

PREFACE

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This issue of *Ilha do Desterro* has to do with intercultural crossings in Shakespeare's poetic drama, mainly by way of the complex phenomenon of translation. Interestingly and, perhaps, predictably, the historicising of Shakespeare's drama in translation corroborates the recent trend in Critical Theory and Translation Studies, i.e., to demythify and background text, meaning, and authorship in order to foreground context, significance, and co-authorship. The study of the linguistic and cultural implications of depriving Shakespeare's text of its original language, a natural consequence of the translation process, has attracted a growing number of researchers. Many scholars are turning to the examination of Shakespeare's plays less as literary/linguistic texts and more as performance texts, which has made it possible to theorise about the significance of the Shakespeare myth across cultural boundaries. Since Shakespeare is now studied and performed across the world, and this international dimension has underlined issues about national identity, race and politics which were undisclosed as long as the poet-dramatist's Englishness—be it in cultural or linguistic terms—was held to be paramount, it is small wonder

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that his plays are being translated, appropriated, adapted, relocated, subverted etc. to a such a remarkable degree.

The reasons for drawing on Shakespeare's works have been various: to measure the sophistication of vernacular idioms and national theatres; to meet or express the artistic and political needs of international theatre practitioners and audiences; to affirm cultural and political national identity; to validate any given translation or critical theory. However the case, in depriving, as it were, Shakespeare of his language, the essentialism of his **text** becomes relativistic and **context** gains a near absolute status. More often than not, Shakespeare, the original author, becomes the co-author of any given international translator, adapter, director, or film maker. And in relation to filmic renderings, Shakespeare's textual language is also destabilised—in the case of silent movies reduced to a bare minimum—and made subject to negotiation, as it is 'translated' to a medium for which it was not originally created.

The essays here collected in themselves epitomise intercultural crossings. They are signed by an international group of individuals that includes linguists, drama professors, Shakespeare scholars, theatre critics, actors, directors, professional translators etc., who, speaking different accents across the seas, ensure plurality and polyphony. Introducing the subject matter of the collection, Dirk Delabastita argues for the need to think and work beyond technicalities in Shakespeare translation, linguistic or otherwise, and invites us to consider not only interlingual, but intralingual and intersemiotic rewritings as well, all as part of a culturally determined, international process. The collection's second article comes from the British Isles. Historicising *Macbeth*, Derrick McClure examines two contemporary translations of the play into Scots, not without first submitting theoretical propositions about poetic translation, in general, and Shakespeare's Scottish play, in particular, considering the analysed corpora in the context of modern literary Scots, of ideology and of national identity.

From Scotland, the collection moves on to Continental Europe. Drawing on recent developments in Translation Studies, i.e., the growing

attention to matters contextual over linguistic correspondences, Ton Hoenselaars and Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen focus on early continental renderings of Shakespeare, especially a mid-seventeenth-century Dutch translation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, to affirm the translator's visibility and to argue that the translation in question is a play in its own right. Addressing questions pertaining to the specificity of translating Shakespeare for theatrical performance, Jean-Michel Déprats foregrounds vocal and dramatic energy, which he considers both the 'music' of a translation, its 'internal poetry', as well as the ultimate means to elicit intellectual comprehension. He makes a case for literalness, and illustrates his argument with examples drawn from his own and other translators' rendering of Shakespeare into French. In a descriptive approach, Isabel Verdaguer provides a selective survey of translations of Shakespeare's plays in several provinces of Spain, including Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia, in their historical contexts. She considers direct and indirect translation, page and stage, verse and prose, taking into account reception, as well as linguistic and cultural aspects. The collection is enriched by a second article about Shakespeare in Spain. Considering that the very act of translating—of denying, as it were, Shakespeare his language—destabilises the text and, thus, presents a challenge to universalising and essentialist assumptions, Susan L. Fischer analyses a 1992 Spanish translation (and the director's casebook) of *The Merchant of Venice* in performance and explores context as well as what happens when Shakespeare is not his text. As we move on to Scandinavia, Sirkku Aaltonen assesses three phases of the Finnish Shakespeare tradition going back to the eighteenth century, to contextualise the phenomenon in the historical background of Finnish culture and theatre, advances ideas about acculturation, authorship and co-authorship and submits that the translator's work is 'disguised' as that of the author's, in this case, Shakespeare's. We then get to Europe's Eastern border. Arkady Ostrovsky discusses, in detail, a historical 1917 Stanislavsky production of *Twelfth Night*, which opened two months to the day after the Bolshevik Revolution.

From Continental Europe, we go in search of American accents, North and South. Chronicling the history of Shakespeare production and adaptation in Québec, emphasising its application in the evolution of a collective identity, Lois Sherlow starts from factors which have defined the cultural life of the province, and argues that, in Québec, in contrast with English Canada, Shakespeare has not necessarily served as a symbol of colonial domination, but as a site for cultural interchange and resistance.

Barbara Heliodora, having completed translations of fifteen of Shakespeare's plays into Brazilian Portuguese, looks back, asks herself her reasons for translating Shakespeare, and replies by means of an essay in which she thinks over the germane circumstances, as well as formal and linguistic constraints regarding her work, and in so doing articulates her own poetics of theatre translation. Aimara Resende compares two Brazilian recreations of *The Tempest*, starting from the premise that translations and adaptations/appropriations of Shakespeare (or any other author) encapsulate ideologies that sway between the 'essential text' and 'contextual constructions', and submits that the well-advised translator will strive to preserve the original's significance both as a classic and a novelty bearing 'the marks of its place of rebirth.' Drawing mainly on Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto*, Junia Alves and Marcia Noe survey the birth and flourishing of Grupo Galpão, the *mineiro* troupe that in 1992 inventively adapted a published translation of *Romeo and Juliet* to mount a carnivalised, circus-like version of the play using 'anthropophagic techniques' to 'devour' the Shakespearean model. After providing the reader with an account of Shakespeare's drama in translation in Brazil (which seems more active than ever), Marcia Martins surveys eight translations of *Hamlet* into Brazilian Portuguese, engaging not only in microtextual analysis but also assessing 'paratexts' and 'metatexts', and searches for matches and mismatches in stated or unstated translators' conceptions of 'faithfulness', a highly controversial notion in translation.

From the Americas, we move on to Africa. The critical reception of Welcome Msomi's *Umabatha*, the 'Zulu *Macbeth*', in the London press in 1972 is the main object of Mervyn McMurtry's investigation;

McMurtry is also interested in comparing the production's reception in South Africa, in the apartheid days of 1972 and in post-apartheid 1995, as well as in the 1997 British and American revivals, and he asks to what extent *Umabatha* was constructed as an expression of alterity and has 'raised questions that confront interculturalism as theatrical practice'.

Pursuing more distant accents, the collection takes us to Asia. Akiko Sano analyses the history of Shakespeare translation in Japan, focusing on the strenuous linguistic and theatrical experimentation of four translators/adapters who, in her view, have contributed significantly not only to the establishment of an appropriated 'Japanese Shakespeare' but to the reformation and modernisation of Japanese drama. Finally, in search of accents that transcend the linguistic dimension, the collection is rounded up by an inter-media essay addressing what Roman Jakobson called intersemiotic translation. Janet Costa examines a key scene in three filmic renderings of *Hamlet* and goes beyond the usual concern with linguistic, textual transposition, as in interlingual translation, to demonstrate ways in which the pairing of word with image, as in film, is a particularly complex mode of Shakespeare translation.

No doubt this multi-language journey evokes a memorable moment in *Julius Caesar*, in Act 3, scene 1, possibly the play's climactic scene. The heated action is worth recalling. The ides of March are come; Caesar, however, ignores the Soothsayer, as well as Artemidorus's warning note, passes into the Senate House, and the action that encapsulates the assassination begins to unfold: Trebonius moves Antony away from Caesar; Cinna reminds Casca who will be the first to strike; Cimber begs Caesar in vain to recall Publius from banishment; and, at Casca's signal, the conspirators plunge their swords into Caesar's body, Brutus, famously, striking last. After the confusion that ensues, and the gory moment in which Brutus calls to his fellow Romans to bathe their hands in Caesar's blood, to carry their dripping weapons into the market place, and cry 'Peace, freedom, and liberty!', he and

Cassius exult in the thought that future ages and future states will dramatise the 'lofty scene' they have just enacted, in 'accents yet unknown!' After tuning into accents—now known—from four continents, the present collection can be seen as contributing to the concretisation of Cassius's unwitting prophecy in *Julius Caesar*.