SHAKESPEARE,

TRANSLATION AND THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION

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Introduction:

Shakespeare and Translation across Europe and Beyond

As Paul Ricoeur maintains in his book *On Translation* (Ricoeur 2006), the ethics of translation could provide a model for a European identity which presupposes hosting the other in one's own language as opposed to a forced domestication of the other. The Shakespearean text thus becomes a brand which provides access to a symbolic capital, so that translations (whether interlingual, intralingual, intermediatic or intercultural) of Shakespeare's plays have been used not only to serve nationalist purposes, but also as mediating frameworks for transnational communities. Such communities would create a public European ground for questioning European values that were formerly the basis of stereotypical Eurocentric attitudes, but which are currently reinstated through new ethical practices. In an enlarged European context, with New (Eastern) Europe as an alter-ego and as the other of core, prestigious (Western) Europe at the same time, such reconsiderations of European values rediscover Shakespeare as a link between the two Europes. This is the more so as access to Shakespeare has always meant access to the centre, which, seen through a recycled postcolonial paradigm, the margin is now in the process of "writing back" to, as Salman Rushdie would put it (Rushdie 1982). One of the ways in which the Eastern European

margin is writing back to the Western European centre is through reinterpretations of Shakespeare.

This volume, published as part of the project *The European Dimension of Shakespearean Translations: Romanian Perspectives* (PNII-Idei 1978/2008, director Prof. Mădălina Nicolaescu) focuses on the construction of transnational European identity using a heritage that can be reclaimed by Europe through Shakespearean translations. The project on the European dimension of translations of Shakespeare sets out to study the convergence of two types of re-writing: on the one hand the rewriting of canonical texts such as Shakespeare's plays in various translations and adaptations produced in the European region; on the other hand the concomitant rewriting of what has been considered the shared set of values and cultural goods that constitute the European identity. The two aspects have been conceived of in a dialogical relation and as part of an ongoing process of construction, as the rewriting of Shakespeare in translation is determined and further determines the construction of European values and identities. This process has acquired an increased urgency and significance in the crisis that the European Union is nowadays experiencing. The convergence of the two processes – translating and constructing or rewriting identities is also the major concern of the papers in the present volume.

An inclusive European discourse reconfigures Shakespeare as a European, reimagining him as the result of an intense process of intra-European translation/ processing/ adaptation, characteristic to the Renaissance and rediscovered nowadays. In the case of peripheral countries aiming to gain access to the centre, while deconstructing the centre at the same time in a double process of localizing and transcending a transnational community, Shakespeare is a brand name that grants legitimacy to the process of identity negotiation.

This brand name also generates a paradox: if adapting Shakespeare used to be a path towards Europeanization, more recently Shakespearean translations have been used as instruments of emancipation of local values to the point where Shakespeare becomes a mere pretext to bring the characteristics of local cultures to the fore.

The various articles in this collection approach these issues from a variety of perspectives, generally wavering between translation studies and applied Shakespeare literary studies, but also employing elements from discourses such as postcolonialism, cultural studies or media studies. As a whole, they show Shakespeare's towering importance not only in a debate around the functions of translation in the contemporary global world, but also in the historical evolution of cultures outside the British space, such as the Romanian one, in the various stages of its process of national emancipation before and after liberation from communist dictatorship.

The volume is structured in four sections, which are meant to reflect the interplay of perspectives that can be established between case studies of various stagings (interpretations and adaptations of Shakespeare's plays) and the theoretical discourse on translation. The first section, entitled *Early Modern Translation and the Fashioning of Modern European Identity*, approaches the earliest translations of Shakespeare's texts, in order to then draw theoretical conclusions regarding translations in spaces alternative to the British one. Keith Gregor's article "Adaptation and (Self)-Parody in the Reception of *Othello* in Early Nineteenth-Century Spain" introduces the reader into the intricacies and complexity of cultural reworkings by giving a detailed contextualization of the first translations of *Othello* in late eighteenth and early nineteenth

century Spain: Shakespeare's play was first introduced in the form of an expurgated and Spanished version of Ducis' French reworking; the La Calle/ Ducis play further sparked off localized low-brow comedies, which parodied the neoclassical model and paradoxically cemented respect for the Shakespearean model. Iuliana Tănase's article reaches out for a larger consideration of translation and its dialogical relation with identity construction: the translations into and the use of Latin in the Renaissance republic of letters and its correspondence in the construction of a European humanist identity. Secondly it focuses on representations of the New World in humanist texts (by Erasmus, More and Montaigne) as well as in Shakespeare's *The Tempest,* which is viewed as a (failed) attempt at cultural translation doubled as a projection of the European *translation imperii.* Monica Chesnoiu's paper "Cultural Translations of Eastern European Space and the Re-patterned Geography of *Pericles*" deals with the relationship of translation in the early modern period, understood in its literal sense of carrying over (*trans-lare*) of geographical names and ethnological data from the texts and myths of the Ancient world onto the early modern geographies. The paper explores the hybridization and re-contextualization of these myths and zooms into the space of Eastern Europe, symbolically alluded to in Shakespeare's *Pericles* which negotiates ancient mythologies and early modern concerns about the threat of the Ottoman power.

The second section, *Translating a European Shakespeare in Romania*, is a concrete approach to the Romanian space, which emphasizes the configuration of a literary tradition synchronic with the European model throughout the nineteenth century. The section starts with the discussion of the earliest translations of Shakespeare in Romania in the nineteenth century. Oana-Alis

Zaharia's paper "The European Dimension of Shakespeare's Plays: Rewriting *Macbeth* and the Romanian 1848 Revolution" studies the first translation of *Macbeth* in the aftermath of the 1848 revolution and highlights how an almost literal translation from French (Letourneur's version) introduced and re- circulated a political vocabulary that converged with the one employed in the revolutionary discourses of the time. An original paper, covering an area that has been rather under-researched so far, is Katalin Ágnes Bartha's "*Shakespeare's Success on the Early Hungarian Stage* – The Taming of the Shrew *or* Gaszner II", which describes Shakespearean adaptations in Hungarian Transylvanian theatre and their dialogue with the Hungarian stage in the Hungary. The paper highlights a multilingual Shakespeare in Transylvania as well as the multiple reworkings and localizations that the Shakespearean text was submitted to in the early phase of its reception in the Habsburg Empire. Mădălina Nicolaescu's article "Shakespeare Translations and European Values" takes a big leap in time and focuses on the promotion of European values in post-communist translations. The paper argues that recent translations of Shakespeare's plays, written at the time of Romania's accession to the EU, promote an outward-looking cosmopolitan identity as opposed to the previous nationalist, inward looking identity constructed in the socialist translations. George Volceanov's article "On the New Romanian Version(s) of *Hamlet*" is a highly professional, applied study of concrete translation situations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* into Romania. It emerges from the author's rich experience of translating Shakespeare and discussing the various solutions found in the practice of translation, the reasoning behind them and their effects within the context of the history of Shakespeare translations. Ana-Karina Schneider's article "Traduttore, the Necessary Traditore:

Towards an Ethics of Literary Translation in Romania" closes this Romania-oriented section by adopting a more theoretical perspective on the history of literary translation in Romania. While insisting on translation's potential for cultural agency, the paper warns against the uncritical attitude towards the massive translations from English in the present period of globalization as well as against the low level of theoretical awareness in the Romanian translation community: the cultural implications of the participation of translations in the global flow of literature (mostly in English) have hardly been the object of serious debate.

The third section, entitled *Shakespeare across Europe and Several Media*, widens the perspective, this time looking at Shakespeare's towering presence in different media of today, where adaptations sometimes depart quite spectacularly from his representations on the stage. Thus, Maria-Sabina Draga Alexandru's article " 'Shakespeare Tourism': Translations of Place in Contemporary Perceptions of Shakespeare" focuses on the contribution of Shakespeare as a brand name (more than as an actual literary authority) in the rise of the fashion of the so-called literary tourism, in terms of which places that are more or less vaguely related to Shakespeare's work or life are (often artificially) invested with deep significance in relation to his works. Irina Spătaru's "Shakespeare Translated on Film. Reshaping Cultural Authority in European Education" brings in the topical issue of the relationship between cinema-viewing and education, in the context in which a large number of film adaptations challenge Shakespeare's iconic status and repackage him as a global media product. Thus, including screened versions of Shakespeare in classroom activities implies dealing with globalization and its impact on education and on the construction of canonical authority. Alina Bottez's study

"Shakespeare Translated into Opera and Its Major Languages" brings us back in the world of the stage – this time the lyric one – showing how, in opera adaptations of Shakespeare, music supplements the original text in ways that enrich the Shakespearean message and contribute to the widening of its universal relevance.

The last section of the collection broadens up the perspective yet again, departing slightly from the Shakespearean text itself in order to bring in a more specific translation studies approach and, further, applications of this approach in non-European, postcolonial spaces. Translation here becomes an essential act in the configuration of a global world, in which migration and mobility – hence translation, whether linguistic or merely spatial and cultural – become fundamental in the (re)definitions of identity. Entitled *Translation, European Identity and Migration*, the section is opened by Valerie Henitiuk's article "The Bones of the Stuff: Translation and the Worlding of Literature", where, starting from an anecdotal example of Shakespeare's own involvement in the act of translation, translation is analysed as an important bridge towards the formation of a globalized world literature. The paper is concerned with developing new ways of theorizing the global space of literature and culture and discusses the postulation of an in-between space, neither completely belonging to the culture of the target language nor to that of the source language; this space would best account for the processes of reworking cultural texts so as to enable their global circulation and cross-cultural comprehension. Further, the articles signed by Elena Stoican ("European Allegiances in the Context of South Asian American Transnational Migration") and Monica Colț ("The Canadian Model as a Perspective on Adjustment to a Multicultural Society in M.G. Vassanji's *Last Rites* and *Her Two Husbands*") bring in Shakespearean traces in non-European texts,

whilst showing the vital importance of the concept of translation and of translation studies as a discipline in the shaping of a dynamic global identity for the new millennium. Iulia Răşcanu prolongs the debate around how translation can be a tool in integrating non-European identities and creating spaces for them to exist within a European metropolis such as London.

Through its variety and multiplicity of focuses and approaches, all brought together by the dialogue between the act of translation, the Shakespearean text and a "European" cultural identity, the present volume fills, we hope, an important gap in the Romanian and international academic text. At the same time a contribution to the continuously growing arena of Shakespeare studies, but also the emerging and highly topical discipline of translation studies, this collection of essays pays, last, but not least, an homage to the richness, versatility and inexhaustible multiperspectivism of Shakespeare's work across time and space.

The Editors