scene. Afterwards, in the third scene of the play, several other pageboys –Henry, Ralph, Hassan, Melchior, Thomas as well as Euryalus– are talking with each other, Paris' castration is one topic. It becomes apparent that one of their functions at court is to pleasure Elizabeth sexually. As she insisted that Euryalus is ill, she ordered him and her doctor to her chambers at night and Euryalus fears that he will be castrated too. Hassan vows to protect him against the queen before all pageboys leave to do their daily chores. A short interlude follows when



Edward, Prince of Wales and Richard, Duke of York, Elizabeth's sons in this play, enter and talk for a while about their mother and especially about Richard: they fear him as he always tells them strange stories of people wanting to hurt them but they pity him too as nobody gives him good words. At the start of scene four, Elizabeth is in her bedchamber with Pulter, the doctor; it is late evening. They talk about a soldier or knight, shipwrecked on the coast of Africa and taken in by natives, who ate a young boy's flesh to survive and found it rather pleasing for the palate. Elizabeth wants to try it too and Pulter mixes a substance which Euryalus is forced to take when he enters for his examination. Elizabeth wants Pulter to prepare him the next day for her to eat. When music draws close to her chamber, she demands that Euryalus hides under her bed cover. Not everyone at court is to know which kind of atrocities she is committing on an everyday basis, although rumours have spread about Paris' castration. In contrast to Shakespeare's namesake character, Jahnn's Elizabeth behaves very differently. Whereas Jahnn's Richard shies away from bloodshed and murders without reason, his Elizabeth seems to delight in them and as she is queen nobody will prevent her from doing so. She alone wields the power in this kingdom and nothing can stop her. When Richard has arrived with musicians and other courtiers to woo her, he is rather courtly and brings forth a well-rounded argument why she should marry him. At first he tries to calm her down as it is late already and she was about to go to bed. He turns this into an argument: 'he plays king only, she however is the queen' (Jahnn: 1994: Act 1, p. 218). Her subjects look up to her but he is the one doing all the work. Nobody cares if he has been up night after night and what it does to his health as long as the queen gets her sleep and is generally in a good mood. He has decided therefore to lay this burden onto those shoulders that should bear it. Elizabeth is not amused and attacks him as foolish. Richard counters that he would not dare joking or depriving her of her sleep but he would like to marry her, so that the country gets a ruler who

is allowed to rule by royal status and not by necessity only. She refuses him at first but then he has recourse to something akin to a ruse. He claims that the country is in a state of upheaval and that even she might not be safe. As he has 'to ensure the country's inner safety and the wellbeing of her Majesty' (Jahnn: 1994: Act 1, p. 220), he discovers Hassan, who has sneaked in to protect Euryalus, under Elizabeth's bed and when Euryalus comes to Hassan's rescue, kills them both. The queen is shocked and faints. When she comes to again, she pretends to be grateful and Richard explains that, by having an ugly face, nobody really cares for him and that his work gets more and more difficult. He yearns for recognition and hopes that, as king, his burden will get lighter. As such, he would like to marry her. In this point he is honest. He does not care if she loves him or not, it does not matter. After all, he has 'asked for the favour of a marriage and not for love as a tribute, which is something else. [He knows] the difference' (Jahnn: 1994: Act 1, p. 223). Yet, Elizabeth still refuses him and he now starts threatening her: he suspects one of the pageboys he killed moments ago to serve as a pleasure boy for Elizabeth, adds that there are strange rumours and that people suspect something about Paris, who was incarcerated in the Tower: his wounds are probably infected and he is slowly dying. As Richard hopes to marry her, therefore also taking on some kind of marital responsibility, he regards it as his duty to warn her and Elizabeth indeed starts to panic. At first she resists again but when Richard apparently renounces his intention of marrying her, she is truly frightened and finally gives in. Both agree that the other is 'cruel and not a human being' (Jahnn: 1994: Act 1, p. 227), which ends this scene and also the first act.

The following plotline until the end of the play does not differ much from the original in terms of cruelty and depravity but now Richard joins in too whereas before he only was a hard-working nobleman and Elizabeth was the depraved queen of the realm. Unlike Shakespeare's Richard, he also suffers more and more because of his deeds although one

cannot really feel sympathy with him. It seems however that, as almost the whole courtly world of Jahn's play is steeped in perversion, Richard just cannot behave differently because of these circumstances. Shakespeare's Richard orders murders and executions because he wants to ascend to the throne (cp for example Richard's speech in 1.1.143-161), Jahn's Richard murders to keep this position and, as mentioned already, abuses his power for this aim.

### 3.2. *FALSTAFE* BY VALÈRE NOVARINA: AN ADAPTATION OF *1 & 2 HENRY IV*

This production had its premiere on 12 March 2008 in the Salle Jean Vilar at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris and was performed there until early April before moving on to Switzerland: it could be seen in Geneva in October and November of the same year. Novarina is a well-known French playwright and painter; he was born in Switzerland but grew up in France. He wrote *Falstafe* when Marcel Maréchal, another famous French writer and director, asked him in 1975 for an adaptation of Shakespeare's two parts of *Henry IV*. It was performed for the first time in 1976 in Marseille under Maréchal's direction; he had previously worked with other texts by Shakespeare at different theatres. The 2008 production was directed by Claude Buchwald, who, as Yves Thoret mentions in his review (Thoret: 2008: p. 89), had collaborated with Novarina on other projects before: this apparently facilitated bringing out the wealth and simplicity of the text by the actors. *Falstafe* was the only time though that Novarina turned to Shakespeare's texts for inspiration in his professional capacity as writer. According to Thoret, he chose to use an old spelling of Falstaff for his protagonist's name as he wanted to illustrate all the translations and inventions which had made use of this character over the centuries as well as raising awareness of different stagings and productions of the plays (Thoret: 2008: p. 89).

His adaptation is noteworthy as, in contrast to the general view of it as an adaptation of *1&2 Henry IV* only, *Falstafe* starts in fact with an excerpt from *Richard II* (cp. 5.6.30-52 in Shakespeare's text) which is however fully integrated into the new play text. As such it provides not only an easier understanding of King Henry's emotional turmoil for an audience but also gives a different impression of the King than the normal beginning of *1 Henry IV*. As mentioned in the general introduction to this chapter, the focus will be directed towards one or two scenes at most and here it seems fitting to analyse the beginning. The first scene of Novarina's *Falstafe* serves as an exposition about the life and problems at court and the second scene introduces Prince Henry, or Harry as he is called, as well as Falstafe and Ned.

The first scene of Novarina's text starts with the arrival of Exton at court: he brings the coffin with the former King Richard II's body to prove to King Henry IV that his enemy is dead. As in *Richard II* (cp. 5.6.29-52 in Shakespeare's text) Henry, however, is not pleased with Extons and laments Richard's fate. To exonerate himself, he vows to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In *Falstafe* he is immediately swayed again when the Lord Chief Justice brings news that 'the wild Archibald' has captured Mortimer and decimated the latter's army. In this piece Westmoreland does not exist and the Lord Chief Justice as well as King Henry share his lines in this first scene between them; Archibald stands in for Owen Glendower. There is more news however: Harry Percy has defeated the Scottish Douglas in the north and taken several noble prisoners. King Henry envies Northumberland for having such a son: his own son, Prince Henry or Harry for short, drinks with Falstaff and his companions. The Lord Chief Justice however reminds him that Harry Percy is also very proud: he did not surrender his prisoners to the crown. This leads King Henry to suspect Harry Percy's uncle Worcester of evil doings against the crown and summons the young Percy to court. He concludes this scene by demanding that the court joins him in mourning for King Richard II.

Although this first scene shares much with the original *I Henry IV* when it comes to the overall plot, the framing device with passages from *Richard II* (cp. 5.6.30-52 and 5.6.51-52 in Shakespeare's text) as well as a different attribution of speeches and cuts from the original, in addition to a change in characters make this an adaptation. To use Lanier's list of different types of narratives (Lanier: 2002: p. 83), it is likely that *Falstafe* is a revisionary as well as a hybrid narrative. The use of material from *Richard II* is obvious when comparing the play texts: Novarina has not re-written any of the speeches although –in translation– he used modern French expressions and a simple sentence structure, which makes for an easy-to-follow language during a performance. For the parts he took from *I Henry IV* he used selected lines and cut others in between. The dialogue between Exton and King Henry starts with the text from *Richard II* 5.6.30-52 and the following dialogue between King Henry and the Lord Chief Justice comes from (in this order) *I Henry IV* 1.1. 1-19, 38-46, 51-55, 70-73, 77-89, 90-93, 95-99; the scene ends with a repetition of *Richard II* 5.6.51-52.

By replacing Westmoreland with the Lord Chief Justice, Novarina has removed all familiarity between the king and his confidant; their relationship seems much more like that of a king and his advisor. In fact, some of the king's lines from the original have been attributed to the Lord Chief Justice in this version so as to make him the bearer of both good and bad news to the king: he first informs him about Mortimer's capture and then about the bravery of the young Henry Percy, prompting King Henry to his comparison between Northumberland's son and his own. It is the Lord Chief Justice too who informs Henry that, by not surrendering his prisoners, Henry Percy has also shown a certain pride which is not acceptable as the king's following speech demonstrates. King Henry speaks the lines about Worcester's evil doings (instead of Westmoreland in the original, *I Henry IV* 1.1.95-98) and then demands to see Henry Percy at court before asking everyone to join him in his mourning.

By conflating the two parts of *Henry IV* into one piece, things have to happen more quickly and not every character and event can be included. By introducing the Lord Chief Justice in the entourage of King Henry at this early moment, it seems likely that Novarina aimed at providing a mirror image to the Falstafe-Prince Henry relationship in the following scene. What the Lord Chief Justice is for King Henry on a positive level, Falstafe is on a negative level for the prince. Falstafe is leading the young man on a downward spiral of drinking and carousing whereas the king is helped along by the Lord Chief Justice's advice in his decision-making. They might not always be good decisions but they are discussed in a rational manner and not over a glass of wine.

This more or less positive impression of life at court is contrasted in the second scene with the more negative or at least flighty impression of Falstafe and somehow also the Prince's behaviour. The location is not the Prince's chambers at court (the Norton edition provides an annotation which reads '1.2: Location: A room in the Prince's apartments', p. 1160) but rather the inn where they usually meet. Falstafe is asleep and Harry wakes him up abruptly. They talk for a while about different topics, sometimes making sense, sometimes making not so much sense, until Ned arrives and they plot the coup against the merchants and the trick Ned and Henry want to play on Falstafe. Although the dialogue roughly follows (in this order) *I Henry IV* 1.2. 2-10, 11-14, 20-32, 50-56, 63-64, 70, 80, 98-104, 110-117, 122-126, 131-140, 141-170, it seems that –since an additional bit of dialogue has been added at the beginning of this scene without any basis in the original– there is a more hostile tone between Prince Henry and Falstafe. They still are friends in this version but it seems that the young Harry is already developing a sense of what it means to be king, which is supported by their talk about his future duties in the middle of the scene. This would also point towards the necessity of developing plotlines quicker in this compressed version instead of in two plays.

Falstafe is not at all happy that Henry has woken him up and immediately seems to insult his young companion when he replies ‘you’re a prince and yet you don’t know why the saying goes “a king ascends to the throne”?’ Henry replies in a similar fashion and the two quibble at each other for a while until Falstafe asks if Henry would hang thieves if he were king. Henry’s reply allocates that role to Falstafe who answers that he would try to be just. When Henry asks Falstafe to try this on him, the latter seems to back off a bit. Unlike the original (cp. 1.2.50-65), here he adds ‘I fear the king like a lion and you like the lion’s cub. The flash of heaven should strike me in two if I lie!’. This scene points towards the precariousness of Falstafe’s situation: he is constantly in danger of being punished by the king because of his behaviour. Although Novarina’s Falstafe acts like Shakespeare’s Falstaff for the rest of this scene, there is a lingering doubt whether Falstafe will be of any importance for the rest of the play. Unlike the Lord Chief Justice from the first scene, he does not offer good advice to the prince and vital concerns for the monarchy do not interest him.

By mirroring the King Henry-Lord Chief Justice and the Prince Henry-Falstafe relations against each other in these first two scenes, it becomes apparent at the very beginning that, although each kind of advisor follows his respective lord’s thoughts, only the Lord Chief Justice will survive in office. Falstafe in contrast is already identified as self-centred and not at all interested in the greater good.

### 3.3. ROSE UND REGEN, SCHWERT UND WUNDE: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM FOR ONLY FIVE ACTORS

*Rose und Regen, Schwert und Wunde* (*Rose and Rain, Sword and Wound*) is an adaptation of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* by the Swiss Beat Fähr; he drew mostly on the German translation by Erich Fried but also used other versions, always indicating when this

had been the case. It was performed for the first time on 29 June 1989 at the Theater der Jugend in Munich under Fähr's direction and has been put on since then regularly in Germany and Switzerland by other directors: most recently it could be seen at the Stadttheater in Fürth in September 2011, which –for marketing purposes– also included an upload of five minutes of rehearsal footage on the video-sharing website Youtube (uploaded by StadttheaterTV, Stadttheater Fürth on 20/09/2011: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPnrENiOzi4> [last access: 11/11/2011]). That particular production can be regarded as an adaptation in itself of Fähr's version since the role of Puck had been shared between a male and a female actor, who are using and abusing each other for their own respective agendas. In the context of Fähr's take on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* this double personality seems to have become a traditional way of thinking about this particular Puck, whether or not it is made explicit on stage by casting two actors in the role. *Rose und Regen*, *Schwert und Wunde* was Fähr's first reworking of a Shakespeare play; afterwards he directed productions of *Twelfth Night*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Othello*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *As You Like It* in addition to *Othello Therapie*, an adaptation by John von Düffel.

Fähr's adaptation is a much reduced version: most of the characters have been cut and it is also not entirely clear if the whole story is not rather a dream in itself (Fähr: preface to the play: no date and page given). When performed, the length of the play varies between one hour and one hour and a half at the most. The only characters present on stage are Puck and the four lovers; the fairy world is entirely missing and the human world is only mentioned in the background story as narrated by Puck. For Fähr the story of the four lovers is most important: as several announcements of performances give 'suitable for 14+' as additional information, it seems that, by reducing the plot to this particular element, he wanted to make it suitable for a young, teenaged audience too, which also foreshadows the intentions of



Cornelissen's adaptations of Shakespeare's plays considered in a later chapter of this thesis. In terms of Lanier's different narrative categories (Lanier: 2002: p. 83), this is both a remotivated as well as a revisionary narrative, which mainly derives from the fact that the fairy-subplot is entirely missing and Puck is the only one responsible for the mix-up of the lovers: in that sense there is a change in plot as well as motivation. Similarly, the reason why the lovers run away is exactly the same as in the original, thereby keeping this plot element in the adapted version.

In contrast to the introduction to this chapter and because of the shortness of the piece, Puck's character and speeches will be analysed in the following rather than a particular scene. This is also due to the fact that this adaptation does not have any scene division at all. On the contrary, it is more or less structured by Puck narrating any necessary background information, making him therefore both a chorus-like figure as well as a character in the play. Unlike Shakespeare's Puck, however, this Puck is not a real fairy; he says of himself at the beginning while introducing all the characters to the audience that he is a gnome. This immediately identifies him not as an airy creature but rather one who enjoys hearty jokes on other people's expenses. He next presents the main obstacle as known from the original (1.1.21-127): Hermia loves Lysander but, according to her father's wishes, should marry Demetrius, who is loved by Helena, and if Hermia does not comply with Athenian law, as Duke Theseus informs her, she has to die (Fäh: no date given: p. 2-3). Puck, in this moment, takes on all those characters and performs each of them when necessary. As in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1.1.156-251), the four lovers flee into the forest and Puck now shifts the scene to 'a forest near Athens' (Fäh: no date given: p. 4-6). To entertain the audience he now lists some misdeeds and tricks he previously played on people. Here, his double nature comes to the forefront when he states he is allowed to play jokes of all sorts,

often with negative or at least not pleasant consequences for his victims: he is ‘the gnome, the spirit, the shadow’ unless one knows him better and also calls him ‘dear Puck’ and ‘good spirit’. He prefers crude jokes however and lists a couple. He was once a small piece of apple in an alcoholic drink and when a woman wanted to slurp him down he hit her on the lips so that the drink got spilled all over her clothes due to fright. On another occasion he transformed himself into a stool and when an old gossiping woman wanted to sit down on him, he slipped out from under her so that everybody laughed at the unfortunate woman (Fäh: no date given: p. 8; Shakespeare: 2.1.32-57). He is clearly happy and satisfied with the effect his jokes have and does not want to change at all. In addition, unlike Shakespeare’s Puck, he does not have someone like Oberon to rule him in. When he observes Helena running after Demetrius, it is he who conceives the idea of making the young man fall in love with her through the help of a magic flower he knows. Here his behaviour does not seem as bad as it appeared in his previous speech. His words are, if not entirely neutral, at least objective enough to not let slip whether his idea is born out of a desire to make fun of Demetrius or whether he honestly wants to help Helena gain Demetrius’ love. Before he manages to anoint Demetrius’ eyes, however, he stumbles over Hermia and Lysander lying at some distance from each other on the ground (Fäh: no date given: p. 11). Puck mistakes them for Helena and Demetrius, interpreting this as a sign that she does not dare come closer, and anoints Lysander’s eyes instead. Puck’s words in those moments are tinged with honest concern and pity for Helena when he calls her ‘the poor beauty’ and threatens that Demetrius is now in danger of insomnia due to love for her. As the original Shakespeare play has it (2.2.65-82, 3.2.41-42 and 3.2.88-121), Puck in Fäh’s adaptation gets it wrong too and Helena is loved by Lysander. When Puck realizes he anointed the wrong man’s eyes, he does it to Demetrius too and lures Helena to pass by the sleeping young man. Puck fully enjoys himself again: this has

turned out to be one of his crude jokes too and he rejoices about it. It is ‘one of those twisted’ affairs he prefers above everything else. His bad nature is coming to the forefront again and – judging by the script– he is now enjoying the fights between the lovers for a while before doing something about them. The next time Puck speaks, it is his longest speech which gives several indications as to his double nature. He starts by blaming himself for the messed up relationships as he was not careful enough, which seems like an allusion to Oberon’s rebuke of Puck in the original (3.2.41-42 and 3.2.88-121). However, it also is not entirely his fault since both Lysander and Demetrius wear Athenian clothes and can be easily confused with each other. As such, Puck is free of blame although he admits that he thoroughly enjoyed the confusion as their arguments pleased him. Yet, he is willing to free Lysander of the enchantment and plans to lead the two young men to different places in the forest so that they do not kill each other over their love for Helena before falling asleep as he wishes them to. He also plans to make Hermia and Helena fall asleep. After they wake up, the four lovers are to return to Athens and live there happily ever after. Everything which happened in the woods should be as a dream to them. This is indeed the content of Puck’s last speech in this play. He states that the human mind cannot even grasp what kind of dream this was and that humans who try to understand this particular dream are simply asses. Neither the five senses nor the heart can reveal what this dream consisted in. It just existed and this is also the end of the play.

When compared with Shakespeare’s original play, it quickly becomes apparent that, as already mentioned above, this adaptation operates on a very basic plotline: two people love each other, their love is threatened and as a consequence they run away to save their love and their life. This piece takes it even one step further: when Puck sends the lovers back to Athens with his blessing, it is not clear at all if this signifies a happy conclusion. This can only be

hoped for but it is by no means sure. Puck decides to help Helena in this play out of his own free will and this the decisive act which, on the one hand, tips the balance in his favour –he seems to feel pity for her and relinquishes his practical jokes for once– but also paves the way for another joke of his, making the audience dislike him even more. By stripping away both the fairy world and many of the events taking place in the human world, Föh allows for a more concentrated examination of the four lovers’ feelings in contrast to the original where their story is only one plotline amongst several. Puck is subordinate to no one, which makes him of course more independent but he is by no means more mature than the namesake servant to Oberon. Aspects of his personality that become apparent in that master-servant relationship are by necessity lost here when there are no Oberon and Titania. It seems to direct the attention more towards the negative qualities of Puck’s character when there is no one to keep him in line. He really is more like a gnome than a fairy, more a hobgoblin than Robin Goodfellow.

#### 3.4. HEINER MÜLLER’S *ANATOMIE TITUS - FALL OF ROME*: A PROPER ADAPTATION?

The production of Heiner Müller’s *Anatomie Titus Fall of Rome – Ein Shakespeare Kommentar* (*Anatomy Titus Fall of Rome – A Shakespeare commentary*) by the Münchener Kammerspiele and directed by Johan Simons had its premiere on 15 November 2003 at the Schauspielhaus in Munich. The world premiere of Heiner Müller’s play took place on 14 February 1985 at the Schauspielhaus Bochum, then West Germany. The company from Munich performed the play in 2004 during the 41<sup>st</sup> Berliner Theatertreffen too, where it was nominated as one of the ten most remarkable theatre productions for the current year. In addition, it was televised under the direction of Andreas Morell for ZDF Theatre Channel in

co-production with 3Sat and broadcasted for the first time on 13 May 2004. Since then, it has been repeated several times.

In response to the question in this chapter's title, as will be shown, this text is of course an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. Yet, without a proper definition of the term one might be hard-pressed to define why, as for some scholars, like Margaret Jane Kidnie remarks (Kidnie: 2009: p. 2), a translation seems to be an adaptation already. As Leanore Lieblein demonstrates in her article "'Cette belle langue': The 'Tradaptation' of Shakespeare in Quebec" about the origin of the term 'tradaptation', developed by Michel Garneau in 1978, language can indeed be used to signal 'adaptation' to an audience in the theatre. Garneau's 'choice of Québécois as [the] target language [for this production of *Macbeth*] was, in its time, a political challenge' (Lieblein: 2004: p. 265) as this particular type of French had been associated up to that point with a more 'primitive' kind of language (Lieblein: 2004: p. 267). It sent out a particular message about the characters on stage. This is certainly a valid and valuable approach for an adaptation but there has to be some kind of reference point for it, which in Garneau's production was the standard variety of French. For Müller's text the translation argument does not work since, although plot and characters are the same as in the original, it is not an exact translation nor is the German used by him any different from the standard variety of German. So if there are no changes to the *dramatis personae* or to the plot, why is it an adaptation? In this particular context, as in so many others, it is necessary to take into account the adaptor's intention and once again Lanier's classifications are helpful for this (Lanier: 2002: p. 83).

*Titus Andronicus* is not the only Shakespeare play that Heiner Müller used and adapted for his own purposes; it was in fact his last adaptation of this particular kind (Hauschild: 2000: p. 87). In the period between 1967 and 1985 he first translated *As You Like*

It, in 1971 he adapted *Macbeth*; in 1976/77 a combined project including *Hamlet. Prinz von Dänemark* (*Hamlet. Prince of Denmark*) and *Hamletmaschine* (*Hamletmachine*) followed and in 1984 he used Shakespeare's *Titus* for his *Kommentar*. Apart from the translation of *As You Like It*, each of the other plays had special meanings for Müller. In his *Macbeth* he attempted to improve Shakespeare: for him, Macbeth is an honest man, who helps the legitimate ruler win the war, but ultimately turns his ambitions against his king. Müller also included the misery of farmers and other members of the lower social class when their superiors fight against each other, which is missing from the original. According to his opinion of Shakespeare's Hamlet, *Hamletmaschine* depicts the Danish prince as an isolated intellectual and is, as remarked on by Hauschild, a somewhat personal play text: in contrast to the original it is very short and reduces the plot to one long monologue, which is divided into five parts and spoken by Ophelia and Hamlet in turns (Hauschild: 2000: p. 105/6). With regard to *Titus*, Müller chose this play on the one hand because ancient Rome as such does not exist any more today and a deeper knowledge is mostly restricted to those interested in it: as such it serves well for reflections on modern times, which means in Müller's own words 'the invasion of the First World by the Third World' (quoted from Hauschild: 2000: p. 120; my translation). This is further explained by Mike Pincombe in his article on the play when he comments that '[t]his constant preoccupation with the East-West conflict in Europe concealed the fact that, as far as Müller was concerned, the really important conflict was not between the two halves of Europe, or for that matter, between the USA and the Soviet Union, but between the First World and the Third World' (Pincombe: 2004: p. 55).

Without changing plot or characters, as mentioned already, Müller included a commentary, reduced scenes, rewrote the dialogue and the different monologues, which occasionally turns the text into something akin to fragments. 'As Zander remarks: "Müller's

*Titus* is one of the rare adaptations in which the original text is not primarily cut, but extended.” (quoted in Pincombe: 2004: p. 56). Although there is still a sense of overall unity in the plot, the perception of the characters changes and Aaron in particular plays a larger role. As such, when using Lanier’s different categories (Lanier: 2002: p. 83), it makes sense to call this particular text a reorientated narrative, as the general set-up from Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* is kept but the story is told with a different focus, coming from a different perspective or point of view. When watching the TV broadcast from ZDF Theaterkanal mentioned above while keeping an eye on the text, it becomes apparent that, as will be shown in the following analysis of the final scene of the play, this particular production of the Münchener Kammerspiele has gone one step further and in turn adapted Müller’s text, reducing Aaron’s role in this scene to a somewhat marginal presence only.

Unlike in Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* (5.3.26-66) where Aaron is not present at the final banquet, he plays a part in Müller’s version. In the text version he arrives together with the Goths lead by Lucius; Aaron has been taken prisoner before and Lucius wants to confront Tamora with her former lover once more. Lucius plans to have Aaron buried up to his breast in the ground and proposes to cut ‘the names of [their = his brothers] deaths’ as well as his father’s and Lavinia’s names (Müller: 2002: p. 182) into his skin so that flies, dogs and other animals will be attracted more easily to the moor. Aaron threatens that, before he is dead, the sky over Rome will be black with flies. After this short preliminary dialogue, the Andronici as well as Saturninus and Tamora come together to eat. Titus greets his son and rejoices that Lucius has brought him ‘a moor for dessert’ (Müller: 2002: p. 183). Titus then engages Saturninus and Tamora in a game which he calls ‘Herz oder Stich’: Pincombe translated this pun as ‘heart or trick’ and ‘heart or stabbing’ (with stabbing referring to ‘to cut someone to the quick’; cp. Pincombe: 2004: p. 58), which are the two meanings implied by

the German. Titus uses the story of Virginius and his daughter as in the original and after he has killed Lavinia with a stab to the heart, Aaron comments ‘that’s a good trick/stabbing’ (the German has the ambiguous ‘Stich’). The next time he speaks, Müller has enhanced his emotional potential. Aaron displays emotion when he sees his baby son: after he has addressed Tamora to soothe her when Titus reveals what she has just been eating, Lucius –as indicated in the stage directions– has the Goths throw the dead baby onto the table while Titus insults Tamora with ‘Do you hear that animal that has worked in her bed’ (Müller: 2002: p. 185; Müller does not use punctuation marks but capitalization to distinguish sentences within one speech). Lucius adds ‘Do you Empress like your black prince’ and Aaron encounters, apparently not having heard their utterances, ‘My fat bastard Come I’ll kiss you to death’ while crying about his son as indicated in the stage directions. After Titus has commented on his tears with ‘That animal has tears’, Aaron is silent for the rest of the play apart from a plea to see the dead Tamora once more (‘Let me see her once more Uncover her’). As in the original (5.3.178-182), he is left to die half buried alive at the end.

The staging reduces Aaron’s lines in this last scene by about half, depending on how they are counted. The initial scene with Lucius is cut as it is necessitated by the staging: the scenery consists of a replica auditorium on stage which is raised on one end towards the actual audience, so that the actors can hang from the seats like monkeys if they wish. This means that basically everyone is on stage all the time, either in full view or hiding behind the seats. As such there is no need to lead anyone anywhere in terms of movement on stage and changing places where the different scenes are set. The mentioning of Aaron for dessert is left in –and gets a laugh from the audience since Titus replies ‘how nice’– as is the moment with the baby. Aaron’s line complimenting Titus on Lavinia’s murder is however cut too. It ends



with Lucius stating that ‘this dog should grow into the earth’ as some sort of punishment and this is the last the audience hears from or about Aaron.

Taken together with the above arguments about the necessity for a definition of the term ‘adaptation’, it can be stated that it is also necessary to take into consideration which basis has to be used to determine which production or text is an adaptation of which text. Heiner Müller’s text clearly is an adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Titus*, as shown above: one example is the enlargement of Aaron’s part or rather his inclusion in a scene where he is not at all seen in the original (5.3.26-66). This particular production by the Münchener Kammerspiele, however, is, as a consequence, both an adaptation of *Anatomie Titus* and *Titus Andronicus* as it is based on Müller’s text but shortens Aaron’s involvement in the last scene. Therefore it is necessary to have a clear definition of what constitutes an adaptation and a clear definition of its reference point, as remarked on earlier in the context of Garneau’s *Macbeth*. Again, Lanier’s classification (Lanier: 2002: p. 83) works well since it is objective enough to allow for different kind of changes without sticking to however widespread references to any particular plays or source texts and as such can be used for both textual and practical (theatre-based) analysis.

#### 4. INTRODUCTION: SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS AS MUSICALS

As mentioned in the general introduction, this chapter will include analyses of another longstanding 'theatrical medium' Shakespeare's plays were transformed into or have been connected with: that of Shakespeare and music. John Gross states that up to 20,000 musical pieces influenced by Shakespeare have been identified so far (Gross: 2003: p. 641), some of the most well-known are probably Verdi's *Macbeth* (1847), *Otello* (1887) and *Falstaff* (1893) and Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1960) (Gross: 2003: p. 641-642).

With this sub-chapter though I would like to open up another line of enquiry into this particular phenomenon, namely that of Shakespeare's plays as musicals. This has been done in a similar way by Julie Sanders whose book *Shakespeare and Music* from 2007 has a short but succinct second line to it –*Afterlives and Borrowings*– and Irene Dash who has done research about *Shakespeare and the American Musical* (published in 2010) in contrast to, for example, David Lindley's 2006 *Shakespeare and Music* which analyses the traditions of this particular field in the Bard's own culture and lifetime. Sanders confesses that her "interests lie, [in contrast], entirely in the realm of what comes after those first early modern performances of his plays, and in subsequent, rather than initial, audiences and readerships" (Sanders: 2007: p. 1), which is also Dash's aim. In their respective books, they consider both well known and newly written pieces; Sanders recalls for example Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* (1957) and *The Bombitty of Errors* (2002), written by Jordan Allen-Dutton, Jason Catalano, GQ and Erik Weiner (Sanders: 2007; p. 78-80), and also innovations based on already existing reworkings of Shakespeare's plays in musical form like Bob Carlton's *Return to the Forbidden Planet* (1985), based on the 1956 film *The Forbidden Planet* directed by Fred M. Wilcox, itself based on *The Tempest* (Sanders: 2007: p. 74).

The musical version of *Romeo and Juliet* included in this chapter has a similar stage life, whereas the others have either served as an initial touchstone for a more far-reaching theatrical process (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) or simply offer a new take on Shakespeare's plays (*Prince of Denmark*). On the one hand, these productions should be wider known in the English speaking world as two of them are even still performed from time to time in repertory by the same theatre; on the other hand they serve as examples for a way of thinking about especially non-English Shakespeare in musical form and also in other theatrical media which might be best illustrated with a little anecdote:

When in 1865 a French review greeted the premiere of the second and final version of Verdi's *Macbeth* with the remark that the composer clearly did not know his Shakespeare, Verdi was furious – far more so than if the critic had merely said that the opera was a failure. “It may be that I have not done justice to *Macbeth*: but to say that I do not know, understand and feel Shakespeare [sic] – no, by God, no! He is one of my favourite poets. I have had him in my hands from my earliest youth, and I read and reread him continually.  
(Budden: 1992: p. 269)

All theatregoers who are interested in Shakespeare have formed their own ideas about him and his plays during a certain amount of performances watched and texts read. And yet: what exactly is that concept of ‘Shakespeare’ that all performances have to adhere to apparently? Peter Holland researched audiences’ and critics’ reactions to all foreign productions at the 1994 ‘Everybody’s Shakespeare’ Festival at the Barbican Centre in London and came to the conclusion that ‘the critics adopted a resolute stance of imperious disdain’ (Holland: 2002: p. 208) and audiences were forced to recognise that ‘not everybody’s Shakespeare is the one [they] possessively think [to] know’ (Holland: 1997: p. 269). This could be true as well for the 2001 French *Roméo et Juliette, de la haine à l’amour* (*Romeo and Juliet, from Hate to Love*). It was totally rejected in 2002/03 by English audiences in London but when the Hungarian production team took staging decisions even one step further in 2004 than the French original, they secured such favour with the audience that it is still running today. This

success in turn led to the commissioning of a new musical production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which Oberon and Titania fall prey to an identity crisis and turn from fairy to human being to cure themselves, and yet again it has been performed several times over the last three years although at least this aspect is clearly not in Shakespeare's text. It seems that audiences in Hungary seem much more inclined to accept these productions for their own sake rather than a comparison with the 'real thing'. It would be interesting to research what English audiences would say to a *Hamlet*, which was adapted by a German entertainer and comedian often called 'Dirty Harry' in the not so distant past, and which is the third production considered in this chapter.

#### 4.1. *ROMEO & JULIET*: TYBALT –LEATHER CLAD THUG OR ILL YOUNG MAN?

As mentioned in the introduction, this musical production of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has quite an interesting stage history in itself. On the whole it does not seem that different from the original play: the two star-crossed lovers meet during a ball in the Capulet's house, fall in love, marry in secret and contrary to the feud between their two families, which also threatens to tear them apart when Romeo is banished, and then die in the end. There is however a significant change from stage play to musical when it comes to Juliet's cousin Tybalt; this is also the area in which some versions of the musical production differ from each other the most. The original French production which set off this global phenomenon was *Roméo et Juliette, de la haine à l'amour* by Gérard Presgurvic, which had its world premiere on 19 January 2001 at the Palais des Congrès in Paris; during this run it was also filmed for a commercial DVD<sup>1</sup>. Since then, it has been performed in various countries, including Canada, Mexico, South Korea, Taiwan and Russia, and a reworked French version, including four new

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<sup>1</sup> *Roméo & Juliette* - Original Paris Cast (DVD edition), 2001, director Gerard Presgurvic, France.

songs, was put on in 2010 in Paris under the title *Romeo et Juliette, les enfants de Vérone*. In addition to *Romeo and Juliet*, Gérard Presgurvic also adapted another literary classic for the stage: his 2003 *Autant en emporte le vent* (*Gone With the Wind*) is based on the 1939 film of the same name directed by Victor Fleming.

In the following I will compare Tybalt from the 2001 French version with Tybalt from the Hungarian version as well as cross-referencing to Shakespeare's original play. *Rómeó és Júlia*, as it is called in Hungarian, had its premiere in Budapest on 23 January 2004 at the Operettszínház and is still running in repertory. It toured to other towns for a few performances and was part of the Szeged Open Air Festival in August 2004, where it was filmed for a commercial DVD.<sup>2</sup> It was also recorded for the theatre's own use during the premiere in Budapest. Apart from one particular scene in which explosions have been used in the outdoor theatre in Szeged when Paris seems to go mad over Juliet's death both versions are more or less the same.

In Shakespeare's version Tybalt is allocated less than 40 lines and in almost all of them he is either insulting someone or desperately wishing to start a fight. Both Tybalts from the musical versions seem to like insulting especially Mercutio and Benvolio either but there is another side to them, which is entirely missing in Shakespeare. In the musical he is on the one hand an essential plot element to expose the hypocritical behaviour of the older generation with regard to the feud; on the other hand he also has a background story which makes him stand out from other characters. Tybalt has been given two solo songs, in addition to a musical dialogue mostly with Mercutio during the duel and, in the Hungarian version only, a short additional musical dialogue with Lady Capulet, which all contribute to an enlargement of this character's function in the musical version. Both Tybalts however can be

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<sup>2</sup> *Rómeó és Júlia* - Original Ungarn Cast (DVD edition), 2005, director KERO, Hungary.

seen onstage in other scenes too and this has a bearing on how they are perceived by viewers of the DVDs or an audience in the theatre. The musical arrangements as such are the same in both versions though some songs have been arranged in a different order. The Hungarian version also includes one new short song for Tybalt which is a reprise of an existing melody with new lyrics, in addition to two other reprises for other characters.

The first time Tybalt can be seen on stage in both versions is at the very start of the musical but it is not clear yet who he is. As in the initial scene in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* all we can see in both musical versions are people fighting each other. The actors in the Hungarian staging wear a mix of costumes: some are similar to those in the film *Moulin Rouge!* from 2001 and directed by Baz Luhrmann, some have a futuristic touch and some are reminders of medieval clothing, thereby making this particular production slightly 'timeless'. The French actors are divided into two colour-coded groups; most costumes are made from leather, which brings a very modern impression to this production. The Capulets are uniformly in red and the Montagues and Mercutio in blue whereas Paris, Escalus, Friar Laurence and other characters have their own colours. Until Escalus, the Prince of Verona, appears for his introductory solo called 'Verona' and afterwards admonishes both groups for another fight they look like one big mob. Escalus is sick of the feud and, like Shakespeare's Prince of Verona, declares his intent to put everyone to death who breaks the peace from now on. This decree does not agree with the Hungarian Tybalt. He clearly is uneasy and his face is devoid of any emotion. The French Tybalt uses this moment to quibble with Mercutio as if he wants to say 'now you cannot fight me any longer without incurring the Prince's anger' but seems to forget that he himself is also included in this sentence.

Whereas Shakespeare's Tybalt as well as his Hungarian counterpart are not on stage again until the ball at the Capulet's house (1.4 in Shakespeare's text), the French Tybalt can

be seen shortly before that moment: like in the original *Romeo and Juliet* (in 1.3) Paris visits the Capulets before the ball to ask for Juliet's hand in marriage and after Lord Capulet asks him to woo Juliet during the ball, Tybalt joins them. Lady Capulet informs him of what has just happened and he is clearly angry with Paris. Lord Capulet has to step between them to stop a fight from breaking out. Tybalt in this version is clearly also a hot-headed youth.

The next time we see Tybalt on stage in both versions is, as in Shakespeare's play (1.4), during the ball scene. In the French version the ball is already in full swing as can be seen once La Morte (Death), a character who is not included in the Hungarian version, has pushed aside the scenery featuring the entrance to the Capulet mansion. The masks make it impossible to tell who is who, whereas in the Hungarian version all characters apart from Lord and Lady Capulet, Juliet and the Nurse arrive one after the other and they can be identified through characteristic pieces of clothing and hairstyle. In the French version there is a lot of dancing at this point, Paris and Tybalt each dance with Juliet and everyone seems to have a good time until Romeo and Juliet meet and fall in love in the middle of the ball. In the Hungarian version, there is a brief passage of dialogue including Tybalt before their meeting: he congratulates his uncle on Juliet's beautiful dress, bids welcome to her nurse, who likes him in a motherly way, and utters a word of warning to his aunt that Juliet might still be too young to marry. He has heard a rumour that Paris asked for Juliet's hand and the Count does not deny it when questioned. Tybalt is anxious and uneasy and observes his cousin throughout the evening, which he also does in the French version.

As in Shakespeare's play (1.4.167) there comes a moment too when it is discovered that Mercutio, Benvolio and Romeo have gate-crashed the ball. Both French and Hungarian Romeos take their masks off when meeting Juliet and the Hungarian Juliet does so as well,

whereas she does not have a mask in the French version. After their initial kiss, each puts on the other's mask in the Hungarian version.

In the French version Romeo does not put on his mask again, which leads to his identity being discovered by all but Juliet. The Montagues flee and the ball continues until the Nurse reveals to Juliet who the boy was that she kissed. The doors of the Capulets' house are closed and now the French Tybalt sings his first solo outside in front of the doors while his friends and followers are looking for him. It is called 'It's not my mistake' and he describes how he grew up with false ideas and how his parents basically raised him to be a fighter and robbed him of his childhood. He seems rather sad and evokes pity, even after some of his negative character traits have been revealed earlier on during the fight. It is likely he wants to justify himself and explain to others that this human being they see each day is not of his own making but rather that of his family and bad circumstances. He is 'always all alone, [...] always too alone'. It seems as though seeing Romeo and Juliet kiss each other during the ball has finally made him realize what he has been missing all his life: he sends a plea to heaven for someone to remedy that and not regard him as cruel and belligerent any longer. This could be an element included in this production in an attempt to appeal to modern sentimentalities on the audience's part but as he is lashing out at his friends at the same time, this sentiment is immediately called into question. When this Tybalt can be seen again on stage for the last time in Act 1 the impression of his apparent insincerity is reinforced once more. He and his friends are insulting the Montagues for Romeo's behaviour at the ball though the latter is not present at all.

In the Hungarian version Tybalt flies into a rage after having witnessed Romeo and Juliet's kiss. He now knows there is somebody else other than Paris wooing Juliet, only this time feelings seem to be mutual. Tybalt demands that Romeo takes off his mask but the



Montague refuses and Lord Capulet steps in: it is a masked ball after all. He can calm things down for the moment and while Juliet asks her nurse about that young man, of whose real identity the nurse is ignorant too, the ball continues. Tybalt however manages to sneak up on Romeo and tears off his mask. Now everyone knows who he is and Juliet is shocked at having fallen in love with the son of her family's enemy. The three friends successfully manage to flee and it is time for Tybalt's first solo in this version too. In contrast with the original French version here his two solo are reversed: 'it's not my mistake' is his solo in the second act whereas now he sings 'today is the day' which is the song the French Tybalt sings in the second act instead. Apart from minor changes due to linguistic necessities in the two languages, both songs have the same text. Their different use within those two versions creates a very different impression of Tybalt's character traits however.

Movement and text complement each other in the Hungarian version in this moment. Through the text it becomes clear that, after his father took Tybalt to a brothel to learn the 'correct' behaviour towards women, he feels no remorse for behaving as he was told to do as far as prostitutes are concerned. There has however been another girl in his life, who truly occupies his every thought: it is his cousin Juliet and that is why he is so angry at Romeo, who is not only a Montague but also a coward for not coming openly without a mask to woo Juliet. Tybalt sings of how he suffered because of his love to Juliet because as long as she was neither married by her parents nor fell in love, he still could admire and keep her safe from danger. This inclusion clearly is an attempt to explain his character traits and behaviour for a modern audience, who is used to psychological underpinnings when it comes to certain kinds of behaviour. Tybalt cannot bear the thought of losing Juliet and resolves to make Romeo suffer too. As Escalus has pronounced a verdict of putting everyone who starts a fight to death, it seems that Tybalt does not mind this –for him– negative outcome of his plan. He

states: 'My heart betrayed me! Should I fear now that my fate will find me? Should I fear now to die for love? I don't care for honour! One has to die for love!' Visually, Tybalt acts as someone in shock: he suffers from an apparent epileptic attack and the way the servants react makes it clear that this is not a one-off occurrence. Once he has recovered a bit, he holds his hand into a small basin of fire and silently swears something akin to an oath.

In this version there are two more scenes in which Tybalt can be seen on stage in Act 1. The first one could be called 'gossip in the marketplace'. The melody used for this song is the same as for the first song in Act 2 when the Montague followers talk about Romeo and Juliet as if to contrast the Capulet and Montague viewpoints with a musical clue. This short scene basically proves that everyone in Verona knows about the two lovers. Tybalt tries to tell his aunt about what he has overheard but in vain. In her opinion he can do whatever he wants as long as she does not have to care about the consequences of his actions.

This Tybalt is also present at Romeo and Juliet's wedding: The way it is staged could be a symbolic nod towards the fact that Tybalt just knows about it or he indeed followed one of them to the church and now either makes sure nobody can interrupt them or wants to see if they are serious with their decision. In any way, this sets the tone for his behaviour in Act 2.

In the French version Tybalt's solo in the second half of the musical blends in together with the duel scene. After Mercutio, Benvolio and other Montague followers have vented their anger on Romeo for betraying them by marrying Juliet, Tybalt starts to sing and now his character in this version becomes a bit more understandable. As stated above it is the same text as that sung by Tybalt after the ball in the Hungarian version. The staging is more interesting. The Montagues are standing in front of a large house and Tybalt is on the balcony of his uncle's house. Mercutio and everyone else is either in the rooms adjunct to the balcony or in the street below: they can hear how Tybalt sings about his father, the prostitutes and

Juliet. It is an open threat to Romeo, everybody knows about it and Mercutio tries to direct Tybalt's attention towards himself when he starts insulting the Capulet as soon as the song ends. Tybalt quickly joins him in the street and they insult each other until Romeo suddenly appears and tries to stop them. He does not succeed however and the two get ready to fight. Romeo tries to prevent their fight once more but in vain. Tybalt now grabs the knife Romeo wears in his belt, pushes him away and stabs Mercutio. At first it does not become apparent that Mercutio is wounded to death; Tybalt proudly presents the knife to Romeo who now slowly realizes that one of his best friends is dying and has been wounded with his very own knife. While Mercutio is still lucid enough to stumble about, Tybalt basks in the admiration of his friends but once Mercutio is lying on the ground and close to his death, he realizes too late what he has done. In this moment Romeo grabs his knife, which Tybalt threw down at his feet some minutes ago, and stabs the Capulet, who dies in turn. Although the story goes on as in Shakespeare's play (from 3.1.132 onwards), Tybalt's life is over now and apart from one or two times when his name is mentioned in remembrance he does not figure in the rest of the musical.

In the Hungarian version Tybalt's second solo is part of a slightly extended scene with additional dialogue, which gives some more clues as to his background. As the lyrics are the same as in the French version when their Tybalt sings about his childhood, I am going to focus more on the added dialogue as well as the staging since it is the total opposite when compared with the French production. Tybalt enters his room and while one servant helps him out of coat and boots, an older servant tries to talk to him about the gossip surrounding Romeo and Juliet. Tybalt however replies in a rather harsh way and gets angry when the servants talk back with "Your father wouldn't have treated me like this, neither would he have let you do it." He is apparently a relict of Tybalt's father, but the young man does not

seem to be very happy about this constant reminder of his childhood. Once the servants have gone, Lady Capulet approaches him, enquiring about the starting time for the mass to commemorate his father's death: Tybalt gives a short answer without initiating a real conversation though and then starts his song, which again serves to invoke sympathy with him. The staging adds to this feeling.

This scene is set in Tybalt's own room: while singing he changes into what seems to be a knight's armour and then retreats into one part of the stage where a shelf is positioned. He takes a knife out of there, which he puts into his belt, as well as an amulet. He then pours some powdery stuff into a glass of water and drinks it. The last thing he gets from the shelf however really adds to the lyrics of the song. It is a puppet with beautiful clothes and golden hair: he strokes it and then lays her down next to him as if this gesture is meant to say "now I never have the chance of doing this again, of never realizing my dreams at one point". It is clearly painful for him to remember his childhood; it seems that he is willingly going to his death at this point as he prepares to hurt Romeo for falling in love with Juliet and taking her away from him for good.

After a blackout, we are immediately thrown again into an atmosphere of anger when we see Mercutio, Benvolio and their friends talking about how Romeo, by falling in love with Juliet, has now turned against them. Suddenly we hear Tybalt's voice coming from the back of the stage and the first part of this scene sounds and looks like the usual banter and exchange of insults between him and Mercutio, but then Tybalt gets impatient and repeats his demand to know where Romeo is. Mercutio does not reply but comes up with some really clever insults: he certainly is more inventive and jester-like than Tybalt, for whom everything is serious. Tybalt has more trouble coming up with the right thing to say and seems to be frozen on the spot while Mercutio is dancing all around him. It is as if Tybalt never had a

chance to joke about things. As soon as Romeo appears on the scene however, Tybalt focuses his attention on him. Romeo tries to convince him to quit fighting and live a peaceful life, which is a completely alien idea for Tybalt, who tries in vain to trick Romeo into fighting. In contrast, Mercutio seems to accept this challenge, trying to protect his friend. He prompts Tybalt into attacking him, ripping the amulet from his neck and throwing it to the ground. Romeo steps in but cannot prevent Tybalt from stabbing Mercutio under his arm. Tybalt runs away and while Romeo says farewell to Mercutio for the final time, he returns to the scene. He is not rejoicing about what he has done however and stands at a respectful distance. It even seems that he is trying to suppress a feeling of nausea. Attacked by Romeo, he does nothing at all to defend himself and seems to be glad that his life is finally over.

When comparing all three Tybalts, it becomes apparent that the perception of them is a combination of their speeches and songs as well as the stagings in the different productions. Shakespeare's Tybalt is a hot-headed young man with excellent fencing/fighting skills, always more than willing to defend family honour. The stabbing of Mercutio and his subsequent death at Romeo's hand are the key moments in the play. In both musical versions Tybalt, as shown above, is a larger role and yet the audience's impression of him is on the whole shaped more by the staging than the actual lyrics of his solos. Although these evoke empathy in both cases, the way this is enhanced by the staging is much more pronounced in the Hungarian version. Tybalt here is very clearly a sick young man caught up in depressing circumstances. It seems like he is willingly rebelling against Escalus' order to be able to die in defending the family honour, drilled into him since his childhood. He seems to have lost all hope and by premeditating Romeo's possible death, only prevented by Mercutio, he has also planned his own. Tybalt in the French version does not aim to kill anybody, he stabs Mercutio on the spur of the moment, which is further supported by the fact that he does not have a

weapon of any sort and has to take Romeo's knife. He only realizes what he has done when it is too late. Yet both manage to somehow expose the hypocritical attitude of the older Montague and Capulet generation: although both families, especially both lords, are shown to be reluctant to fight or let Tybalt fight, they also do not care what happens if he does indeed fight. After he lies dead at their feet, Lord and Lady Capulet spar verbally over who is most responsible for what has happened instead of paying their nephew a final tribute. In the Hungarian version, Peter and the Nurse say their farewells to Tybalt, in the French version Juliet cries out for her cousin and it is a small comfort to know someone in the household loved him.

#### 4.2. A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM: FAIRIES WITH AN IDENTITY CRISIS?

The musical production analysed in this sub-chapter is based on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and was a special commission by Miklós Gábor Kerényi, the director of the Operettszínház in Budapest, following the success of the previously discussed *Rómeó és Júlia*. As well as directing this piece he was also responsible for the libretto. The music was composed by Béla Szakcsi Lakatos, an award winning pianist, composer and lecturer on jazz piano at the Béla Bartók Conservatory in Budapest. He is popular for his jazz interpretations and his love for gypsy and folk music. Apart from this production he has composed several other musicals for instance (*Red Caravan*, *Once Upon A Time a Gypsy Girl* and *Cartwheel*), a rock opera about the life of Elizabeth Báthory titled *The Beast*, and had been invited to compose a ballet for the Hungarian State Opera House to celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of America. The song lyrics were written by Péter Sziámi Müller, a well-known singer, songwriter and translator/adaptor who has already worked on the lyrics for such other musicals as *Elisabeth*, *Mozart!*, *Peter Pan*, *Rebecca* and *Altar Boyz*.

*Szentivánéji álom*, as Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is called in Hungarian, had its world premiere on 25 July 2008 at the Open Air Festival in Szeged; the Budapest premiere took place on 16 October 2008 at the Operettszínház. The premiere in Szeged is significant in its own right since it marked the signing of the declaration of intent for founding the Union of European Musical Theatres, which counts as its constitutional members the Operettszínház in Budapest, the State Theatre of Musical Comedy in Saint Petersburg, the Karlin Musical Theatre in Prague and the National Operetta Theatre "Ion Dacian" in Bucharest. Its aim is a cultural exchange across national borders through productions which rely on music like operas, operettas and musicals. This made it possible for example to send the Hungarian team to Bucharest to co-produce a replica version of *Rómeó és Júlia* at the "Ion Dacian" and subsequent bilingual performances took place either in Budapest or Bucharest with a combined cast from both countries.

*Szentivánéji álom* has not been put on elsewhere. The music is influenced by typical Hungarian folk tunes and recalls in parts traditional Gypsy music. This impression is further supported by the garish style of most of the costumes for the human world, suggestive of supposedly typical Gypsy clothing. In comparison with the plot of Shakespeare's original play, almost everything which happens in the human world is as it should be: the four lovers or would-be lovers elope, the mechanicals rehearse their show, Bottom is turned into a beast and in the end all are reconciled with each other. The initial set-up of characters has been modernized in parts, but this does not affect the outcome of the plot. In this production Hermia is the daughter of Theseus and Hippolyta, who are already married and who rule over a small town near the forest. Their favoured son-in-law is Demetrius, son of the town's police captain, with whom they wish to form a closer alliance. The wedding which is planned for the end of the piece is Hermia's with Demetrius, not that of Hippolyta and Theseus. Hermia,

though, wants to marry Lysander, who is poor but willing to work hard for their living, and they elope. Helena and Demetrius go after them and the usual mix-up of lovers follows. What is changed in this production is the fairy world as symbolised by Oberon, Titania and Puck. They are still fairies and they also behave in the way Shakespeare's fairies do, but this production incorporates textual as well as staging elements which call into question their identity. Above all, there is no doubling in this production of the kind that has become common with Shakespeare's play. Hippolyta and Theseus as well as Titania and Oberon are played by one actor each. There is no Philostrate, as the wedding preparations are overseen by Theseus himself and consequently Puck is not doubled with this omitted character. His role has been enlarged when compared to Shakespeare's Puck and it seems that, although Oberon is still the main schemer behind most tricks, it is Puck who sometimes takes them one step too far. The Indian Boy in Shakespeare's play gets a bigger role here; he is called Nanda and is also much older. It becomes apparent in the first scene that Titania and Oberon are out to teach him the fairy ways.

Whereas in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the fairies only enter in Act 2, here they open the production. Puck and two of his friends enter first, followed by Oberon and Nanda, who is shown around the area. It seems they are in a workshop or an open shed in the human world: everyone is asleep and the fairies can roam between them without fear of detection. Titania now enters and it becomes apparent that they are talking about something which happened in the past on Midsummer's Eve. It seems that they make fun of the humans but equally admit that fairies make the same mistakes as them and that it is best to own up to those mistakes as the past has shown. In addition it is now Midsummer again and love can easily turn to lust. The references to the past might be without meaning (apart from forming a general background story) but it could also be a word play with the word 'dream' in the title.



This interpretation is reinforced later on by the musical's ending. The fairies make the audience dream while in the theatre: what is happening on stage is not real but rather a story told by the King and Queen of the fairies and their attendants. As the plot progresses it becomes noticeable however that this might be a story from the fairies' own past and that it had a more sinister undertone than just a nice dream of eternal love.

In this production too Oberon and Titania are King and Queen of the fairies and part of a framing device to turn the whole play into a dream for the audience. Both refer to themselves as fairies though they each also suffer from a mild identity crisis when Oberon realizes what his fairy magic has done, and when Titania discovers Bottom, who is still an ass, in her bed after Oberon has removed the spell from her. To get to this point however something must have happened before and it has indeed: in the first scene within the actual plot Oberon interrupts Titania, Nanda and her fairy attendants while they are dancing and being merry. He wants to have Nanda all to himself as he fears Titania will spoil him and make him soft: it is the traditional start of their argument over the changeling boy. This Oberon displays all the egoistical character traits of Shakespeare's fairy king (cp. Puck's description in 2.1.18-31), and when Titania resists him, he swears to revenge himself on her. To be able to do so, he demands that Puck fetches him 'that fiery red flower of lust' from Tibet so that Oberon can make her fall in love with the first person she sees when she awakes. While he waits for Puck to come back, he overhears first Demetrius and Helena, then the mechanicals and then Hermia and Lysander. Oberon comments on each of them: he will also anoint Demetrius' eyes so that he will love Helena and the mechanicals are surely going to fail with their play. Oberon also admits envy and admiration for Lysander's love for Hermia. He is also shown as somewhat hypocritical as, although he admires the latter's love for each other and wants to make Helena happy, he cannot see further than his own nose when it

comes to his wife Titania. He envies her Nanda as she does not give him the attention he thinks he deserves as her husband. When he comes across Titania and her entourage sleeping in and next to her bower, he anoints his wife's eyes and leaves it to Puck to do the same for Demetrius: he warns Puck to be careful but is not present at all when the latter fulfils his order.

Puck is glad that his master has trusted him with so many important spells to cast and happily dances around with his two fairy friends while singing/boasting about his ability to make jokes and play pranks on people. He claims that he is best friends with Oberon and that they concoct every plan together though the fairy king might be his 'real master' of course. Nobody is safe from Puck unless out of the woods where the fairies live. He immediately proves this as the mechanicals arrive to rehearse and through some lucky or unlucky circumstances they provide him with the idea of making Titania fall in love with an ass, which is what he decides to turn Bottom into. He then continues his work but as the sign Oberon told him to look out for, a white cap, is in the middle between Lysander and Demetrius who are asleep on the ground, he anoints the eyes of each to be on the safe side. As in Shakespeare's play (cp. 3.2), they both are in love with Helena now and that story takes its usual course. Puck and his friends lead Bottom to Titania's bower and her attendants have a little bit of fun with him first before he discovers the sleeping Titania. As predicted by Oberon, the fairy queen immediately falls in love with him and tires quickly of Nanda, the source for all their trouble as she 'ha[s] enough of tiny dancers' now that she knows Bottom.

When Puck reports to Oberon that he has fulfilled his requests, he is clearly out for some praise at least. As such Oberon's anger after finding out that Puck has got everything wrong so that Lysander and Demetrius are now both in love with Helena seems unreasonable. Similar to Shakespeare's play, Oberon is responsible: it was after all his idea of using the

flower's magic and he did not provide Puck with a very clear description of Demetrius. There is however a tiny twist here when it comes to Titania. Shakespeare's Oberon clearly states that 'this falls out better than [he] could devise' (3.2.35) when being informed by Puck that Titania has fallen in love with an ass; in this production however he is horrified at that thought, having received 'An ass with huge, hairy ears, who stinks!' from Puck in reply to his initial question 'Who is the lucky man?'. This Oberon clearly did not intend to make Titania suffer this much: he punishes Puck by immobilising him for several seconds through his magic. When alone Oberon is overcome by self-doubt and self-hatred which is increased even more as he secretly observes Titania and Bottom falling under the spell of lust and passion. Oberon feels true remorse at that point and he is willing to suffer any punishment sent either by heaven or by Titania to atone for what he has done. His fairy identity as known from Shakespeare's play has been shaken and this is indeed reinforced in the next scene when the human and fairy worlds meet. Puck in turn, although he might be angry at himself, still is more like a clown since 'a nice mess this became, *unintended* though, as Puck is my name' (my italics). Similar to Oberon, he now realizes that messing with each others' feelings might not be a very good idea and he also seems to be afraid of his master now. He tells his friends that 'we need to set it right, or else our king with all his might just kill me in his fury and than you can really bury me!'

Oberon in turn now witnesses Hermia's anguish about being left by Lysander for Helena. When she tires herself out Oberon puts her to sleep and makes sure that she is safe, shielding her with his body when Lysander and Demetrius get into a fistfight about Helena nearby. As he has acknowledged that this is mainly his own fault, he steps between them to stop them from killing each other but gets tangled up. In this moment Lysander rips off the cloak Oberon has been wearing all the time and the two humans now can see him as they can

see each other. It turns out to be is a magic cloak and as becomes apparent in this scene it might be just what makes Oberon a fairy in the first place or at least gives him an extra little bit of magic. Demetrius runs away in fright but Lysander is curious and wants to know more. He questions Oberon as to who he is and where he comes from and when Oberon realizes that Lysander wants to try on the cloak he gives him a brief explanation. Lysander wants to know why Oberon messed up their life but the latter somehow evades replying. Oberon is also visible getting weaker, which would support the argument that the cloak has some special significance and gives him extra strength. However it could also be that Oberon has worn the cloak too long and now feels unprotected and weak without it. He manages to put Lysander to sleep finally, puts on his cloak again and now sets off to care for Titania and take the spell off her while Puck is to get rid of Bottom. Oberon warns him to be careful so that he does not 'flunk the exam', which also raises questions about Puck's and in fact everybody's status in the fairy world. Although Puck explains quickly that 'to flunk the exam would be a shame, for then for men we'll never be seen. Not till the re-take [re-sit], anyway' this is slightly confusing: on the one hand it means there must be someone who controls this exam, who might even have a higher authority than Oberon and Titania. On the other hand this could also signify that, to become a fairy, one has to pass an exam: is Nanda then training to become a fairy, therefore necessitating lessons from both Oberon and Titania. But who trained them? Was somebody else reigning over the fairy world before they took over? No matter how it is, Puck fails to tend to Bottom in time: before he can either remove the ass Bottom from Titania's bower or take the magic spell off to turn him into human Bottom again, first Bottom and then Titania wake up. The fairy queen though is no longer under the magic spell and as such is horrified to find an ass in her bower. She pushes him out and after a short moment Puck and his friends finally take him away. Titania though is in shock: her spirit is crushed

and she seems 'broken in body and mind'. Her attendants try to sooth and calm her down again and they also urge her to take revenge by voicing what Titania suspects: Oberon is the one who made her fall in love with such a beast. He will regret it dearly. She questions her identity still when she muses whether 'the rest of a fairy is that what I am?'.

The next scene supports this reading that there is something about Oberon and Titania which can make one question their fairy identity. After Oberon has taken the spell of her eyes and she has become aware of his scheming, Titania starts to conjure up a storm but her husband prevents her from fully unleashing it. Rather, she is now to cast a spell on him and anoints his eyes: Oberon is now deeply in love with her and even proposes to leave the fairy world to prove it. Titania accepts and Puck informs them that, should they really wish to leave, they need to give him their cloaks. They comply with his request and are now human beings, joining the festivities for the wedding of Hermia and Lysander and Helena and Demetrius.

It is not fully clear in this moment whether they are going to revert to a fairy identity again afterwards, thereby closing the framing device from the first scene as if they retold their past in a dream-like sequence, or going to stay human forever now and were referring to something else at the start of the play. Puck is left behind in the fairy world and similar to Shakespeare's Puck (cp. 5.1.409-424) he is the one ending the play for the audience when he says 'If we shadows have offended, we lost a battle, which is splendid, the spirit lights go out and you can take your route home. Your humans will want an antidote, so next time you give your vote: come back to the theatre to see what you saw and let us give you another heehaw!'. It sounds as if he is referring back to the initial mention of a past story and as such this would support the theory that the framing device mentioned above points towards a word play on 'dream' in the title: it clearly is a story to dream away the time in the theatre. This production

also raises a question at least I have been asking myself since I first read this play: why does Titania not revenge herself on Oberon in return? She is a powerful fairy with magic abilities in her own right: at least after the spell had been lifted from her eyes, it would have been possible for her to sense something has happened in the meantime even if she cannot remember it. Her attendants though have not been under the spell, so they were witnesses to Titania's and Bottom's behaviour. A similar thing happened here when Lysander and Oberon meet by accident: Lysander immediately realises that Oberon must have done something to make Demetrius and him fall in love with Helena and thereby confusing his relationship with Hermia. Oberon might have meant well but it clearly did not go well and now somebody other than the fairy king has to deal with the consequences. When Lysander is lucid enough while under the spell to realize somebody must have enchanted him and this somebody was most likely Oberon, he also must have had previous knowledge of the fairy world or at least of its existence. As such this musical offers a new view of Shakespeare's play by tying up some loose knots but also questioning why Titania and Oberon as well as Puck should have an interest in the four lovers if they are indeed just Theseus, Hippolyta and Philostrate in disguise. As in the Royal Shakespeare Company's 2011 production, it is quite difficult to shake off the initial confusion some audience members might have experienced when seeing those three characters from the human world slipping into the fairy world because of the doubling without any inherent indication as to why this should be so and why they should toy with the four lovers' relationships. This musical indeed does elude this question mark by not taking recourse to doubling and making sure there is a valuable explanation as to why Oberon casts a spell on the four lovers and why Titania and Oberon slip into the human world. These methods raise other questions in turn though but they are then about these particular fairies and not about Shakespeare's original play anymore. When regarded from this perspective,

*Szentivánéji álom* is a noteworthy attempt to add some deeper layer to the fairy world even though Oberon and Titania now clearly suffer to some degree from an identity crisis.

#### 4.3. *PRINCE OF DENMARK*: 'THIS IS SHAKESPEARE'S PLOT. THIS IS NOT SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY.'

This musical version of *Hamlet* is nothing like the other two productions analysed in this chapter. Although it makes use of Shakespeare's general plotline the title suggests that this is more or less a parody of the original play and according to some critics sometimes does not even that convincingly. Without having seen a performance of this production or a recording, the following analysis is relying solely on photos and reviews this time.

*Prince of Denmark* was adapted by Harald Schmidt, probably one of Germany's best known entertainers and comedians; the textual basis was the popular Schlegel translation. He also acted in it. The premiere took place on 25 October 2008 at the Schauspielhaus in Stuttgart, the city where Schmidt himself trained as an actor from 1978-1981 and has performed several times since then in a variety of functions (cabarets, presenter at the Bambi Award Ceremony, a charity event as well as a recital with Elvis songs). Five quickly sold-out performances followed until the end of November before the production went on tour to other cities and towns in Germany for some few performances. Schmidt had already played Lucky in *Waiting for Godot* in Bochum 2002 to great acclaim and afterwards went on to play the title role in *Volpone* in Stuttgart in 2010 for example, so this is not only his only stage role. In *Hamlet* he portrayed Polonius, the Ghost, Yorick and a messenger. Thomas Eisen played Horatio, Rosencrantz and one of the gravediggers, Sebastian Schwab was Laertes, Guildenstern, Bernado, the second gravedigger and an officer. Claudius (Martin Leutgeb), Hamlet (Benjamin Grüter), Gertrude (Marietta Meguid) and Ophelia (Lilly Marie Tschörtner) were not doubled. The story around the Norwegian invasion and Fortinbras was cut entirely,

though the name of the Norwegian prince provided the basis for the band called Fort'n'Brass: Jean Pierre Barraqué, Max Braun, Matthias Klein and Andreas Zbik, who provided the music for the production.

As can be inferred from this list of characters this was not the full text: the whole performance only lasted around 90 minutes at most. This however can be intrinsically linked to Harald Schmidt's original interest in putting this Shakespeare play on stage and also to how he views theatre in general. Schmidt sees theatre as a particular kind of attitude towards life and has therefore always aimed to present a certain 'Harald Schmidt' to the public, though he also admits that he cannot honestly be such a fascinating actor. This ties in with his belief about acting in the traditional sense of the word or rather his non-belief: in a recent TV interview (online broadcast of *Foyer – Das Theatermagazin*: 1/12/2010: <http://www.zdf.de/ZDFmediathek/beitrag/video/1204170/Foyer---Das-Theatermagazin#/beitrag/video/1204170/Foyer---Das-Theatermagazin> [last access 25/10/2011]) he said that he does not see the reason to wait for a spontaneous emotion to occur, presumably within the actor's mind while speaking his or her lines, and then play with it as might traditionally be the case. Instead, if such an emotion can be created artificially, it should be presented to the audience immediately. An actor should have a feeling after all for what an audience wants, so why not provide it without hesitation in any given situation? This seems to be the main premise for his *Prince of Denmark* and his reason for choosing this particular play ties in with that explanation as well. In a 2008 interview conducted around the time his musical opened, he and Angela Winkler, an actress famous for playing Hamlet in Peter Zadek's acclaimed 1999 production, talked about their experiences with Zadek's *Hamlet* as audience member and actress respectively to a journalist from the *Spiegel* magazine (on 24/10/2008: <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/0,1518,585805,00.html> [last access



23/10/2011]). As Winkler talked about her experience of working with Zadek, Schmidt admitted to having deeply admired her as Hamlet. He referred to one special instance which also highlights the aim he worked towards with his own production. He said that Winkler's way of uttering the sentence 'What players are they?' really stuck with him, as he would like to achieve the same effect with *Prince of Denmark*: that the audience remembers this production long after having left the theatre. He also considered the problem that most people only have a very limited knowledge of *Hamlet* and that, if they see the play in theatre, do not immediately recognize all the different relationships between the characters. He only realized after seeing half of Zadek's production that Polonius also is the father of Ophelia and Laertes and not only some kind of advisor to the royal family. For his own production Schmidt aimed at greater clarity: 'people should not get confused by what they see'. Winkler, who apparently sat in on one of the rehearsals, indeed praised this approach. She said that for her this Hamlet is without 'all that intellectual shit, like a fairy tale in comic book format'. Both actors agree that, in theatre in general, actors have to serve a play to audiences in the best and most inclusive way possible: after a certain amount of time a performance is over and there is no way to remedy any bad impressions afterwards. As such the actors have to enjoy themselves and their work too which in Schmidt's case for example meant that his actors could also choose some of the songs for their characters themselves.

As a further consequence, this production does not include a lot of scenery or very elaborate costumes. The stage is mostly empty apart from a kind of building structure in the background which, judging from photos, looks like the façade of a hotel called 'Denmark' for some of the outdoor scenes. For some of the indoors scene a huge white skull on a black curtain towers over the stage. In other instances the stage seems like a scenery from a TV show with light bulbs at the back, arranged to form the words 'Hamlet, Prince of Denmark'

when the title character is alone on stage and in again other circumstances there are two staircases on which the characters sing and dance. Other photos occasionally show a backdrop with interior designs of castle walls as well as actual furniture, so in that particular sense also this production aims at make-believe for some aspects. The centre of the forestage is lowered as if to form an orchestra pit and here the band Fort'n'Brass is seated with their various instruments: they can follow what happens on stage and play the different musical pieces accordingly. Whenever some tragic happened on stage the characters broke out into songs, taking recourse either to classical music or rock and pop. As such, Hamlet's 'To be or not to be' speech could heard while tunes from U2 were played by Fort'n'Brass whereas Ophelia was singing Tina Turner songs.

The costumes used supported the comic aspect of the performance even more. They are rather garish and colourful and some look like 'prince and princess' carnival costumes and all the men wear tights with shirts of varying length. In line with his general dark mood, Hamlet is clad in black trousers and a shirt which has long sleeves in the shape of a bird's wings. His dead father, the Ghost, in contrast wears a completely white nightshirt-like garment with extra long sleeves, a long white wig and a white crown. White in this production seems to equal the innocent dead, a theme which is taken up later on again when Ophelia and Laertes are also dead. They too have changed from their usual clothing to white robes whereas Claudius and Gertrude still wear their normal costumes. In the Queen's case this consists of a yellow dress with a dark blue, sparkling fur vest-like decoration. Her hair is put up in massive plaits above her ears: each plait sports a mini crown with a bigger one in between on her head as the symbol of her queenship. Claudius only wears one crown but his costume is equally colourful. He wears blue tights and oriental slippers in addition to a long white shirt, including a red belt and red gloves; his light blue cape reaches down to the floor

and is decorated with fur of the same colour at the shoulders. Similar to Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern wear clothes of only one colour: they are dressed in silver sparkling clothing but it consists only of tights and a tunic-like long shirt with a belt. Their costume is not as elaborate compared to those of the royal family and they are therefore clearly marked as inferior in status. The same can be said of Polonius and his family: they make an attempt at wearing the same clothes as the royal family but everything is a bit too short. Laertes wears red tights and shoes with a short silver shirt whereas Ophelia wears a blue dress which barely reaches down to her knees in addition to high heels and white tights. Their father Polonius is clad in yellow tights with a blue and white spotted shirt and a dark cape, the former stained with blood when Hamlet has stabbed him through the curtain. Hamlet's friend Horatio is marked by the same colours as Laertes but in reverse: his tights are silver and his shirt is red. He seems to be clad like a soldier as his shirt has a white cross on red background and the silver tights suggest remind one of armour. Schmidt himself took on the role of Yorick, the court jester whose skull is dug up by the gravediggers. This production made use of the stage's trap door out of which Yorick peeped while Hamlet cradled his head. Schmidt seems to have worn a head microphone for this role, enabling him to talk back or sing to Hamlet.

Although this is indeed not 'Shakespeare's play' as such but rather his plot only (one picture shows Hamlet threatening his mother with a sword, so it can be assumed everyone who should be dead according to Shakespeare ends up dead here too), it bears out justice to Schmidt's initial aim that an audience should not immediately forget what has happened on stage. In his opinion and experience the audience in Stuttgart has seen all kinds of atrocities and wild ideas on stage already in other productions of this play; he wanted his production to stand out. As such, for example lunatic behaviour by Hamlet is nothing new any more and to make an impression it was 'back to the roots' for Schmidt with simple costumes and scenery.

After all, Elizabethan actors in general mostly had to make do with what they could afford and what was provided by patrons and others. This idea of putting his production in contrast with others applied even more to the 2008 season during which *Prince of Denmark* was staged, as two other *Hamlet* productions had previously been seen. If staging and artistic ideas had been too similar, they would have blended into each other and could not have been separated in the audience's memory. The fact that this was promoted as a musical version certainly helped to achieve this aim as also in Germany the combination of 'Shakespeare' and 'musical' is quite unusual. Schmidt's production also provides a fairly good access to this play as it did not seem to have been cluttered with an excess of props, scenery and elaborate traditional costumes, which can also distract from the action on stage and from the relationships between the different characters. When looking at the pictures, it seems as if Angela Winkler's utterance of 'a comic book style' is true: this does not put it into the range of comic theatre though ('comic' as in 'comedy'). It is a production in its own genre.

## 5. SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS FOR CHILDREN & AS PUPPET THEATRE

### 5.1. INTRODUCTION: SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS FOR CHILDREN

When thinking about introducing children to Shakespeare, the first methods coming to mind are either through stories adapted from the original plays like the world-famous *Lambs' Tales* or through texts and adaptations used within the wider context of Shakespeare and education. In addition, some scholars like Velma Bourgeois Richmond for example are convinced that "Shakespeare's plays require a change in genre before they can become stories for children" (Bourgeois Richmond: 2008: p. 1).

While I agree that this might be true for smaller children as many modern adaptations of the plays prove, being published either as short stories with pictures or comic-book style renderings (cp. Matthews/ Ross: 2003 and 2007 or Williams: 1998), it does not always have to be like this. Lois Burdell, who has taught as a primary school teacher at Hamlet School in Stratford, Ontario (Canada), has shown many times that children can deal with Shakespeare on their own terms, in verse, in the theatre: she has been rewarded for her efforts with Canada's Meritorious Service Medal and the Encyclopaedia Britannica's National Award for Early Childhood Education (Burdett: 1997, reprint 2011: back of book). Burdell took a selection of Shakespeare's plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Macbeth* and turned each of them into short, about one-hour long pieces of verse (Armagnac as quoted from Burdett: 1995, reprint 2009: p. 4). Her students recited those on stage in their respective characters' costumes and performed the action inherent in their lines. Gary Armagnac, Director of Education at the Utah Shakespearean Festival, described reactions before and after one of their performances during a conference of the Shakespeare Theatre Association of America at the Stratford Festival, Ontario as follows

Before:

As we sat discussing the future of classical repertory theatre, we were informed that we would be entertained by Lois Burdett and her second- and third-grade class from Hamlet School. The response to this was polite silence. After all, we were important people who had flown an awfully long way to talk about art and theatre.

After:

I'm told the performance lasted just under an hour. I couldn't tell you, because I was utterly transported. These little people had taken a room full of fairly cynical theatre folk and turned it upside down. Grown men were weeping and laughing in the same moment. And *not* because the performers were cute. Cute doesn't cut it in the professional theatre. No, there was something very special in what we witnessed that day. [his italics]

(Armagnac as quoted from Burdett: 1995, reprint 2009: p. 4)

It becomes obvious from those comments that, although the audience seems to have been very sceptical at the beginning, Shakespeare performed by children for adults can make for some very convincing theatre. But what about adults performing Shakespeare for children? As this thesis deals with productions from countries with different cultural and educational backgrounds, a motivation 'to do Shakespeare' needs to be found even more so than in English speaking parts of the world. It might even have wider and more far-reaching repercussions. In Germany, for example, Shakespeare's plays are usually taught in those classes equating to the sixth form in the UK system and more often than not without any attempt at performance. It can be very dull and, looking back, I myself definitely preferred French over English in school when faced with that choice since I never wanted to do Shakespeare. In 2003 I saw the Royal Shakespeare Company's *Titus Andronicus* in Stratford-on-Avon and was hooked immediately. Had I seen one of his plays in a suitable rendering while a child or a teen my reaction in school would have been very different I imagine.

So in which way can Shakespeare be staged as to sustain the attention of children throughout a whole play? David Wood and Janet Grant for example propose to view children's theatre as a unique art form: it has to have sincerity and truth as well as honesty and depth and must not try to provide 'constant jollity and surface enthusiasm' (Wood/Grant:

1997: p. 11). Children should be entertained by what they see but there is no desperate need to make them laugh. They have to be able though to think about what they see and understand it and as such the performance has to be age-appropriate. In addition, however, they are then also able to grasp the inherent core of the story without much explanation as so many literary adaptations of Shakespeare's plays have done in the past. So what can be done with Shakespeare in this respect?

To try and answer this question I have decided to focus in this chapter on the three adaptations by Ignace Cornelissen who is well-known all over Europe as a playwright for children's theatre and has received several awards for his work. Cornelissen was born in Turnhout (Belgium) in 1960 and is founder and artistic director of the theatre company Het Gevolg there. Apart from writing his own pieces for performance, he has also adapted other plays and literary texts such as *Don Juan* by Molière, Rita Törnqvist-Verschuur's *De Muzikant en het Meisje* (The musician and the little girl), Goldoni's *Servant of Two Masters* (*De Gang*), Aristophanes' *The Birds*, Chekhov's *On the Harmful Effects of Tobacco* (*Tabak*) or texts by Bertolt Brecht, performed under the name *Oorlog* (War). So what exactly did he do to Shakespeare?

#### 5.1.1. OTHELLO – SELF-CONFIDENT GENERAL AND INSECURE LOVER

Ignace Cornelissen's adaptation of *Othello* had its world premiere on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2001 at the theatre in Turnhout where Het Gevolg is based. The company was then invited to perform at the First International Theatre Festival Schäckpir in Austria in 2002, which is a special festival for children and young adults with productions from all over Europe. The German language premiere took place at the Theaterhaus in Frankfurt/ Main in 2005, more performances in other places followed.

Similar to Shakespeare's original play, this *Othello* deals with jealousy and envy on two levels: between friends and between lovers, or rather a married couple. And yet, right from the start some things become apparent: this Othello is not a moor but rather someone who parents might not really want as their son-in-law –he's coarse, impudent and doesn't have any manners at all (cp. Brabantio's speech in Cornelissen: 1995: p. 23, scene 5). Although the murder of Desdemona by Othello is still part of this adaptation, the Emilia-Iago subplot is totally missing. Instead this action is transferred onto other characters. Aimed at children aged 9 and older as well as adults, the play as such is less than 90 minutes long and is divided into twelve scenes in total. As alluded to above, Cornelissen has decided to cut most of the characters. His *Othello* is a play for 5 actors only, one of which should be female: Brabantio, Desdemona, Othello, Iago (or Jago as it is spelled in German) and Michael Cassio. Three additional roles are specified: a soldier and a commentator but, in addition to a priest needed in one of the scenes, these can be played by any of the 5 actors who are not needed in his or her main role in that particular moment.

The set-up of the stage is very simple: according to Cornelissen's notes (Cornelissen: 1995: p. 3) included in the play text there should be an old-looking table, if possible with something akin to a small trapdoor in the middle, a pole or mast and a big white silk scarf, which can be used as a bridal veil, a sail and a tent. 'More than a hundred' light bulbs should be hanging down from the ceiling at different heights and therefore serve as stars to be gazed at (Cornelissen: 1995: p. 3)

The main difference between this play and Shakespeare's original text is the development of the unfolding tragedy and the order in which things happen as well as the question of 'who does what to whom for and why?'. In the original play Othello and Desdemona are already in love at the very beginning and this is indeed the very first argument



Shakespeare's Iago uses to talk Roderigo into complicity for revenging himself on Othello. In Cornelissen's version however there is no Roderigo for example, yet everything which I would say is essential to Shakespeare's *Othello* is still included: Iago's treachery and desire for revenge, Brabantio's anger about his daughter's marriage with Othello, Othello's easily aroused jealousy, the trick with the handkerchief and Desdemona's murder for instance. The question remains: if all essential parts are preserved, how does this *Othello* for children work from a narrative viewpoint?

In the very first scene it becomes apparent that Cornelissen has not only adapted the play for children but has also modified it for modern times. Othello, Iago and Cassio enter the stage and Cassio as well as Iago are eager to hear who is going to be Othello's new lieutenant. Instead of telling them directly though, Othello draws it out and teases them: he has written it down but cannot remember where he put the envelope with his note. He even suggests going to Brabantio's place first –he is the Duke of Venice in this version- to have a cup of coffee and chat for a while. Othello seems to imitate modern entertainers: the way he talks about this nomination and the use of an envelope points towards the popular *X-Factor* or awards ceremonies like the Oscars or Baftas. In addition, he also seems like a child when he asks Cassio and Iago to keep their peace with each other and still be friends after he has revealed who is the lucky one. It is Cassio, the younger of the two; Iago is not pacified at all but grumbles and seems to become jealous.

The next two scenes are the most important ones in this particular adaptation as all the other characters are introduced and the dynamics between them become apparent. As already mentioned above, Brabantio is the Duke of Venice and as such he and Othello meet once a week to talk politics and discuss other important issues. This time though Othello also introduces Cassio as his new lieutenant. Each of the three friends display their personalities in

such a way that an audience can sense that something going to happen, even without any previous knowledge of Shakespeare's *Othello*. Othello is like a man who is very sure of himself when it comes to matters military and adventurous but without any sense of social mores; Cassio, though the youngest of the three men, is the best behaved one and Iago acts as if he envies Othello his position and also Desdemona's affection: she falls head over heels in love with Othello when he tells of his adventures and how, for example, he rescued a baby and reunited it with his mother. Iago informs her 'if you like, I can tell such stories too' (Cornelissen: 1995: 12) and Cassio tells him off, having noticed that apparently Othello has fallen for Desdemona in turn. Brabantio in contrast doesn't seem to have noticed anything. He has organised a party –it is Desdemona's birthday– and intends to make his daughter enjoy herself. He does notice however Othello's bad manners: Othello makes jokes to the Duke's expense and drinks before toasting like everybody else. Since at the end of the scene Iago and Cassio are in danger of falling out with each other, Othello suggests going to an all-night disco and suddenly Desdemona appears there as well with a friend, having run away from the party. The following dialogue sounds like Othello and Desdemona are about to become two star-crossed lovers like Romeo and Juliet but their adversaries are real people, not an ancient feud. Iago predicts that 'it's not going to work out' and that Brabantio is similarly against a relationship between Othello and Desdemona. Cassio is mediating between them but he cannot keep Othello and Iago from a fistfight. Similar to Shakespeare's trio of friends the set-up here is very similar and the initial need for Iago to revenge himself on Othello is the same. Cornelissen however includes a plot device which does not turn Desdemona's murder by Othello into such a shock ending. While at Brabantio's place Othello has told everybody that he is not very good with emotions: when he finally confesses his feelings to Desdemona, he is at first at a loss for the right word, finally using 'Klippfisch' (klipfish) to say 'I love you', but

then accidentally hurts Desdemona. He hugs her too tightly as he ‘doesn’t know [his] own strength’. The Romeo and Juliet similarity becomes even more apparent as Desdemona demands that their relationship be kept a secret which is further complicated when Othello asks her to marry him: Brabantio as the Duke of Venice simply will not be happy to see his daughter married to such a brute. It is however not as easy as just keeping silent as Cornelissen includes another modern plot device. Desdemona fears that ‘photographers who constantly look across the hedge and garden walls’ will accidentally reveal their marriage to Brabantio. Although Othello tries to soothe her by declaring “Knights of the Order of the Big Lense. Not permitted here.” (Cornelissen: 1995: 19), an audience can already sense that it is going to fail. During the marriage ceremony depicted in the next scene, which once again recalls Romeo and Juliet, they are indeed photographed without knowing by whom. After they have left the church, the audience realizes it was Iago: he hid behind a curtain and now seeks a way to get those photos to Brabantio (Cornelissen: 1995: 20).

His chance arrives when Othello, Cassio and Brabantio as well as Iago meet in the Venetian army’s command centre to plan a counterattack as a Turkish fleet is just on its way to Cyprus. Iago uses this moment to slip an envelope with the photos to Brabantio, claiming hypocritically that he just found them “lying around here”. From this moment onwards, several things are happening simultaneously on different levels: on the one hand, there is the relationship of Othello and Desdemona which, because of their different views of the situation, deteriorates a bit in this moment. On the other hand, there is Iago’s intrigue which aims at dividing Othello and Desdemona as well as Othello and Cassio. All is as it should be when compared to Shakespeare’s play and yet, as referred to above, one thing is missing. One has to ask the question: how does Iago succeed in his revenge when there is no Emilia?

The all important handkerchief makes an appearance in this production though and it is still Iago's toy to trap Othello. When Desdemona bids farewell to her husband while he and his men are getting ready to sail against the Turkish fleet, he offers her an embroidered handkerchief which his mother gave to him. Desdemona first laughs it off –“strawberries on a handkerchief, what nonsense!”– but Othello reveals its secret: “whoever has this handkerchief in his/her possession can be sure of being loved by that person from whom s/he has received it”. Desdemona is so much in love with Othello in that moment that she says “Klippfisch” (klipfish), their word for “I love you”. Othello embraces her once more too firmly again before finally leaving for war apparently.

Just as in Shakespeare's play, the story could have ended peacefully if not for Iago's desire for revenge. Desdemona has followed her husband and the army with Cassio's help and a touching scene follows: she confides in Othello that her mother died when she was five. Her father consoled her with the tale that all stars are little windows, each of them opened by a dead person, through which they can observe their nearest and dearest on Earth and points out her mother's star to him. Although this seems just like a nice and peaceful interlude in this particular moment, it becomes significant later on. Othello and Desdemona retreat into their tent and Cassio is left on watch while the rest of the soldiers celebrate the unbloody victory over the Turkish army. Iago in turn begins the next step of his devious game, having mostly sneered at the other characters so far as well as having slipped Brabantio those compromising photographs. He disguises himself and tackles Cassio, explaining that he just wanted to congratulate him for having been made lieutenant. Iago offers him a glass or two of spirit and though Cassio declines at first, he agrees to have “one glass only”. However, as a soldier passes by who obviously has had a bit too much, Cassio encounters some difficulties in calming the soldier down. He is so distracted that he does not notice Iago topping up his glass.

They quibble over their drinks for a while but when the aforementioned soldier passes by once more, Iago secretly raises the alarm which Othello set up in case of an attack by the Turkish army. It was never meant to be used for any other purpose and Othello is furious that Cassio, who is hard-pressed for an explanation, has been drinking while on guard duty. He strips him of his rank and storms off. Cassio does not know what to do and when Iago, similar to Shakespeare's Iago, suggests having Desdemona plead on his behalf, he is more than willing to try his luck. As he helped Desdemona rejoin Othello on this campaign, she now promises to help him. Iago has observed their friendly interaction and reports it to Othello. He also mentions that some days prior Cassio apparently dreamed of Othello's wife as he talked about 'dear Desdemona' in his sleep and that Desdemona might have given Cassio the handkerchief from Othello's mother. Othello is furious and when Desdemona speaks to him on Cassio's behalf, his jealousy grows. He asks for the handkerchief but Desdemona does not have it with her at the moment. Othello gets angry and even when she tells him that she does not like him that much when he is like this, he cannot calm himself. He insists on seeing the handkerchief and what now follows is quite strange: apparently Cassio has the handkerchief in his mouth for some unknown reason and Iago pulls it out of there. Othello decides that his friend should deal with Cassio and he himself will talk to Desdemona. Suddenly Brabantio arrives in the camp however: he wants to check up on the current military situation and make peace with his daughter, whom he cast out for her marriage to Othello. The couple is to return with him to Venice and Cassio to govern over Cyprus. When Othello reacts badly to this news, Brabantio, not knowing what has happened before his arrival, is confused and tries in vain to rectify things. Iago tries to implicate Othello for his bad behaviour against Desdemona but Brabantio is only too keen on looking after his daughter again, leaving Cassio on guard and Iago without anything to do. It is dark by now and one can only guess that it is Iago who

is hiding in the bushes, attempting to murder Cassio. Unfortunately, Brabantio calls out for Iago in that moment and Cassio is only wounded in his leg. While the Duke and Iago look for the attacker, Cassio cries out for help. Iago is closest to him and makes an attempt to shoot him a second time, is hindered however by Brabantio and, when questioned, admits that Othello gave him orders to murder Cassio: Iago informs Brabantio of Desdemona's apparent adultery and the three men now turn into secret onlookers on the play's final scene.

As mentioned above, the ultimate outcome in this last scene is the same as in Shakespeare's play and yet Cornelissen makes use here of some hints dropped earlier in the play in an attempt to make it less horrid for children. Othello asks Desdemona once more for the handkerchief and when she honestly replies she does not know where it is, he shows it to her. Although Desdemona is relieved to see it, Othello does not believe her: when she asks him to embrace her as he has not done for a long time, he hesitates at first but then goes along with her request. However, as Cornelissen has described it in previous scenes (cp. Cornelissen: 1995: p. 16, scene 3; p. 30, scene 6), Othello does not realize when he squeezes her too hard. He does it again this time but now Desdemona is not in a position to protest against such treatment. Othello does not notice something is amiss until he lets go of her out of his own will, her body falling lifelessly to the ground. He panics and tries to rouse her in vain. Realising what he has done, he cries over her dead body and a light bulb representing a new star lights up, which reminds an audience of how Brabantio consoled Desdemona when her mother/ his wife died (cp. Cornelissen: 1995: p. 35, scene 8). It is therefore entirely possible to feel for Othello in this moment despite what he has done to get to this point.

Although the focus in this sub-chapter was directed towards Cornelissen's text, reviewers of actual performances in various theatres have pointed out that, however changed the sequence of events as well as the characters might be in contrast to Shakespeare's *Othello*

(cp. review from *Kronenzeitung* in Cornelissen: 1995: p. 52 and Scherer in Cornelissen: 1995: p. 52-53), Cornelissen as well as any subsequent directors of this piece manage to concentrate children's attention to what is happening onstage in this play about "love and jealousy" (cp. review from *Kronenzeitung* in Cornelissen: 1995: p. 52): it is fast paced, the language is contemporary and the usage of TV- and yellow press-like elements makes it understandable for a younger, modern generation. The fact that Othello as well as Iago and Cassio apparently seem to love or at least like Desdemona turns this play into some kind of TV soap opera (cp. review from *Neues Volksblatt* in Cornelissen: 1995: p. 52); audience members are already warned that something is going to happen. As such, no matter how surprising Iago's fast-growing desire for revenge might be, events are foreshadowed and the audience might be more prepared that things will go downhill. The ultimate lesson however is similar to what Shakespeare is trying to bring across in his play: 'Think first, act later.' (cp. Staude in Cornelissen: 1995: p. 53).

#### 5.1.2. HENRY V – A CHILDISH FEUD OVER A FRENCH SANDCASTLE

*Henry V*, or *Hendrik de Vijfde* as the play is called in Dutch, is Cornelissen's earliest adaptation of a Shakespeare play. It had its world premiere in 1992 with Het Gevolg in Turnhout and was awarded the Hans Snoekprijs (Hans Snoek Award) in 1993 for the best children and youth theatre piece of the season. Premieres in other countries followed: it was introduced in Germany and Switzerland in 1996, in Austria in 2001, in Croatia in 2003 and in Spain in 2006. The group from Theater Grüne Soße in Frankfurt/ Main who had been responsible for the German language premiere toured with this piece to Great Britain (Aberystwyth and Bath), Canada (Toronto and Edmonton); all in all they have been on the road about 33 times. They can also be booked by schools to perform this play in English for

pupils from year 8 onwards in the German school system who learn English as a foreign language. The Croatian company in turn toured with this *Henry V* to a theatre festival in Romania; in Germany it has been and still is performed many more times by other theatres: it was awarded the Kölner KiJuThPreis (acronym for ‘children and youth theatre prize’) in 2002 for example.

Unlike Shakespeare’s play, however, which is for a large part concerned with the French-English conflict as well as with the subplot of Bardolph, Nym and others, this *Henry V* comes across as a children’s game in the playground. Instead of the vast list of characters to be found in Shakespeare’s *Henry V*, this piece is written for 4 people only: one female actress who portrays a young girl and Princess Katherine and three actors who portray the young Henry and King Henry V, an old man and a distant cousin, and the narrator as well as a French and English soldier respectively (Cornelissen: 1995: p. 3).

According to what Cornelissen indicates in the play text (Cornelissen: 1995: p. 3), the stage should be 6 by 6 in size and be fenced off like a boxing ring. This is the central area for the actors to move in but they can also leave that ring and move around it. In the middle of the fenced off area there should be a table, a sandcastle on the table and above it a crystal lustre to symbolize the regal luxury in the French castle. Above all else, the sandcastle really reinforces the idea of this being like a child’s play, which becomes even more evident when the piece is kicked off by a child’s voice asking from offstage “Is it allowed to watch a war?” This question also raises the central point of the production: unlike Shakespeare’s original play it is not so much about the importance of patriotism and the arising conflict between England and France but rather about war and its consequences. Is it allowed to just watch for pleasure or would that be deemed outrageous? And how does a war start after all? Where does it lead to and what are its consequences? When Cornelissen was asked why he decided on



Shakespeare, he said: 'I chose Shakespeare because his texts fascinate me and because, after the Gulf War, I wanted to write a piece demonstrating parallels between children's war games and those of adults.' (Theatermappe from Theater Grüne Soße, Frankfurt am Main: no date given: p. 9, my translation). So how did he fulfil his chosen 'leitmotif'?

After the child's initial question, we see the young Henry chasing after a girl while the narrator introduces us to the background of the story. While his father was still king, Henry was a wild boy but since he took over the throne (at this moment the young Henry puts on a crown as the symbol of his kingship), his behaviour is appropriate to his royal status. The narrator details how difficult it is for Henry though to be a good king: each morning he moans over empty coffers and when he tries to put forward an idea like printing new stamps or raising the taxes, the narrator talks him out of it with various arguments. Henry decides to find another solution. He takes off his crown and becomes a young Henry again. He observes a girl building the sand castle, an old man is watching too. The girl decorates the castle with a French flag and starts dancing. As soon as she sees the young Henry she stops again and leaves the central playing area. He now tells the audience in a short monologue what a lovely castle this is and that he wants one too. Henry puts on his crown and it becomes obvious that appearances as well as symbolic props are everything in this piece. Henry is now king again and he demands that castle for himself as his own is damaged; beyond repair apparently. For him this castle symbolises France and this France is rich. He turns to the narrator who, similar to the Chorus in Shakespeare's *Henry V* is omniscient as long as he wears the narrator's cloak, and asks how things will turn out. Henry wants to know everything: Will he stay king? Will he get married one day? Will he stay healthy? The narrator cuts him off however: he cannot tell Henry or otherwise he will lose the plot himself. Henry is impatient however and begins to rummage around old books until he has found a particular one. This is clearly a version of

the advisors talking to Henry in Shakespeare's *Henry V* but the book does not yield more information than that France belongs to England and when Henry asks for advice as to what he should do, the narrator again lets him down and tells him that he must get through any events on his own. And Henry knows what he at least wants to do. He travels to France, taking his book with him, where he is welcomed by Katherine, the French princess: her father is ill and she is to look after Henry. He is desperate however to speak with the French king and only reluctantly agrees to play boccia with Katherine, which is a reminder of the tennis balls the Dauphin sent to England in Shakespeare's *Henry V* to mock King Henry. Here this plot device of a toy is taken literally: Henry and Katherine are indeed children who play boccia on the one hand and on the other 'being adults'. Katherine is worried about her father and starts to cry; Henry tries to console her but does not succeed. He turns to the narrator for help but the latter only announces as a matter of fact that the French king has just died and puts a black flag at half mast on the sandcastle. Henry becomes impatient and looks to his book for help but now he has to wait again; something which Shakespeare's Henry did not seem to be good at either. When the funeral takes place Henry is at Katherine's side however; he wants to support her.

Once the king is laid to rest, the narrator prepares Katherine for her succession to the throne: he gets another crown out for her, puts the French flag back on the sandcastle again and shows her how to use a microphone to give speeches. They all do not notice an old man though who draws nearer and nearer and whose only desire it is to read out a letter by Katherine's father. He informs everybody that he is the dead king's notary and has come to read out his testament. To everyone's surprise it turns out that he is in fact Katherine's distant cousin for whom he should guard the throne until she is 21. Katherine protests when the notary seizes the crown and puts it on his own head; she rather wants to fast-forward through

the next four years and be queen immediately. The narrator however opposes her wish: his duty is telling Henry's story, not hers. Henry and the newly crowned French king now quibble over the crown and though Henry tries to point out that 'it says so in [his] book', the French king will not listen. It brings us back to Shakespeare's piece in a way when Henry tries to use the Salic law to his advantage. It is in vain however in both plays.

Similar to Shakespeare's Henry V, Cornelissen's Henry now also proposes marriage to Katherine as a means to solve this row. If they are married, they could both reign over France and England. Katherine however does not really like Henry and puts him off. She is equally flabbergasted however when her distant cousin takes his chance: he wants to marry her and hands her a bridal dress. Both Henry and Katherine now argue that this would be incest, which is not allowed at all by law. They reach the conclusion though that the king makes the law and since the distant cousin is now the crowned king of France, he changes the law so that he can marry Katherine, with or without her consent. He equally banishes Henry, but is so angry by that point that he confuses England and France at first, allowing Henry and by extension the audience in the theatre to have a good laugh at him. As Henry is angry himself, he damages the sandcastle: when he cannot have the French king's castle, nobody should have it.

As Henry is now banished from France, he travels back to England where he is sulking about his misfortune. He decides to wage war on France for the insolence suffered. The narrator is trying to dissuade him: people will die during this war but Henry is bent on getting his way. While his soldiers get ready to sail to France, his only worry is, similar to Desdemona and Othello's concern mentioned earlier, that paparazzi might take photos of the departing soldiers and that the French king will see them in the papers and is therefore warned. In terms of staging it becomes once more clear that this is a play for children as

Henry's soldiers are symbolised by balloons he is holding in his hand. Some are bursting and the narrator quickly turns them into soldiers who died on the journey from England to France, even though the weather as such was not bad. He switches the focus from the English troops to the French king and Katherine in their castle and though only two weeks have passed since her father died, the newly crowned French king tells her to forget about it. It is apparent here once more that the narrator –like the Chorus in Shakespeare's *Henry V*– is an omniscient narrator, he knows what is going to happen and though he can try and talk the characters into acting along the plotline he knows and represents, the characters can also rebel against him and decide to drop out of the story. When Katherine wants to get away from the castle as she and her husband, the French king, do not get along, the narrator puts several obstacles in her way: her husband locked the door, the spare key breaks off and when Katherine tries to destroy the wooden door with a knife, there is an iron door behind it. The windows are too high up and the bed sheets are too short, so Katherine has to add curtains to her make-shift escape rope. In the gardens below however there are bloodhounds that have not eaten for days, which makes it impossible for her to escape. Katherine breaks down and when the narrator tries to console and comfort her by putting his coat around her shoulders, she seizes the chance and turns into the narrator, thereby escaping the story. As mentioned above, symbols in this play are very important and the narrator is flabbergasted that, once he gave her his coat, he is no longer the narrator but has to find a new identity as a character within the story. Katherine makes her escape from the castle by narrating how there is a secret passage under the room. The former narrator gets picked up by the French king, who has returned to look for Katherine, and is drafted as a soldier. He reminds one of the young boy in Shakespeare's play who went to war with Pistol, Bardolph and Nym but who did not really

know what to expect. The narrator is frightened; his identity is still unclear since he does not have a costume or a symbol to let others know who he is within the narrative.

Meanwhile Henry and his army have arrived in France: they fight their way towards the French king's castle. It becomes apparent here that the narrator as such might not be as reliable as he seems. He negates Katherine's request that he 'should tell Henry to write off the castle': first of all, he is the one telling the story and secondly, he cannot interfere or else he loses the plot. He can only describe and narrate what he sees: the English army are cruel, they kill men and babies. The French king is determined to do something against this cruelty and goes offstage.

As mentioned above this is the moment during which Katherine decides to escape and accidentally gets turned into the narrator. She enjoys narrating the story however and the former narrator now has to stumble along as a character. He and the French king decide to flee in the end and Henry invades the castle: the actor playing him marks it with an English flag on top. The castle is however damaged, snow and rain make everybody's life miserable and Henry's order that everyone has to guard the castle does not help. His soldiers, symbolised by red balloons, some with plaster on them, surround the sandcastle and the whole misery of war becomes apparent. Many soldiers die as well as some of the horses and the weather makes it even worse. Henry counts his balloons/ soldiers and, like Shakespeare's Henry before the battle of Agincourt, concludes that he has far too few to hold out for much longer.

In this moment the French king and the former narrator return on stage: they try to rally their own troops but whereas the narrator blows air into balloons manually, the French king deems this method too slow. He uses gas but the balloon flies away. He shouts 'deserter' and motions to the narrator to follow him off stage. They come back on after a while with

many green balloons/ soldiers and like Henry before, they arrange them around the table: green balloons outweigh red balloons by far but they are kept on shorter leashes. The French king gloats now: he has surrounded Henry and there is nothing the English king can do. Katherine, who is still in the castle with Henry but in her role as the narrator, pleads for negotiations but the two kings only snipe at each other: who is more frightened, who has more soldiers, who can hold out longer? They argue about everything and especially about Katherine. Neither the French king nor Henry can see her as Katherine now wears the narrator's coat and is no longer Katherine. But as she is much loved by the French people Henry is eager to have her by his side as he wants his new French subjects to like him once he is king of France. Night falls and as in the corresponding scene in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, the English king is walking through the camp at night and starts a conversation with a soldier who, not recognizing him, freely speaks his mind: 'I would rather be at home with my wife and my children. Just imagine that the whole war might be futile and I might be shot, I would have died in vain. The king is to blame then.' Although Henry is at first touched by those words he does not act accordingly nor does he act to stop the war and take up negotiations, in contrast to Shakespeare's Henry who was true to his word and led his soldiers into battle. This Henry ponders about his crown a little but only concludes that it does not make him happy as he cannot distinguish whether people like him for his own sake or only because he wears a crown. These thoughts are short-lived though.

Katherine, who is now the narrator, describes the quietness of their surroundings while Henry and the French king get ready for battle. A child's voice offstage asks again if it is allowed to watch a war. Henry and the king start to fight each other, they let soldiers die (they burst the balloons) and destroy the sandcastle on the table completely. They fight and fight and Katherine as the narrator explains that they have forgotten why they started to fight and it

only brings damage to continue this constant battle. Katherine throws off the narrator's coat, which is immediately picked up again by the real narrator, and stops the fight effectively by stepping between Henry and the French king. She throws a bomb and while everyone is recovering from its aftermath, Henry and Katherine quibble again: he cannot believe that she is still alive and that he has not died from the bomb. Once Henry and the French king have set eyes on the destroyed (sand)castle however they both are crestfallen and start lamenting. Henry turns to the narrator for help but as the narrator was inside the story for a good while he does not know the general picture any more; Katherine in turn is now again a character within the story and cannot answer Henry's question either. Everybody has lost the plot at this point. While Henry and the French king try to rest, the narrator picks up the French crown and puts it on Katherine's head, as he remembers that she wanted to be queen of France before the battle started and he lost some parts of his memory. The crown is too big however and slips down to her shoulders, which signals the end of the play. Nobody is King or Queen of France in this moment.

As with *Othello*, this is a more or less traditional way of telling a story, albeit there is a narrator-figure within the play which makes it easier to connect to the story emotionally: like Katherine and Henry within the play who turn to the narrator, the audience members might expect the narrator to explain the situation to them too. In addition, the question of the necessity of war is raised. In contrast to Shakespeare's play the main focus is directed not so much towards the tension created by the different nationalities but towards fighting and war and whether or not an abuse of power can spark a conflict. By including symbols such as the sandcastle for a real castle or balloons for soldiers, it also becomes apparent very quickly that this is an everyday conflict between children at school and in the playground when two children do not agree on everything and each has his or her own opinion.

### 5.1.3. THE WINTER'S TALE – REFLECTIONS ON THEATRICAL ACTING

The *Wintersprookje* (or *The Winter's Tale*) by Ignace Cornelissen had its world premiere with Het Gevolg but in Amsterdam instead of their usual theatre in Turnhout in 1992. The Italian language premiere followed in 1994 in Acqui Terme and in Germany the play was performed for the first time in 1997 by the group from Theater Grüne Soße in Frankfurt/ Main. Another production by the same company was staged to great acclaim in 2003. This *The Winter's Tale* is suitable for children aged 8 and older and lasts about one hour in length.

Like *Henry V* and *Othello*, the large cast of Shakespeare's original has been reduced to four performers, who each play several characters. Unlike the other two plays however this *The Winter's Tale* has a double layer to it: it is a performance of *The Winter's Tale* at the same time as it is a theatrical reflection on the dynamics within a group of actors. Richard Mol is the director and main actor of the troupe, Ria Pijpers is his assistant as well as an extra and Less Walter and Ilona de Graaf are an actor and an actress respectively. As in *Othello* the play text specifies twelve different scenes, eight of which are concerned with what happens before the sixteen-year gap and four for events afterwards. There is a prologue, a bear hunt, a short revenge scene, a birth, a scene called 'King Freddy and the baby', an intermezzo, a tribunal, a thunderstorm, a fair, two scenes called 'The lovers' and 'King Walter at the fair' and a final one called 'Political asylum' (Cornelissen: 1995: p. 3, Szenenfolge/list of scenes). It becomes obvious already that, though the general outline seems the same as in Shakespeare's play, it differs in some respects. There is another change which is certainly noteworthy, though it might have been purely accidental on Cornelissen's part.

In the Prologue Ilona, Less and Richard introduce themselves to the audience and set up the imagined scene for their play: it is a story of two kings. One of them is bad, malevolent and does not like jokes. According to Less, most women are constantly pregnant since this



king, whose name is Freddy, likes to have a lot of subjects. As becomes apparent in the following scenes King Freddy is the equivalent to Shakespeare's Leontes and as such it is of interest that here he is no longer king of Sicily but of Bohemia. In addition, one cannot help but notice that Richard and Less do not get on well with each other. While Richard tries to introduce the story and the two kings, Less is constantly interrupting and complaining about his account until Ilona steps in. Once Richard puts a simple crown on his head the story moves on, although they continue to just narrate it for the time being.

During the bear hunt scene it becomes clear that Less plays the role of Shakespeare's Polixenes: he is Walter, King of Sicily, thereby reinforcing the similarity to Robert Greene's Pandosto (cp. Appendix B, 'Robert Greene's Pandosto' in the Oxford edition of *The Winter's Tale*: 1998: p. 234-274, here especially p. 234-235), in which the two kingdoms are also reversed in contrast to Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. Ilona plays Rita, Queen of Bohemia, Hermione by extension and therefore King Freddy's wife, whereas Ria portrays the forester taking care of any potential dead bears once hunted down and shot. Both actors playing kings confirm that King Freddy is a bit strange, he does not have any real friends and Walter is only an acquaintance from their school days in Scotland. They finally find bear tracks but they have two bullets only: King Freddy hides because he is frightened and King Walter shoots the bear, receiving a quick kiss from Queen Rita for his bravery. Once the bear is dead, however, King Freddy appears again and claims the credit for himself: Ria is to take a picture of him with Rita and the bear, but without Walter. The latter is slightly angry, cuts off the bear's head, puts it on and runs after Freddy to frighten him as some sort of punishment. It turns out however that this is not such a good idea: King Freddy does not like jokes and this 'joke' also serves to set the scene for the development of the play. As Rita and Walter or rather Ilona and Less laugh together about King Freddy or Richard, the latter is willing to do everything to

show them their limits. This scene also reinforces the idea that, at the moment, King Freddy and King Walter either do not like each other as such or do not like to be with each other at the moment.

As might be expected, King Freddy takes the next opportunity to revenge himself on King Walter; it could also be said that Richard wants to get back at Less for allowing Ilona to kiss him. All the actors constantly fall out and back into their respective role, which makes for an interesting experience. Although some minor details are different from Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, the general plotline in this scene is relatively similar. King Freddy calls for the forester, or rather Ria, and demands that he leaves his wife and nine children: in King Freddy's opinion the forester is to be accused as he did not take care that King Walter, or rather Less, did not have a possibility to mock him with the bear's head. Ria, or rather the forester, functions here as some kind of replacement for the original Camillo on the one hand and Antigonus on the other, as can be seen later on. Queen Rita and King Walter have fun together in the background of the stage and kiss each other. King Freddy is irritated by their flirting but Queen Rita informs him that King Walter is returning home to Sicily now. Both Freddy and Rita manage however to convince him to stay one day longer although he has already been with them for a week. Rita and Walter retire. All the way through this conversation Ria, or rather the forester, is packing her suitcase to leave the kingdom but gets called to Freddie once more. He has a suggestion for her: if s/he shoots King Walter for flirting with the queen, he will allow her/him to stay in Bohemia. Like Camillo, Ria/the forester gives in at first but once the king is out of sight and King Walter is onstage again, s/he warns him. They take recourse to a ruse: Ria/ the forester shoots into the air, so that s/he can honestly say s/he fired a shot. Both go offstage and now King Freddy and Queen Rita are arguing much in the same manner as Hermione and Leontes. Rita is exasperated, yet Freddie

insists. He wants to throw her in prison, regardless of what Bobby, their nine-year-old son, thinks about it as well without any respect to Rita's current pregnancy: Ilona quickly puts a pillow under her jumper as if Richard had made up this story-line on the spot, there has been no reference to this pregnancy before. They argue about Bobby's potential paternity and that of the unborn child but Rita is put into prison nevertheless, no matter how much she insists on her innocence. Unlike in Shakespeare's play however, the actors now break out of the play for a while: Less comes back on with King Walter's crown in his hand and informs everybody that Walter fled from Freddy's court. Richard is exasperated and turns on the forester or rather Ria, who is now accused of not portraying her character properly: as a forester she owes strict obedience to the king. King Freddy is angry with her and Richard with Ria too; she tries to plead with him to let her stay but it proves to be futile.

Though reminding one of Shakespeare's play, the birth scene in prison is much more elaborate, both within the play's plot and within the performance, as this is one decisive scene in Cornelissen's *The Winter's Tale* in which Richard becomes even more jealous. Less now portrays the jailer who helps Ilona as Queen Rita with the birth of her baby daughter while Richard looks on in apparent jealousy: he does not like how Less and Ilona behave towards each other and also how Rita is helped by the jailer. As in Shakespeare's play, one of the characters, in this case the jailer, takes it on himself to try and convince the king of the queen's innocence with the help of the newborn princess.

Like Leontes however, King Freddy is convinced he is right and the jailer even has a hard time, like Paulina, getting to the king: the latter is convinced everyone is out to murder him and has surrounded himself with multiple guards and other safety mechanisms. Unlike Leontes however who just strictly refuses to believe or even acknowledge that the baby girl might be his own daughter, King Freddy takes recourse to a ruse. The jailer has presented the

baby in a buggy and when he turns to leave, Freddy orders him to leave baby and buggy behind. The jailer rejoices secretly but asks to make sure: is the King now willing to acknowledge this baby as his own, which Freddy answers in the affirmative. The jailer leaves and Freddy sees Ria as the forester getting ready to leave too. Once more he suggests something: Ria/ the forester can come back once in a while to visit his family if he pushes the buggy into the castle moat. Like Leontes' examination of Mamilius, Freddy has examined the baby and finds it horrifying and disgusting; he just wants to be rid of it. He hands Ria a small pouch with gold and makes sure she takes the buggy with her.

The following 'Intermezzo' is a short scene in which the actors and not the characters are in the foreground. Although Less and Ilona congratulate Richard on his portrayal of King Freddy, he suspects foul play and questions them about the real meaning behind their words. In the end it seems as if he is satisfied of their honesty however.

The tribunal scene resembles that in Shakespeare's play. Before the trial starts, word gets out that Bobby, Rita and Freddy's son, is ill; he has not eaten for a week and it does not look too good. Proceedings have started nevertheless and, similar to Leontes, Freddy relies on an oracle as well. Two tokens, one red for guilty and one white for innocent, are in a bowl and Freddy will draw one while blindfolded. The outcome is the will of the gods. He does draw the white piece but while he ponders that this might mean Rita is innocent, it is announced that Bobby has succumbed to his illness. On hearing this Rita faints and cannot be revived: she too is dead. Freddy is in shock and full of remorse and decide to change his outlook on life for the better. This, however, does not seem to be the case for Richard, the actor portraying Freddy. Still in character, he picks up Rita's/ Ilona's body and dances with her around the stage. But even this action cannot make her alive again so he lets her body drop to the ground. This of course hurts quite a lot and Ilona cries out. Her knee pains her now and

Less and Richard argue about the responsibility each actor has for his or her fellow actor in such a case; Ria looks after Ilona. Finally, they all slip into the story again and narrate how King Freddy became sad and depressed and locked himself up in his castle, forever mourning his dead wife, laid to eternal rest in a coffin made from glass.

As Ilona, Richard and Less are getting hungry, they take a break from their story but when they start eating, they notice Ria sitting at the other side of the stage. They muse about what might have happened to the forester, thereby slipping into the story again. The forester wanted to save the child but he could not find a suitable place in the woods, so he decided to cross the sea into another country. He decides to swim over but gets caught in a storm and drowns whereas the baby is washed ashore safe and sound in, as it becomes apparent, Sicily. A fisherman, portrayed by Richard, finds the baby together with a purse of gold and a letter and adopts it as his own daughter. Less, now slipping out of character again, utters his opinion: it is not good that the forester left Bohemia as he is now dead and his wife and ten children are utterly alone. Ilona is the most vehement advocate against this view: the forester is a hero and that should be a great honour for the family. Richard interrupts them: they could argue for year and years and still not come to a suitable conclusion. Ilona agrees and states that sixteen years have now gone by and King Freddy still sits in his castle next to the coffin like Sleeping Beauty in her castle. Ilona clearly has a function here similar to Shakespeare's Time, announcing that everybody apart from one person has moved forward, grown older, thereby also signalling a change in mood from sombre and sad to festive and funny.

From this moment onwards there are not that many changes to the original storyline. Some differences result from changes within the first half of the play, such as the switch of Bohemia and Sicily and the change from shepherd to fisherman. Florizel and Perdita, aka Bruno and Vicky, are played by Less Walter and Ilona de Graf respectively, which leaves the

role of King Walter, Bruno's father, to Ria Pijpers. Richard Moll does not have a fixed character to play but rather assumes different personalities as they come up, like a guest at the masked ball the fishermen have organised. This masked ball stands in for the sheep shearing feast (in 4.4 in Shakespeare's play) and everybody is there celebrating. King Walter, who in this moment is still played by Less Walter, also is eager to attend the festivities but cannot find his mask nor his 18-year old son Bruno, whom he has not seen for days. He lets the matter rest for the moment, especially as Ria, Ilona and Richard half in, half out of character argue with him that he cannot turn his son into a mini-Walter, that Bruno has to make his own mistakes. They now fully turn their attention to the masked ball and Vicky is asked to sing by two guests (played by Ria and Richard); she decides on "Wenn bei Capri die rote Sonne im Meer versinkt" (a famous German song from the 40s and 50s and still quite popular today in pop music). Afterwards Ria and Richard go offstage and Less, now masked as Bruno, walks with Vicky across the stage: he admits that he is in love with her and invites her for a tour on his motorbike. In the meantime King Walter, as played by Ria, has also arrived at the ball. When a party game reveals to all that Bruno loves Vicky and wants to marry her without his father's consent, there is a direct reference to a pre-determined storyline the actors adhere to: it is possible that they refer to Shakespeare when Less explains 'well, the story goes like this'. As in the original *The Winter's Tale*, Bruno and Vicky flee the country to be able to stay together and escape King Walter's anger; the fisherman goes to King Walter's castle to inform him about how he found Vicky as a baby and has raised her as his own child. Once King Walter finds out who she is through the letter the forester wrote, he is full of remorse and makes haste to go after Vicky and Bruno to reconcile himself with them. In Bohemia, Vicky and Bruno have arrived at King Freddy's castle and like Shakespeare's Leontes the king is smitten with this lovely girl who so much resembles his dead wife. He rejoices even more once King

Walter has arrived too and it is revealed that Vicky is in fact his daughter. Freddy is sad however despite his joy: he would have liked his wife Rita to witness this happy event. Unlike in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* where Hermione miraculously comes to life once again, Rita, who is now that Ilona plays Vicky symbolised by a dress inside the glass coffin, stays dead. This is as much a necessity caused by the doubling of Vicky and Rita as well as a definite twist on the story as we know it from Shakespeare. As Less hands the dress to Vicky and thereby lets Rita disappear for good, Freddy gets frantic: he needs to find her. Reminding one of the force of his jealousy earlier in the play, he is now bent on finding her, which even causes Richard to fall out of his role again by trying to make Ilona play Rita and not Vicky any longer. She does not agree and the two actors chase each other across the stage but finally kiss each other: Richard is triumphant and Less, Ilona and Ria good-heartedly laugh about it. This *The Winter's Tale* certainly also ends on a happy note.

With its double layer of storytelling, this is probably the most sophisticated of Cornelissen's three plays but maybe, like his *Henry V*, it might also be one of the more accessible plays for children of that age. Whereas *Henry V* is more concerned with what happens in the playground when children quarrel, this *The Winter's Tale* might ring a bell with all those who have seen their parents argue over something: sometimes the reasons for an argument are as nonsensical as King Freddy's jealousy. In the same way Bruno and Rita's behaviour when faced with King Walter can appeal to young teenagers who often rebel against their parents. Seen from this angle, this play can be strangely soothing as it shows that children, no matter what might happen, do not lose their parents' love for good: this is symbolised by Walter's reconciliation with his son Bruno as well as by Freddy's joy at seeing his daughter Vicky alive and well. It might not include the easiest of themes to deal with in a

young person's life, such as death, but it certainly shows that there is a life afterwards when one is willing to go on.



## 5.2. INTRODUCTION: SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS AS PUPPET THEATRE

This chapter provides a short overview of the use of Shakespeare in puppet theatre. This particular type of theatre has a rich history of various traditions and approaches when literary texts and other topics are adapted for the puppet stage: for example the Salzburg Marionette Theatre with its opera productions including marionettes, which are directed at adults rather than children; or the Bunraku theatre puppets in Japan. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century it became more common than during the centuries before to turn high literature into repertory pieces for puppet theatres, such as Shakespeare's plays, novels by Jules Verne and Alexandre Dumas or even Offenbach's operas. Well-known puppets from a more traditional origin of this type of theatre also exist. They are known in several European countries: in England for example as Punch (or Punch and Judy), in France as Guignol, in Germany as Kasper or the Italian Pulcinella, a stock character in Neapolitan puppetry, and the Russian Petrushka.

A problem though arises with the generic use of the term 'puppet' since different types exist, which in turn also impact on what can be portrayed on the puppet stage. The different underlying constructions of these puppets will not be analyzed in depth but an attempt will be made nevertheless at an account of how they differ from each other and how this might influence the scope of the performances. The purpose a puppet serves in a performance is also important: some productions have only puppets as characters, like the Little Angel Theatre's *Venus and Adonis*, done for the Royal Shakespeare Company during the Complete Works 2006/07 season, in others they combined with human actors, as in Julie Taymor's *Magic Flute* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York or the Little Angel Theatre's *The Tempest* for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2011. This also has an impact on the way puppets are perceived in the theatre, since they sometimes tend to be overshadowed by human actors but, on their own, can be perfect actors in their own right.

When it comes to the different types of puppet, the most complex one is the marionette, which –in a simplified way– is a human being on a miniature scale. It is usually operated by systems of strings and rods; the manipulator stands on a bridge above a small proscenium puppet theatre and operates the puppets from this position. Most often the torso is made from wood and the limbs and head are attached by a system of hooks, rods and special joints. This type of puppet can most easily portray some sort of realistic, human-like movement and is therefore most readily used for high drama.

The glove puppet is used mostly for comic purposes or for plays where funny, crude scenes are interwoven with a more drama-like main plot. This type of puppet is worn like a glove on the puppeteer's hand and operated from below; the simplest form is the one where the index finger supports the head and the thumb and middle finger manipulate the two arms. This puppet does not have a fully developed torso but consists only of a 'basic body or 'sleeve' into which the glove-puppet manipulator introduces the hand [which] may also serve as the costume, or it may simply be an underbody to be dressed' (McCormick/Pratasik: 1998: p. 141). Only occasional are there legs above the waist; if they are, they dangle down onto the stage.

The rod puppet, which is basically a sub-type of the glove puppet though not operated with a hand but rather with a rod, is not very common in the general European puppet repertoire and hails from the tradition of the crib-theatre, sometimes still put on in Spain.

Flat figures most likely have developed from an oriental tradition of playing with shadow and light against a screen and are most often interwoven with marionette or glove puppet performances, as McCormick and Pratasik detail for example in their respective chapter for the apparitions conjured up by Faust, (McCormick/ Pratasik: 1998: p. 173-175) as

these required either none or very crude movement and should frighten the other characters and the audience.

The combination of Shakespeare and puppet theatre has received little attention so far and even Susan Young's 1996 monograph *Shakespeare Manipulated: The Use of the Dramatic Works of Shakespeare in Teatro di Figura in Italy* concentrates exclusively on Italy and its teatro di figura. Nevertheless many of her findings, such as the following statement, can also be applied to Shakespearean drama in puppet theatre in other countries: '[t]he risk is that the Shakespearean work is made familiar, but is irreparably damaged in the process. The masks [= the puppets] are least intrusive when they are introduced into a comedy or the comic subplot of a tragedy' (Young: 1996: p. 152). This suggests a combination of puppet characters with a long tradition in the repertoire and new characters that come in because they are characters from Shakespeare's plays. Therefore two questions must be raised, one of which might be answered by Young's own findings: is there a preference for certain Shakespeare plays when a company thinks about adapting one of them for the puppet stage and how can a possible answer to that query be helpful to illuminate a seemingly non-traditional choice of play? Young looks at material from about 1820 or 30 up to about 1996 (the publication date of her book) and differentiates between the type of puppets used:

- performances with marionettes include *Romeo and Juliet* (9 different productions), *Othello* (6), *Macbeth* (5), *Hamlet* (5), *The Tempest* (4), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1),

- performances with *pupi* (a special type of marionettes used exclusively in Sicily with traditional chivalric subject matters) include *Macbeth* (3), *Romeo and Juliet* (2), *Othello* (2), *Richard III* (1), *King Lear* (1), *Coriolanus* (1),

- performances with burattini (glove puppets) include *Hamlet* (7), *Romeo and Juliet* (7), *Othello* (5), *The Taming of the Shrew* (4), *The Tempest* (2), *Macbeth* (1),
- performances with mixed techniques include *Romeo and Juliet* (1), *Othello* (1), *Macbeth* (1), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1).

Clearly, there seem to be plays whose topics are more favourable for adaptation to the puppet stage than others: *King Lear*, *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra* as well as *Richard III* are the only plays with only one production each. Therefore, it is quite surprising to discover two different productions of *Richard III* in Germany (2001) and Finland (2006), which are analysed in the following sub-chapters. So how do the results of Young's research stand up to a seemingly non-traditional Shakespearean subject matter for the puppet stage? Are these two plays more puppet plays than Shakespeare plays or vice versa or does this distinction not matter at all?

#### 5.2.1. A GERMAN *RICHARD III* WITH A HUMAN KING AND PUPPETS AS THE REST OF THE CAST

The production of *Richard III* analysed here was directed by Hasko Weber and had its premiere on 27 May 2001 according to the World Shakespeare Bibliography; Janine Ludwig's review in the newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel* dates from 14 May 2001 so the production's run must have started before 27 May. It was put on as well during the XIII Figurentheaterfestival (puppet theatre festival) in Erlangen, Nürnberg and Fürth in 2003. This *Richard III* was performed by OstEndTheater from Berlin, which is a company for puppet theatre that tours during the summer months and is housed in an old cemetery chapel in Berlin in winter. It was founded by Dietmar Blume, who adapted Shakespeare's play for this production (cp. interview him in *Pfälzischer Merkur*: 10/12/2009 <http://www.pfaelzischer-merkur.de/sz-berichte/saarbruecken/Saarbruecken;art2806,3128281>, [last access:

22/11/2011]). Unlike *Richard III* by Teatteri Taiga-Matto however it made use of Richard's supposed ugliness and disfigurement. This king was portrayed by a real actor: Philipp Otto played Richard III in Berlin and Matthias Friedrich took on the role for the Figurentheaterfestival. He is blind on one eye and the other also seems to be infected with a disease. All his enemies are puppets, which are handled by Dietmar Blume. It seems that this Richard, in contrast to Shakespeare's but not completely unlike the one imagined by Hans Henny Jahnn, is playing out his own fantasies: he needs to murder to become king. He is not marked as king however: no crown adorns his head and he is dressed in normal clothes.

Blume, who is clad in black but can be seen on stage in contrast to the traditional (European) place of the puppeteer backstage, is reluctant to hand over control of the puppets to this protagonist (for details of the performance mentioned in this paragraph see review by Janine Ludwig: 14/05/2001: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/puppenspiel-koenigin-margareta-die-alte-stute/227690.html>, [last access: 22/11/2011]). The reason consists in Richard mishandling them; his struggle for the puppets turns into a struggle between the two men too. As soon as he gets hold of one puppet, Richard decapitates it with a guillotine. Each execution is therefore heralded by the preparation of this instrument. Afterwards, Richard hangs up the heads on the scenery behind him.

As such, the focus of this production is directed mostly towards Richard. He displays self-hate and hubris, misery and brilliance at the same time as well as a desire for love in contrast to unfeeling behaviour. Judging from Ludwig's review (Janine Ludwig: 14/05/2001: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/puppenspiel-koenigin-margareta-die-alte-stute/227690.html>, [last access: 22/11/2011]) as well as photos from the Figurentheaterfestival (cp. websites for Ostendtheater's *Richard III* during Figurentheaterfestival 2003: <http://www.figurentheaterfestival.de/2003/pages03/gruppen/41-ostendtheater.htm> and

<http://www.figuretheaterfestival.de/2003/pages03/presse/download.htm>, [last access: 22/11/2011]), it seems that the most important feature of the puppets in this production were their heads. One picture shows Richard kneeling in front of Lady Anne, presumably wooing her to marry him. Her face is white as well as her hair; she wears a veil which does not cover her face however. Her clothes are made from a fabric with black dots and a mix of different colours (blue, black, white and yellow). Richard has grasped the front of her clothing and looks up to her. He seems to be begging either for her love, her hand in marriage or both. But as puppet cannot show emotions, he cannot read from her face what she thinks about him, which might even further push him towards the edge of his sanity. Richard has already murdered at least one of his enemies, as a puppet can be seen hanging down from the red background scenery.

The puppets have been turned into stereotypes of the characters they are portraying, as Ludwig points out in her review (Janine Ludwig: 14/05/2001: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/puppenspiel-koenigin-margareta-die-alte-stute/227690.html>, [last access: 22/11/2011]), Lady Anne is a somewhat ethereal-looking widow (hence the white face and hair) whereas the young Edward is made to look naïve. The Duke of Clarence is identified by a devout gesture, as religion is important for him, whereas Queen Margaret resembles a mare, always ready to snap at whoever comes too close to her.

When asked why he decided to adapt Shakespeare's *Richard III*, Blume explained that he partly regards it as a theatre of bizarre characters and images (cp. Janine Ludwig: 14/05/2001: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/puppenspiel-koenigin-margareta-die-alte-stute/227690.html>, [last access: 22/11/2011]). This becomes evident when looking at the other picture on the website by the Figuretheaterfestival (cp. websites for Ostendtheater's *Richard*

<http://www.figuretheaterfestival.de/2003/pages03/gruppen/41-ostendtheater.htm> and

<http://www.figuretheaterfestival.de/2003/pages03/presse/download.htm>, [last access:

22/11/2011]). It shows a Richard who seems to be watching the puppets to decide which one will be his next victim. Perched on his shoulder is another puppet: the head is neither a skull nor a recognizable human face. It has holes for eyes and a crude opening for a mouth in addition to a cap which reminds one of a three-cornered hat with a button as an emblem. It is almost as if this puppet is an accomplice in Richard's crime or even the instigator behind his desire to be king.

It can be stated that, apparently, all essential elements of Shakespeare's *Richard III* have been preserved in this production with regard to Richard's cold-blooded ambition and willingness to murder people. The difference, however, consists in the focus of the audience's attention on Richard as he controls the play, once he has wrestled control over the puppets from Blume. In contrast to a performance where all characters are portrayed by human actors, the inclusion of only one actor in a group of puppets automatically shifts the balance towards him or her. The puppets are only a method to reach a certain aim, which is in this case the portrayal of Richard's descent into madness. The non-human participants add a certain quality however, despite the stereotypical use of gestures and postures to make clear which puppet is which character: with human actors there could be no executions for example. This combination of puppets and human actor therefore opens up another viewpoint on Shakespeare's original play.

### 5.2.2. *RICHARD III* BY TEATTERI TAIGA-MATTO (FINLAND): A MIX OF DIFFERENT STYLES

Unlike the production of *Richard III* discussed above, Richard in this production is also a puppet. There are no human actors, only the puppeteers who handle the puppets. This *Richard III* was directed by Karim Tcharkov of the group Teatteri Taiga-Matto, and the puppets were voiced by Sari Tirkkonen. It had its premiere on 20 September 2006 and was put on again during the Nukkero Puppet Theatre Festival in Kankaanpää in October 2009. From the latter performance some clips were uploaded on Youtube by the festival organisers (Nukkero Festival: recorded 1/10/2009: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oG29pMPaSCQ>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoiNsVyi8Ag>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMXHJlQUljg>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzMDWtR5lQA>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuKJPn4Hasc>, [last access: 22/11/2011])

and these allow a more detailed appreciation of the puppets, their movements and the overall set-up of the stage than was the case for Blume's production.

Taiga-Matto is a very small company. The director and dramaturge Karim Tcharkov was born in Abakan, the capital of the Republic of Khakassia, where he studied history and graduated in 1993 before moving to Saint Petersburg and studying directing there until 1998. Sari Tirkkonen, who took a course in marionette studies in Saint Petersburg from 1993-95, had previously graduated from the acting class of Tampere University in 1985. Since then she worked for the Oulu City Theatre and the Tampere Theatre before founding Taiga-Matto with Karim Tcharkov.

The two puppeteers believe in a certain way of storytelling: by combining tales and stories from the past and from modern times, they want to integrate those tales in a respectful but entertaining way and make their audience aware that the past still provides valuable



lessons if one is prepared to listen. They draw from both Finnish and Siberian traditions for both the puppets and the stories but also more generally known plotlines –such as *Richard III*. Their repertoire consists of several plays, which are suitable for both children and adults and as such appeal to the whole family. The *Kalevala* is a selection of stories from the namesake Finnish national epos and lasts about 35 minutes. Unlike in their *Richard III*, here the puppets used for this piece are not clothed and consequently an audience can also see how the puppets work. The *Viking Adventure*, which is directed at younger children and lasts about 25 minutes, presents animal puppets to the audience. It is more a fairytale-like story than ‘real theatre’. In *The Little Clown* and the *Egg of the Wild Duck* their puppets as well as Sari Tirkkonen and Karim Tcharkov can be seen as performers. *Egg of the Wild Duck* is a traditionally told story which combines masks for the actors to portray certain characters together with marionettes, and children can again actively influence the story, which is mainly concerned with friendship. It includes live music and lasts about 25 minutes. *The Little Clown* lasts about 30 minutes, and makes use of the well-known figure of Kasper to depict the life of a circus clown. Karim Tcharkov sings and plays the accordion while Sari Tirkkonen handles the puppets and narrates their story. Their repertoire also includes a *Christmas Tale* which is performed by puppets and puppeteers with a portable three-story Vertep stage, which puts this piece in line with the nativity and mystery plays traditionally known from Western Europe for example around Christmas time. By including such a performance in their repertoire, Taiga-Matto wishes to revive this tradition. They have been rewarded in 2006 for their effort with the Award of Citizen Activity which is granted by the Finnish Central Association for Mental Health. According to the theatre’s website, they received this award because they deal ‘with sore things of life in a fine and plain-spoken way. Themes originate in folklore of different countries, and the puppet theatre is not afraid of dealing with hard topics’ (their translation).

Their aim with *Richard III* is similar. It is a piece suitable for children aged 13 and older and brings Shakespeare's tale close to a tragic farce. Taiga-Matto intends to question Richard's belief that greed and lust for power are good values to pursue and offers this take on Shakespeare's story as a basis for further discussion. The performance lasts about 40 minutes and includes contemporary music from different cultures (Japanese drums, Russian rock and Turkish music by Gökhan Özen). As they are mainly a touring company they either perform in their own yurt or in rooms and buildings suitable for a makeshift stage and an audience. As such they rely on very few props and often have recourse to symbolic meanings. Richard in this production is not disfigured at all; he rather looks like an older man of Asian origin and therefore settles the production more in the tradition of an oriental tale than an English history play. His clothes consist of blue trousers and a black coat; he has grey hair, which he wears in a ponytail, as well as a beard. Equally, the puppet representing Lady Anne seems to be from an Asian country rather than European, which could also be explained by Karim Tcharkov's influence and provenance. She wears a dress a western European audience would immediately associate with Asian culture too and her hair is in a bun. The stage is marked either with a carpet over a pole or on the floor as if to signal a playing area (this had been the case at the festival in 2009). The two murderers for example who can be seen in one picture on the theatre's website (Teatteri Taiga-Matto: no date given: [http://www.taigamatto.com/etusivu\\_e.htm](http://www.taigamatto.com/etusivu_e.htm), [last access: 22/11/2011]) are creeping up over the pole as if to murder Richard while the latter sits on a chair in front of the carpet seemingly oblivious of them. They are signalled by two different gloves with buttons for eyes and the symbolic use of props is furthered by the chair on which Richard sits. In one of the clips uploaded on Youtube by the organisers of the Nukkero Festival (Nukkero Festival: recorded 1/10/2009: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoiNsVyi8Ag>, [last access: 22/11/2011]),

Lady Anne can be seen as she arrives on stage. At first she seems to be in a good mood, Japanese music sounds but as soon as she sees the chair lying upturned on the floor she starts to cry and mourn. It is as if this chair signifies regal power and when she sees the position it is in now she knows something bad has happened and her husband has been possibly usurped and even murdered. In another clip Clips of Taiga-Matto's *Richard III*, uploaded by the organisers of the Nukkero Festival (Nukkero Festival: recorded 1/10/2009: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oG29pMPaSCQ>, [last access: 22/11/2011]), she sits on the upturned chair as if in mourning while Richard lies on the floor in front of her. This is most likely the wooing scene as Richard prostrates himself in front of her and when she stands up to leave, he follows her and she sits down on the chair again with fright. Richard follows her and kneels down again. He attempts to kiss her but Anne tries to stand up and leave once more. Yet, Richard apparently can convince her to at least listen to him and both puppets sit down on the floor. When Richard attempts to sit closer however, Anne moves away again. Finally it seems that Richard has somehow pacified her with his words and although Anne leaves, she does not leave in a hurry. There are three more short clips Clips of Taiga-Matto's *Richard III*, uploaded by the organisers of the Nukkero Festival (Nukkero Festival: recorded 1/10/2009: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMXHJIQUljg>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzMDWtR5lQA>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuKJPn4Hasc>, [last access: 22/11/2011]) but unless one understands the language it is not possible to identify exactly which part in Shakespeare's *Richard III* they correspond to.

As can be concluded from the above, in this case it might be difficult without a previous knowledge of Shakespeare's play and without taking into account the theatre's

information about their piece (Teatteri Taiga-Matto: no date given:  
[http://www.taigamatto.com/etusivu\\_e.htm](http://www.taigamatto.com/etusivu_e.htm), [last access: 22/11/2011])

to guess which play this production is based on although some essential features are still preserved. The fact that Shakespeare's *Richard III* has been the source text for their puppet play becomes obvious in the light of the theatre's background information of course but, by turning the whole story more into an oriental tale, the specific English background of Shakespeare's text gets lost. This production certainly includes some elements of the original but Shakespeare's history play as such does not seem to be the main focus for Taiga-Matto.

## 6. INTRODUCTION: SHAKESPEARE'S POEMS IN PERFORMANCE

This chapter will include analysis of selected productions of Shakespeare's poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* as well as his sonnets. As in the UK, these texts are very rarely performed in the rest of Europe as especially the two narrative poems are more or less focused on the inner thoughts and feelings of the characters and not a particular situation or event, whereas the sonnets –although the whole sequence could be summarized with few general topics– lack a coherent plotline running through all of them. One has to find a need of whatever sort to put them on stage and decisions have to be made in terms of who and how many actors portray which characters, whether the poems might work better as staged readings instead of a real performance, which props have to be used and above all how long a performance can be without stretching an audience's good will.

Similarly, scholarly research about either the sonnets or *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* in performance are mostly rare, except when academics have become interested in particular productions resulting in reviews, such as the 2007 special edition of *Cahiers Élisabéthains* about the Royal Shakespeare's Company Complete Works Festival 2006-07: this special issue includes reviews of *The Rape of Lucrece*, directed by Gregory Doran for the RSC (reviewed performance seen on 10 September 2006 by Kath Bradley, p. 54-56), *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, edited and staged by Deborah Shaw for the RSC (reviewed performance seen on 5 November 2006 by Rosemary Stiles, p. 67-68), *Venus and Adonis*, directed by Gregory Doran for the RSC in arrangement with The Little Angel Theatre (reviewed performance seen on 15 March 2007 by Michael Jones and Peter J. Smith, p.84-85) as well as *Nothing like the Sun (Sonnets)*, developed by Gavin Bryars for Opera North and the RSC (reviewed performance seen on 24 February 2007 by Peter J. Smith, p. 80). Some noteworthy exceptions, especially when it comes to the sonnets in performance, are Stanley

Wells and Paul Edmondson's chapter on "The Sonnets in Performance" in their *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Edmondson/Wells: 2004: p. 166-176) and Claire Bardelmann's "Les Sonnets en musique: questions et perspectives" in *Shakespeare poète* edited by Yves Peyré and Pierre Kapitaniak (Bardelmann: 2006: p. 229-245).

Whereas Bardelmann focuses on selected sonnets set to music by Henry Lawes (sonnet 116) and Igor Stravinsky (sonnet 8) as well as musical versions of sonnet 43 by Benjamin Britten's *Nocturne* and Henri Saguet's *Deux poèmes de Shakespeare*, Wells and Edmondson in contrast do not direct their readers' attention to any particular sonnet in their section on the sonnets in music, yet overlap sometimes with Bardelmann's selection. In addition, they also provide examples from other areas. At first they consider various recordings of the sonnets by different actors and for different purposes and then continue with the "Sonnets on Stage and Screen" (Edmondson/Wells: 2004: p. 170), which includes two performances of the kind considered in this chapter besides uses of the sonnets in films in a variety of ways.

This particular chapter, as indicated above, will focus on actual theatrical productions of *Venus and Adonis*, *The Rape of Lucrece* and the *Sonnets*, which means for example that the characters have been portrayed as if they were characters in plays written for the stage. Although this was the case too for the already mentioned *Venus and Adonis* by the Royal Shakespeare Company, the main difference between that performance and those included here is that there all characters had been portrayed by puppets modelled on the Japanese tradition of bunraku theatre instead of human actors. Of course productions with real actors are also nothing completely new as such: Camille O'Sullivan, an internationally known renowned singer and actress performed her interpretation of *The Rape of Lucrece* for the Royal Shakespeare Company from 30 March to 2 April 2011 and Gerald Logan toured with his one-

man show of the poem throughout the UK as well as internationally after sold out runs in Edinburgh and London in 2010-2012. Similarly, *Venus and Adonis* has received attention by actors and theatre practitioners as Philip C. Kolin has proved with “Venus and Adonis in Production” in his *Venus and Adonis – Critical Essays* (Kolin: 1997: p. 287-297), including productions from both the UK and the US from before 2000. Productions of the sonnets have been fewer though they definitely exist as will be proved in this chapter and the subsequent chapter on European Shakespeare Festivals.

Reviews of all of the performances mentioned in this introduction have been mixed: some critics praise them; others are convinced that the poems are actually better for reading as literature than seeing in a theatre (cp. Boquet: 2006; De Carles: 2007; Hamburger: 2010). This certainly has to do with their very nature as poetry rather than plays or poetry in plays: as Wells and Edmondson point out in their chapter on “The Sonnets as Theatre” for example, there are sonnets too in Shakespeare’s plays so what makes the *Sonnets* as such unfavourable for performance does not seem to be this specialized form of poetry (cp. Edmondson/ Wells: 2004: p. 86-95). In addition, there are even references to the theatre in, for example, sonnets 15, 23, 53, 113, 128 and 144 according to Wells and Edmondson (Edmondson/ Wells: 2004: p. 83-84) so this connection cannot come as such a surprise too. Staging them as well as *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* in the theatre is definitely possible as will be shown in this chapter. To achieve this aim, one production of each poem has been chosen: *Venus and Adonis* directed by Martin Oelbermann at the Schauspielhaus in Düsseldorf in 2001, *Le viol de Lucrece* directed by Marie-Louise Bischofberger in 2006 as a French-German-Luxembourgish co-production of the Théâtre National du Luxembourg, the MC93 Bobigny and the Theater im Pfalzbau Ludwigshafen at the Théâtre National de Toulouse (France) and Robert Wilson’s and Rufus Wainwright’s *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* with the Berliner Ensemble

in Berlin in 2009. All of them are based on Shakespeare's poems but, like real play texts, have been adapted for performance (adaptation as defined by Lanier's classification (Lanier: 2002: p. 83) detailed in the respective earlier chapter) by including other texts with the same topic or mixing different performative styles. Bischofberger and Oelbermann combined *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis* with St Augustine's *City of God* and Ted Hughes' *Venus and Adonis* respectively; the Wilson/Wainwright co-production included allusions to Japanese Noh Theatre as well as somewhat literal translations of the various sonnets in modern German. Whereas the productions of the *Sonnets* and *The Rape of Lucrece* will be analysed as actual performances, the production of *Venus and Adonis* will be used as a touchstone for a more detailed thinking about the difficulties in staging Shakespeare's poetry to allow for a deeper appreciation of Bischofberger's as well as Wilson's and Wainwright's efforts. It is hoped that this provides a new view of the original texts and proves that Shakespeare's poems are suitable for performance as 'plays'.

#### 6.1. VENUS AND ADONIS, OR: HOW TO COMBINE TWO DIFFERENT POEMS

The production considered in this chapter could be regarded as one example why scholarly analyses of Shakespeare's poems in performance are almost non-existent. There are no reviews and although information about the actors and directors involved can be found on the internet even the critics from the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch 139* do not mention this performance at all in their reviews of the 2001/2002 season (Schabert: 2003: p. 208-250). The World Shakespeare Bibliography indicates that this production had its premiere on 6 December 2001 at the Schauspielhaus in Düsseldorf under the direction of Martin Oelbermann and his assistant Tanja Brugger with Michael Volk as the dramaturge. According to the database it seems like this was a combination or adaptation based on texts by Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes



and William Shakespeare with Eva Spott as ‘Sie/Venus/Lukrezia’ (‘She/Venus/Lucrece’), Michael Fuchs as ‘Er/Adonis/Tarquin’ (‘He/Adonis/Tarquin’) and Stefan Schuster as ‘Erzähler’ (‘narrator’), Konstantin Sonneson was responsible for lighting. Yet, due to the mentioning of ‘Sie’ (‘She’) and ‘Er’ (‘He’) as characters it would also be possible that this was a production combining Shakespeare’s poems with a theatrical reproduction of Sylvia Plath’s and Ted Hughes’ lives with different kinds of love as an overarching theme.

So as to not speculate too much however this chapter will be dedicated to a comparison between Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis* and Ted Hughes’ *Venus and Adonis (and Atalanta)* (Hughes: 1997: p. 128-143), the latter of which had been adapted for the stage on its own by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1999 when ten tales were chosen for performance. Both poems deal with the love of the goddess of love for Adonis, both equally include a story narrated by Venus and in both poems Adonis dies in the end. Although there are similarities between Shakespeare’s and Hughes’s poems, the latter provides a different point of view of the characters and, when both poems are combined for performance, can shape an audience’s opinion about the characters quite drastically. In addition, when preparing those poems for an actual production other decisions about cuts and inclusions have to be made, for example when it comes to the behaviour of the characters as well as the background story.

Ted Hughes’ *Venus and Adonis (and Atalanta)* is part of his collection of poems *Tales from Ovid* (Hughes: 1997: p. 128-143), which provides twenty-four tales from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in a modern rendering. Others stories included in this collection are *The Rape of Proserpina*, *Tereus* and *Pyramus and Thisbe*, which have also been taken up by Shakespeare in various plays as well as his poems. Hughes’ poem begins with the birth of Adonis. His mother Myrrha is praying for being ‘no part/ Of either her life or her death’: ‘the

earth' (both p.128) has pity on her and changes Myrrha's human form to that of the myrrh-tree. The young woman's sin consisted in having fallen in love and sleeping with her father Cinyras, thereby becoming pregnant with Adonis who is both her son and her brother. She is pursued by her father but the gods take pity on her: Adonis is born out of the myrrh-tree and raised by 'nymphs of the flowing waters' (Hughes: 1997: p. 129). Seemingly a moment later he is a young man of great beauty that Venus 'feels awe' (Hughes: 1997: p. 130). It is hinted here that Myrrha wants to revenge herself on Venus for making her fall in love with her father: as such Venus nicks herself on an arrow in Adonis' quiver and falls in love with him in turn. She forgets everything else and even changes her behaviour out of love. Whereas she spent a lot of time in the shades before, she now goes hunting after hares and hinds as Adonis likes hunting. Venus prefers those animals which can do no real harm however and entreats Adonis to do the same. Boars, wolves, bears and lions are too dangerous and she advises the young man to leave those animals alone. If he is killed while hunting them, he might have gained honour but she would lose her 'heart in a fool's gamble' (Hughes: 1997: p. 131). She clearly does not like wild animals, which Adonis does not understand. When he asks about it, she first explains that all that hunting activity tire her out as she is not used to it and when they retire to a secluded spot in the woods, she explains with a story why she abhors lions, boars and others. The story she tells is the story of Atalanta and Hippomenos. It seems as if Venus wants to convey a special meaning with this story to Adonis but he does not understand it fully as becomes apparent afterwards after Venus has left him. In her story, Atalanta is bound by a prophecy to marry the man who wins a race against her; if she wins, the men lose their lives. It becomes obvious very early that Hippomenos is in love with her but does not dare take part in the race to win her as his wife. Atalanta is equally in love with him and does not want him to lose his life but she has no other recourse to take him as her

husband as having him win the race. Hippomenos prays to Venus for help and the goddess provides him with three golden apples which he successfully uses to distract Atalanta from the race and is victorious as a consequence. Instead of thanking Venus however he forgets all about her help and consequently experiences the goddess's anger. Both Hippomenos and Atalanta decide to spend the night in a temple for 'Cybele, Mother of the Gods' (Hughes: 1997: p. 140) when Venus enchants Hippomenos so that he rapes Atalanta in her sleep. Cybele is now out for revenge too as her temple has been defiled but instead of plunging them into Styx and eternal hell-fire, she transforms both of them into lions, which are obedient only to Cybele herself. This is the reason why Venus hates lions and wild animals and would rather have Adonis give up hunting instead of running the danger of being killed one day. Left alone by Venus to ponder her words and the story, his hounds wake up a wild boar which, after being wounded by Adonis, now turns on the hunter and kills him quite brutally. Venus, 'afloat on swansdown in the high blue' (Hughes: 1997: p. 142), feels Adonis' agony in death and hurries to his side. She rips open her clothes, harms herself and rages against the Fates that they are not to have Adonis' body. Instead she drips nectar into it and thereby transforms him into a flower which she regards as his eternal monument although 'This flower's life is brief./ Its petals cling so weakly, so ready to fall/ Under the first light wind that kisses it' (Hughes: 1997: p. 143). It is the windflower; with this explanation Hughes's poem ends.

Shakespeare in contrast wrote his poem *Venus and Adonis* following Ovid's *Metamorphoses* only loosely. Like the Latin writer he presented the erotic experiences and anxieties of the characters from both perspectives, from both seducer and seduced, even more so than Hughes had done in his poem which is almost devoid of anything more seductive than Venus' voice. However, he rewrote the relationship between Venus and Adonis as he wanted to. The traditional roles of seducer and seduced are disturbed. In both Shakespeare's as well

as Hughes's narrative it is the fact that the seducer is female and a goddess. Yet, Shakespeare's Venus is much more actively seductive than Hughes' when she uses her experience with Mars to prove to Adonis how desirable she is (l. 97-114). The earlier poem also includes other attempts at seduction which represent matching parts to the overall theme. After Venus has plucked Adonis from his stallion, the animal notices a mare and tries to impress her with its strength and finally seduces the female horse (l. 269-324). Venus uses this opportunity to rebuke Adonis for his ever-lasting resistance to love (l. 379-408). In addition, the original includes a third attempt at seduction which can get lost however if the poem is put on stage. The lovers are described in a way that can arouse the passion of a reader with imaginative powers of his own but which might get lost in a performance. Adonis is depicted as the counterpart to the traditional love object of Petrarchan love poetry, whereas Venus behaves as a dominant male lover.

Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* begins with a reversal of the traditional rhetoric of a love poem. In the first stanza Adonis's resistance to love and the behaviour of Venus like a 'bold-faced suitor' are described. This sets the tone for the rest: the goddess of love has fallen in love with a mortal boy who is more eager to go hunting with his friends than being seduced. At the beginning of Venus's long speech she assumes that even nature is angry with Adonis as he will not marry and procreate (l. 189). She uses all the traditional rhetorical devices like the blazon to persuade Adonis to enter in a relationship with her. But by applying it only to her own body, Venus is basically depicted as being downright ridiculous (l. 145-198). She is consumed by her love to the coy boy and does not recognize her follies. The goddess exerts her strength on Adonis when he mounts his stallion to join his friends for the hunt. She ties the reins to some bush or tree and carries on with seducing him. She brings Adonis and herself in a position not uncommon for lovers and touches his cheeks (l. 39-96).

He frowns and tries to resist her, but in vain. She proceeds to kiss him on his lips and every other part of his face. He accepts, but does not enjoy it nor participates willingly. The more he opposes himself to her seductive attempts, the more aggressive Venus becomes: his anger makes him even more beautiful. Finally the goddess seems to be appreciative of the young man's feelings and promises to let him go in exchange for a kiss (l. 79-96). Adonis raises his face but in the last moment he pulls away and Venus is inflamed anew. She relates her relationship with Mars during which the god of war behaved like her slave. But nothing can persuade Adonis to give in to her attempts, which causes her to become more aggressive in her tone and takes refuge to insults. She compares herself to old women (l. 133-144) and to a park (l. 229-240) wherein Adonis should be the deer, only to get a favourable reply from him. By chance, Adonis's stallion perceives a mare and tries equally to seduce her and successfully impresses her with his strength. Adonis tries futilely to recapture his horse but has to endure Venus' attempts again. When he opens his mouth to speak, she faints as in anticipation of his refusal (l. 451-575). He tries to revive her with a kiss but in her greediness she is not apt to let him go after only one. She clings to Adonis even more when he reveals he is going to hunt the boar the next day. But finally night falls and she cannot restrain Adonis any longer. He departs admitting being ashamed of himself having spent the whole day with her and enduring all her vain words. Venus is left alone and when Adonis goes hunting the next day, the outcome is the same as in Hughes's poem. The boar kills him and Venus transforms his body into a flower to preserve him forever. It seems that desire like that of Venus for Adonis is in fact disastrous in both poems and can only end in death and destruction.

It becomes apparent that, although the two poems derive from the same source and include the same characters, the inherent story and the characters' behaviour is very different to some extent. When adapting both for performance as for example the production in

question seems to have done, some ideas and thoughts have to be agreed on first, as for example the number of characters to be performed. In this particular case it has been done already: Venus is played by one actress, Adonis by one actor, a narrator is used to fill in the main story. When blending two narratives into one coherent plotline, further decisions about the exact content are necessary. Hughes' poem reads more like a revenge story at the beginning when Myrrha makes Venus fall in love with her son as a punishment for making herself fall in love with her own father; in Shakespeare's poem the starting point is Venus' love for Adonis only. It now depends on the decision of the performers and the director as to what they want to include: although Shakespeare's plays usually start in medias res, the necessary background knowledge is usually conveyed almost immediately through characters' speeches. As such there are two possibilities for a staging of his poem: if Venus should be seen only as seducing Adonis, and therefore a slightly negative character, including this background from Hughes' poem would tip the audience's opinion in her favour. In contrast, the negative image of Venus is painted by Hughes in the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes and when keeping the overall tone of Shakespeare's poem it would make more sense to integrate this story into a production. What comes into focus here too is the length of both poems: whereas Shakespeare wrote 1194 lines, according to the 1997 Oxford Edition, Hughes's poem is only 341 verses in length. This difference makes it necessary to determine how long an actual performance should be: as some reviewers of previous productions have remarked on, at some point a performance based on one of Shakespeare's narrative poems always seems to drag on a bit. A reduction of the original *Venus and Adonis* is therefore necessary and Hughes' contribution should be not necessarily short but well-integrated. This however makes a further decision very important: the two poems have been written several hundred years apart and as such their language is quite different. A resulting mixture of both

can only result in a fractured text, as was the case for the production of *The Rape of Lucrece* considered in the next chapter, although for a different reason. However, in terms of an actual description of the goddess and her lover the wordiness of Shakespeare's poem is helpful as Hughes' poem does not give a lot of detailed information as to their appearance. One would expect however an actor portraying Adonis to be very handsome and an actress playing Venus to have a stereotypical female look as to allow for the speech about her body as a garden for Adonis to wander in to make sense. This brings up too the question of which costumes should be used to enhance their looks and which props to use during the performance and what is conveyed through speech only. When it comes to the story told by Venus in Hughes's poem it would for example make sense to have Venus manipulate puppets to portray Atalanta and Hippomenes in some sort of shadow-play on a screen. Similarly, the short story in Shakespeare's poem of Adonis' horse running away with a mare would be possible to portray in this manner whereas Venus could just narrate the story of her and Mars. Alternatively, the narrator could step in at this point and take over, leaving the actors portraying the two main characters in those moments to either lying together on the stage with Venus trying to seduce Adonis.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of decisions which need to be made but it hopefully provides a more detailed overview over the difficulties in staging Shakespeare's poems, especially when they are combined with other texts, something which has been the case for the production in the following chapter too.

## 6.2. LE VIOL DE LUCRÈCE IN COMBINATION WITH AN ECCLESIASTIC INTERPRETATION

This production used Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* as its basis in addition to a passage from Saint Augustine's *De Civitate Dei Contra Paganos* (*The City of God Against the*

*Pagans*). It was adapted for performance and directed by Marie-Louise Bischofberger, Lucrece was portrayed by Rachida Brakni and Véronique Sacri (depending on where the production was performed: Lucrece in each performance was played by one actress only) and Pascal Bongard took on Tarquin, Collatine and the Nurse or Maid. Raymond Couvreur designed the sets and the costumes had been chosen by Bischofberger herself in collaboration with Jean-Daniel Vuillermoz whereas Marie-Christine Soma was responsible for the lighting. All these elements were important for this production so the impact of each on the perception of the poem in performance will be touched upon in the following analysis. The 80-minutes-long *Le Viol de Lucrece* had its premiere during summer 2006 at the Odéon Théâtre de l'Europe in Paris and was performed between 17 and 20 October 2006 at the Théâtre National in Toulouse; it then went on tour to Ludwigshafen, Luxembourg, Perpignan, Bourges, Chartres and Cherbourg. This production was a cooperation between several theatres from different countries: the MC93 Bobigny (France), the Théâtre National of Luxembourg and the Theater im Pfalzbau in Ludwigshafen had been involved.

According to Guy Boquet's review of a performance in Bobigny in *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 70, Bischofberger chose to adapt *The Rape of Lucrece* for the stage because 'of its beauty [...], because of the importance of the words [...], because of the mental pictures into which the verses are transformed [...], because it makes each of us think about light and shadow inside us. [She had] chosen this poem because it is the portrait of a woman facing circumstances which threaten her life [...]' and links this reading of the poem with modern fundamentalism (Boquet: 2006: p. 73; my translation). She stresses however that she did not chose the poem because of Lucrece's sacrifice, as Bischofberger would have wished that Lucrece had lived on, successfully managing to build up a new life for her like many women in similar position nowadays. As such she did not turn *The Rape of Lucrece* into a long



monologue but provided a multi-faceted view of the poem and preserved its alternation between monologue and dialogue. She took ideas for the adaptation not only from Shakespeare's theatrical cues in the poem such as the secondary characters or the comic relief when the nurse enters the scene for example but also took recourse to what Saint Augustine had written about Lucrece and her suicide in his *De Civitate Dei Contra Paganos* and made it an integral part of her overall argument. 'The production was divided into six parts: the prologue, the rape and its aftermath, the Augustinian vision of the suicide, the messenger and the nurse, the story of Troy [and] Collatine, and Lucrece' (De Carles: 2007: p. 124). In addition, Bischofberger decided to interrupt the performance three times to intersperse readings of selected parts of the poem and Saint Augustine's text, an effect which was supported by the scenery. 'Thus, [she] regularly pushed the Shakespearean text to its limit by focusing the spectators' eyes on [a] scenic margin where she could lose the audience in poetic and philosophical asides. [...] Those interludes cleverly put the plot into perspective' (De Carles: 2007: p. 124): the passages used included the full quotation of the passage from Saint Augustine's *De Civitate Dei Contra Paganos*, Lucrece's lament as well as her examination of the painting of the siege of Troy.

The passage from Saint Augustine is an interesting inclusion but looking at Bischofberger's explanation as to the underlying reason it becomes plausible, although it somewhat contradicts the inherent message of Lucrece's suicide as described by Shakespeare. Saint Augustine was born in 354AD and died in 430AD; he composed his *De Civitate Dei Contra Paganos* between 413 to 426AD in 22 books. The rape of Lucrece is depicted in Book 1, Chapter XIX under the title "On Lucretia, who committed suicide because she was violated". For Augustine it is not important to retell the story but rather to find the motivation and logic behind her behaviour and suicide. He begins his text by stating that only the man

who lay with her by force is guilty, not she who suffered it. Augustine seems to take Lucrece's side at first, but in the next paragraph turns his argument on its head when he creates an imaginary court scene and asks '[i]f [...] a woman, not only uncondemned, but even chaste and innocent, had been put to death, would you not punish the one who had done this with fitting severity?' (Augustine: 1966: p. 85). When Augustine suggests that a sentence should be pronounced, he points towards the fact that Lucrece is not able to attend this imaginary trial in person. Perhaps she is not present because she slew herself, not innocently, but conscious of her guilt. What if she would have been seduced by her own lust and, though Tarquin violently attacked her, consented, which might have left death as the only suitable expiation? Augustine reaches the conclusion in the end that Lucrece was 'too greedy of praise' and 'she feared that if she remained alive, she would be thought to have enjoyed suffering the violence that she suffered while alive' (Augustine: 1966: p. 89). Ultimately, he condemns her for committing suicide as he sees her only from the Christian viewpoint on morality and shame and questions her innocence in the crime.

This question as to whether or not Lucrece is guilty of self-murder has been given a new twist in Bischofberger's adaptation of Shakespeare's poem, to which scenery, costumes and lighting contribute. The stage was divided into a central playing area in which the action took place and a margin, where the extracts from the poem and Saint Augustine's text were read. The argument/prologue was staged in this area with the two actors portraying the married couple at the beginning as well as Lucrece and Tarquin each raising their voices to speak but only managing to end up unheard as they talked over each other's voice and not to each other, at the same time providing multiple perspectives on this particular tragedy. A small door in the upstage area allowed them afterwards to enter into the playing area, where the scenery suggested a modern 21<sup>st</sup>-century loft apartment 'with eclectic objects (a Spartan

helmet, a sword, a basin, pieces of [medieval] armor, a locker, a lamp, and on each side two music stands) scattered about' (De Carles: 2007: p. 123). Singled out was the bedroom in which the bed was raised over an abyss created by a clever use of the theatre's trap system to symbolize both the impending rift between the characters as well as in the fragmentation of the poem's perception by the audience through the combination with Saint Augustine's text. The man wore a black suit and the woman a white dress. The couple sat down on the bed, apparently caught up in their own little world, and the man proceeded to tell the story of Lucrece and Tarquin to his wife (De Carles: 2007: p.123).

At first it seemed that this was an allusion to the archetypal courtly love in which a knight woos his lady but suddenly the atmosphere was turned on its head. The husband/narrator started to put on the pieces of armour lying around on stage and, when ending his initial speech, lay on the bed with his wife. By turning into a military man he also turned into Tarquin and the connection to the poem's inherent mental image of Lucrece's body as a fortress to conquer is obvious. His wife therefore turned into Lucrece and her costume –a white dress reminding one of a sari– became the trap in which Tarquin caught her. The lighting enhanced this sudden occurrence of a frightful event (an intruder in one's marital bed) as the bed was only dimly lit and as such had cast different shadows when especially the man had been clad in his normal evening clothes in contrast to the shadows made by the armour. There was a definite tension on stage as the man hesitated for a moment and circled around the bed after putting it on but then extinguishing a little lamp representing the torch from the poem and lying down on the bed next to his wife. He talked to her as Tarquin talks to Lucrece in the poem and, as in the original, this woman/Lucrece resisted and refused her attacker, who then grew bold and tried to hinder her flight by holding on to her dress, which turned into a visual symbol for both her strength and her flaw (De Carles: 2007: p. 125). Her

dress was a long piece of white fabric wrapped around her body in a sari-like manner and Tarquin only had to grasp one fold to nearly make it come undone. One end became unfolded and he only needed to hold on to it: part of her dress ripped when Lucrece tried to free herself and while not ending up naked, she was definitely trapped now. According to De Carles (2007: p. 126), 'Lucrece's costume was a substitute for the progressive emotional destruction of the character'.

The light, which had up to the moment when the man put on the different pieces of armour beautifully provided a dimmed hue for a bedroom atmosphere, now was switched off rather abruptly to signal the rape and was used in different ways, always contrasting light with darkness or shadows, afterwards. When the light went on again after the rape, Lucrece was alone in her bedroom and soon undressed completely to scrub herself clean in a basin. In the aftermath of her assault Lucrece now went through different types of clothing to search for something which would allow her to match her destroyed femininity and inner feelings with a corresponding appearance. Similarly, she turned her bed into a monument as it was there where she lost her chastity and where she started her lament and considered suicide: she changed the tainted white bed sheets into a black veil as if to signal visually and in a symbolic way what had happened there. After the bath she put on black clothes, took a dagger and contemplated suicide. In this moment Pascal Bongard, now the husband again, entered the area of the stage marked out for the reading of the texts from behind the lectern and tried to sway her with the complete version of Saint Augustine's rendering of Lucrece not to commit suicide, thereby also questioning her motive on behalf of the audience.

As is known from the original Lucrece indeed did kill herself and in this version too she could not be convinced otherwise. Bongard left the stage and what now followed was a succession of events like in Shakespeare's poem. Lucrece sent out the messenger to fetch her

husband and conversed with the maid while trying to find a way to deal with what happened. This was apparently further expressed by more changes in clothing: she changed first into a dark blue Vietnamese dress and a veil, which was then replaced by a 1950s man's suit when she thought about revenge and then goaded Collatine into it once he arrived. De Carles interpreted the fact that the suit did not fit her well as follows: 'The oversized suit was a visual metaphor of Lucrece's ontological destruction and, also, of the abortive nature of her vengeance. She was so maladjusted in her new attire that it became a symbol for the incompleteness of her revenge on Tarquin. Her ill-assured posture suggested the failure of Tarquin's punishment' (De Carles: 2007: p. 126). Before Collatine's arrival however the actress portraying Lucrece had crossed the stage towards the lectern marked out for reading and painted an imaginary tapestry of the siege of Troy for the audience. After Collatine had promised revenge on her behalf, she then killed herself as in the original and thereby ended the performance.

The two critics quoted in this chapter, although both generally in favour of Bischofberger's adaptation, are equally divided when it comes to especially the symbolic use of visual elements to convey meaning. For De Carles this decision sometimes hindered appreciation of the sound elements (the characters' monologues and dialogues) (De Carles: 2007: p. 126) whereas for Boquet they enhanced a 'fine representation by Rachida Brakni and an excellent performance by Bongard alternating between [...] unity and brutality' (Boquet: 2006: p. 73; my translation).

When compared with Shakespeare's original poem it becomes obvious that this is not only *The Rape of Lucrece* in performance but also an adaptation, as for example defined by Lanier's classification (Lanier: 2002: p. 83), which might also have something to do with the shift from poem to a text used for performance. It offers a modern view on the poem, which is

achieved in two different ways. The addition of Saint Augustine's text about Lucrece's suicide has been mentioned explicitly already; in addition this production embedded the story of Lucrece and Tarquin in a contemporary framework by having a modern couple act out their story. The Roman or rather antique background is still recognizable through the use of props and the passages from the original poem but it is no longer the only focus. Indeed it seems that the couple could be Lucrece and Tarquin from Antiquity on the one hand but also a modern man and woman on the other as this adaptation caters to both tastes and viewpoints.

### 6.3. ROBERT WILSON'S AND RUFUS WAINWRIGHT'S COLLABORATION ON

#### SHAKESPEARES SONETTE

The following production is a collaboration between the well-known director and theatre practitioner Robert Wilson and the singer and songwriter Rufus Wainwright with the Berliner Ensemble in Berlin: 25 poems of Shakespeare's 154-long sonnet sequence had been selected for performance. The production had its premiere on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2009 –400 years after the first publication of Shakespeare's poems in 1609–, public rehearsals had taken place on 7, 8, 9<sup>th</sup> April and other performances followed on 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April. Due to public demand, they sold out rapidly and more performances were scheduled for June and December that year. Arte, a German-French TV channel for mostly cultural events and historic topics, commissioned a TV broadcast, which was aired on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009 and lasted about two hours, whereas the production took up about three hours plus an interval in the theatre.

Even more than for *Venus and Adonis* or *The Rape of Lucrece*, one has to find a suitable plotline to stage the sonnets, and as such the use of Lanier's account of the narrative varieties is useful (Lanier: 2002: p. 83). This production clearly fits in either the 'revisionary narrative' or the 'hybrid narrative' section, depending on how some of the characters are

regarded: as can be seen in the TV broadcast aired on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009, one character is like a Shakespearian chorus for example who either comments on the action taking place on stage or a theatrical necessity for providing entertainment while the sets and scenery are rearranged. This production also makes use of the characters generally regarded as belonging to the sonnets: the rival poet, the dark lady or the handsome young man in addition to Shakespeare himself.

A collaboration between Robert Wilson as the director of this particular production and the Berliner Ensemble is nothing new. Previously, they had worked together on Büchner's *Danton's Death* (1998) and his *Leonce and Lena* (2003), on Brecht's *The Flight Across the Ocean* (1998) as well as his *Three-penny Opera* (2007). According to Arthur Holmberg, '[after 1984] Wilson worked most frequently in Germany, a country that takes the arts seriously [and] nurtured Wilson's genius' (Holmberg: 1996: p. 23). With regard to Shakespeare's plays he had staged *The Winter's Tale* in 2005 in Berlin with this company and had worked together with Heiner Müller on parts of *CIVILwarS*: he went into a self-imposed exile after he was not allowed to stage this production in full during the Los Angeles Olympics Arts Festival in 1984 due to official refusal by the organisers. Müller and Wilson frequently collaborated on projects, for example the former's *Hamletmachine* in 1986 as well as his *Quartet*. A production of *King Lear*, as translated by Müller, at the Schauspielhaus in Frankfurt in 1990 had been planned too but as Müller was busy with directing *Hamletmachine* at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin, Wilson used the translation by Wolf Graf Baudissin instead (Holmberg: 1996: p. 31). Wilson believes that 'a realistic approach always diminishes Shakespeare' (Holmberg: 1996: p. 33) and it became apparent in that production: he prefaced it with a poem by William Carlos Williams about the death of his grandmother, which was followed by the division of Lear's kingdom and fifteen scenes taken from the original to

depict the story of King Lear and his three daughters. Similarly, he turned Shakespeare's original *Hamlet* into a sixty-minute monologue: 'it is a memory played over and over in someone's mind' (Holmberg: 1996: p. 34). It is not clear however in whose mind this monologue is set.

Wilson's method of breaking up Shakespeare's original texts can also be traced in this production of the sonnets. In addition, as will be shown based on selected examples from the TV broadcast aired on Arte on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009, Wilson also included other styles and acting methods in his work. In general, his works can be called experimental in the widest sense of the word and are noted for their very slow movement, and often extreme scale in space or in time as well as for handling sets, lighting and props in a new surrealistic style. Although he 'does not choose one cultural tradition over another, he has no interest in reprocessing elements specific to identifiable cultures' as Patrice Pavis has noted in his article "Wilson, Brook, Zadek: an intercultural encounter?" (Pavis: 2004: p. 270-289). Wilson himself, when interviewed by Ariel Goldenberg in 1995 in Paris (included in Delgado/ Heritage: 1996: p. 303-308), explained that he regards the actor's body as a resource and that he usually starts with it first and how this impacts on the portrayal of a character through movement. He went on to explain that, even without any actors at all, there can be something happening on stage which too can influence an audience's perception. When asked about 'this show with Philip Glass where there will be no actors', Wilson replied '[i]t's an architectural arrangement in time and space and it's the same if you have an actor or don't have an actor. A light moves or a prop moves and it's timing, it's a construction in time and space. And that's what I think is the architecture, the construction of anything, whether it's Mozart or Wagner or Shakespeare.' (Goldenberg included in Delgado/ Heritage: 1996: p. 306).



This detailed planning of the architecture of a production and therefore also its narrative structure became apparent too in this collaborative effort with Wainwright: each scene resembled a carefully erected tableau which added to the overall impression of a particular scene. According to Bonnie Marranca in her introduction to Wilson's *A Letter to Queen Victoria* in her 1997 *The Theatre of Images*, he 'takes characters, objects and situations having no common history or relationship to each other, and merges them in a poetry of space. [In addition,] he does not accept the absolution of language and so he purposely sets out to fashion one to his own liking' (Marranca: 1997: p. 41-42), which was the case with *Shakespeares Sonette* too. For Wilson 'a realistic approach always diminishes Shakespeare' (Holmberg: 1996: p. 33) and in his opinion theatre should not provide a ready interpretation of any given piece for the audience but rather allow for the audience's own individual interpretations (cp. Weiler: 1996: p. 110). Therefore, as detailed by Christel Weiler in "Japanese traces in Robert Wilson's productions", 'the ideal Wilson actor obviously corresponds to the ideal Noh artist' (Weiler: 1996: p. 107). Wilson himself explained that the classical Noh theatre of Japan fully satisfied his aesthetic sense, also because this theatrical form gives space to the audience and respects them. Such an actor 'does not force his emotions on the audience, [but] leaves everything that [goes] through his mind back in his dressing room and walks on stage fresh, as if he knows nothing' (Weiler: 1996: p. 107).

Although for Wilson language is also important, he usually refers to a more visual approach in theatre too as exemplified in the interview with Goldenberg when he recalled that 'when [he] was in Shanghai [...], [he] saw a fifteen-year-old girl sing an aria for an hour and forty minutes. She had 550 different ways of moving the sleeve of her dress. [...] It's a visual language that parallels the text that she has to speak or sing' (Goldenberg in Delgado/Heritage: 1996: p. 304). As reviewers, for example Manfred Pfister in the *Shakespeare*

*Jahrbuch 146* remarked, the actors from the Berliner Ensemble were perfectly suited for Wilson's demands (Pfister: 2010: p. 180) and this will be explained in more detail while analysing this production later on.

Rufus Wainwright, who had previously worked on his operatic project *Prima Donna*, was commissioned to provide the music for *Shakespeares Sonette*. His oeuvre contains several recurring styles like opera and pop culture or songs based on literature, but also more abstract ideas like attraction, yearning, and love (often unrequited). However, there seems to be something of a problem with Wilson's and Wainwright's general attitude of approaching the sonnets: whereas Wilson assumed that Shakespeare might not have known what he was talking about in the sonnets or what this narrative is able to accommodate (the interview was conducted by Deutsche Welle in the context of this production and can be seen on Youtube; Deutsche Welle (*Kultur.21 / Shakespeares Sonette als Event*): 20/04/2009: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVa1T8SJdI>, [last access: 22/11/2011]), Wainwright admitted in an interview that, although he took this production seriously, he also regarded it as a test-run for *Prima Donna* although he admitted at the same time that he was thrilled to be involved with a project that combined Shakespeare, Wilson and the Berliner Ensemble as he apparently admires Kurt Weill and Berthold Brecht, who worked together on Brecht's *Three Penny Opera* as well as his *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. There definitely is a slight discrepancy between their accounts of their collaborative creation, and there were equally mixed reactions and critiques from journalists.

Unlike the original 154 sonnets, which only include three characters in addition to the overall narrative voice, the fair youth, the dark lady and the rival poet have been enhanced by fifteen other characters in this particular production. Apart from small exception, all of them employ cross gender casting, which is not only another reminder of Wilson's preference for

the Noh theatre from Japan but could also be a reference to the Elizabethan custom of having female roles played by men. Old William Shakespeare was played by Inge Keller, who –when she had to walk in the last scene– needed help due to old age (now 87), whereas William Shakespeare as a young poet was portrayed by Sylvie Rohrer, Anke Engelsmann played Shakespeare’s secretary while Ursula Höpfner-Tabori was a Black Lady. Christopher Nells, Dejan Bucin and Sabin Tambrea also played dark ladies as signalled by black clothes, Traute Hoess was the rival poet and Ruth Glöss was the fool and Anna Gränzer and Christine Drechsler portrayed two young boys. In addition, Eve as in ‘Adam and Eve’ was played by Christopher Nell, Sabin Tambrea also portrayed a lady, Georgios Tsivanoglou was Cupid, Queen Elizabeth I and II were portrayed by now 79-year-old Jürgen Holt and Georgette Dee was a chorus-like character as already mentioned before. Dejan Bucin also took on the role of a gentleman and was therefore the only same-sex casting decision for this particular production.

Wilson and Wainwright selected 25 sonnets altogether for their narrative. They relied partially on the translation by Martin Flörchinger; mostly, however, they used Christa Schuenke’s renderings (Pfister: 2010: p. 180). She translated all 154 sonnets into radically modern German, an endeavour which was called ‘Radikalübersetzung’ by Manfred Pfister in his article “‘Bottom, thou are translated’: Recent Radical Translations of Shakespearean Sonnets in Germany” (Pfister: 2008: p. 21-36) about the translations by Ulrike Draesner especially. Some of the sonnets used throughout this production were number 18 (‘Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day’), number 20 (‘A woman’s face with nature’s own hand painted’), number 23 (‘As an unperfect actor on the stage’), number 29 (‘When in disgrace with Fortune and men’s eyes’), number 43 (‘When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see’), number 66 (‘Tired with all these, for restful death I cry’), number 76 (‘Why is my verse so

barren of new pride'), number 144 ('Two loves I have, of comfort and despair'), number 148 ('O me! What eyes hath love put in my head') and number 154 ('The little Love-god lying once asleep'). In some instances the original English versions had been used for songs, most of the spoken sonnets were in German. Sonnet 43 opened the performance, immediately followed by sonnet 148, settling the audience in a dream-like world, which was closed only with the penultimate sonnet –number 87– shortly before the performance ended with the last sonnet in Shakespeare's sequence, number 154. The performance had a turning point after 12 sonnets with sonnet 29 as a fulcrum, followed by 12 other sonnets. The production included three main themes, which were supported by Wilson's and Wainwright's selection of Shakespeare's poems as well as by the overall structure and casting decisions, according to Manfred Pfister: he mentions 'androgyny and homo-eroticism, truth and dream-like illusions and the grave passing of time, which seem to smother imagination and Eros' (Pfister: 2010: p. 181).

The following analysis will focus on the beginning as well as the end of the production in addition to the usage of sonnet 29 in the middle. In the very first scene, the curtain seems to be down still and only one character can be seen at this point. It is the fool, an old person, who introduces the audience into this production and draws them in by describing his own emotions and ways of seeing the world using sonnet 43. It seems as if he as a character on stage as well as the audience are about to enter into a dream. Day and night are reversed: during the day not a thing can be seen, yet when it turns night suddenly the shadows come to live and are as bright and beautiful as sunlight normally is. Time is equally reversed and the music is appropriately chosen. It seems as if the fool sits on a bench in a garden, which is the only prop used in this scene, when night is falling and when he reaches the end of his speech, birds as portrayed by the music are calming down too. As can be seen





room one after the other by ringing the bell for each of them: it seems that the queen has given an order and the person in the chair now sets out to fulfill it. First, a lively young boy comes in who tickles the secretary's nose. Afterwards a second boy comes in as well, very much the opposite of the other. He is very boastful and tries to be more than he is. They seem almost to be mirror images of one another, only in a reverse sense: their clothes and hairstyle are exactly the same but their behaviour is not. Next comes a dark lady, who immediately locks hands with the boys. They leave however and now a young poet comes in, followed by another dark lady to whom the poet is immediately attracted and so woos her. They leave as well and the rival poet comes in. He takes the papers from the other person's table and rips them to pieces. The secretary is not amused. After the rival has left the fool comes in again in a shuffling way without lifting his feet from the floor at all and hums a funny melody. This annoys Queen Elizabeth, but the fool makes a curtesy to the secretary and now discovers who the person in the chair is. He is delighted and also discovers what the rival has ripped apart: the pieces have been lying on the floor and the fool picks them up with his walking stick to which the pieces stick as if by magic. He stuffs them into his shirt and smiles. Queen Elizabeth however does not seem to like this kind of behaviour, thunder can be heard almost immediately once the fool has taken the ripped pieces of paper. Three shadows come in, provoking more thunder with the movement of their arms, which frightens the Queen. In addition, this is the first time the dark lady can be seen in the background. Once the thunder has stopped Cupid comes in and it seems that he sends everybody to sleep and therefore into the dream world. All the other characters, including one of the boys in a sheep's costume, come in again, the music assumes an airy quality and now slowly the chair begins to turn: William Shakespeare was the one who was sitting there and who now greets the audience, like the fool in the previous scene, with sonnet 43. This scene clearly serves to introduce the audience

into the performance as such and showcase all the different characters, which is also done in Noh theatre when all the different masks are shown to the audience with explanations of who they are at the beginning of a performance.

The last scene of this production takes up again the theme of dreaming but in a reverse sense: whereas at the start of the performance the audience had been settled in a dreamworld, at the end they are slowly woken up by the action on stage. In addition, it seems as if the characters are closing a chapter of their lives too. At first the two young boys come in, then one of the dark ladies, but they are now dressed in white, which could signify innocence on the one hand but also that they have lost all their illusions and ideas about love, life and death. As Wilson is influenced by Noh theatre in particular as well as other Asian theatrical traditions, white could also stand for death with regard to the character's clothing (Weiler: 1996: 100-108), therefore this scene could also be their farewell to the audience until they are revived again for the next performance. The other characters too enter one after the other – apart from the fool they are all dressed in white– and together they start to sing sonnet 87 which is then taken up by Queen Elizabeth I who speaks part of it. By having her speak some lines of this sonnet it seems that, unlike at the beginning of the performance when she gave orders for Shakespeare to amuse her, she now renounces her right for this kind of privilege and gives it back to the man to whom it belongs by right. It might be that this man might be Shakespeare as he enters the stage once the queen has finished speaking.

Finally Shakespeare comes in and starts to speak the text of sonnet 66, which is first shared between him and Queen Elizabeth I and then taken up by all characters. The queen sings the first four lines, Shakespeare the next four and then the poem is taken up by all characters, including a repetition afterwards as some sort of chorus. The first line of this sonnet in the English version is put at the end however in the German version, which is only



sung by one of the dark ladies at the very end of the characters' 'song'. It might be that they themselves are disappointed, that their expectations of love have not been fulfilled or that they are not so sure of them anymore or that what happened was more than expected in addition to the audience's expectations. It could also be that Shakespeare and the queen are arguing here, turning this sonnet into some kind of dialogue between them. Like with many of Wilson's productions (including this one), it is a very fragmented scene where costumes, text and visual aspects of the performance do not create one unified whole but rather are important each on their own although the characters' movements during sonnet 87 are suitable for the text. They stand in awe of something only they themselves can see and seem to catch flies while singing the lines of the poem, apparently thinking about them at the same time. The very subdued choreography in this moment fits together well with the text.

William Shakespeare (sonnet 87)	Translation by Schuenke/ Flörchinger
<p>Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing,  And like enough thou know'st thy estimate.  The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing:  My bonds in thee are all determinate.  For how do I hold thee but by thy granting,  And for that riches where is my deserving?  The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,  And so my patent back again is swerving.  Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,  Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;  So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,  Comes home again, on better judgement making.  Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter:  In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.</p>	<p>Lebwohl, Du bist zu gut mein Gut zu sein,  Du weißt gewiss, wie teuer man Dich schätzt,  Dein Freibrief ist Dein Wert, ich seh es sein,  mein Pachtvertrag ist zeitlich festgesetzt.  Nur Dir verdanke ich, dass ich Dich hab,  doch wie verdiene ich dieses reiche Glück?  Ich blieb den Anlass schuldig für die Gab,  Drum geb mein Privileg an Dich zurück.  Du hast von Deinem Wert noch nichts gewusst,  als Du Dich hingabst,  Meinen Wert verkannt,  So kommt die Gabe, die auf Irrtum fußt,  zurück zu Dir, durch wachsenden Verstand.  Mein warst Du nur im Traum,  Schlief ich bei Nacht, war ich ein König, nichts  wenn ich erwacht.</p>
Re-translation into English	
<p>Farewell, you are too good to be my own,  You certainly know how dear you are valued,  Your carte blanche is your worth, I accept it,  My lease is for a limited time.  I have to thank you that I own you,  But how do I deserve this rich happiness?  I owe the reason for this gift,  Therefore I return my privilege to you.  You did not know about your value  When you gave yourself,  You misjudged my worth,  Therefore the gift, based on a mistake,  Comes back to you due to growing reason.</p>	



three beds, two television screens and a chair, the sonnet used is sonnet 29. The three black ladies are lying, standing or sitting on the beds and the rival poet is sitting on the chair. At first only his face can be seen in the spotlight whereas the others are in the shadows; it is them however who sing this sonnet in English. A video clip in slow motion can be watched on the screens in the background: a black boy is given a glass of milk to drink by a black lady, who ultimately kills the boy with a knife. After a short moment the faces of the black ladies can be seen while the rival poet is in the shadows. They also get up and move to the music. Once they have finished their song, they retreat into the shadows again and the rival poet begins to speak the same sonnet but in German. He apparently wants to reinforce the point the black ladies have tried to make. It could also be that he is ridiculing their opinion however as he was sneering and bickering once they finished singing and then starts to repeat the sonnet. In English and as a song it came across as a beautiful song of love and despair whereas in German and spoken by the rival it acquires an additional connotation: it seems that, although he might be out for ridicule, he secretly agrees with them, convinced by the words of the sonnet. As Manfred Pfister pointed out, this tableau included Rufus Wainwright's concert version of sonnet 29, hence the sung sonnet in English, whereas the video clip shown on the screens had been taken from Robert Wilson's 1970 *Deafman Glance*. Pfister therefore regarded this scene as a 'narcissistic self-mirroring of the two authors [...] through emphasized self-references' (Pfister: 2010: p. 181). This is certainly true but it could also be that Shakespeare's characters are indeed sneering at each other here, since both a black lady as well as a rival poet are part of the original sonnet sequence, wooing the young man, who might be the 'thee/Du' of sonnet 29.

William Shakespeare (sonnet 29)	Translation by Schuenke/ Flörchinger
When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes I all alone beweepe my outcast state, And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,	Wenn mich Fortuna schmäht, kein Mensch mich mag, Wenn ich mich selber nicht mehr sehen will,

<p>And look upon myself and curse my fate,  Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  Featured like him, like him with friends  possessed,  Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,  With what I most enjoy contented least;  Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,  Haply I think on thee, and then my state  (Like to the lark at break of day arising)  From sullen earth sings hymns at heaven's gate.  For thy sweet love remembered such wealth  brings  That then I scorn to change my state with kings.</p>	<p>Dem tauben Himmel meinen Jammer klag,  Mein Vagabundenlos verfluche still,  Dann möchte ich, dass ich Hoffnung haben  könnt,  Neid dem den Wuchs, dem dass er Freunde hat,  Dem den Erfolg und jenem sein Talent,  Selbst der Genuss schmeckt kaum genossen fad,  Doch hat mein Selbsthass mich so klein gemacht,  Denk ich an Dich und schwing mich empor,  Der Lerche gleich, die aufsteigt nach der Nacht  Vom klammen Feld und singt vorm Himmelstor.  So reich macht Deine Liebe mich,  So groß, mit keinem König tausche ich mein Los.</p>
Re-translation into English	
<p>If Fortuna vilifies me and no human being likes  me,  If I do not want to see my own sight,  If I complain about my misery to deaf heaven,  If I silently curse my fate as a vagabond,  Then I would like that I could have hope,  Then I envy him his growth, him his friend,  Him his success and him his talent,  Even delight tastes, scarcely enjoyed, insipid,  But as my self-hate has made me this small,  I think of you and swing myself upwards  Like the lark who soars up after the night  From the wet field and sings in front of heaven's  gate.  Your love makes me this rich,  This big, I do not trade my fate with any king.</p>	

In conclusion, it can be stated that this is a very unusual production of the sonnets, unlike for example Peter Brook's *Love is My Sin* analysed in a later chapter, which provides a much more intimate relationship between the characters. Although all characters from the original like the young man, the dark lady and the rival poet have been included in Wilson and Wainwright's collaborative project as well as William Shakespeare himself, the rest of the characters are more or less responsible for the overall fragmentation of this production: by enlarging the cast, the necessity for a more intimate staging has been removed in addition to Wilson's decision of cross gender casting as well as the use of make-up in such a way that it seems like masks. The highly stylized movements as well as the androgyny being caused by the casting ensures that, in this production, the sonnets themselves are heard.

## 7. INTRODUCTION: SHAKESPEARE AND ‘OTHERNESS’ IN EUROPEAN PRODUCTIONS

This chapter is concerned with “otherness” in performances of Shakespeare’s plays in Europe. Unlike other productions for whom “otherness” is either connected to post-colonialism and thereby restricted to certain plays like *Othello* or *The Tempest* or to productions which are heavily influenced by Asian theatrical traditions, even if they do not hail from those countries, the productions included here exhibit “otherness” either through the circumstances of their performance or through the actor’s provenance, attitude or ability.

There have been attempts before to subvert the traditional reading of certain plays as postcolonialist renderings, as Peter Holland remarks on in his chapter about “Festivals and foreigner” in his *English Shakespeares* (Holland: 1997: p. 253-270, here especially 267). In 1990 Peter Brook for example had decided to stage a French-language *The Tempest* with Sotigui Kouyaté as Prospero: Kouyaté was from the Mandinka ethnic group and one of the first Burkinabé actors (he died in 2010); in 2002 Brook had cast him as Polonius in *Hamlet* too and Caliban was taken on by David Bennent, a Swiss actor. According to Holland, Brook had hoped to create a ‘non-political production [with his *The Tempest*] in which the ethnicity of the performers would resist politicisation in favour of theatricality’ (Holland: 1997: p. 266). Although Holland regards this production on the whole as ‘thrilling’, he reaches the conclusion that ‘Brook’s production [...] replaced [the play’s argument about colonialism] by its own colonialism, its own annexation of other cultures for its aesthetic ends’ (Holland: 1997: p. 267). Simply reversing the generally assumed discourse of postcolonialism in *The Tempest* by changing coloniser for the colonised other and vice versa does not solve this problem, as can be inferred from Brook’s attempt.

In line with the overall theme of this chapter, Ania Loomba in contrast argues that ‘examples of mixture and interpenetrating influence cannot be adequately explained by

deploying the familiar binaries of post-colonial theory, especially the view that pits emergent nationalism against colonial oppression' (Loomba quoted in Dawson: 2002: p. 188) and Anthony B. Dawson adds that '[g]iven divergent cultural conditions, Shakespeare, like cricket can emerge as quite a different game from what he originally was' (Dawson: 2002: p. 188). Therefore the following analyses are based on productions which are either far removed from any postcolonial readings (Schlingensief's Nazi *Hamlet* – *This is your family*, the online project <http://www.shakespeare-4you.de/>, a German minority *Cymbeline* in Romania or a French *King Lear* in sign language) or, if seeming allusions to theatrical postcolonial traditions are present as in the African *Hamlet* or the multilingual *The Tempest*, they are not there by a conscious choice on part of the director and actors but rather out of necessity. The African *Hamlet* was produced by a company, of whom one aim is not so much an assimilation of Shakespeare's characters into African cultural traditions but rather creating a unified company with actors from several African cultures who would not have worked together otherwise. Providing a joint aim is often a successful method in bringing together people from different ethnic groups, as is the case for most African countries, who would not have thought of working together due to being from these different ethnics groups, considering themselves superior/inferior to one another, as own experiences with pygmy and Bantu tribes in the province Equateur in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have shown. In this case, Shakespeare's play is the outsider but it is ideal since the playwright is, on the one hand, known on a world-wide level as Sonia Massai has pointed out in the introduction to *World-wide Shakespeares: Local appropriations in film and performance* (Massai: 2005: p. 3-11). On the other hand, by being such a presence on the global cultural market, any comparison between the original play and the production put on by the African company will immediately bring to light those differences caused by the cultural provenance of the actors versus the

provenance of the play text, and as such will therefore help and further a Western European understanding of some cultural aspects of the African continent. Without the African “otherness” in this case, this would not be possible.

Therefore, this chapter could be read as a possibly negative reply to Anthony B. Dawson’s question if ‘[we are] in danger of producing a single ‘universal’ culture that would obliterate ‘otherness’ altogether’ because in his opinion ‘our post-modern world seems to incorporate and perhaps even homogenise ‘other’ cultures, making what were formerly local cultural institutions and memories into something widely accessible’ (Dawson: 2002: p. 189). The productions included here are very much still ‘local’ productions: *King Lear* for example can only be understood in its completeness in France or French-speaking cultures as, even with an internationalised sign language in existence, this specific production is tailored to a Francophone audience. An other example would be the otherness of Hausvater’s German-language production of *Cymbeline*, which only becomes apparent when considering that the theatre where this play had its premiere is in a town in Romania: even with a large part of the population still having German as their mother tongue, the majority of the town’s inhabitants speak Romanian. This production in its otherness can only be recreated with the same effect in circumstances similar to those surrounding it when it was performed under the direction of Hausvater. This could be for example Windhoek in Namibia as a former German colony or certain areas and towns in countries of the former Soviet Union, for example in Kazakhstan where more than 1% of the country’s population are of German nationality. In any other settings such a performance would lose an important part of its overall effect.

The fact that circumstances need to be taken into account as well when talking about ‘otherness’ in a production has also been stressed by several academics, such as Bharucha about otherness in India (Bharucha: 1996: 196-205) and Pavis in the introduction to *The*

Intercultural Performance Reader (Pavis: 1996: 1-21). W. B. Worthen in his chapter on “Shakespearean geographies” in *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance*, when he cited an example he witnessed himself:

American undergraduate students who saw *King Lear* and *Troilus and Cressida* with me as part of the RSC’s 1991 season were not persuaded that the black actor playing Oswald and Patroclus (Paterson Joseph) was cast in these roles merely because he was a younger and less experienced member of the company, nor was race insignificant in the production; they read the performances as a commentary on the stratification of the social world of those plays, and as an index of the plague of custom at the RSC as well.

(Worthen: 2003: p. 119)

The fact that his students were so convinced the different skin colour of Paterson Joseph had to mean something that they could not be persuaded otherwise points towards another issue. Some ways of analysing the casting of actors from different ethnical and racial backgrounds have become so engrained in scholarly debates in addition to postcolonial readings of Shakespeare’s plays that this particular area of academic research needs to become more open again for other interpretations. This chapter hopes to contribute towards a new way of discussing productions which include ‘otherness’ but are also settled in certain localities: as such their ‘otherness’ only carries meaning in special circumstances.

#### 7.1. SCHLINGENSIEF’S *HAMLET – THIS IS YOUR FAMILY* IN ZÜRICH: NEO-NAZIS AS ACTORS

Although there have been many previous attempts to bring Shakespeare and the Third Reich together thematically as Richard Burt has pointed out (Burt: 2008: p. 437-456), there have been few attempts, if any at all, to incorporate actual neo-Nazis in a production. As such the following analysis of *Hamlet – This is your family* directed by the late Christoph Schlingensief, which had its premiere on 10 May 2001 at the Schauspielhaus in Zürich, will take into account both the actual performance as well as some of the preparative ideas, surrounding circumstances and public discussions.



Many people regarded this production as a provocation. Peter Mächler and Thomas Meier from the right-wing populist Schweizer Volkspartei for example voiced their opinion in a letter to the district council of Zürich. They detailed Schlingensief's previous projects in addition to legal actions taken against him in the past and demanded replies to three enquiries posed to the council (Heineke/Umathum: 2002: p. 15). Amongst others, they also cited Schlingensief's previous project in 2000 in Vienna, when the director locked up twelve asylum seekers for seven days in mobile homes, which had been erected in front of the opera house, and asked the city's inhabitants to vote –in the style of Big Brother– for the two least popular candidates per day to leave the container and Austria: they were deported to their home countries. The person lucky enough to win was awarded money and a sham marriage would have been allowed too to enable them to stay in their chosen home country. A book about this project was published under the title *Ausländer raus! (Foreigners out!)*; similarly, the accompanying book about Schlingensief's *Hamlet* project the following year had been called *Nazis rein! (Nazis in!)*. This and other similar incidents led to an attempt by the Schweizer Volkspartei to have Schlingensief and his project banned. Schlingensief then tried to have the Schweizer Volkspartei banned in addition to an affiliated icehockey club in Zürich.

The book's title *Nazis rein!* (Heineke/ Umathum: 2002) points towards one of the main aims of this production. On the one hand, Schlingensief wanted to integrate the famous *Hamlet* production by Gustaf Gründgens at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Hamburg in 1963 into his own version of the play. He did not want to take recourse to the modern world as the setting of his production, thereby making it time-specific, but rather keep it in a classical and age-less format. Gründgens' production had been recorded on tape and extracts of that recording were projected onto the stage in Zürich. Schlingensief was fascinated by the

way in which Gründgens' actors were speaking their lines and wanted to rediscover the spirit of that famous 1963 production (Schlingensief in Heineke/ Umathum: 2002: p. 14). On the other hand, as Carl Hegemann, the dramaturge from the Volksbühne in Berlin who was involved in the planning process, pointed out in the production diary as well as in correspondence with the director and Stefanie Carp, the chef dramaturge at the Schauspielhaus in Zürich (Hegemann in Heineke/ Umathum: 2002: p. 8-14), Schlingensief's main aim was to support the Bundesrepublik Deutschland in its attempt to reintegrate into society former neo-Nazis wanting to leave that way of life. A group of six former neo-Nazis portrayed the acting company for the play-within-the-play sequence under the leadership of the first actor (Jauslin mentions that seven neo-Nazis had been approached initially; cp. Jauslin: 2002: 188). As an additional consequence, Schlingensief and his ensemble founded the organisation REIN e.v., which supports neo-Nazis who want to quit as well. There have been a lot of controversial discussions in Germany about this project and its consequences which raise a justified doubt about Schlingensief's approach, but including more information here would lead too far for the purpose of this chapter.

Schlingensief and his team decided on Switzerland as the ideal country to put on this production as, supported by historical facts, '[there], no Jews had been gassed and murdered, there is no open hostility towards foreigners and everything is neatly arranged and organised through money' (Schlingensief in Heineke/ Umathum: 2002: p. 10; my translation). Zürich and its Schauspielhaus in particular were chosen because of the apparent enthusiasm of Stefanie Carp to give Schlingensief a possibility to stage this production. It seems that, in her opinion (Carp in Heineke/ Umathum: 2002: p. 12-13) in addition to what could be inferred from her letter/email to him, her home country –Switzerland– is the most hypocritical country she knows, even more so since, at that time, it had been decided to allow the descendants of

Friedrich Flick to built a privately financed art museum in Zürich. Friedrich Flick was a German industrialist, who supported the Third Reich financially and had slave labourers working in his factories without ever having paid reparations afterwards; the museum planed by his family had been rejected in Germany. Carp remarked that this did not bother anyone in Switzerland apparently and, as can be inferred from her wording, might be a good reason to use actors somehow connected to the way of thinking in the Third Reich. It seems that she thought that Schlingensief's project might make the inhabitants of Zürich prick their ears as to the significance and meaning of the planed museum.

As can be concluded from the above, this is not a production which adhered to the usual sequence of deciding on a play and a theatre, casting actors, rehearsing and finally putting on the play in front of an audience. Instead, a certain air of 'otherness', the overall theme of this chapter, comes into play as one might expect because of Schlingensief's use of former neo-Nazis, who are not trained as actors and who had very specific motivations for joining this project. A lot more could be said about the hubbub surrounding this play, as hopefully becomes apparent, but how did Shakespeare's *Hamlet* end up as Schlingensief's chosen play? In the last entry of his production diary Carl Hegemann tries to explain what they saw in Shakespeare's original to make it the basis of their production (last accessed on 26/11/2011; taken from Schlingensief's website about the project at [www.schlingensief.com](http://www.schlingensief.com); my translation):

Hamlet is the paradigm of the human being who does not believe anything any more and who does not know anything any more, who believes everything to be possible and to whom the world seems more and more alien like he becomes alien to himself. Hamlet, as Erving Goffman has pointed out, is a drama which is set amongst human beings who are as trustworthy as double agents, who have changed sides several times and have been turned round and round so often, that nobody knows which side they are on, least of all themselves. And it is within this play that a play is put on, which should bring to light the truth. Yet, this truth also is only a play and 'in theatre, truth is limited' (Pirandello; Hegemann's quote).'

With regard to the actual performance, critics like for example Christian Jauslin in the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 138 (Jauslin: 2002: p. 184-190) mention that the text used was radically cut: the whole performance only last approximately 90 minutes and characters such as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as well as the two grave diggers did not exist. The second act was played in reverse, which for example meant that Ophelia died before her father Polonius, and as such it is clear that she kills herself out of the love she feels for Hamlet instead of leaving the cause for her suicide up to the imagination of the audience. As already mentioned, a tape recording of Gründgens' famous production had been used and while it could be heard, the actors either repeated the words or mimed speaking them. Sometimes they also tried to parody what they heard, which was not always successful. There was not as much public outrage surrounding the premiere as could be expected from the previous public discussions. The neo-Nazis could enter the stage and perform the Mousetrap without any problems. As Jauslin remarks, their articulation however was often unintelligible or they spoke too loudly, an effect which was reinforced by music (Jauslin: 2002: p. 188). In addition, spotlights sometimes dazzled the audience (Jauslin: 2002: p. 188). Trained actors portrayed the other characters: Bibiana Beglau was Ophelia, Sebastian Rudolph was Hamlet, Irm Hermann played Gertrude, Peter Kern was Claudius, Michael Gempart played Polonius, Arthur Albrecht portrayed Laertes, Kalle Mews was Horatio, Peter Brombacher played the first actor, Stefan Kolosko was the queen and Christoph Schlingensief himself took on Fortinbras. The former neo-Nazis were Markus B., Melanie Dittmer, Jürgen Drenhaus, Tim H., Torsten Lemmer and Jan Zobel.

It seems that this *Hamlet* on the whole, apart from the six unusual actors, had not been very innovative when it comes to the characters which are recognizable Shakespearean (such as Hamlet, Horatio, Laertes, Gertrude, Claudius, Ophelia), even with the cut text. This can

mostly be deduced from the costumes. The innovation of the production rather comes from the inclusion of non-Shakespearean elements. As can be seen in the film *Hamlet – This is your family/Naziline* by Peter Kern, recorded as to make this production, its preparations and consequences available to a wider audience, Schlingensief took a very traditional approach when it comes to the costumes of Gertrude and Claudius but also of Hamlet and Laertes for example, which puts them in contrast to the neo-Nazis who were wearing normal dark street-clothing.

According to the *Berliner Zeitung* from 12 May 2001, when the acting company from the play-within-a-play scene come on stage for their big scene, there is applause, thunder and music from recordings and a chandelier as well as red flags are let down from the ceiling. The neo-Nazis enter while waving flags on which photos of Rosa Luxemburg, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Joseph Beuys and Otto Schily can be seen. Schlingensief, for whom it is not very clear if he is onstage as part of the acting group or in his role as Fortinbras, plays air xylophone while the acting company marches about the stage to a melody, which could not be identified clearly. The whole group seems to have been announced as ‘Schlingensief & Entertainment’ while Gertrude and Claudius look on for a short moment. The actors and Schlingensief all wear Nazi-style uniforms with a red armband, on which ‘Naziline’ can be read. This alludes to the idea of helplines for various issues. Gertrude and Claudius in turn are clad in costumes reminding one of their royal statuses: both wear crowns and regal clothing in various shades of brown. In addition, Claudius has put on a cape over his clothes. Their costumes are what one would expect in a traditional production. They are not very elaborate but their making and the fabrics used denoted their social status.

In the last scene of the play when Hamlet and Laertes are fighting against each other, Laertes is clad in black and Hamlet in white. Although their costumes look like fencing

uniforms, the neo-Nazis who are present as well in this scene (some of them are busy giving Claudius a good trashing) now wear their normal everyday clothing. As such, Hamlet and Laertes look more like representatives of a traditional production as Gertrude and Claudius did earlier on. The neo-Nazis are also busy singing: they have rehearsed a song called ‘Unser Deutschlandlied’ (‘Our Song of Germany’) which includes the following lines ‘Mit Stolze schwörte ich den Eid, dass ich zu Deutschland steh. Deutschland, das ist meine Welt, zu Deutschland werd ich stehen’ (‘I proudly swear the oath that I am a staunch German. Germany, that’s my world, I am a staunch German.’). This seems to be a very ambiguous choice for this group, as most of them professed wanting to leave that world behind.

As could be expected, reactions to this production were mixed due to a variety of reasons, the least of which had to do with the Shakespearean basis used. Although the Schauspielhaus in Zürich had been nominated as the theatre of the year 2001 by the magazine *Theater heute* (*Theatre today*) (Heineke/ Umathum: 2002: p. 153), Carl Hegemann seems to have uttered the true verdict for this production when he closed the last entry of his production diary (last accessed on 26/11/2011; taken from Schlingensief’s website about the project at [www.schlingensief.com](http://www.schlingensief.com); my translation) with ‘without doubt: this whole [piece was] very debatable’. The otherness brought in by Schlingensief with the neo-Nazi actors seems to have driven out Shakespeare in the audience’s awareness of this production.

## 7.2. ALEXANDER HAUSVATER’S *KÖNIG CYMBELIN*: GERMAN MINORITY THEATRE IN ROMANIA

This production seems to be more of a traditional style than Schlingensief’s *Hamlet* but when analysed from the point of ‘otherness’, the overall topic of this chapter, it becomes apparent that this is an example of minority theatre. Alexander Hausvater, a famous director in Romania, decided to stage Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline* as translated by Erich Fried and adapted

by Beat Fäh at the German State Theatre in Timișoara. The production was performed in German and had its premiere on 24 September 2004. Georg Peetz and Tatiana Sessler portrayed Cymbeline (as well as the fool and Jupiter) and the Queen respectively together with Claudia Ieremia and Rareș Hontzu as Imogen and Cloten, Andras Demeter, Horia Săvescu and Alexandru Mihăescu played Posthumus, Pisanio and Iachimo, Ida Jarcsek-Gaza, Ioana Iacob and Etelka Magyari portrayed Belaria (Belarius), Guideria (Guiderus) and Arvira (Arviragus) and Simona Vintilă, Isolde Cobeț and Boris Gaza took on Caius Lucius, Cornelius and Philario respectively. Ines Stoianovici portrayed a panther.

This was Alexander Hausvater's first production at a theatre in Timișoara although he has a long connection with Shakespeare and already produced other plays by him with different theatre companies. Timișoara or Temeswar, as it is called in German, is a town in Western Romania, whose inhabitants are, according to a national census in 2002, to 2.25% of German descent and 1.91% (cp. website by the Ethocultural Diversity Resource Centre about the population in Temeswar: 2002: [http://www.edrc.ro/recensamant.jsp?regiune\\_id=1832&judet\\_id=2057&localitate\\_id=2058](http://www.edrc.ro/recensamant.jsp?regiune_id=1832&judet_id=2057&localitate_id=2058) [last access: 23/11/2011]) have German as their mother tongue alongside Romanian as their second language. A similar situation exists in other parts of the country but with a Hungarian minority. An article from December 2008 in the *Aurora Magazin* ([http://www.aurora-magazin.at/medien\\_kultur/rumtheat\\_edit\\_dt.htm](http://www.aurora-magazin.at/medien_kultur/rumtheat_edit_dt.htm): December 2008, [last access: 23/11/2011]), an Austrian online publication for theatre, mentions that a German-language theatre tradition existed in what is now Romania as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Today, only two theatres are active in an otherwise mostly Romanian-orientated theatre world with regard to the language used. One of the two theatres is the German department of the State Theatre in Sibiu (or Hermannstadt in German), the other is the State Theatre in Timișoara/ Temeswar which has

German as its only language with Romanian subtitles used throughout its performances. Both theatres have attracted young actors and are focused towards an experimental, modern style. They offer traditional spoken drama but also make use of effects produced by including videos, dance and music. In addition, they have strong links with theatres in Germany and are always willing to start cooperations and partnerships. As the article states ([http://www.aurora-magazin.at/medien\\_kultur/rumtheat\\_edit\\_dt.htm](http://www.aurora-magazin.at/medien_kultur/rumtheat_edit_dt.htm): December 2008, [last access: 23/11/2011]), the efforts made by the State Theatre in Timișoara/ Temeswar especially have been rewarded with the KulturPreis Europa 2009 (Cultural Prize Europe) for their production of Fausto Paravidino's *Krankheit der Familie M* (*The Illness of Family M*), thereby pointing towards the importance this theatre has in modern Romania.

Critics who saw Hausvater's production also pointed out that it was good that a modern translation of Shakespeare's play had been chosen; the critiques have been posted on the website of the theatre itself for Hausvater's production (State Theatre Timișoara/ Temeswar: no date given: [http://www.teatrulgerman.ro/repertoire.html?no\\_cache=1&L=2&action=single\\_view&spectacol\\_id=61&representation\\_id=255&date=1146092400&hour=19%3A00%3A00&location=](http://www.teatrulgerman.ro/repertoire.html?no_cache=1&L=2&action=single_view&spectacol_id=61&representation_id=255&date=1146092400&hour=19%3A00%3A00&location=) and [http://www.teatrulgerman.ro/repertoire.html?no\\_cache=1&L=2&action=single\\_view&spectacol\\_id=61&representation\\_id=255&date=1146092400&hour=19%3A00%3A00&location=](http://www.teatrulgerman.ro/repertoire.html?no_cache=1&L=2&action=single_view&spectacol_id=61&representation_id=255&date=1146092400&hour=19%3A00%3A00&location=) [last access: 23/11/2011]). As can be read on there too, this version had lost a lot of the romantic language other translations, such as the one by Dorothea Tieck, had included. This is not the only 'otherness' which had been included in this production however. When looking at the cast list, it becomes apparent that Hausvater had also decided to change the gender of Belarius, Guiderius and Aviragius from male to female, thereby turning the banished lord



Belarius into a lady-in-waiting banned from court. This change might also have to do with Hausvater's general attitude towards Shakespeare. In an interview conducted with *Art Act Magazine*, a Romanian online magazine for theatre (interview by Ciprian Marinescu: 18/01/2009: [http://www.artactmagazine.ro/interview\\_with\\_alexander\\_hausvater.html](http://www.artactmagazine.ro/interview_with_alexander_hausvater.html) [last access: 23/11/2011]), he states that for him Shakespeare appears to look down on any director or actor from above and conveys the message that one possibility is only that: one option amongst many others. Hausvater is convinced that it is not good to stage Shakespeare's *Hamlet* for example just because a director wants to stage *Hamlet*. It is important to stage Shakespeare only when he is necessary in a certain moment in a certain place (interview by Ciprian Marinescu: 18/01/2009: [http://www.artactmagazine.ro/interview\\_with\\_alexander\\_hausvater.html](http://www.artactmagazine.ro/interview_with_alexander_hausvater.html) [last access: 23/11/2011]). Hausvater stressed that, as he was educated in English, Shakespeare was imposed on him from a didactic point of view, and he could not choose if he wanted to read Shakespeare or otherwise discover him. Shakespeare was not optional. As such Hausvater explains that he came to identify him with power and political control. This might have something to do with Hausvater's own personal history and this connection could be one possible explanation for the gender change of Belarius as well as the abducted sons of Cymbeline. Hausvater was born in 1949 in Bucharest and immigrated as a ten-year-old boy with his mother to Israel, where he grew up and studied at the University of Tel Aviv before continuing his academic education in Dublin. There he joined the Abbey Theatre and was made director of its experimental section. He moved to Montreal in 1971 and founded the Montreal Lab Theatre. His work can be called controversial as he likes to experiment with the text as well as with images. He regards a script purely as a guideline, which has an impact not only on his work with classical texts such as *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *As You Like It* or the

*Trojan Women* but also on modern texts as *The Seagull* or *A Clockwork Orange*. His *King Lear* with Joe Cazalet in the title role was called a 'provocation' for example (review by Alina Mazilu: 01/05/2008: [http://www.aurora-magazin.at/medien\\_kultur/mazilu\\_muslim\\_frm.htm](http://www.aurora-magazin.at/medien_kultur/mazilu_muslim_frm.htm), [last access: 23/11/2011]). Cazalet was terminally ill and died of cancer shortly after the performance. It was a production in a cabaret style; the effect the combination of Cazalet's illness and his role as such had on the audience was shocking in his directness: in one moment the performer was stripped down until his emaciated body could be seen and as such highlighted the loss of power in both a political and physical sense to the highest degree. An audience would surely feel even more sympathy for him because of his physical appearance.

When considered in its entirety Alexander Hausvater's output as director spans over 150 productions at theatres all over the world. Israel, Canada, the US and several countries in Eastern Europe, including Romania, are only some of the countries he worked in. Apart from play texts by other authors, such as Shakespeare, he has also adapted *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoyevsky and has written the play *Solzhenitsyn* about the well-known Russian author. In addition, he has taught at drama universities in Montreal, Michigan, Tel Aviv, Moscow and Ottawa. In 1991, he returned to Romania.

When asked about his work in Timișoara/ Temeswar in general and about the importance of the three theatres in that town, each of which puts on productions in a different language (Romanian, German and Hungarian) (interview by Alina Mazilu: 28/12/2007: [http://www.aurora-magazin.at/gesellschaft/rum\\_mazilu\\_frm.htm](http://www.aurora-magazin.at/gesellschaft/rum_mazilu_frm.htm), [last access: 23/11/2011]), he replied that each theatre does not only cater to one specific audience because of its language. Hausvater added that he regards it as important that this town with its long multi-cultural history has three different theatres with very specific cultural values: each of them has responded to the attitudes and movements within their own linguistic, and also cultural,

group. This in turn can attract people from the respective other linguistic groups and as such both the theatres as well as the whole town has gained from this exchange. For Hausvater, whose mother, as mentioned above, went into exile because of the communism in her native country, it is important that Romania becomes a multi-cultural society again, in which foreign languages are valued. He regards the monolingual attitude imposed on the country during communism as a real problem and is not satisfied with the explanation that multiculturalism has been imposed by a general orientation towards Western Europe or the US. For him and others this movement equally has its roots in the Romanian culture and he mentioned German, Jewish and Armenian groups living in the country as examples.

As such, the importance of this *Cymbeline* is not so much connected with its original writer William Shakespeare but rather with what Hausvater from his point of view about multiculturalism conferred on it, having chosen it as his first piece as a director at the German State Theater in Timișoara/ Temeswar. According to critics (State Theatre Timișoara/ Temeswar: no date given: [http://www.teatrulgerman.ro/repertoire.html?no\\_cache=1&L=2&action=single\\_view&spectacol\\_id=61&representation\\_id=255&date=1146092400&hour=19%3A00%3A00&location=](http://www.teatrulgerman.ro/repertoire.html?no_cache=1&L=2&action=single_view&spectacol_id=61&representation_id=255&date=1146092400&hour=19%3A00%3A00&location=) and [http://www.teatrulgerman.ro/repertoire.html?no\\_cache=1&L=2&action=single\\_view&spectacol\\_id=61&representation\\_id=255&date=1146092400&hour=19%3A00%3A00&location=](http://www.teatrulgerman.ro/repertoire.html?no_cache=1&L=2&action=single_view&spectacol_id=61&representation_id=255&date=1146092400&hour=19%3A00%3A00&location=) [last access: 23/11/2011]), Hausvater combined a touching love story with cruel measures taken by the king. Topics he touched on were reminders of the original: abduction, seduction, love and jealousy as well as envy and friendship, banishment and revenge, hostility and reconciliation, thirst for power and war, madness and wisdom as well as unexpected reunions and resurrections, ending on a happy note when the king welcomes his long lost daughters.

This reversal of the gender of Belarius, Guiderius and Avirargus could also point towards Hausvater's perception of the play and its many motives as a kind of modern fairy tale, in which especially those three characters have certain characters traits which make them stand out in relation to others. Through their life in the wilderness their senses have sharpened and they perceive things differently. This can also be detected in the text used. When Arviragus/ Avira, Guiderius/ Guideria and Belarius/ Belaria discover the body of the seemingly dead Fidele/ Imogen, especially Arviragus/ Avira and Belarius/ Belaria take recourse to nature to voice their grief. Arviragus/ Avira calls Fidele 'the bird' and vows to cover Fidele' (Fäh: no date given: p. 80) grave with flowers as long as possible. S/he compares the young man's pale face to primrose and blue lily of the valley to Fidele' veins and even adds roses. If s/he cannot come and render this service, a robin should do it for him/her. As soon as winter falls, Fidele' grave would be covered with moss and therefore kept warm. Belarius/ Belaria adds a metaphor coming from another area (Fäh: no date given: p. 80): s/he wonders which boat will be suited to carry Fidele's to a spot where his/her body would enjoy eternal rest. To this verbal language, although stripped by Erich Fried and Beat Fäh of some of the eloquence of Shakespeare's original, Hausvater has added a specialised way of movement. The actors moved on the stage in a much choreographed way sometimes reminding critics of modern dance movements, which was noticeable in a highlighted way during the battle scenes. This was supported by the music which changed between a more elegiac melody and a martial march.

It seems that Hausvater used this production not only to begin his directorial work at the German State Theatre in Timișoara/ Temeswar but also to include several themes which are important to him personally. The gender change could be explained too, in addition to reasons mentioned earlier, with Hausvater's own opinion about women. When asked by Alina

Mazilu during an interview for *Aurora Magazine* if he prefers to think of himself as director or as a character (Hausvater is a character in Cristina Modreanu's book *Die Masken des Alexander Hausvater; The masks of Alexander Hausvater*), he could not provide a clear answer (interview by Alina Mazilu: 28/12/2007: [http://www.aurora-magazin.at/gesellschaft/rum\\_mazilu\\_frm.htm](http://www.aurora-magazin.at/gesellschaft/rum_mazilu_frm.htm), [last access: 23/11/2011]). He finally replied that, when he works as a director, he tries to identify with all the characters or roles in a play. According to him one cannot work as a theatre artist if one does not try to understand what is not easily accessible. He offered an example: he said that the interviewer was a woman, he never was one but he knows from biology what happens in a woman's body, what is different to a man's body, what is the same. Yet, to grasp her role, her spirit he needs to identify with her, to feel what she feels in every aspect of the word. Perhaps that is also a valid reason why he decided on female characters.

As can be inferred from the above, although Shakespeare's play has not been altered that much as Fried and Föh did not decide to cut anything of the original plot, *Cymbeline* on the whole has been important for this special occasion: the inherent otherness by being put on in a seemingly minority theatre means so much more than just 'other'.

### 7.3. TO EACH THEIR OWN: FOOTSBARN TRAVELLING THEATRE'S MULTILINGUAL *THE TEMPEST*

The production analysed in this sub-chapter had its premiere on 10 April 2004 in Maillet, the French home town of Footsbarn Travelling Theatre, and was put on at the Festival d'Avignon (France) on 22 July 2004 too. Subsequently the company toured throughout France as well as to Ireland and South Korea. They had adapted Shakespeare's *The Tempest* for a multilingual version in 2004: multilingual in this case does not only refer to the different languages spoken by the actors but also to the type of visual language and symbolism used during the

performance. It was directed by Paddy Hayter (British), the founding father of the company, and Joe Cunningham (British), who also portrayed Prospero. Julie Biereye-Meziat (French) played Miranda and the King of Naples, Guillaume Meziat (French) was Ferdinand, Akemi Yamauchi (Japanese) played Ariel and Sreeletha Suseelamma (Indian) took on Caliban. Other roles were played by Romain Puyuelo (French) and Aidan Shiels (British). Judging from Josée Nuyts-Giornal's review in *Cahiers Élisabéthains* (Nuyts-Giornal: 2004: p. 73-75), no characters had been cut and the plotline of the original had not been altered. What makes this production remarkable is the combination of different cultures, be it through spoken or visual languages and signs.

Footsbarn Travelling Company has a long history both as a theatre company and as performers of Shakespeare's plays. It was founded in 1971 in Cornwall in the barn of a man with the family name Foot, hence its first name Foot's Barn Theatre, which was later turned into Footsbarn Theatre. The company left England for France in 1984 and in 1989 settled in an old farmhouse called La Chaussée, situated between the towns of Hérisson and Maillet in the Bourbonnais region of France. When they are not on tour, they rehearse and create new productions at La Chaussée or offer summer schools for example. The renovated house accommodates two rehearsal rooms, a music studio, and workshops for sets, a small restaurant, bedrooms and offices. They also invite other touring companies for collaborative projects or to give them the possibility to present their work to an audience, as La Chaussée also houses a performance space. Footsbarn has been travelling the world for over 30 years and has staged more than 60 plays on six continents, mostly adapted from the classical repertoire. They have become a multinational company, which is reflected in their approach to the different plays they put on. Joe Cunningham and Paddy Hayter, the two directors of *The Tempest*, have been with Footsbarn since 1972 and the very first day respectively. As such,

they have reprised many roles many times. Cunningham for example has played approximately 200 roles in more than fifty different productions and Hayter admitted in an interview with Caroline McGinn from London's *Time out* magazine in 2008 that he has played Bottom since he and his wife Freddy went on the first tour with their company in 1975 (Caroline McGinn *Time Out London*: 30/10/2008: [http://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/features/6092/Footsbarn\\_travelling\\_theatre-interview.html](http://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/features/6092/Footsbarn_travelling_theatre-interview.html) [last access: 26/11/2011]).

What makes Footsbarn attractive to potential audiences is the non-traditional way to put on plays. Performed in a tent, their productions at first seem more like a 'circus-y thing' as Freddy explained to McGinn and the horseshoe arrangement of the seats around the stage helps the actors to connect with the audience (Caroline McGinn *Time Out London*: 30/10/2008: [http://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/features/6092/Footsbarn\\_travelling\\_theatre-interview.html](http://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/features/6092/Footsbarn_travelling_theatre-interview.html) [last access: 26/11/2011]).

The 'otherness' in *The Tempest* therefore is not only connected to the use of several languages and visual elements but also in the company's approach to theatre in general. They are keen on attracting those people who would normally not go to the theatre.

Their repertoire of Shakespeare plays includes *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest* and, in the past, adaptations based on the complete works such as *Perchance to Dream* and *A Shakespeare Party*. In the latter Juliet performed a tightrope act, for example, whereas William Kent [sic] (cp. information about this show on <http://footsbarn.com/en/show.php?showid=12> [last access: 18/04/2012]) could be seen Morris dancing; in the former the main themes are the four seasons of the year and the different

stages of human life (birth, adolescence, adulthood, old age and death) and the actors performed pieces from *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Their next big Shakespeare project is the *Tempête Indienne (Indian Tempest)* in 2012/13 which will be rehearsed and put together in Trivandrum (Kerala, India) and Guimarães (Portugal), the European Capital of Culture 2012, and then tour throughout Europe and India, including a couple of performance at Shakespeare's Globe in London (scheduled for April-May 2013 approximately; cp. Footsbarn Archive: <http://footsbarn.com/spectacle.php?showid=33>, [last access: 26/11/2011])).

With regard to their production of *The Tempest* it can be stated that Footsbarn's decision to perform the entire play not in either English or French only actually added a certain appeal for the audience (cp. review on Spectacles.fr about the production: <http://www.spectacles.fr/la-tempete-par-footsbarn-travelling-thea/infos-pratiques>, [last access: 26/11/2011])). Their use of both English and French as the main idioms in *The Tempest* alongside a Malayan speaking Caliban actually makes sense. According to Shakespeare's play, all human characters of *The Tempest* are from Italy although Miranda and Prospero have left their native country twelve years ago. It seems possible that the Italian they speak has not changed since then as their linguistic community only consists of the two of them and therefore the usual developments in a society's language use probably did not take place. In contrast, the Italian spoken by all the other human characters presumably was subjected to linguistic changes during those twelve years since there had been a larger group of speakers. As such, although those two groups speak the same language, it could be possible that Prospero and Miranda use an older version of Italian than Alonso and the rest. An example from real life would be Pennsylvania Dutch, which is a particular variety of the dialect spoken in the south-west of the German-speaking part of Europe. It can still be understood by modern



German speakers but has stagnated at an older stage in the linguistic development of this particular language. Caliban as well as his mother Sycorax in retrospection come from a different part of the world and therefore would have spoken another language. Miranda and Prospero have deprived him of it by teaching him their Italian, provided Caliban and Sycorax spoke any language at all (based on Caliban's speech at 1.2.333-347). The spirit Ariel might or might not have spoken at all before Miranda's and Prospero's arrival on the island but he clearly is from a different background as the other three groups. As mentioned above Sreeletha Suseelamma as Caliban spoke Mayalan and Ariel was played by Akemi Yamauchi, a Japanese actress and acrobat.

The impression of an 'other' in this production however does not only come from their use of various languages. This feeling manifests itself as well in the use of costumes, especially those of Antonio, Sebastian, the King of Naples and Gonzalo. According to Josée Nuyts-Giornal, the costumes for the King of Naples and Gonzalo had been very much influenced by the *Commedia dell'Arte* (Nuyts-Giornal: 2004: p. 74). They wore masks and overacted emotions, which was also the case for Alonso who seemed to mourn that much for his son that he reminded the audience of a circus clown. In contrast Antonio and Sebastian had been dressed as more conventional noblemen although Antonio's exaggerated eye movements, seen as a sequence, seemed like slapstick-type comedy. Stephano and Trinculo get to know Caliban in a more clown-like approach and their attitude to alcohol adds to their stumbling about. This proves that costumes and mimics as well as gestures also speak a language. By specifically drawing on traditions which most people think of as funny, these characters too are regarded as comic and only their actions can convince an audience otherwise, such as Antonio's suggesting of robbing the King of Naples of his power. Prospero as well as Miranda in contrast wear their traditional robes: a magic cloak and a young girl's

clothes, and Ferdinand too does not seem to have been marked in any way by his clothing. Like another language, these different costumes set the two groups apart. Caliban however was set apart by his physiognomy as well as his language: although multiple-breasted, his body was visually marked with a male penis too. Since Sreeletha Suseelamma spoke Mayalan, Caliban's position as an outsider, if not an outcast, was highlighted even more. As such, his line about Miranda and Prospero teaching him language and how to curse made a deeper impression on the audience as they actually had to teach him their language to be understood by him. His malformed body marked him as inferior and as such he needed to be bettered. Ariel in contrast was portrayed as a very agile spirit who whirled past the audience and flew through the air to fulfil Prospero's requests. As can be seen on a photo of Ariel/Akemi Yamauchi on Footsbarn's website of this production (cp. Footsbarn Archive, no direct link to the page of their *The Tempest* possible: <http://footsbarn.com/archive.php>, [last access: 26/11/2011]), the spirit costume includes light colours like blue and white in addition to black or brown lines, which does not seem unusual for this character, which can be both airy and earthly. The cap Yamauchi wore looked like a Phrygian cap however and therefore carries meaning too. This type of cap is called liberty cap as well and as such could be a reminder that Ariel strives for freedom from Prospero.

It can be inferred from the above that, although Shakespeare's original plot had not been altered at all, changes in how characters are perceived are possible too through the use of actual language as well as visual symbols which carry additional meaning. Each group or individual had a signature costume, language or behaviour/movement and as such had been easily recognizable. Although this production might have come close to a postcolonialist reading of *The Tempest*, this variety served as a reminder why this impression arises. By

having Caliban speak Mayalan for example the difference between him and Prospero had been highlighted even more than would have been possible in a monolingual production.

#### 7.4. HAMLET AND MACBETH AS ONLINE HOME THEATRE: OTHERNESS DUE TO TECHNOLOGY

It can be debated if the two productions analysed in the following could be called actual theatrical performances as both include only one actor and as such are different from all other productions. *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are the brainchild of Roland Sukow from Germany, who retired in 1998 after a career in business. He founded the online Alois-Mösenbichler-Theater in 2009, named after ‘an unknown actor but not without talent’ and his wife (cp. the interview clip on [www.faust-4you.de](http://www.faust-4you.de)). The inaugural performance was Goethe’s *Faust* in a six-hour-long version. Shakespeare’s *Richard II* and *Henry V* as parts one and four of the Henriad and *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III* as parts three and four of the tetralogy of the Wars of the Roses have been announced as Mösenbichler’s next projects. Until otherwise noted, all references in this section to the online material are to the website of the Alois-Mösenbichler-Theater <http://www.shakespeare-4you.de/> –linking to the different sub-websites is not possible and apart from 2009 the initial starting date for the whole project no date has been given [last access of the website: 17/11/2011].

As can be inferred from clips and photos on the websites [www.faust-4you.de](http://www.faust-4you.de) and [www.shakespeare-4you.de](http://www.shakespeare-4you.de) it is Roland Sukow himself who portrays Alois Mösenbichler and as such all the characters in the different plays. From a technical point of view this is possible with a green or blue screen, which is used for movies and TV productions. For his theatre Sukow uses the program Aftereffects by Adobe as well as a camera to film himself in various costumes, speaking the lines of one character and then switching to another. After recording all necessary scenes of a play, he overlays the different clips with virtual background images

to fit the different scenes. In addition, he has recorded another clip: ‘Das Interview’ (‘The Interview’), which can be accessed via the *Faust* website, is an online talk show with the actors Alois and Aloisia Mösenbichler, Roland Sukow and Max Grantlhuber. They discuss the performances of Alois and Aloisia Mösenbichler in *Faust*. Although it is recognizable a parody of all the talk shows on German TV with a similar format, Sukow also focuses attention on other performances of *Faust*, such as Peter Stein’s 21-hour-long project during the Expo 2000 in Hannover. Shakespeare too is one of the topics discussed. During this talk show, Alois Mösenbichler tries to convince Max Grantlhuber and Robert Sukow that ‘Goethe is in fact the reincarnation of Shakespeare’ and that ‘Shakespeare never existed – Goethe is behind everything’. They also mention Delia Bacon and her theory that Francis Bacon wrote the plays.

As such it is interesting to see what Sukow did with *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. As mentioned above all roles are played by him as the only actor, who portrays all the characters in the personalities of Alois and Aloisia Mösenbichler. *Hamlet* is the play which is completely finished and up on the Shakespeare website. It is divided into five acts with varying lengths: in total this *Hamlet* is approximately two hours and twenty-one minutes long. Each act is divided into the different scenes, of which each is titled with the beginning of the first line spoken in that scene. As such the viewer can chose with which part he to start. In Act 1 Scene 2 (‘Though yet of Hamlet’), Act 3 Scene 1 (‘To be, or not to be’) and Act 4 Scene 3 (‘Now, Hamlet, where is’) Sukow has also provided particular speeches in English to allow for an appreciation of Shakespeare’s original words and not the translated version in German.

The full German version of *Macbeth* is still being prepared by Sukow. Yet, he has uploaded selected scenes from the play already in English. These are Act 1 Scene 1 (‘When shall we three’), Scene 3 (‘Where hast thou been’), Scene 5 (‘They met me’) and Scene 7 (‘If

it were done') as well as Act 5 Scene 1 ('Yet there's a spot') and Scene 5 ('To-morrow and to-morrow'). In each of those scenes, like in those in *Hamlet*, the English text is provided for the viewer on the right side of the virtual stage as some kind of subtitles.

This virtual environment can provide new possibilities for the staging of the three witches in *Macbeth* as well as the Ghost in *Hamlet*. Although it is not unusual that the witches are not female and have beards –even Bavarian trousers and hats might not be that extraordinary–, the possibilities for their surroundings/ the scenery, their way of moving around the virtual stage as well as their behaviour are endless due to the technology used (cp. respective scene from *Macbeth* on the website of the Alois-Mösenbichler-Theater: no date given: <http://www.shakespeare-4you.de/>, [last access: 17/11/2011]). When they meet at the beginning of the play, each of them can be seen contributing to their joint effort of spinning wool while thunder can be heard. They sit on fly agaric and speak the well-known lines from the original. Their pets however are introduced in a funny way. The cat and the toad appear in the sky as if highlighted by the moon. Once they have finished discussing their next meeting, they get up to fly away on their green broomsticks.

When Macbeth approaches the witches' meeting place in the second scene they are spinning wool again while sitting on some rocks. A milestone can be seen in the foreground with 'Torres Inverness' and 'Scone Dunsinane' written on it. As soon as the witches notice Macbeth, they get up but in a special way. They whirl up into the air as if caught up in a hurricane and fall down again a bit further away. Each of them has a rake in their hands and they start to chant while drawing a magic circle on the ground. Macbeth, accompanied by Banquo, steps into this circle before speaking to the witches. Banquo is outside the circle. When Macbeth demands an answer from them, they literally vanish into thin air. Through the use of the magic circle, it seems that Macbeth has been enchanted by the witches. As such it is

debatable if, in the course of this version of the play, he could have acted differently from the original.

The Ghost of the murdered king in *Hamlet* appears on the battlement of Elsinore as in the original. He seems to be a spirit in a green cloud. Hamlet has been alerted by Horatio as well as the two officers Marcellus and Bernado to the ghost of his dead father; they wait together in front of the castle for the spirit to show himself while celebrations are taking place inside the castle. Finally the ghost appears and Hamlet and Horatio cross themselves on seeing it. This ghost wears trainers, an unidentifiable style of trousers (jeans maybe), and a helmet and amour-like shirt. In case anyone does not recognize that this is the ghost, the line ‘Der Geist erscheint’ (‘The Ghost appears’) can be seen above its head. The Ghost communicates with Hamlet as in the original and Hamlet and the Ghost leave together to talk with each other. Hamlet’s dead father informs his son what has happened and provides a sword, which he hands to his son in a flash. The play is the same as in the original and as such only the one supernatural element has been of interest here like for *Macbeth*.

In conclusion it can be said that using modern technology to create an entire online theatre to put on Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* is unusual. However, it provides a possibility to get to know both plays without going to an actual theatre as only a broadband connection and a computer is needed. This seems like a good incentive for people to watch Shakespeare who might not go to the theatre but who use the internet to watch films and –in this case– a play. Sukow included some comic elements too such as the appearance of the witches’ pets in the sky, which can serve as a minor comic relief to make the plays more palatable to non-Shakespeareans. This kind of otherness due to technology might open new ways for introducing interested people to Shakespeare.

### 7.5. OTHERNESS THROUGH SILENCE: A *KING LEAR* WITH DEAF AND HEARING ACTORS

The production *K - Lear* analysed in this sub-chapter is a French *King Lear* adapted and directed by Marie Montegani and based on a translation by Jean-Michel Déprats. The premiere took place in early 2007 to inaugurate the new home of the International Visual Theatre in the renovated Théâtre du Grand-Guignol in the Pigalle area of Paris. Selected scenes from a performance had been recorded on 15 February 2007 at Théâtre 95 of Cergy-Pontoise and have been uploaded on Youtube by Marie Montegani in 2009 (cp. clip recorded on 15/02/2007 at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqMBgdqau-k>, [last access: 28/11/2011]). *K - Lear* was a co-production of the International Visual Theatre, its partner Arcadi and the touring company Des Transports Amoureux and had been supported, amongst other institutions, by the Council of Cultural Affairs of Taiwan. As such the company had been invited to perform their production during the Taipei Arts Festival too which took place from 12 August to 6 September 2009. The text had been heavily cut as a consequence of a reduction of some characters, the subplot of Gloucester and his two sons Edmund and Edgar had been eliminated entirely. Clémentine Yelnik played Lear, Emmanuelle Laborit, Marie-Christine Adam and Véronique Affholder portrayed Cordelia, Goneril and Regan respectively, Patrice Pujol and Cyrille Henry took on Kent and Oswald, Philippe Le Gall was the Fool, Laurent Valo was a Man and Aurélie Rusterholtz played a Spirit. What makes this production stand out in terms of ‘otherness’ is the fact that Emmanuelle Laborit is deaf since birth. In addition, although the play had been translated into French sign language by Chantal Lienenel, Anne-Marie Bisaro, Philippe Galant and Marie Montegani, the combination of deaf and hearing actors adds to the inherent message of this *King Lear*. Yet, as with Hausvater’s German-language *Cymbeline* analysed earlier, this approach to Shakespeare’s classic has a lot more background to it which has both to do with Laborit’s own experiences as well as the

general attitude of the French state towards its deaf citizens and their need for both sign-language and other ways of communications (cp. Alan Riding, *The New York Times*: 8/02/2007: <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/08/theater/08deaf.html?adxnnl=1&fta=y&pagewanted=all&adxnnlx=1322559727-8fMMzuTvoitS90mqpopgvA> [last access: 28/11/2011]). As Alan Riding has pointed out in his article about this production (Alan Riding, *The New York Times*: 8/02/2007: <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/08/theater/08deaf.html?adxnnl=1&fta=y&pagewanted=all&adxnnlx=1322559727-8fMMzuTvoitS90mqpopgvA> [last access: 28/11/2011]), the International Visual Theatre had been founded in 1976 by Alfredo Corrado, a deaf theatre director from America, and his French colleague Jean Grémion. They wanted to promote the use of sign language and the inclusion of deaf actors onstage. The aim of their company is to create a bridge between hearing and deaf people. As such it does not only provide the possibility to embark together on joint theatrical productions but also offers courses in sign language for example as well as recordings and other material in an attempt to bring the two groups closer together. According to its website, its home base at the Théâtre du Grand-Guignol is –at the same time– a theatre, a publishing company, a language school for French Sign Language as well as a creative space where different individuals and groups can come together, no matter if they are deaf or able to hear.

Emmanuelle Laborit had been introduced to this institution by her parents in 1978 when she was seven years old. She has a severe hearing impairment since birth which rendered her deaf and as such did not communicate with other people. By introducing her to the International Visual Theatre, her parents hoped she would be able to learn how to enter into closer contact with others but not be forced to do so through having to learn how to speak. Riding explains that educational policies in France had banned sign language since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and thereby forced children to learn how to lip-read and, when technology



became available, to use hearing aids and speak like a hearing person would do. Billy Moody and Ralph Robbins, both experts for American Sign Language working together with Corrado and Grémion, started to train deaf French actors and held workshops for deaf children, one of whom was Laborit. She first appeared on stage at age nine and remained in contact with the International Visual theatre since then. She continued with her actor training and won a Molière, the French equivalent of a Tony Award, in 1993 for her performance in *Les Enfants du Silence*, which is a French version of Medoff's *Children of a Lesser God*. She rejoined the theatre company as an actress after her success and became its co-director in 2002 before taking over as its sole director in 2003. Meanwhile France had changed its educational policies: in 1991 sign language had been allowed in schools for the first time and in 2005 signing was officially recognized as a language in its own right. Up to this point in time there seems to have been a constant conflict of how to include deaf people into normal social activities on a wider scale: although Laborit too expected that more hearing than deaf people actually went to see *K – Lear*, this inherent potential for conflict is what rips King Lear and Cordelia apart in this particular production. The company's aim with this and other theatrical productions is to show that hearing and deaf people can communicate perfectly well on stage as characters in a play in addition to enjoy the same spectacle when both groups are members of the audience. There is a difference between the common practice of having at least one performance during the run of a play signed by an interpreter in British theatres for example to enable deaf people to enjoy a show –a translation practice analysed by Peter Llewellyn-Thomas in his “Interpreting Shakespeare's plays into British Sign Language” in Hoenselaars' *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation* (Llewellyn-Jones: 2004: p. 199-213) –, and the use of two such interpreters for the whole run of *K – Lear* as members of the cast: they portrayed a Man and a Spirit, thereby taking on actual roles within the piece. In the UK as

well this collaboration of hearing and deaf actors in one cast is nothing new as for example Tim Barlow and Genevieve Barr prove. Barlow acquired a severe hearing impairment due to being exposed to the sound of a high-muzzle velocity rifle during his army career and is actually deaf without hearing aids; as he and Martin Hutson told me after a performance of the Royal Shakespeare Company's *As You Like It* in 2003, Barlow (who played Adam) mostly relies on lip-reading and body contact with other actors for his cues. Barr on the other hand was born deaf and started to mouth her mother's words back at her before being fitted with hearing aids at age four. For her role in the 2010 BBC's *The Silence* she had to learn how to sign as she played a character having just been fitted with a cochlear implant, who previously communicating through sign language only. Barr herself had relied on hearing aids and lip-reading only while being able to speak almost like a hearing person would do.

For *K – Lear* some of the actors also learned how to sign but as mentioned above, their sign language was part of the production, not only of selected performances; it highlighted the problem between King Lear and his daughters even more. Their story starts at nightfall and ends the following morning. As in the very first scene in Shakespeare's original play, Lear wants to retire from ruling the kingdom and therefore needs to determine who should be his successor. He turns to his three daughters for confirmation of their filial love. As can be seen in the clip which Marie Montegant uploaded on Youtube (cp. clip recorded on 15/02/2007 at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqMBgdqau-k>, [last access: 28/11/2011]), the play opens with Lear standing on a throne-like structure which can be used as a chair/throne as well as a bed. The Fool sits at his feet. Five other characters can be seen bowing to the king while a Man stands on the left side of the stage as seen from the auditorium, presumably the Spirit stands on the right side. They don't bow, which marks them not as actual characters taking part in the action, but as the interpreters in this production. Three musicians sit at the front of the

stage, they play a flute, a guitar and a tambourine. To introduce the audience into the plot, the next scene shows a tableau-like image on stage. Lear and the fool still sit on the throne but the other characters now have approached them and the musicians have moved to the side. The actress portraying Spirit has turned towards the audience and while the Man is signing what she is saying, it can be noticed from the text that an additional twist has been introduced into this *King Lear*. It seems as if he and Cordelia have returned from the dead and reunited all those who have been responsible for their deaths as well as those who offered support throughout until the very end. Afterwards Lear starts to speak like in the original: he has decided to announce his daughter's dowry in public. As a signal to deaf members of the audience he has the end of a length of material in one hand, whereas the other end is grasped by his eldest daughter Goneril. Their talk resembles that by Shakespeare (in 1.1.), and Regan in the next scene sits down at her father's feet to entreat him in turn (the Man is signing throughout their exchange from one side of the throne). When Lear asks for Cordelia to speak who, up to this point, has not moved at all from her position at the stage right side of his throne, she first bows to him again with a gesture to say 'mon seigneur' ('my lord') and then adds the sign for 'rien' ('nothing'). Lear does not believe what she has signed to him and asks 'rien?' ('nothing?') in spoken language. To confirm Cordelia's answer, both she herself as well as the Fool repeat the sign for 'rien' while the Spirit speaks to Lear 'elle a dit rien, mon seigneur' ('She has said 'nothing', my lord'; due to French grammar this is not an ambiguous use of 'nothing' in French). As a consequence, Lear in the next scene divides up the dowry and also his crown/kingdom between Goneril and Regan only, while Cordelia is forced to look on in silence. The length of material is used once more to signal that Lear is speaking to Goneril and Regan, whom he has joined in front of the throne while the Spirit now stands on the throne to sign their conversation to the audience. The following scene shows a video clip

which was projected onto the back of stage, showing Goneril and Regan's lascivious behaviour in a crowd, seemingly at a party or some other social event, while all other characters look on in horror. Cordelia and the fool are the only ones who stay with Lear, and when Cordelia has been separated from her father, she actively seeks the help of others to look for him. As the night progresses, Lear becomes more and more delusional and, when day breaks, seems to realize he has committed a terrible wrong. Yet, he is too far gone and does not seem to recognize his youngest daughter anymore. In this moment he signs to her for the first time while still being able to speak. After her death however he has become silent. He can only sign to express himself.

In this production, the conflict arising out of the division of Lear's kingdom does not so much arise out of a different degree of love his three daughters feel for him but rather out of an abuse of language. On the one hand, Lear wants to hear prove of their love, but as true love cannot properly be expressed with words, Cordelia is right in remaining silent. On the other hand, this Cordelia cannot express herself with words as she simply cannot utter them properly. Yet for Lear language cannot be eloquent and flattering enough and as such Goneril and Regan are at a clear advantage. In this production in contrast, communication has been broken down between Lear and Cordelia as they do not share the same language and other always have to act as their interpreters. Here, Lear is however provided with one form of remedying his mistake: he can choose to express himself through signing, the language of his daughter, at the end. But as in Shakespeare's original it is too late and both, Lear as well as Cordelia, die in the end. As shown above, in this production the inherent 'otherness' of some the performers has served as a starting point for a startling new take on Shakespeare's story by taking Cordelia's silence literally.

#### 7.6. *HAMLET* IN AFRICA: A STORY TOLD FROM GERTRUDE'S POINT OF VIEW

The production included in this sub-chapter is marked by 'otherness' not so much through a radical change of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with regard to the text but through its treatment of the relationships between the characters. Hugues Serge Limbvani, who adapted the piece based on a translation of Jean Michel Déprats as well as directing it, put Gertrude into the focus of the story. The Boyokani Kyeseli Company, who toured with this production throughout Africa between June and December 2004 (Senegal, Togo, Dakar, Niger, Cameroun) and travelled in Europe and North America in 2006 and 2007 (Canada, Croatia, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Switzerland, Germany), has been founded on the remains of a previous company, the Company Lian. The company's new name (boyokani) signifies 'union, unity' in Lingala, the language mostly spoken in Central Africa and particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as the Republic of the Congo. Artists from different cultural backgrounds have come together in this company, aiming at presenting their creative work outside of their respective countries of origin. They also look for new ways to express themselves artistically and as such are always willing to enter into collaborations with other companies and artistic groups as well as individuals. They use French as their main idiom for communication as it is spread throughout several different continents and cultures and therefore, although each of the different localities has a slightly different use of French, the basic language is the same in each of them (cp. website by the Boyokani Kyeseli Company: <http://boyokani-kyeseli.voila.net/>, [last access: 20/11/2011] and article about the Boyokani Company: <http://www.africultures.com/php/index.php?nav=groupe&no=902>, [last access: 20/11/2011]). Each year the members of the company chose one author, of whom a play is put on in a country the company has decided on in a communal vote. In 1994, Emmanuel Boundzéki Dongala's short story collection *Jazz et vin de palme* (*Jazz and palm wine*)

provided the basis for *La déchéance* (*The Decline*). During the Festival d'Avignon in 1997, they put on *La Valse interrompue* (*The Interrupted Waltz*), which had been based on Sylvain Bemba's namesake piece. *Les Noces posthumes de Santigone* (*The posthumous marriage of Santigone*), which had been the chosen piece in May 1996, was written by Bemba too. In February 1999 they performed a dance spectacle called *Le Silence de la Forêt* (*The Silence of the Forest*) in Saint Quentin (France), which had been choreographed by dance artists from four different countries. In April of the same year, they put on Shakespeare's *Othello* in Marseille before turning to *Les bouts de bois de dieu* (*The end of the forest of God*) by Sembène Ousmane in Dakar. In 2004 they voted for another of Shakespeare's plays for their 23<sup>rd</sup> play: it was *Hamlet*, which will be analysed in this sub-chapter, and with which the Boyokani Company went on tour throughout twenty-two countries after having put together the piece in Dakar in January (PDF press pack for *Hamlet* by the Boyokani Kyeseli Company: 2004: p. 7) and review by Yvette Mbogo: 5/01/2005 *Hamlet*: <http://www.africultures.com/php/index.php?nav=article&no=3666>, [last access: 20/11/2011]). Before this tour they made plans to prepare an English version of their *Othello* in London and in March 2004 Shakespeare's *Peines d'amour perdues* (*Love's Labours Lost*) in Benin. According to an article on 25 September 2011 in *Star Du Congo*, an online magazine for Africa-related news in general (Jean Dany Ébouélé: 25/09/2011: [http://www.starducongo.com/Theatre-le-comedien-congolais-Hugues-Serge-Limbvani-et-son-equipe-entament-une-longue-tournee-en-Amerique-latine\\_a4339.html](http://www.starducongo.com/Theatre-le-comedien-congolais-Hugues-Serge-Limbvani-et-son-equipe-entament-une-longue-tournee-en-Amerique-latine_a4339.html), [last access: 20/11/2011]), the company has been preparing a tour of *Hamlet* in America, which will take place in two parts. The first part will take them to South America (Chile and Argentina) only, the second part to both North and South America. They have been performing this piece in repertoire since 2004 and a recording of it had been made in 2007, of which Limbvani

uploaded seven extracts on Youtube (Limbvani's Youtube Channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/limbvani?feature=watch>, [last access: 20/11/2011]). He explains the fascination of the audience with their *Hamlet* by comparing it to a much-liked song: 'It is possible to like or even admire a song in English without knowing the language (Jean Dany Ébouélé: 25/09/2011: [http://www.starducongo.com/Theatre-le-comedien-congolais-Hugues-Serge-Limbvani-et-son-equipe-entament-une-longue-tournee-en-Amerique-latine\\_a4339.html](http://www.starducongo.com/Theatre-le-comedien-congolais-Hugues-Serge-Limbvani-et-son-equipe-entament-une-longue-tournee-en-Amerique-latine_a4339.html), [last access: 20/11/2011]). This is possible as well in the theatre when a piece has been well-rehearsed. In the case of *Hamlet* the text is well-known in the whole world and we have been developing it since 2004'. Éric Mampouya, who joins the tour of the Bokoyani Company to America and travels from Brazzaville to their home base in Paris to meet them there, adds that, for him, one of the messages of this particular play is the message of love (Jean Dany Ébouélé: 25/09/2011: [http://www.starducongo.com/Theatre-le-comedien-congolais-Hugues-Serge-Limbvani-et-son-equipe-entament-une-longue-tournee-en-Amerique-latine\\_a4339.html](http://www.starducongo.com/Theatre-le-comedien-congolais-Hugues-Serge-Limbvani-et-son-equipe-entament-une-longue-tournee-en-Amerique-latine_a4339.html), [last access: 20/11/2011]). He explains that 'we are first of all responsible for loving our neighbour, which signifies the other [person] who is [physically] in front of us. This is one of the most touching tragedies by Shakespeare, as is the fact of forced marriages.' (my translation for both quotes mentioned in this paragraph).

Mampouya's last half sentence reveals what has been actually changed in this *Hamlet* and why this time especially Gertrude is the main centre of attention. In a PDF press pack by the company for the 2004 version of this production to be found on their website (Boyokani Kyeseli Company: <http://boyokani-kyeseli.voila.net/>, [last access: 20/11/2011] and press pack by Boyokani Kyeseli Company: 2004: p. 2), Limbvani explained that Hamlet had often been portrayed as melancholic but willing to embark on the mission imposed on him by his father in addition to suffering from complicated feelings about his duty. As such he aimed at

elucidating the piece for his audience and did not include any possible Freudian and post-Freudian aspects. Instead he focused on the dichotomy of 'old' and 'new'. The leitmotif of his *Hamlet* is the forced marriage of Gertrude to an older man, Hamlet's father, whom she detests. Forced marriage is a custom still in existence on the African continent according to Limbvani. Meanwhile Gertrude falls in love with Claudius and the two decide together to rid themselves of her husband, as African custom also allows for the younger brother to marry the wife of his older brother, should the older brother die. This would mean that, in African circumstances, Gertrude and Claudius adhere to officially recognized behaviour and as such Hamlet's problem consists in his possible rebellion against this custom, should he decide to revenge his father. The Ghost exists in this production as well as all other characters from the original, but here he is a typical African spectre who comes back from the world of the dead to demand revenge from his son. This spectre has a mystic quality which is supported by introducing it with the famous poem *Souffles (Spirits)* by Birago Diop, a Senegalese poet. In this piece Hamlet is despairing about the following choice: comply with his father's wish or rebel against a traditional custom. The focus on Gertrude as having been in a forced marriage with Hamlet's father necessitated a change in mood when she and Claudius are together on stage and caused Limbvani to introduce their marriage too into his version of *Hamlet*. As a consequence, Claudius is no longer the bad guy of the play although he is still responsible for the murder of Hamlet's father. Here, Gertrude played a part too in using him for her own gain.

Although performed with a company of only eight actors almost none of the characters had been cut and the performance had a length of over two hours. Marina Ahoui played Francesca, Ophelia and a member of the acting troupe, Jacques Eric Mampouya took on Claudius and Vict Ngoma was Horatio. All three come from the Republic of the Congo in addition to Serge Hugues Limbvani who is of Congolese origin but mainly lives in France.



Doumbia Maïmouna from Mali played Gertrude, Momo Ekissi from the Ivory Coast was Polonius and the first gravedigger, Addoulaye Seydi from Senegal took on Laertes, Rosencrantz, Marcellus and another member of the acting company whereas Kaf Georges Malère from France portrayed the Ghost, Guildenstern, the second gravedigger and the third member of the acting company. Pierre Gille from France was responsible for lighting, Ndissané from Senegal took care of the costumes and Alain Tomety Sena Kossi from Togo was Limbvani's assistant director (Boyokani Kyeseli Company: 2004: p. 3-6).

In one of the clips uploaded by Limbvani, Gertrude can be seen wearing only a thin white dress (the clip is called 'Scène d'amour Claudius Gertrude': <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGX9F1nSJI0>, [last access: 20/11/2011]). She is dancing on her own to some music coming from speakers when Claudius enters the platform serving as the stage. Gertrude appears to be glad to see him and the two engage in some seemingly sexual act. They plot together to kill Hamlet's father, Claudius vows to protect her and Gertrude rejoices at his promise before both of them leave the stage together. Although their encounter here is a secret, forbidden tryst it also adds a different tone to the production as a whole. Gertrude certainly is suffering, if not physiologically then at least emotionally, from being married to Hamlet's father and her behaviour can be understood from this point of view. She definitely is not heartless as becomes apparent in another clip. Ophelia has succumbed to madness and folly and when Gertrude fully realises what her action has set into motion, she is visibly distressed. After Hamlet has tried to console Ophelia in vain, Gertrude embraces her as if a mother would do with a crying child and leads the young girl away to look after her.

Limbvani's decision to include Gertrude's marriage to Claudius adds on the one hand to the feeling that she is glad to have escaped her former marriage to Hamlet's father. On the

other hand, this particular scene also serves to firmly settle this production in its African context. Unlike Schlingensief's *Nazi Hamlet* for example, Limbvani's attempt at combining two different, unrelated cultural contexts – that of Shakespeare's original as well as his own native African background– succeeds in not only portraying the (originally Danish) prince but also his mother as a tragic figure who are caught between their own desires and the traditional customs of their native continent. Otherness in this case has not only successfully highlighted the practice of forced marriages as was the director's intention but also added a new layer to Shakespeare's original *Hamlet*.

## 8. INTRODUCTION: THE IDEA OF SHAKESPEARE TOURISM AND THE EUROPEAN SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL NETWORK

In line with the overall theme of this thesis, the following chapter is concerned with festivals on the European mainland especially dedicated to Shakespeare. Touring companies from England such as a group called the English Comedians (cp. Holland: 2004: p. 196) started to appear on the Continent even within Shakespeare's own lifetime: as such the phenomenon of a theatrical group going on tour is nothing new to both audiences and scholars alike. When concerned with Great Britain the notion of 'Shakespeare tourism' commonly implies travelling to Stratford-upon-Avon, not only to see the world-famous Royal Shakespeare Company productions but also to visit the five Shakespeare Houses managed by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, or journeys to London to witness a performance at the reconstructed Globe Theatre. Festivals in North America in contrast like the Stratford Festival in Ontario (Canada) and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland (USA) are described as reconstructing a "factual reference point to Stratford-upon-Avon" to "allow for [their] own validity, and, indeed, appeal" (Bennett: 2008: p. 500). Both places try to recreate a link between the original Stratford, the birth town of William Shakespeare, within its rural landscape, thereby making themselves attractive for tourists who also happen to be theatre-goers.

If Continental European towns and cities are included at all in scholarly writing as in Lanier's chapter on "Shakespeare Tourism and Festivals" (Lanier: 2002: p. 151) in *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* who lists '[...] Prague, Czechoslovakia; [...]; Neuss, Germany; [...]' within Europe, it is to demonstrate that replicas of the Globe theatre and other reconstructed Shakespeare specific sites are globally wide-spread and 'testify to Shakespeare's worldwide drawing power as an icon of Culture' (Lanier: 2002: p. 151). Despite the factual error that 'Czechoslovakia' as such was dissolved on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1992

and no longer existed in 2002 when Lanier's book was published, he either chooses to overlook or is ignorant of the fact that the Globe in Neuss, Germany was originally not planned as a permanent structure and served its current purpose on the Neuss racecourse only since 1991.

In including a chapter on European festivals in my thesis, I would like to make the case for a more considerate approach to the already known and acknowledged phenomenon of 'Shakespeare tourism'. Even the Royal Shakespeare Company has toured to Europe and beyond: they participated for instance with a production of *The Tempest* at the 2000/2001 European Union of Theatres Festival in Budapest, which was later shown in Portugal and Japan between performances in Anglophone parts of the world; yet it was only referenced in passing by Peter Holland in his chapter on "Touring Shakespeare" (Holland: 2002: p. 195).

In many instances the participation of an English-speaking company in a Continental festival is not mentioned at all; indeed the whole festivals seem to be completely ignored by Anglo-American academia. Unless someone is especially invited to such a festival, most academics, at least in writing about Shakespeare tourism, do not acknowledge the festivals at all: Russell Jackson for example had been invited to serve as chair of the jury for the 2006 International Shakespeare Festival in Gdańsk and John Blondell from the US, who co-founded the Lit Moon Theatre Company in 1992, had been asked to perform *Hamlet* with his company in Poland in 2004. Additionally Bath, one member town of the European Shakespeare Festival Network, is indeed in England and yet the festival taking place there is mostly known within the local area unless one happens to be particularly interested in it. Another example for the participation of either theatre companies from especially Great Britain or the USA or theatre practitioners from those geographical areas in Shakespeare festivals on the European mainland is the fact that Patrick Spottiswoode, the Director of

Education at the Globe in London has been invited for an annual lecture at the Shakespeare Festival in Neuss since 1994 and is regarded as a steady fixture within an exciting and yearly changing program. It seems that the festivals make a deliberate effort to bring together different kinds of expertise, knowledge and practices in one place to make them more widely know and to allow for possible comparisons between them in how they approach the plays of one playwright in all their nuances. So why this reluctance by English-speaking scholars to look a bit further across the Channel for inspiration and explore the possibilities offered there? Academics do not need to like what is on offer from a theatrical point of view but they should at least acknowledge that such festivals exists, all the more since festivals on the European mainland more often than not include lectures and productions originally hailing from the Anglo-American part of the world.

The idea for a European Shakespeare Festival Network had been conceived in August 2006 during the Festival in Gdańsk; its members are the Shakespeare im Globe Neuss, the Festiwal Szekspirowski Gdańsk, the Bath Shakespeare Festival, the Festival International Shakespeare in Craiova and the Shakespeare Festival Gyula. It was officially registered as a foundation on 4 March 2010 in Gdańsk. All those festivals regard it as their aim to bring Shakespeare closer to the people of their respective countries, which also includes invitations to Shakespeare scholars and practitioners from the UK and America to give lectures and workshops. The organisers of those festivals would like to provide information to students and scholars from their area too in addition to exchange theatrical productions and ideas between them across national borders. In general, the Festival Network aims at a European-wide cultural education shared between its members and also building up links and collaborations with academic exchange programs such as Erasmus and Leonardo, which has the added advantage of being able to secure funding for trans-national projects and for the

festivals themselves as their different activities on offer appeal to different groups of people coming together for the festivals, either from the same country or from abroad. Shakespeare's oeuvre is the ideal basis for festivals to build bridges between different global cultures, educate people in an internationally inspired environment and help to reduce prejudices against others. One of the first results of the founding of this network had been an invitation by the festival in Neuss in 2007 to the festival in Gyula to perform their *A Midsummer Night's Dream* under the direction of Szergej Maszlobojcsikov at the Globe, which, in addition, was an inter-Hungarian collaboration between the theatre in Gyula and the New Theatre in Budapest. Other invitations and exchanges followed. Each of the founding members of the European Shakespeare Festival Network will be presented in the following chapters together with selected performances; as such each sub-chapter is divided into a general account of the festival and its background in addition to an analysis of the respective productions.

#### 8.1. SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL IM GLOBE NEUSS: WATERMILL PROPELLER'S *THE WINTER'S TALE*

The Festival in Neuss took place for the first time in September 1991: it was a week long event with only four different productions by one company (the Bremer Shakespeare Company). In 2010 it celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with twelve different theatrical productions from all over the world as well as lectures; in recent years the festival usually lasted approximately four weeks.

According to the festival website, the idea for a festival was conceived for the first time when the town council of Neuss and the Gemeinnützige Neusser Bauverein (a building organisation) acquired the Globe theatre in 1991 which had been built some years previously. In 1987 the director Reinhard Schiele had developed the idea of a movable theatre for his touring group Schloßtheater Overhagen. Although he thought of the London Globe as a basic

model for his theatre, he did not want to reconstruct it in its entirety. His idea rather consisted in providing staging conditions like those Shakespeare's company might have experienced when on tour outside of London: Schiele's first draft mentioned a wooden construction which could be dismantled and erected quickly wherever his touring company decided to stage a play. Their inaugural performance were to take place during the 1988 Bundesgartenschau (often abbreviated to BUGA; Federal Horticulture Show) in Rheda-Wiedenbrück. Health and safety measures made it impossible to erect a movable wooden theatre in the BUGA area however. It was finally built as a wood- and steel-construction but as such was not movable any more. In consequence it was left unused in the area for two years after the BUGA had finished. In 1991 the Neusser Bauverein celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and wanted to give something to the town. Klaus Harnischmacher, then manager of this organisation, had been thinking of inviting a theatre company to perform in the market square of Neuss: Shakespeare was mentioned as a possible author and the Bremer Shakespeare Company was invited. Its director Norbert Kentrup brought up the idea of renting the Globe which had been used in Rheda-Wiedenbrück. Renting was not possible due to its construction but buying was a realistic option. Contracts were signed and all the different parts of the building were transported to Neuss: the seats for example travelled in boats which had been fitted on to lorries to provide maximum safety for them while on the road. The Globe found a permanent home on the town's racecourse. Its interior has space for about 600 audience members and none of the seats, which are spread out over three storeys, is more than ten metres from the stage.

When interviewed for the anniversary program brochure in 2010 (interview by Birgit Wilms in program brochure: 2010: p. 4-6), Dr Rainer Wirtz, the artistic director of the festival, and Andreas Giesen, who is responsible for overseeing all practical aspects, talked

about their own experiences with this festival. They had both been part of the organisation team since the festival's beginning in 1991. Both enjoy their work very much and they aim to share their joy with the audience each year. As such the Globe is not only a place where plays can be watched but also a meeting point for several different groups. In 2010 the program included for the first time a week-long workshop for twenty actors from all over Europe, who came together in Neuss to work on Shakespeare's plays and Elizabethan theatre in general. Their aim was a short performance for the festival audience at the end. This workshop had been developed in collaboration with the project 'Shake in the city. The art of inclusion.' and was financially supported by the Culture Program of the European Union. The festival in Neuss also offers short introductions to the plays before a performance starts as well as a small mobile restaurant and a shop where play texts and other theatre-related products, such as masks, are sold. When asked which moments they like to remember the most (interview by Birgit Wilms in program brochure: 2010: p. 5), Giesen mentioned small things like a small metal ring he carries on his keychain, which was used originally in a fencing scene in the 1993 production *La Storia di Romeo e Giulietta* from Turin. He was also impressed by an all-male performance by the Compagnie des Petits Carreaux from Paris in 1996, for which he needed to buy a pig's head; another production which he admired very much was *Kathakali* from India: for this production special lighting had been installed as the actors wore masks made from rubber and soil for example. Wiertz in turn replied that one production in particular had impressed him a lot. He mentioned the 1997 performance of Shakespeare's *Henry V* by the Watermill Theatre, now Watermill Propeller Company, under the direction of Edward Hall.

1997 had been the first year this company had toured to Neuss: they used not only the stage and the interior of the theatre but also the space in front of the building for their *Henry*



V. They have been back several times in the following years with a variety of Shakespeare plays: *Henry V* and *Comedy of Errors* (1998), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2003), *The Winter's Tale* (2005), *Taming of the Shrew* and *Twelfth Night* (2007), *The Merchant of Venice* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2009), *Comedy of Errors* and *Richard III* (2011).

The Watermill Propeller Company is an all-male company specializing in Shakespeare's plays. They aim at putting on engaging productions of his plays and exploring the relationship between text and performance in a new way. Apart from very few exceptions, all productions are directed by Edward Hall and designed by Michael Pavelka whereas Ben Ormerod is responsible for lighting. The company is influenced in their approach by several different factors according to their website (Watermill Propeller Company: no date given: <http://propeller.org.uk/>, [last access: 15/11/2011]): mask work, animation and classic as well as modern films; in addition they also incorporate live music and songs into their productions. Apart from Neuss (meaning Germany in general), they have also toured to Australia, China, Spain, Mexico, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Cyprus, Ireland, Japan, Poland, Italy, Malta, Hong Kong and the USA: as can be inferred from this list of countries, they are popular both at home and abroad, which is proof of their appeal for audiences all over the world. From 1995 onwards when Edward Hall had started to work at the Watermill Theatre in Newbury, Berkshire, and directed *Henry V* in 1997 with his first all-male company (later called Propeller), the management of this theatre had been responsible for all productions with regard to tours in Great Britain and abroad. Since 2010/11 Propeller is a company in its own right.

The production which will be discussed in more detail is their 2005 *The Winter's Tale*, which I saw myself. As such this sub-chapter can also be regarded as an addition to James C. Bulman's "Queering the Audience: All-Male Casts in Recent Productions of Shakespeare" in

*A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance* (Bulman: 2008: p. 564-587), in which he wrote about two other all-male productions and companies: he considers Cheek by Jowl's 1991 *As You Like It* and the 2002 production of *Twelfth Night* at the Globe in London in particular. Bulman points out that 'especially in Shakespeare's comedies, gender is often interrogated as a form of role-play' (Bulman: 2008: p. 565) though this statement is not applicable as such to this particular production by Propeller: *The Winter's Tale* is one of the romance plays.

What was most intriguing for me about this all-male production was the fact that almost all actors playing the female characters of the play (Hermione, Emilia, a lady-in-waiting, Perdita, Mopsa, Dorcas) had opted for skirts and veils to signal their assumed femininity to the audience apart from Adam Levy who had been cast as Paulina. Casting all female roles with male actors is what makes this company special and can cast a new light on Shakespeare's female characters, thereby allowing for comparisons between their productions and others invited to Neuss for example to enable different viewpoints on both the plots of the plays and theatrical practice as such. The sequence of events in this production was exactly as in Shakespeare's original and as such no deep analysis of the text will be included here. The focus is directed only towards Levy's portrayal of Paulina. When asked whether or not the company's actors could chose their own costumes in agreement with the director's and designer's ideas about a production, he answered in the affirmative and, when asked about his choice to wear trousers, a shirt and a shawl as the only nod towards his female role, he explained that this was meant as a kind of tribute to the female painter Frida Kahlo. When analysing Levy's portrayal of Paulina, it seems that he managed to combine Shakespeare's outspoken character who confesses to be, amongst other male professions, the king's 'physician' (2.3.54 in Shakespeare's text) with the femininity and strength Kahlo is known

for. The idea of a male actor playing this character As such certainly added something to the audience's perception of Hermione's loyal supporter. As Levy entered the stage for the first time, he was outraged at the treatment Hermione had been subjected to by her husband. When talking to the jailor it seemed that Paulina was able to do what Leontes could not do: she firmly believed in the queen's innocence and as such was very convincing in her insistence that the baby should be freed from prison, even if his mother could not be free. Paulina was visibly angry at Leontes's unjust jealousy but when she was handed the baby, she soothed it like she would have done with her own daughters (who were mentioned in the next scene). As could be guessed from Levy's next appearance on stage, this Paulina had a reputation at court for her sense of justice: Leontes seemed to recoil from her once she had pushed her way through the lords surrounding the king's throne. The audience could see that she cared for the child and only wanted to convince the baby's father to acknowledge his daughter. Leontes was enraged more and more by her presence but only when she had delivered her message and laid the baby at his feet, did she leave the stage. The trial scene was shocking and emotionally touching because of both Levy's portrayal of Paulina as well as Simon Scardifield's of Hermione. Once everyone was present Hermione entered: whereas before Scardifield had worn a white dress, it was now smeared with what looked like blood and dirt. One audience member even said 'oh my god!' as she appeared weak from giving birth to Perdita and yet she had to stand the whole time during the trial. After the reading of the oracle, Leontes' mistrust of it and the news of Mamillius' death Hermione fainted and was carried offstage by her lady-in-waiting as well as Paulina. When Levy came on stage to deliver the news of Hermione's death, Paulina was visible distressed and even seemed to cry. She raged at the king and spit on him until Leontes kneeled on the floor like a frightened child and put his hands over his ears. Only then did Paulina reign in her fury but after Leontes told

her to go on, she kneeled down by his side and rubbed his back to sooth him. In Act 5 Leontes and Paulina as well as the other lords stood around Hermione's tomb and mourned for her. Whereas all other lords urged the king to choose a second wife, Paulina made him promise not to do this until she told him so. It seemed by their behaviour that they had become something short of friends in the past sixteen years and that Leontes now listened unconditionally to what Paulina had to say. As such, after revealing Hermione to her husband and reconciling the royal family to each other, Leontes' decision to marry Paulina to Camillo seemed like a betrayal of their faith in each other. This was supported by Levy's movement during the last scene. Once it had been proved that Antigonus was dead, he went from the middle of the stage to one side, set down the candle he was carrying, kneeled down and seemed to curl up into himself while speaking his last lines. After Leontes asked her to stand up again and accept Camillo as her second husband, she stayed where she was as if she could not believe what the king had just done. Paulina was shocked and an eerie silence could be experienced in the theatre. By having a male actor portray her (and this is also true for the rest of the cast), audience attention had been focused more on Shakespeare's words and the emotions this play can evoke than on the natural differences between male and female actors. As such the ending did not come across as happy as it might have done otherwise.

## 8.2. INTERNATIONAL SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL IN GDAŃSK WITH A TURKMEN *KING LEAR*

The Shakespeare Festival in Gdańsk is firmly linked with the history of the Theatrum Gedanense Foundation and as such the Festival is only one part of the Foundation's projects. Its main aim and the reason why it was founded at all was and still is the reconstruction of an Elizabethan theatre in the city on the historic site of an original early seventeenth century building. The historic theatre had been built at a time when the city's culture had reached its

high point and the Foundation hopes to remind people of its achievements and revive its spirit through modern performances. The original building had been erected in approximately 1610. Although it was called “School of Fencing” it served its purpose not only for fencing training and competitions but also for animal fights, acrobatic and juggling shows as well as performances of theatrical productions. It went out of use and was dismantled in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century before the Foundation made it their aim to reconstruct it. Since work had started on the historical plot in 2000, progress has been made every year. An archaeological dig to find out about the remains of the old building has been completed and the Foundation’s plans and building conditions have officially been accepted. In early 2005 architectural plans by Professor Renato Rizzi from Venice were chosen for the new building after a global competition had been held during the previous year. With all preliminary work completed, the corner stone of the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre was laid on 14 September 2009. Rizzi’s plans, as detailed on the website of the Foundation’s theatre project, incorporate several different theatrical as well as building traditions. From the outside, the building is made of brick and as such does not look out of place in Gdańsk whereas on the inside it seems like a structure made from wood, which is a reminder for example of the reconstructed Globe Theatre in London. Equally, it houses three storeys, including the groundlings, round a courtyard where the stage will be. The building project’s website calls this idea ‘a treasure in a chest’. Its roof can be opened as well like a lid to let in the sunlight and as such ensures playing conditions as they existed in Shakespeare’s time with its open-air theatres. Similarly to this double building structure there are also two types of stages planned. One is a playing space as traditionally known from Elizabethan theatre practice: a thrust-stage which reaches into the auditorium and around which spectators can gather. The other stage is created by letting this stage disappear into the floor and replacing the so-created space with seats. The

traditional Elizabethan backstage area can be removed and in this way the stage can be turned into a proscenium arch stage. Another use, which is a reminder of the Roman and Greek amphitheatres, is the possibility of turning the area for the groundlings into a stage too in addition to the Elizabethan thrust stage, thereby providing the possibility for a theatre in the round. Other additional non-theatrical features of the building are being considered too and as such this theatre will not only become the headquarters of the Foundation's International Shakespeare Festival but also an arts and educational centre.

According to their website the Foundation (cp. <http://www.teatr-szekspir.gda.pl/index2.php>: no date given, [last access: 16/04/2012]) had been founded in 1990 and was inaugurated in 1991 in the Old Town Hall in Gdańsk with participating figures from politics, culture and business. In addition, an exhibition of different designs for the theatre took place at the same time as the presentation in June of a first honorary diploma awarded by the Foundation (it went to the German author Günter Grass) and a first academic conference in November with the topic "From Shakespeare to Szekspir". Others followed over the following years. In 1992, because of the Foundation's efforts in promoting Shakespeare in Poland, the Polish Shakespeare Society was founded on the occasion of another academic conference, which brought together Shakespearean scholars from Poland, Great Britain and North America. The project has not only received attention from the surrounding local area and Poland in general but also from all over the world: the Prince of Wales is its patron and in addition two theatre directors –Sir Peter Hall and Andrzej Wajda– have been made honorary patrons. Two societies of Friends of the Foundation exist in Great Britain and the US.

In addition to this building project, the Foundation's broader aim is to bring international theatre companies to Gdańsk for performances, providing a platform for cultural

events in the city and educational projects connected to the productions. The most important event as such is the International Shakespeare Festival which had been started initially as the Gdańsk Shakespeare Week, taking place for the first time from 31 July to 7 August 1993, in collaboration with the famous Wybrzeże Theatre. In 1997 finally, “The Shakespearean Days in Gdańsk” as the event had been known so far, was turned into the Festival as it is known today in addition to academic conferences, possibilities for the review of adaptations on film, art auctions, concerts and exhibition in addition to educational projects for schools and universities and an annual celebration of Shakespeare’s birthday as well as (since 2005) the “International Summer Academy of Theatre and Drama”. For Polish productions taking part in the Festival the Golden Yorick Award has been established to promote the Best Polish Shakespeare Production of the previous season. In general, all productions from Europe and the world are selected with the Festival’s cooperation partners, such as the European Shakespeare Festival Network and the International Association of Theatre Critics in Paris. The aim is to present a variety of European and global approaches to Shakespeare to a Polish audience as well as promoting Polish productions and culture in general to non-Polish audiences worldwide.

The Festival in 2006 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this important part of the Foundation’s work; it ran alongside a project called “10 years of European Shakespeare in Gdańsk”. According to the festival website for that year (cp. website of the Theatrum Gedanense Foundation for the 10<sup>th</sup> Shakespeare Festival

<http://www.teatr->

[szekspir.gda.pl/article/miedzynarodowy\\_festiwal\\_szekspirowski/x\\_festiwal\\_szekspirowski/index.php/id\\_item\\_tree/0eaba28664251a4aa525a21d0929dac9/expand/0eaba28664251a4aa525a21d0929dac9](http://www.teatr-szekspir.gda.pl/article/miedzynarodowy_festiwal_szekspirowski/x_festiwal_szekspirowski/index.php/id_item_tree/0eaba28664251a4aa525a21d0929dac9/expand/0eaba28664251a4aa525a21d0929dac9), [last access: 16/04/2012]), there had been productions of 24 Shakespeare

plays altogether in those ten years (*Hamlet* alone had been performed 12 times in total) with 59 performances from 21 different countries: 12 came from Great Britain and 33 from Poland for example; 47 foreign companies had travelled to the city as well as 17 Polish theatrical groups. This jubilee festival, as it was called, also included a Competition for the Best Shakespearean Performance, during which performers from the US, Korea, Germany, Iceland, England, Poland, Russia and Turkmenistan showed their talent in front of the audience as well as an internationally renowned jury. Several related events had been organised in connection with this official program.

It was in this context that Anna Mele presented his one-man-show of Shakespeare's *King Lear* under the direction of Ovlyakuly Khodjakuly. It was a production by the Awara Theatre in Ashgabat (Turkmenistan) and Mele won the Award for the best male actor. The director and the actor had developed this production of *King Lear* several years ago and have travelled with it to several festivals and theatrical events in the world. On the one hand, it highlights the problems Shakespeare's character has to deal with; on the other hand this story seems partly symbolic of Mele's and Khodjakuly's own lives. The two men founded the Awara Theatre in 1997 as the first independent theatre in Turkmenistan, according to the website of the World Theatre Festival in Zagreb in 2007 (website: 2007: [http://www.zagrebtheatrefestival.hr/2007/en\\_kralj\\_lear.htm](http://www.zagrebtheatrefestival.hr/2007/en_kralj_lear.htm), [last access: 16/11/2011]). Khodjakuly is Turkmen by birth but had to leave the country and settled in Uzbekistan. After his studies in Tashkent and a job in an artistic workshop in Tbilisi he was the artistic director of the Turkmenistan Drama and Musical Theatre and afterwards of the Youth Theatre in Ashgabat. He has worked with several theatres from different countries in the geographical vicinity of his native country and directed plays by Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, Thomas Mann, Euripides and Federico Garcia Lorca amongst others. He met Mele in the Youth Theatre and



they decided to work together, even when separated by the border between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Up to this point Mele had attended classes at the Film Academy, experienced military service in the Soviet army including two years in Afghanistan, then attended courses at the local Arts Institute before joining the Youth Theatre. As pointed out by a review in the *Hamburger Abendblatt* on the occasion of Mele's performance at the Festival Polyzentral in 2006, the two men could not stage *King Lear* with a group in their home country and as such had to use a somewhat different approach. They decided on Mele as the only actor.

Their *King Lear* is firmly settled in the story telling tradition of the Orient and as such the performance is only sixty minutes in length. As can be seen in a short clip recorded to promote a performance at the Théâtre Dijon Bourgogne in 2008 and uploaded to the video-sharing site Dailymotion by Dijon Sourds (in connection with "La Main, l'Oreille and l'Oeil de Dijon", an organisation which brings together deaf and hearing people in the Dijon region), Mele enters the stage dressed as a travelling storyteller (clip uploaded by Dijon Sourds uploaded on 12/12/2007: [http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3qi3e\\_le-roi-lear\\_creation#rel-page-5](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3qi3e_le-roi-lear_creation#rel-page-5) [last access: 16/11/2011]). He spreads his rug and places three small pieces of woods on it to represent the king's three daughters. He pulls out a small bag from a bigger one and then pulls a small black piece of cloth out of the small bag; this is Goneril. He puts it down next to the first piece of wood and then swings the bag through the air to close it, then folds it together and weighs it in his hands. He repeats this twice: once for Regan and once for Cordelia. In addition he wears a puppet on a string around his neck, which he strokes after having presented the three daughters to the audience. Afterwards he pulls a white bag out of the large bag and throws the large bag over his head but when it falls to the floor, he frightens himself. He proceeds to listen into the white bag but as he cannot hear anything, even when he speaks into the bag, he stands up and utters the words into the air. What is remarkable is that,

although Mele speaks Turkmen, the meaning of what he presents to his audience manifests itself in his gestures and the props he uses. Especially in this moment of the production as seen in the clip the differences between the three sisters are highlighted. The piece of cloth representing Goneril is completely black and the small bag Mele puts on the branch symbolizing her/her personal space is heavier than the other two. Regan's piece of cloth is black on one side and white on the other and Cordelia's piece is completely white. As the storyteller/Lear needs to choose which props he uses and as such it seems that he has imbued each of the three sisters with a different meaning by choosing their colours in the way he did. By directing the focus on the relationship between a man and his daughters, Mele has focused attention on the underlying problem. There is something wrong in this particular relationship and it does not only start to go wrong when *King Lear* begins. There is a fundamental mistake which has been made at some previous point within this family and one cannot help but wondering if Lear has been blind up to the point when he divides his kingdom. Although especially Goneril is the evil one in this group, it might be possible that there have been events between her and her father which made her as black as Mele's piece of cloth signalled and as such Lear would be to blame for his misery. The mixed white and black cloth for Regan and the white cloth for Cordelia could just be their respective stages on the way to the blackness which has engulfed Goneril already. As such Mele's *King Lear* focuses attention on the three sisters in an equal measure as to the king, their father.

#### 8.4. PETER BROOK'S *LOVE IS MY SIN* AT THE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL GYULA

The International Shakespeare Festival in the town of Gyula on Hungary's south-western border with Romania takes place as one event amongst others and, in contrast to the other two festivals previously discussed, is not an event in its own right though it is well-known by

visitors to the framing festival. Several times a production staged in Gyula has toured to one of its other festival partners in the Network. Wider recognition from people other than Shakespeare enthusiasts and Hungarians seems to be non-existent almost as Ian Herbert writes in the *Stage* magazine that ‘there is no obvious reason why any of [his] readers [...] should be making their way to Gyula in Hungary’ apart from visiting the Shakespeare Festival [2011] as ‘Gyula is not really on the road to anywhere’ (quoted from the ‘Press room’ section of the Festival website). Some performances impressed him, others not so much. His article is interesting however as they point towards a problem all festivals but Neuss and Gdańsk seem to suffer from: they are not very well known to non-Shakespearean theatre enthusiasts and sometimes information about them is far and few in between unless one looks for it or happens to live in the area where the festivals take place and as such knows them. In most cases this is undeservedly so, as for example Peter Brook’s *Love Is My Sin* was one of the highlights of the 5<sup>th</sup> festival in Gyula.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> July and 15<sup>th</sup> August each year the Gyula Castle Theatre offers various entertainments and events for its guests in the form of its annual summer festival, such as theatrical productions (historical dramas or contemporary theatre in addition to opera, operetta and ballet), puppet shows, jazz and medieval as well as classical and folk music. Since 2005 the International Shakespeare Festival takes place within this frame during the first two weeks of July. The setting within the only gothic brick castle provides a special atmosphere and the aim is to include Shakespearean performances of the highest quality. Additional performance spaces, apart from the castle courtyard, are the nearby lake-stage and several purpose-built stages within the town itself. Productions from the own Castle Theatre and from other parts of Hungary as well as from abroad are invited each year.

József Sándor Gedeon, the director of the Gyula Castle Theatre since 1995 and as such also director of the International Shakespeare Festival, has been one of the founding members of the European Shakespeare Festival Network. Under his management not only theatrical performances can be seen during the Festival. Its 2011 edition started with a wine festival called *Midsummer Night's Wine* in an allusion to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and offered showings of recordings of theatre productions (1992 *Romeo and Juliet*/ Gergely Színház, 1998 *Merchant of Venice*/ Kamaraszínház, 1985 *Coriolanus*/ Katona József Színház, *King John* directed by David Giles), various performances (*Love's Labours Lost*/ Jókai Színház, *Troilus and Cressida*/ Gyulai Várszínház, *Merchant of Venice*/ Tamási Áron Színház, *Coriolanus*/ HOPPart Társulat, *King John* as adapted by Friedrich Dürrenmatt/ Örkény Színház) and an interactive performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, which had been developed during the previous Budapest Fringe Festival. In addition, the Yohangza Theatre Company from South Korea had been invited to perform their *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. There also was a discussion with the author Géza Bereményi about his relationship with Shakespeare's works (it was chaired by Dr Tibor Elek) and a one-day-conference about the topic *Shakespeare and multiculturalism* with theatre critics, directors, actors, university lecturers and theatre historians from several countries (Ian Herbert and Maria Shevtsova / Great Britain, Robert Sturua/ Georgia, Alice Georgescu/ Romania, Tamás Koltai and Zoltán Balázs from Hungary with Adrienne Darvay Nagy as the chair). It seems that this edition was directed on the one hand towards multiculturalism as stated by the conference title, on the other hand towards a comparison between old recorded and newly developed productions as the actual performances and the video showings were presented one after the other and play by play.

The 5<sup>th</sup> edition in 2009, during which Peter Brook's *Love Is My Sin* was staged, opened with a *Shakespeare and Jazz* concert, and again included actual performances as well as recorded ones or films and other concerts and dance performances (cp. website of the Shakespeare Festival Gyula: no date given: <http://www.shakespearefesztival.hu/>; [last access: 18/11/2011]). Brook's production was the second event on the program, followed by the film *Mystery of Shakespeare*, a photo exhibition about *The Whole World is a Theatre*, a recorded *As You Like It* of a 1983 production (by the Katona József Színház), the Castle Theatre's own production of *As You Like It*, the film *Richard II* (directed by David Giles) and *Shakespeare In Love*, a dance performance based on *Othello* and different ethno-jazz concerts as well as a lute concert, a production of *Macbeth* by an Armenian company, a Hungarian *Merchant of Venice*, Zeffirelli's *The Taming of the Shrew* and the 2008/09 production of the same play by the Wybrzeze Theatre Gdańsk (awarded with the Golden Yorick as the best Polish performance), a production of *Richard II* as well as a *King Lear* from Budapest and a Lithuanian *Romeo and Juliet*. A recorded production of Géza Bereményi's *The Queen of Shakespeare* from 2001 was shown too. Workshops had been organized in collaboration with the London Metropolitan University, which also included a performance titled *More Than a Woman*, and a one-day conference with the theme of *Shakespeare and Eastern Europe* as well as a talk with the author Géza Szőcs about his relationship with Shakespeare took place too.

Peter Brook's production of *Love Is My Sin*, which is based on Shakespeare's sonnets, had its premiere on 8 April 2009 at the Bouffes du Nord Theatre in Paris and could be seen in Gyula on 29 and 30 June 2009 (for the dates compare website of Peter Brook: <http://www.newspeterbrook.com/?p=28>, [last access: 18/11/2011]). Unlike Wilson's and Wainwright's sonnet production from the same year which used a lot more characters than the few narrative voices the sonnets originally include, Brook focused attention on only two

people, portrayed in Paris and Gyula by Natasha Perry and Bruce Meyers. Franek Krawczyk played music by Louis Couperin (1626-1661) on accordion, piano and harpsichord. This production could also been seen at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-on-Avon for three performances on 7 and 8 January 2011 and as Peter Brook confirmed when I approached him after the Saturday afternoon performance, nothing had been changed since their performance in Gyula apart from Michael Pennington playing the male lead in Stratford. Brook had chosen 31 sonnets and arranged them into a narrative in four parts. The first part called "Devouring Time" is made up of sonnets 15 ("When I consider everything that grows"), 19 ("Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws"), 30 ("When to the sessions of sweet silent thought"), 64 ("When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced,"), 73 ("That time of year thou mayst in me behold") and 12 ("When I do count the clock that tells the time"). The second part is called "Separation" and is made up of sonnets 57 ("Being your slave, what should I do but tend"), 29 ("When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes"), 97 ("How like a winter hath my absence been"), 50 ("How heavy do I journey on the way"), 44 ("If the dull substance of my flesh were thought"), 27 ("Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed"), 49 ("Against that time (if ever that time come)") and 87 ("Farewell, thou are too dear for my possessing"). The third part is called "Jealousy" and includes sonnets 149 ("Canst thou, O cruel, say I love thee not"), 147 ("My love is as a fever, longing still"), 120 ("That you were once unkind befriends me now"), 93 ("So shall I live, supposing thou art true"), 92 ("But do thy worst to steal thyself away"), 138 ("When my love swears that she is made of truth"), 61 ("Is it thy will thy image should keep open"), 110 ("Alas 'tis true, I have gone here and there"), 129 ("Th'expense of spirit in a waste of shame"), 142 ("Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate"), 90 ("Then hate me when thou wilt, if ever, now") and 145 ("Those lips that love's own hand did make"). The fourth/last part is called "Time defied" and includes sonnets

71 (“No longer mourn for me when I am dead”), 146 (“Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth”), 60 (“Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore”), 123 (“No! Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change”) and 116 (“Let me not to the marriage of true minds”). Brook has explained his choice and overall approach as follows

It was not easy to choose between 154 sonnets. I needed to find a dramatic continuity and was guided by the hidden tensions that arise in a relationship with two people.

At first, Shakespeare evokes a shared tranquillity, but little by little the pains of love appear: there is separation, then infidelity and treachery which lead to a disgust of the body and flesh. But in a final phase, Shakespeare affirms the reality of a love that can transcend all barriers that is even more powerful than age or death.  
(quoted from the castlist provided by the RSC for the performances in January 2011)

In contrast to the production by the Berliner Ensemble, there was not much at all to distract from the words of the poems. One could imagine that those two people actually are in a relationship: they fall in love, become jealous, take some time out to reflect about their feelings and their emotional connection and then come together again as a loving couple in a true marriage of minds. Although Bruce Meyers played the male lead in Hungary, I can only refer back to Michael Pennington: he and Natasha Parry were completely clad in black, the stage was bare but for some chairs and tables with sheet of papers as well as a notebook lying on them. Parry and Pennington interacted not only through Shakespeare’s poems, which were spoken in a dialogic way (Parry started with sonnet 15, Pennington then uttered sonnet 19 and so on) but also in a physically intimate way which was missing from Wilson’s and Wainwright’s production. At the end of the first part when Pennington was about to utter the last lines of sonnet 12, he kissed Parry’s hand as if he wanted to woo her or, in case she agreed to be his before already, wanted to sooth her in view of what the lines foreshadowed: ‘[a]nd nothing ‘gainst Time’s scythe can make defence/ Save breed to brave him when he takes thee hence.’ This sense of longing for the other even when faced with adverse circumstances was developed throughout the next part as well and then gave rise to the

jealousy mentioned in the third part's title. In this part Parry and Pennington also made use of the papers lying on the tables to communicate in writing to and seemed to read out some of the sonnets as if the other had written them down before. They also changed the tone of their voices and alternated between speaking louder or calmer, thereby projected anger with each other as well as a loving reconciliation. In one instant this became apparent very pointedly: at the end of part three ("Jealousy"), Brook had decided to use sonnet 145 to connect this part with the next about "Time defied" and while the sonnet on the whole was spoken by Pennington, Parry uttered 'I hate' at the beginning of the penultimate line and then the 'not you' at the end. As Michael Billington called it in his review of this production at the Rose in Kingston on 17 January 2011, 'the two actors share their defiance of time, offering a genuine and very moving "marriage of true minds".'

Although both this and the production by the Berliner Ensemble made use of the sonnets, the effects they evoked had been totally different: whereas Wilson and Wainwright broke down the narrative sequence of Shakespeare's poems, thereby fragmenting their production too, Brook made an effort to find a unifying narrative and as such was able to portray an intimate relationship between a woman and a man who very obviously are in love with each other.

#### 8.4. A WORK-IN-PROGRESS *CORIOLANUS* AT THE SHAKESPEARE UNPLUGGED FESTIVAL BATH

The next festival to be included in this chapter, which has been named as one of the founding members of the European Shakespeare Festival Network does not seem to exist anymore, if judging by publicly accessible information. According to the website of the Theatre Royal Bath, the first Bath Shakespeare Festival had taken place there in 1998. On the website of the Festival Network this particular festival is not mentioned either (cp. website: no date given:



<http://esfn.eu/about-us>, [last access: 15/11/2011]). Instead, a new festival called the Big Bill Festival has been included which, according to its description, should have taken place in March 2011, yet not much more information is available either apart from information about its director, Philip Parr, who is a founding member of the Festival Network. He has worked as an actor, singer, musician, composer and puppeteer and has directed dramatic plays as well as operas both nationally and internationally. According to the website of the Festival Network (cp. website: no date given: <http://esfn.eu/about-us>, [last access: 15/11/2011]), he was the director of the 2006 edition of the Bath Shakespeare Festival, according to his profile on [stagejobspro.co.uk](http://stagejobspro.co.uk) he was its director from 2005-07 and according to his own website he has been the festival director since 2004. Instead of no information at all there is conflicting information it seems. Unlike the other festivals which either are represented on the website of the Festival Network (Romania) or have their own website (Germany, Hungary, Poland), no website exists for the Bath Festival and even the Theatre Royal where it took/takes place does not provide any sort of sub-website and only very few information can be brought up by searching its complete website and archive (cp. results for archival searches (search term was „Shakespeare“) <http://www.theatreroyal.org.uk/page/3147/1905+-+present> and <http://www.theatreroyal.org.uk/page/3014/History>, [last access: 20/11/2011]).

Apart from his work on the English Shakespeare Festivals (both the festival in Bath as well as the Big Bill Festival) Philip Parr was not only the director of the Swaledale Festival from 2000 to 2006 but also the artistic director for the Holocaust Memorial Day National Event in Liverpool in 2008. He also worked at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the Bayrische Staatsoper and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden as well as developing his own projects. In addition, he founded Spitalfields Market Opera, which is the first one of its kind to have been built in London for over 100 years and consists in a purpose built chamber opera house.

His artistic specialities are large scale community plays and projects, on which he worked very much already, such as the pan European site specific production of *Pericles* for the International Shakespeare Festival in Gdańsk in August 2010. According to his biography on the Festival Network's website (cp. website: no date given: <http://esfn.eu/about-us>, [last access: 15/11/2011]), he is co-founder of Parrabola, a group which works mainly on community projects, as well a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a member of the national executive of the British Arts Festivals Association.

The Big Bill Festival, which seems to be one of Parr's more recent projects, is described on the Network's website as an inclusive and accessible festival for Shakespeare admirers and interested people; the proposed date was March 2011. It includes/included various productions, workshops, screenings and other media events in places on the coastline in Kent and other regions in the South East of England and as such also seeks to attract a variety of people from these areas, which does not only refer to theatre goers and Shakespeare enthusiasts but also to schools and people who normally would not go to such cultural events; for this aim respective activities and events had been planed apparently. The Festival was to achieve profile at regional, national and international levels as is described on the website. More information is not available however.

It seems that, in an attempt to put those statements from the initial paragraph of this chapter into an appropriate perspective, festivals in Great Britain celebrating Shakespeare are hindered by his constant presence in British culture. Everybody has at least heard of him, whereas in other countries his name holds much more of an attraction and a certain kind of fascination, around which stories and anecdotes can be centred too, such as Paul Taylor's recollection of the press conference in connection with Cheek by Jowl's *As You Like It* during the first (1994) International Shakespeare Festival in Romania: 'a man at the press conference

remarked that the last time the company had brought Shakespeare to Romania [their *The Tempest* in the final period of Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime] there had been a revolution just a few months later, and [...] he hoped they'd be able to pull off the same trick this time.' (cp. p 10 of the 2010 festival program). Whereas searching for the Bath Shakespeare Festival on the internet as well as the World Shakespeare Bibliography brings up at least some reviews and dates for various productions, a search for the Big Bill Festival draws a blank.

There is however still a festival at the Theatre Royal Bath; it is questionable though if it can be called International Shakespeare Festival. From 19 February to 13 March 2010 there has been a Shakespeare Unplugged Festival mainly at the Egg and the Ustinov (smaller sub-theatres of the Theatre Royal in the same building) which included productions from Europe and Great Britain in an attempt to update Shakespeare for a 21<sup>st</sup>-century audience. The next edition of this festival, which takes place every two years, has been developed already as a casting call for productions between 11 February and 4 March 2012 has been published on the online Cultural Forum for the Bath area (<http://cfba.org.uk/call-for-participants-shakespeare-unplugged/>, [last access: 20/11/2011]). Those shows are (so far) *Venus and Adonis* in an adaptation for young people aged 16 and older, *MacHam Lear*, based on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear* but written in a soap-opera style, *Translations (or 'The Bard Ain't Heard')* by Gill Kirk, who uses origami to interpret Shakespeare, and *Shakespeare in Bath* which is a workshop ending with a performance by Mark Bishop, Education Director of the Natural Theatre Company. The 2010 edition of the Unplugged Festival included Theater Grüne Soße from Germany, who presented Ignace Cornelissen's *Henry V*, New York's Tiny Ninja Theater put on *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* with little ninja puppets, Nola Rae and Lasse Akerlund presented *Homemade Shakespeare* in a mime version, Platform 4 put on their interpretation of *The Tempest*, a group with one actor, one musician and one illustrator created

*The Animated Tales of Shakespeare* and Greyscale performed *Coriolanus* – A work-in-progress with toy soldiers and three actors (cp. website of VisitBristol.co.uk, providing information about the Shakespeare Unplugged Festival at the Theatre Royal Bath in 2010: <http://visitbristol.co.uk/events/shakespeare-unplugged-festival-p175623/overview-t6218#productlist=/events/shakespeare-unplugged-festival-p175623/overview-t6218&proxprodtype=acco>, [last access: 20/11/2011]).

Greyscale is a theatre company formed by directors, writers, actors as well as designers who want to explore the overlaps between the different fields and how they influence each other's work (cp. website of Greyscale: <http://www.greyscale.org.uk/>, [last access: 20/11/2011]). The company is at the cutting edge of contemporary theatre writing, developing and producing processes and welcomes different ways of starting the creative process. Lorne Campbell and Selma Dimitrijevic are Greyscale's co-artistic directors and Sandy Grierson, David Ireland and Fraser Ayres had been the three actors involved in this project. It was supported by a Fellowship awarded to Lorne Campbell in a collaborative project by the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Shakespeare Institute and the Capital Centre at Warwick University and allowed students from the Institute to participate in this project as assistants to Campbell, thereby experiencing the creative process of this company's work; I was one of the students participating in this project.

The initial idea had been to create a new version of *Coriolanus* with three actors and a lot of plastic toy soldiers to develop a new way of imagining Shakespeare's play. The aim was not a fully developed production of the original but rather an attempt to develop a new way of thinking about the plot. The basic premise should be that three children (the actors) are playing together but suddenly turn against each other and assume the characters' different roles, as Campbell explained to us. This was facilitated by creating the scenery from what was

available in rehearsals such as sleeping pads, which had been used for warming up exercises, handkerchiefs and chairs. The main characters, such as Caius Martius, Menenius Agrippa, Volumnia or Virgilia, had been selected toy soldiers and when each of the actors was assuming one of those roles, they took the toy soldier and spoke the respective lines, signalling a message like ‘now I am Caius Martius’ etc. The rest of the toy soldiers served as the mob or the different armies. As such, Shakespeare’s original was always recognizable in this process although a different perspective on the characters and their interaction had been presented. Within the complete festival the puppets made sense too as the topic of ‘Shakespeare Unplugged’ already alludes to non-traditional ways of either putting the plays on stage, different genres than just normal spoken drama or non-human actors. Instead of a full performance of *Coriolanus* with real actors portraying all characters and thereby possibly focusing more on the delivery of the play, this work-in-progress highlighted the relationships between both characters in a new way in addition to providing an interesting insight into the theatrical practices used to mount such a production.

#### 8.5. A LITHUANIAN *HAMLET* AT THE INTERNATIONAL SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL IN ROMANIA

The International Shakespeare Festival in Romania was founded in 1994 under the direction of Emil Boroghina and took place every three years up to 2006 (1994, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006). From 2006 onwards the festival has taken place every two years (2008 and 2010). It is mainly funded by the Ministry of Culture and by extension the Romanian government, by the local council of Craiova and the General Council for Bucharest as well as its City Hall. The initial editions of this festival were held in Craiova, a town in south-western Romania, and since 2006 took place in Bucharest as well in collaboration with several cultural institutions of the capital, such as Arcub, the Centre for Cultural Projects of the City Hall, the city’s General

Council and the Romanian Cultural Institute. As is the case with all the other festivals of the Network considered in this chapter, the main idea by Boroghina and his team was to present the most important as well as most interesting Shakespearean performances from Europe and the world to the Romanian public from a certain point in time onwards after the initial editions mostly focused on the nation's own productions. This aim soon turned into a cultural exchange with the partner festivals and as a consequence also into an export of Romanian productions to other countries. It has developed into a popular and well-known festival which is of high standard and, as judged by several critics, ranked among the best thematic festivals in Europe. This has also been recognized by the Theatre Union of Romania with its Prize for Excellency and in 1997 the Romanian postal service even published a special stamp to commemorate the occasion of the second festival edition.

According to Emil Boroghina's short introduction in the 2010 festival program (cp. p. 6), the 7<sup>th</sup> edition concluded a thematic cycle which had been started in 2006. Since that year each edition had been put under an overarching motto: in 2006 it was "Shakespearean Performances in Parallel Visions", in 2008 it was "Great Directors, Great Performances, Great Theatres of Europe and of the World" and as such some of the most famous directors of the current theatrical world had been invited to Romania. Peter Brook, Robert Wilson, Declan Donnellan, Lev Dodin, Eimuntas Nekrosiu and Silviu Purcarete presented their productions in Craiova and Bucharest. In 2010 the motto of the festival was "The time is out of joint: O cursed spite/ That ever I was born to set it right" and it had been dedicated to one play only: the general focus was directed towards *Hamlet* and Thomas Ostermeier, Oskaras Koršunovas, Monika Pecikiewicz, Yoshihiro Kurita, Yun Taek-Lee, Elizabeth LeCompte, Eimuntas Nekrosius and others had been asked to present their interpretations and visions in Craiova and Bucharest. As the festival in general does not only include theatrical productions,

audience members and critics were again given the opportunity to compare, discuss, comment and debate the different performances with each other. In addition, as usual, there had been seminars and conferences, workshops (acting, directing, design/painting and criticism/reviewing), showings of recordings of famous productions, concerts, exhibitions on various theatrical topics as well as book and DVD launches.

Emil Boroghina mentioned in the 2010 program that the decision to focus on *Hamlet* had been developed as early as 1997. He explained that “‘Hamlet’”, masterpiece of the masterpieces, offers infinite possibilities and perspectives to all those that delve in it. The themes of “‘Hamlet’” are inexhaustible’ (cp. p. 6, 2010 festival program). This was also reflected in the diversity of the different productions invited to Craiova and Bucharest that year, even when –as Emil Sirbulescu informed me– two companies could not come to the festival after all (one from Russia and one from Japan).

One of the productions of the 2010 festival was the acclaimed *Hamlet* from the OKT/Vilnius City Theatre and directed by Oskaras Koršunovas with Darius Meškauskas in the title role. Koršunovas had developed his version of the play in 2008, having worked previously on Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew* which he staged at the Comédie Française in Paris in 2007, and was awarded the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2009 to honour his untraditional interpretation of the play. *Hamlet* had its premiere on 8 September 2008 at the Rogalands Theatre in Stavanger (Norway) while the city was the European Capital of Culture. It is a co-production between Stavanger and Vilnius, which had been the European Capital of Culture in 2009, and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania. This *Hamlet* is as much Shakespeare’ tragic hero as it is Koršunovas’ perception of the title character. According to the director, today’s modern generation lives in a kind of false reality which is as much caused by their reliance on an assumed security as by the elder generation leaving

them ignorant of so many issues (cp. website of the Europe Theatre Prize (12<sup>th</sup> edition, 2008), providing a biography for Oskaras Koršunovas as well as an interview with him by Anders Kreuger [http://www.premio-europa.org/open\\_page.php?id=187](http://www.premio-europa.org/open_page.php?id=187) and [http://www.premio-europa.org/open\\_page.php?id=185](http://www.premio-europa.org/open_page.php?id=185), [last access: 19/11/2011]; Website of the OKT Theatre Vilnius, providing information about this production of *Hamlet* <http://www.okt.lt/en/performances/hamlet>, [last access: 19/11/2011]). As such, his production is fast-paced though it still is three hours long without an interval and the staging with its dress room setting can be converted quickly into a heap of chairs or exactly placed rows of tables. The actors portraying the characters are sitting in front of mirrors when the play starts. They question both their own identity and that of their respective characters, although it is not possible to find an answer or, if there is one, no one is willing to hear it, afraid what it might bring up (cp. first and second part of a TV documentary from Italy on Youtube, focusing on Oskaras Koršunovas' *Hamlet* in Stavanger 2008, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BWzzkRSFQ0&feature=related> and [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0M3t\\_cyD9Q8&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0M3t_cyD9Q8&feature=related), [last access: 19/11/2011]).

This *Hamlet*, although preserving as much of the spirit of Shakespeare's original as possible, is a very modern production, as if Koršunovas wants to present a representative alter ego on stage for any audience member. According to the director, Shakespeare's text is suitable for each period of time as it offers manifold ways of presenting Hamlet's story to an audience, depending on a director's or an actor's vision of what all the characters in the play suffer from (cp. website of the Europe Theatre Prize: [http://www.premio-europa.org/open\\_page.php?id=187](http://www.premio-europa.org/open_page.php?id=187) and [http://www.premio-europa.org/open\\_page.php?id=185](http://www.premio-europa.org/open_page.php?id=185), [last access: 19/11/2011]; Website of the OKT Theatre Vilnius, providing information about this production of *Hamlet* <http://www.okt.lt/en/performances/hamlet>, [last access: 19/11/2011]). It seems to Koršunovas that time itself makes use of Shakespeare's famous character when he



explained in an interview with Anders Kreuger on the occasion of the Europe Theatre Prize that *Hamlet* is still applicable today as the future of each person is informed by that person's immediate past (cp. website of the Europe Theatre Prize (12<sup>th</sup> edition, 2008), providing a biography for Oskaras Koršunovas as well as an interview with him by Anders Kreuger [http://www.premio-europa.org/open\\_page.php?id=187](http://www.premio-europa.org/open_page.php?id=187) and [http://www.premio-europa.org/open\\_page.php?id=185](http://www.premio-europa.org/open_page.php?id=185), [last access: 19/11/2011]).

## 9. CONCLUSION

When thinking back to the question raised in the general introduction (“How much of the original has to be recognizable in a production to call that production Shakespearean?”) and then looking again at all the different productions included here, an answer is not that easy to provide. None of these performances are truly Shakespearean in the most literal sense of the word as, apart from some exceptions, virtually none are performed in his native English. In a wider sense, and which is what I hope to have shown in this thesis, many different approaches can produce valid interpretations of the Shakespeare canon, which in turn are influenced by the underlying narrative strategy or theatrical genre which has been chosen initially for a production. Yet, different approaches can also overshadow Shakespeare’s original sometimes, which has been the case –in my opinion– for some few of the included performances.

Translated versions of his plays are obviously the closest equivalent to the original as they aim to reproduce not Shakespeare’s words but his attempt at recreating a world in which an audience can immerse themselves during the course of a play. As was shown in that first chapter, this approach also bears problems. Schlegel translated *Hamlet* at a very specific moment of time during which people spoke a particular type of German. The language he used sounds old-fashioned nowadays and therefore his translation is not that much useful to keep the serenity of the original *Hamlet* when it is combined with a modern, post-Freudian approach in performance. Moratín’s translation in contrast, undertaken and published within the same period of time as Schlegel’s text, has proved that such an old translation still is valuable today, even when done mostly for reading and not staging. This might have as much to do with the linguistic development of Spanish since then as with the fact that the Spanish translator did not admire Shakespeare as unconditionally as Schlegel, and as such did not attempt to recreate Shakespeare’s poetic language. This has been the case for Gide’s

translation as well: he struggled and then decided to focus not on trying to recreate the metaphorical style of the original but rather do a translation which can be used without a problem for performance. As can be inferred, translation is one of those narrative strategies in which Shakespeare is still very much recognizable.

The same can only be partially said about adaptations, in which the general aim is to recreate new texts and productions out of the original. Yet, there are differences. Novarina's *Falstafe* and Fähr's *Rose und Regen, Schwert und Wunde* are still recognizable as having been based on Shakespeare and one can even say with certainty on which plays. Müller's *Titus* seems to be on the borderline: he did not change the inherent storyline, so Shakespeare's *Titus* is still there but depending on how his play is staged, it takes a moment to recognize which scenes in the original he was alluding to. Jahn's *Richard III* in contrast can be said to be 'based on Shakespeare' but it turns out to be very different from the original and only some characters have been preserved. When adhering strictly to the initial question, it can be said that in the field of adaptation Shakespeare's plays (as indicated by the term 'adaptation') the danger always exists that in this narrative strategy the original is changed so much that the adapted version is not compatible any longer and as such Shakespeare can get lost in the process.

For musicals a similar danger can be expected. Yet, for the three productions analysed here this does not seem to be the case. Shakespeare's originals are still very much recognizable. *Romeo and Juliet* as well as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* only highlight different aspects and characters in contrast to the originals as a closer analysis of their content has shown. As such, they offer a different viewpoint on the well-known plays. Schmidt's *Hamlet* seemed at first to be different from the original; this, however, is not the case at all. In contrast, his attempt at recreating *The Prince of Denmark* equally serves to focus attention on

different elements but Shakespeare's characters are all there as is the underlying storyline.

When it comes to Shakespeare's plays for children and as puppet theatre, changes are necessitated by these narrative strategies as well as the intended audience: children as well as young adults. Cornelissen has offered three different attempts at how Shakespeare's plays can be adapted for children, two of which clearly are Shakespearean in nature, one of which loses out a bit on the original. His *Othello* is the one production which is closest to the original. Although it has been adapted for a young modern audience, the storyline of Shakespeare's play has been preserved bar one element –the relationship of Emilia and Iago has been excluded by Cornelissen. This, however, is the one element young audiences might have problems with today: relationship between men and women are different today; as such this element from the original has been cut but all the rest has been preserved. His *Henry V* too resembles the original Shakespeare play in most aspects, though it has been adapted to suit the imagination of young children by making Henry and Katherine young children too. The two characters show age-appropriate behaviour but the inherent Shakespearean elements (Henry's fight for France, the war between England and France, and the Dauphin trying to hinder Henry) can be recognized too in this version. In contrast Cornelissen's *The Winter's Tale* is the most changed play in contrast to the original. The underlying plot (Leontes' jealousy, the apparent death of Hermione and the real death of Mamilius and Antigonus, Paulina's attempt to make Leontes see sense for example) is still there but by changing all the characters' names as well as imposing a different narrative (that of the acting group) on the Shakespearean inspired plot, the potential for Cornelissen's text to be recognized as originally being conceived by Shakespeare has been decreased. It is not impossible but as with Jahnn's *Richard III* for example, one has to know the original to see the similarities between them.

By adapting Shakespeare's plays for puppet theatre two different acting levels have been created: the characters can partly be played by human actors, partly by puppets or they can be exclusively portrayed by puppets. This makes a difference in terms of the stage (big versus small, proper stage versus small puppet stage) and in terms of the use of voice: do the puppets speak lines as human actors would do to interact with each other or are they silent and their actions as well as look and behaviour speak for them? To allow for a better comparison between two different methods of combining puppets and Shakespeare, the same play has been the focus of attention. In addition, *Richard III* seemed quite an unusual choice in subject matter. As can be inferred from the analysis, Blume's *Richard III* is more a production for adults: Richard is disfigured and evil and as such the puppets serve for his every whim. Taiga-Matto's *Richard III* comes across as a production for both children and adults. Richard is not the cruel tyrant anymore, who could frighten children, but as a consequence Shakespeare's original play is not that easy to recognize anymore. Like with Cornelissen's *The Winter's Tale*, one needs to know the original *Richard III* to see the new play's provenance. It is a valid approach but Shakespeare's play is slightly different.

In contrast, an adaptation of Shakespeare's poems always seems to retain the original, as can be inferred from the productions considered in that chapter. Although the stagings of *Venus and Adonis* as well as *The Rape of Lucrece* have been combined with other texts, the original poems are still very much recognizable. This might also be due to the fact that both additional texts are concerned with the same topic and only offer a different viewpoint on the subject matter at hand. All four (two for each plot) are firmly settled with the literary tradition of that particular myth or story and a combination of the two texts for each plot can only enhance both of them. Here, Shakespeare's narrative poems are clearly recognizable. It seemed at first that the same could not be said of Wilson's and Wainwright's collaboration on

*Shakespeares Sonette* but the analysis of their production brought up slightly different results. Although their ideas about how to stage these poems have been very different from both the directors and actors of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, they also manage to preserve the impressions which arise from reading Shakespeare's original, but do so in a very modern manner. By not adhering to one unified narrative in their production they direct attention towards the words especially and as such Shakespeare's sonnets are highlighted in a very special way. It is a production in which each member of the audience can find his or her own personal interpretation and which offers up new possibilities to understand Shakespeare's original.

Similar to the process of adapting Shakespeare's plays, the combination of the original works with the theme of "otherness" seemed at first to bring up productions which differ the most from Shakespeare's plays. Yet, if a similarity to Shakespeare (and as such "enough Shakespeare" to call a production Shakespearean in nature) is defined by adhering to characters as well as situations and conflicts arising out of the different plots, only one production in this chapter falls through this net. The online *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are probably the most similar to Shakespeare as their underlying approach –a complete rendering of those plays in German on the internet– is more or less that of a play in translation, which is per se the closest to the original. The basis of Hausvater's *Cymbeline* and Footsbarn's *The Tempest* as well as the African *Hamlet* are still recognizable the respective plays by Shakespeare, which has been achieved by not cutting a lot of the characters or important subplots, but rather enhancing selected features of the original plays like the gender change in *Cymbeline*, which highlighted the importance of Belarius, Guiderius and Arviragus for the somewhat happy ending of the play. The importance of this production as minority theatre is important too in that particular context but it was treated as a *fait accompli* and as such did not direct attention

away from the plot of the play. Equally Footsbarn's *The Tempest* with its multilingual approach added something to the original rather than taking something away. It pointed towards the fact that language and as such a mutual understanding between the characters is important for the play's resolution too. The African *Hamlet* in turn managed to deflect the negative qualities which are sometimes ascribed to Gertrude in traditional renderings of this particular play. In addition, this production also offered a view on African culture in general and one widespread problem of that culture in particular. The production of *K - Lear* with deaf actors did not include the Edmund/Edgar subplot and as such moved away from the original in this aspect but by doing so it highlighted the problems which exist between Lear and his three daughters due to a seeming abuse of language. By taking Cordelia's silence literally, this company actually added to the original as well. In contrast to these five productions, Schlingensiefel's idea to cast six former neo-Nazis for his *Hamlet* sounded like a creative idea, but the result lost most of Shakespeare's original. Apart from anything connected with the Third Reich causing a lot of public discussions, sometimes neutral, most often very subjective and heated, it seemed that in this case Shakespeare's play was only used for promotional and marketing purposes. It was not put on for its own sake like all the other productions analysed in that chapter and as such is settled on the borderline between adhering to the original in most aspects and veering completely away from it. The "otherness" brought in through the inclusion of supposedly former neo-Nazis seemed to have pushed "Shakespeare" to one side.

All productions which had been chosen for the different festivals organised in the European Shakespeare Festival Network seemed to have achieved what the different directors proposed for their various festival editions: they have offered valuable insights into the original plays by drawing on a range of different traditions and backgrounds. None of these

productions, though sometimes quite changed in their delivery (such as Mele's *King Lear*), steers too much away from what Shakespeare had offered in his plays. They all draw on the relationships between the characters and take them one step farther, like for example Paulina's vehement defence of Hermione in Propeller's *The Winter's Tale* as well as her relationship with Leontes during those sixteen years, or the loving couple in Brook's *Love Is My Sin*. Other productions like Greyscale's work-in-progress *Coriolanus* and the Lithuanian *Hamlet* offer new interpretations of those relationships and still can be classed as "Shakespeare plays". The original is still recognizable in those productions. This chapter has highlighted however an important aspect: there seems to be a slight discrepancy between how Shakespeare is perceived and used in theatres in the UK and on the European mainland, which can also explain why radical productions and interpretations often hail from outside the Anglophone parts of the world. In the UK Shakespeare is still very much connected with the language he used and as such directors and actors often are reluctant to radically change them. They often grasp for potential innovations in scenery, movements and costumes but it proves difficult to change the words. As such I hope to have shown that, when "Shakespeare" is regarded as a certain kind of concept (which he needs to be when stripped of his language), there are a lots of different possibilities to put him on stage. This is why the UK has mainly been disregarded in this research and why it might be useful to adopt a more European-centred view in the area of performance studies when it comes to Shakespeare. In Europe his original English is in most cases meaningless and as such, the inherent relationships and the underlying tensions between the characters are often more important and therefore explored in performance. The different narrative strategies or genres considered in this thesis have highlighted which options exist to work with Shakespeare and which can be achieved in each of them.



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John Blondell, lecture transcript „Born in the USA: William Shakespeare and the American Theatrical Tradition“ (kindly provided by the author)

PDF Brochure by the Boyokani Company about their production of *Hamlet*

PDF Brochure by Theater Grüne Soße for Ignace Cornelissen's *Heinrich V (Henry V)* (Theatermappe Theater Grüne Soße, Frankfurt am Main)

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Brochures by Shakespeare Festival im Globe Neuss for 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011

## INTERNET RESOURCES

Program announcement of *Shakespeare's Musical Comedy*

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[last access: 19/11/2011]

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