



# Edinburgh International Festival 2016 Shakespearean Repertoire, Shakespeare at 400 Celebrations and Crisis in Contemporary Britishness

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## ► To cite this version:

Tuğba Şabanoglu. Edinburgh International Festival 2016 Shakespearean Repertoire, Shakespeare at 400 Celebrations and Crisis in Contemporary Britishness. 2018. <halshs-01835618>

**HAL Id: halshs-01835618**

**<https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01835618>**

Submitted on 11 Jul 2018

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## **Edinburgh International Festival 2016 Shakespearean Repertoire, Shakespeare at 400 Celebrations and Crisis in Contemporary Britishness**

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Although Shakespeare's body of work has been persistently in vogue, it is fair to say that 2016 marked a specifically heightened interest and engagement with Shakespeare's legacy not only across the UK but all over the world. With the celebrations of the 400<sup>th</sup> centenary of his death, Shakespeare pervaded the national and global cultural spheres not only as "the greatest English playwright", but also as a national treasure and a pillar of universal cultural heritage. While this elevated mood was largely disseminated and nurtured by global theatre festivals and art events dedicated to Shakespeare, this commemorative reflex extended beyond theatrical productions and found expressions in other representative forms and public celebrations, facilitated by the Shakespeare at 400 Consortium and the "official" framework of British Council's "Shakespeare Lives" initiative.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps not surprisingly, a number of international cultural events and European festivals' nod at the Shakespeare at 400 celebrations in 2016 was indexed within the larger framework of this government partnership.<sup>2</sup> With the British Council's mission to build and promote international collaboration and cultural exchange, such institutional endorsement of international Shakespeare festivals all around the world may strike one only as occupational. Still, this institutional collaboration belies an ideologically charged narrative about Shakespeare's status as the quintessential monument of English heritage: as much as celebrating and spreading the legacy of Shakespeare, the "Shakespeare Lives in 2016" project also constitutes a fundamental part of the Conservative UK government's nation-branding campaign "GREAT" that seeks to attract global financial capital to Britain.<sup>3</sup> GREAT Britain campaign's strategy indexes British cultural and popular landscape as part of its brand identity, thus using cultural,

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<sup>1</sup> The list of exhibitions, plays, film screenings, talks and conferences and other celebrations carried out by Shakespeare Lives project could be found here: "About Shakespeare Lives". *Shakespeare Lives*, British Council, 2016. <<https://www.shakespearelives.org/programme/>> 15 January 2018.

<sup>2</sup> One major example that bore Shakespeare Lives affiliation is 20<sup>th</sup> Gdansk Shakespeare Festival: "20<sup>th</sup> Gdansk Shakespeare Festival" *British Council Poland*. British Council, 2016 <<https://www.britishcouncil.pl/en/events/20th-gdansk-shakespeare-festival>>. A comprehensive list of collaborations could be seen here: "Shakespeare400 Consortium" *Shakespeare400.org*, Shakespeare400, 2016 <<http://www.shakespeare400.org/>> 15 January 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Apart from financing Shakespeare Lives events in 2016, Shakespeare and his works regularly feature in GREAT campaign posters as part of the national heritage of Britain, which can be studied in detail here: "Welcome to the Great Britain Campaign" *Great Britain Campaign*, 2016 <<http://www.greatbritaincampaign.com/>> 15 January 2018.



artistic and literary productions, including Shakespeare, as “exports” in the global financial market it operates in. My point of entry into a consideration of Shakespeare’s role in the Conservative UK government’s larger trade, tourism and investment strategies is predictably informed by the neoliberal economic turn in Britain with Thatcherism from the 1980s on that facilitated the increasing encroachment of market reasoning into modes of dissemination and consumption of culture. As shall be seen shortly, Shakespeare’s cult status in national imagination precedes any debate around cultural policy issues. However, my argument suggests that it is precisely this universal, transcendent standard associated with Shakespeare that also masks his double function. Being systematically co-opted as an incentive in the country’s international economic, diplomatic and cultural impact program, Shakespeare and his legacy provides an anchorage in reinforcing an image of Englishness, or rather an English-salient Britishness in the global arenas that his cult status is celebrated.

This paper offers a critical eye to this special collaboration between government-sponsored Shakespeare Lives in 2016 project and international European arts and culture festivals’ engagement with Shakespeare specifically in the post-war British context. As one of the earliest international arts festivals launched after the Second World War, the Edinburgh International Festival will be taken as a case in point to better illustrate the culturally charged locus that Shakespeare occupies in the British national imagination. Ever since its inaugural program in 1947, as well as negotiating the issues of high and popular culture, the Edinburgh International Festival provided a platform to facilitate dialogue with the international cultural world on a national setting. As Angela Bertie in her study on Edinburgh festivals states, starting with the inaugural festival program, “the Festival was a chance to create a new post-war identity [...] as well as asserting both civic and national identity through its internationalism and the high standards promised”,<sup>4</sup> an ethos that is carried out by the festival directors to this day.

However, questions of “Scottishness” or the “national” aspect of the festival were also not absent, not least because the locale of the Festival happens to be a European country that was not only struggling to calibrate a post-war consensus, but has also been still mediating its dual identities of Scottishness and Britishness. This was perhaps most apparent in the Festival’s theatre repertoire that featured national dramatic resources. As Claire Cochrane

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<sup>4</sup> Angela Bertie, *The Edinburgh Festivals: Culture and Society in Post-war Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013) 43.



remarks in her *Twentieth Century British Theatre: Industry, Art and Empire* (2012), a sense of confident and outward-looking Scottish cultural identity was especially emergent following the failed 1979 Scottish devolution referendum in Scottish drama companies like Glasgow Citizen's Theatre and Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre,<sup>5</sup> with whom the Edinburgh International Festival had already been collaborating. The Festival's ambition to showcase its national theatre landscape while fostering its international outlook could be said to reach a milestone with the cooperation with National Theatre of Scotland after its establishment in 2006, an unlikely "national" theatre that literally did not confine itself within four walls and aspired for as much international and local outreach as possible.<sup>6</sup> However, in this specific Scottish/British context, the question of "national" quality of the showcased works is often accompanied by larger questions to do with the British political climate, especially of the past half-decade. First with the Scottish Independence referendum, then the Brexit decision, and the current talks of a possible second referendum to settle down the European integration issues for Scotland, the questions as to whether the Edinburgh International Festival would assume a stance that would comment on the national political debates did not quite cease to arise.<sup>7</sup> Theatrical productions like Rona Munro's trilogy *The James Plays* (2014), a co-production with National Theatre of Scotland and National Theatre of Great Britain, and *Anything That Gives off Light* (2016), again a NTS production, probed related Scottish-specific questions like pre-Union Scottish history and post-Union Scottish diaspora. However, rather than favouring or propagating a national or cultural distinctiveness, contestations of Scottishness especially in the National Theatre of Scotland's productions appear as "difficult questions about figuring 'Scotland' to speculate about what can be meant by 'performance'" as Joanne Tompkins puts it.<sup>8</sup>

It is with this specific political-cultural positioning of the Edinburgh International Festival that this paper attempts to reconsider the Festival's Shakespearean productions

<sup>5</sup> Claire Cochrane, *Twentieth Century British Theatre: Industry, Art and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 220.

<sup>6</sup> NTS was not based at a permanent location and used different locales across Glasgow from warehouses to community centres until very recently, when the *Rockvilla*, an industrial area in Glasgow was decided to be the new headquarters of the company in 2017. More can be read here: "Rockvilla". *National Theatre of Scotland, 2017* <[https://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/about/rockvilla/?page=s8\\_15](https://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/about/rockvilla/?page=s8_15)> 15 January 2018.

<sup>7</sup> This video interview with the Festival director raises the question again as recently as 2016: Fergus Linehan, "Nationhood and the Edinburgh Festivals" *FT.com*, Financial Times, 5 August 2016 <https://www.ft.com/video/0709bead-b2c4-35bb-b102-6db02804e769> 15 January 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Joanne Tompkins, *Theatre's Heterotopias: Performance and the Cultural Politics of Space* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) 73.



Students' best essays collection, Tuğba Şabanoğlu, Berlin, March 2018 (Pre-print version)

during the heavily marketed and institutionalized quadricentennial Shakespeare celebrations. Although the Edinburgh International Festival was not an organic part of the official celebrations that took place globally throughout 2016, the Shakespearean repertoire Edinburgh International Festival included in the 2016 program was nevertheless an acknowledgement of the Shakespeare at 400 celebrations. I argue that the poetics and the politics of the international profile of the EIF 2016 Shakespearean productions like *Shake!* (Eat a Crocodile, France), *Richard III* (Schaubühne, Germany), and *Measure for Measure* (Pushkin Theatre and Cheek by Jowl, Russia) distinguish the Festival from the main trajectory of commodifying and nationalizing impulses of the official Shakespeare at 400 celebrations that are part of the British Council's partnership with the Conservative UK government's nation-branding campaign GREAT. Instead, EIF 2016's Shakespeare repertoire under the Festival director Fergus Linehan makes an indirect but solid statement that reaffirms the festival as a heterotopian platform that offers a space that refutes hegemonic representations by way of a resistance to the institutionalizing and nationalizing impulses around Shakespeare. The resulting impact, I propose, is that with its Shakespearean repertoire in 2016, the Edinburgh International Festival offers an alternative celebration of Shakespeare's legacy, one that can be read against recent revivals in Shakespeare's role as a pillar of English national imagination. Hence, the nuanced political debate in which Scotland finds itself with the British state allows us a reconsideration of the culturally charged legacy of Shakespeare and Scottish cultural institutions' engagement with it.

### **Resurrecting Shakespeare: Shakespeare Lives in 2016 and the Crisis of Englishness**

As has been already pointed out above, the year-long series of events, festivals and programs launched to commemorate Shakespeare's legacy in his 400<sup>th</sup> death anniversary in 2016 at times co-existed with the established Shakespeare and theatre festivals across Europe. While this 400<sup>th</sup> centenary collaboration with the British Council and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was obviously limited to the duration of 2016,<sup>9</sup> it still enabled the official sanctification of said festivals and the Shakespearean scholarship they fostered. Of course, this one-off affiliation on the sponsorship level on its own cannot be said to have any

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<sup>9</sup> To this day, GREAT campaign has still been adamant about revisiting Shakespeare Lives events across its social media presence. This way, social media vernacular and rituals such as "throwbacks" enable revisiting an already revisited experience and keep the commemorative impulse alive. Most recent example is a celebration of the Twelfth Night, the Eve of Epiphany by the GREAT Britain account: GREATBritain. "It's Twelfth Night [...]" 5 January 2018, 4:48 PM, <<https://twitter.com/GREATBritain/status/949306556713263104>>



bearing on the statement that European Shakespeare festivals are and have been making. Yet, the fact that the commemoration of Shakespeare's 400<sup>th</sup> death anniversary was managed by a government initiative meant that it symbolically invaded and organized the acknowledging nods at the Bard under the umbrella of the highly catchy "Shakespeare at 400" motto. By so doing, it also revealed an interesting strain of the discussions around the Bard: the role of Shakespeare in constructions of Englishness and the contestations of English/British identities. As scrutinized in the collection of essays *This England, That Shakespeare* (2010), edited by Willy Maley and Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, nationalizing Shakespeare not only in the form of theatrical performances but also as a narrative impulse that would metonymically stand for the imagined community of the nation constitutes a significant counterpart to the readily accepted universality of the Bard's genius.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, a brief look at the popular cultural scene in Britain shows us a peculiar preoccupation with the cultural/national coordinates of the country: from the unmistakably patriotic and mood-altering St. Crispin Day speech delivered by Laurence Olivier in a filmic adaptation of *Henry V* right during the Second World War, to the more ambiguous and chaotic celebration of "the isles of wonder" with Caliban's words by Kenneth Branagh in the London 2012 Olympics opening ceremony, Shakespeare's *œuvre* has been evoked so as to remind and reassure the nation who she exactly is. One thing that could be observed in this frequently exercised need to talk back to the nation about its self-image is the backward direction of this dialogue. As Tom Nairn forcefully argues in his notoriously titled *The Break-up of Britain* (1977), this past-oriented vision of England figured frequently in interwar literature in an attempt to search for England under the fading influence of the imperial state.<sup>11</sup> The loss of imperial power and its expediency in English identity certainly points towards an ensuing crisis experienced in Englishness as a category of identity. Nairn further argues that, for all the appearance of a backward England in post-war poetry (Nairn's analysis focuses on Enoch Powell and G.K. Chesterton), it failed to morph into "a new national-popular consciousness" and instead presented itself as cultural nationalism.<sup>12</sup> My argument that Shakespeare provides a reservoir for a sense of Englishness that is struggling within contemporary political and social anxieties in Britain also follows this contention. Invocations of "Shakespeare's world" in 2016 not only

<sup>10</sup> Willy Maley and Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, "Introduction. 'To England send him': Repatriating Shakespeare," *This England, That Shakespeare: New Angles on Englishness and the Bard*, ed. Willy Maley and Margaret Tudeau-Clayton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010) 1-20.

<sup>11</sup> Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain* (London: Verso, 1977) 261.

<sup>12</sup> Nairn 262.

seek to celebrate the literary world of the Bard, but also throw the country back to the Golden Age of Gloriana in the last throes of the New Elizabethan Age.

In his article “Shakespeare-land” Graham Holderness scrutinizes at length this organic relationship between crisis and the national/cultural mythologies Shakespeare has to offer and traces it back to a demise that stems from the loss of Britain’s imperial power and the ensuing vacuum in Englishness as an identity category that was largely defined through the Empire.<sup>13</sup> According to Holderness, this was largely enabled by an active process of “artifice and imitation, reproduction and replica”<sup>14</sup> that took its cue from the catalogue of cultural markers that Shakespeare provided. Holderness takes two Shakespeare themed events from 1912 – a pictorial guidebook *Shakespeare-land* and “Beautiful England” exhibition in Earl’s Court Road – to illustrate the highly nostalgic and constructed images of England and Englishness that are rooted in the Shakespearean legacy. In these representations of “Shakespeare’s world”, anachronisms, airbrushing and fantasy abound: images of Edwardian Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare’s alleged birthplace, strangely mute the traces of industrial, modern transformation and instead are nestled cosily in a rural, temporally frozen landscape.<sup>15</sup> In other words, as the imperial world England was secured in dismantled rapidly and the War loomed in, a backwards looking and melancholic idea of an England that is frozen temporally (as in heritage industry today) and spatially (as in rural configurations of the country) gained momentum.

The element of replica and artifice that Holderness locates in the instrumentalization of Shakespeare in English nationalism surely heralds the type of English heritage industry in which Shakespeare plays a dominant role to this day. Yet Shakespeare’s world is not limited to “England as Shakespeare-land”, but extends beyond the actual, or imagined, cultural borders of the nation. Holderness traces Shakespeare’s international reach by revisiting another special occasion designed to appreciate and promote Shakespeare’s legacy: the anniversary of his death in its three hundredth year in 1916 and the accompanying book to this special event: *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare*. According to Holderness, *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare* (1916) brought together international scholars and writers of differing backgrounds and featured multiple languages, but the linguistic and artistic virtuosity of the Bard were not the only cause of celebration. Rather, Shakespeare was made

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<sup>13</sup> Graham Holderness, “Shakespeare-Land,” *This England, That Shakespeare* 201-19.

<sup>14</sup> Holderness 202.

<sup>15</sup> Holderness 201.





use of as an export that was in communication with the imperial discourse by way of imperial pathways.<sup>16</sup> This simultaneous locality and universality associated with Shakespeare's world is one that is also echoed in 2016's Shakespeare Lives events. A hundred years on, what Shakespeare Lives events achieve comes from a similar concern to find economic and cultural remedies to a sense of loss and disempowerment by exercising global impact via Shakespeare. Although in today's post-imperial late-capitalist world order such claims do not assume an imperial undertone, they do, however, play out in convoluted and opaque rules of global capitalism and still aim for economic domination.

The Shakespeare Lives project is an off-shoot of the ongoing trade and tourism campaign called GREAT that the UK government has launched in 2012 after the London Olympics and Paralympics. Closely working with the British Council to collaborate on educational and cultural projects like Shakespeare Lives, the GREAT Britain campaign has been exerting the same replicating and reproducing practice Holderness identifies via its serial advertisement of visuals that are supposed to capture both Great Britain and the "greatness" of Britain. By co-opting Shakespeare, GREAT campaign transforms the literary canon into an economic and ideological asset by turning the monumental and universal status of Shakespeare into a resource for "economic gain and soft power influence".<sup>17</sup> Shakespeare becomes the binding principle of various global events of different media, whose overriding strategy is guided by the current financial and political policies that the UK government is following. This way, the national literary and cultural canon, especially Shakespeare, gets conveniently subsumed within the Conservative British government's global strategy as a force of influence in a world where Britain strives to be an influential political and economic player, a need that became more pronounced after the Brexit referendum results. Indeed, it is this mutually lucrative partnership between the country and Shakespeare through which the global reach of Shakespeare's legacy is secured. With the help of the year-long events of the Shakespeare Lives project, Shakespearean space goes global and global space takes on a hyperreal aspect, bringing audiences together around a concoction of staple Shakespearean institutions like the RSC, official tourism/marketing strategies, and celebrity culture – a case in point being the iconic Shakespeare actor Sir Ian McKellen's "Shakespeare tour" that is

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<sup>16</sup> Holderness 205-6.

<sup>17</sup> Conrad Bird et al., "Shakespeare is GREAT," *Shakespeare's Cultural Capital*, ed. Dominic Shellard and Siobhan Keenan (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) 148-62.



organized by the British Council.<sup>18</sup> The space-time compression that characterizes the postmodern world as David Harvey theorizes in *The Condition of Postmodernity*<sup>19</sup> enables a Russian metro station to provide a portal into the world of Shakespeare, or an RSC production happening in London manages to capture audiences simultaneously across the world via online screening technology.<sup>20</sup> Yet amongst these intricate corporate world – culture industry relations, Shakespeare and Shakespearean legacy today still remain to be an issue to negotiate and dissect, and not just on the national level.

### **Shakespeare in Scotland in 2016: EIF and De-nationalizing Shakespeare**

The frenzy of the Shakespeare at 400 celebrations, supported by the GREAT campaign, was potent enough to make its imprint on major festivals as well as declaring collaborations with other arts and culture events of the year like BBC Proms and Hay Festival.<sup>21</sup> The Edinburgh International Festival is neither a Shakespeare-related nor specifically a theatre festival, but is equally focused on other forms of art like dance, music and opera. Still, if we regard Shakespeare Lives events as an officially sanctioned response to a contemporary crisis in Britishness both at home and abroad, Scotland's Edinburgh International Festival offers us another perspective towards internationalism and Shakespeare's legacy. Though “international” seems to be the operative word in both EIF's 2016 Shakespeare repertoire and Shakespeare Lives events, a closer look at how this is achieved foregrounds the ideological nuances between the two, if not in an explicit way that obscures the artistic statement of the productions themselves. As has been pointed out before, the Edinburgh International Festival in 2016 was never an organic part of the Shakespeare at 400 celebrations on the sponsorship level, despite having acknowledged the speciality of the year on their website. While this alone does not earn the festival a firm position that challenges the nationalized and

<sup>18</sup> Eminent Shakespeare actor Ian McKellen's Shakespeare tour in India and China in 2016 was followed by his visit to Turkey in 2017: “Ian McKellen casts a spell on India and China” *British Council India*. British Council, 2016. <<http://film.britishcouncil.org/comment/2016/ian-mckellen-in-india>> 15 January 2018. “Sir Ian McKellen in Turkey” *British Council Turkey*. British Council, 2017. <<https://www.britishcouncil.org/tr/en/programmes/arts/sir-ian-mckellen>> 15 January 2018.

<sup>19</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) 240.

<sup>20</sup> “Shakespeare on the Moscow Metro” *British Council Russia*, British Council, 2016 <<https://www.britishcouncil.ru/en/event/shakespeare-passions-train-in-moscow-metro>> 15 January 2018. “Stars shine to celebrate Shakespeare” *BBC Shakespeare Lives Online Festival*, BBC, 2016 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3gr3J7Pg9wHckbw5NWhBHFd/stars-shine-to-celebrate-shakespeare>> 15 January 2018.

<sup>21</sup> “About Shakespeare Lives” *Shakespeare 2016 Lives*. BBC, 2016. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1N0y70KJVt5f2ccfvSqZF2c/about-shakespeare-lives>> 15 January 2018.



monumentalized status of Shakespeare, the curatorial choice for the Shakespearean program compliments this indirect commentary that EIF communicates. The Edinburgh International Festival in 2016 featured three Shakespearean productions, all international dramatic works: French theatre troupe Eat a Crocodile's *Shake!*, an adaptation of *Twelfth Night*; *Richard III* by Berlin's Schaubühne; and Pushkin Theatre's *Measure for Measure* from Russia. What is so significant about these productions is that all three of them dislocate the original setting of the respective plays and stage dynamic after-lives for the Shakespearean play-texts. *Shake!* transposes *Twelfth Night* to a 70's sea-front with beach huts banging open and shut, lending the comic elements of the play an economically imagined spatial dynamism. The action in the play is interrupted regularly by Feste playing American hits on a record player and telling the audience corny jokes in English, which adds to the pop quality of the play. Other performance forms like pantomime and vaudeville too benefit the play's mix-and-match cast. German director Thomas Ostermeier's *Richard III* achieves a similar performative effect with the stage shifting fluidly between a theatre for Richard's psychotic machinations and a concert hall with a live drum set banging in the background as Richard exercises his verbose charisma on the audience as a rock star. As for Pushkin Theatre and Cheek by Jowl's joint production, *Measure for Measure* is recreated against the canvas of modern-day institutional intrigues in a Russian setting, opening Shakespeare up not only for creative inventiveness but also non-patriotic political interpretations on an international level.

Modernizing, or experimenting with, Shakespeare as these three productions are doing is nothing new when it comes to adapting or interpreting Shakespeare. In fact, adaptability and reproduceability of Shakespeare could be said to contribute to the quality of "timelessness" that is often attributed to his works, tragedies and comedies alike. However, when considered from the specific context of the institutionalizing and homogenizing influence of the 400<sup>th</sup> centenary celebrations, EIF Shakespeare repertoire's moving away from the more traditional interpretations that subscribe to a "Shakespearean legacy" throws EIF's alternative self-positioning into sharp relief. While this emphasis on "legacy" that accompanies celebrations and promotions of Shakespeare's works and culture is ambiguous enough to suggest clashing interpretations of the concept (both a conventional and inventive adaptation could well qualify as contribution towards a legacy, for instance) on the merit of the preservation impulse that it clearly connotes, it can also be said to be part and parcel of the heritage industry that revolves around Shakespeare. As Holderness notes in his collection of



essays titled *Cultural Shakespeare* (2001), this preoccupation with inheritance from the past and with reproducing the past in the present is very much visible in conservative political thinking in Britain.<sup>22</sup> EIF 2016's aberrance from such concerns with historiographic authenticity clearly rejects this mainstream understanding and instead generates a narrative of alternative dramatic expressions. Eat a Crocodile's *Shake!*, as its title suggests, is not only meant to "shake" the festival and the audience with its breezy, pop rendering of *Twelfth Night*, but also shakes the canonicity of the Shakespearean products, a status which also generates the questioning of the degree of "inventiveness" of inventive adaptations. Likewise, by hosting a *Richard III* adaptation that decidedly strips the play from its Tudor history setting, EIF 2016 paves the way for a dialogue by way of contesting the solidified historical productions. *Richard III* in this regard is a curious example. In 2014, only two years before Schaubühne's performance in Edinburgh, the DNA testing of the bones found in a parking lot in Leicester confirmed that they belonged to the body of King Richard III. The discovery drew media attention largely on the basis of anecdotal sensation and scientific thrill. Nonetheless, it did help surface doubts around the legitimacy of the successive dynasties.<sup>23</sup> The intrigues Schaubühne's *Richard III* dramatizes downplay this particularly English anxiety around the sacrosanctity of Tudor succession; and instead plays to a demonic display of power politics. In this way, it could be claimed that the EIF's distance to Anglo-hegemonic interpretations of Shakespeare reinforces the festival's heterotopian quality as an alternative space where "international" as opposed to "global English" versions of Shakespearean productions cohabit. Michel Foucault's formulation of the heterotopian space in his essay "Of Other Spaces" refers to isolated but nevertheless penetrable spaces in which real sites are "simultaneously represented, contested and inverted."<sup>24</sup> These "openings" offer a slice of the larger order they belong to, and theatre and the festivals come across as prime examples to this spatial reordering of the political and cultural set-up of society. The festival compresses time and space for the duration of a period of time, exists outside the external real sites, bringing forth their own set of codes and rituals.

<sup>22</sup> Graham Holderness, *Cultural Shakespeare: Essays in the Shakespeare Myth* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001) 107.

<sup>23</sup> This *Telegraph* article gives a succinct summary of the royal conundrum that Richard III's DNA match brings out: Sarah Knapton. "Richard III DNA shows British Royal family may not have royal bloodline" *The Telegraph*, 2 December 2015. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2016/03/15/richard-iii-dna-shows-british-royal-family-may-not-have-royal-bl/>> 15 January 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces" trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, 16.1 (Spring 1986): 22-7.



Indeed, with the Edinburgh International Festival and the Fringe, every year throughout August the city of Edinburgh is transformed into a stage itself, which the inhabitants of the city continuously penetrate in and out of, and the experience of time and space gets suspended by the invasion of this alternative space within the actual space of the city. The festival transforms the spatial and temporal experience of the mundane not only of the festival-goers, but also of the inhabitants of the city as peripheral to this suspended alternative order. In this context, heterotopia as a modality, as a way of thinking about spatial (re)emergences proves especially useful when read against the homogenizing impulses of globalisation and global experience. With its global reach and mission, Shakespeare Lives operates in this conflicting space that both the attributed universality of Shakespeare and the national value it is attached with occupy. While the global space Shakespeare's legacy is disseminated across certainly constitutes an alternative space outside academic and canonical codes, inherent to the same global processes that enable the creation of such alternative spaces is the operation of global capital and power flows. Thus, an interrogation of the macrocosm in which Shakespeare's legacy has survived becomes useful in our reconsideration of the ideological implications of Shakespeare's cult status. Viewed from this perspective, theatre's capacity to underline these tangents takes on an additional significance. Joanne Tompkins picks up on this in her *Theatre's Heterotopias: Performance and the Cultural Politics of Space*, and posits that theatre as an alternative place with its capacity to "intervene in its culture" can actualize its potential as a site for resistance:

A heterotopia, then does more than simply mark politics or ethics or conscience: it is a technique for exploring theatrical space that enacts a 'laboratory' in which other spaces – and therefore other possibilities for socio-political alternatives to the existing order – can be performed in greater detail than Foucault's conventional definition of theatre as heterotopic.<sup>25</sup>

It is precisely via this principle that EIF 2016's Shakespeare repertoire "intervenes" in the mainstream British treatment of Shakespeare in favour of dramatically nuanced, de-Anglicized Shakespearean narrative orders. Again, this is not to suggest that *Shake!*, *Richard III*, or *Measure for Measure* introduce ground-breaking, iconoclastic interpretations, especially because they certainly do not. Yet when compared to the "internationalization" claims of Shakespeare Lives initiative, of which the internationalization focus depends on carefully conducted market research and current political alliances as GREAT campaign's

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<sup>25</sup> Tompkins 6.



market objectives dictate, EIF's claim on staging an international Shakespeare selection acquires more political significance as a resistant force against homogenous and/or capital-driven renderings.

As French cultural critic Pierre Bourdieu posited in *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993), works of art and the art world do not exist transcendentally outside of the influence of and interaction with other economic and political forces, like capital and power structures.<sup>26</sup> The Edinburgh International Festival, like other cultural and art events, is no exception of being a party to this, as it is also testified by the long list of public and corporate sponsors and individual benefactors that bookends the festival program every year. However, the extent to which financial capital interests interact with the ideological course that artistic and cultural productions take becomes a matter that deserves further scrutiny, especially with a figure like Shakespeare whose name has had a significant purchase in the national imagination of England. 2016's both publicly and privately funded Shakespeare Lives events are an apt example to this relationship insofar as this also unravels a deep-seated instrumentalization of the Bard whose works offer a kaleidoscopic picture that not only locates the nation, but also "saves Britain in her hour of peril" in times of crisis as Holderness delineates in *Cultural Shakespeare*.<sup>27</sup> The Edinburgh International Festival's 2016 Shakespeare repertoire was rather a miniscule contribution to the celebratory Shakespearean projects that took place in 2016. However, considering the jarring political and national cultures of England and Scotland as the two constitutive nations of the same state – United Kingdom of Great Britain – the internationalized Scottish response to the ongoing national fetishizing of Shakespeare certainly poses a strong positive challenge to the way Shakespeare's legacy is currently managed and made visible by way of a branding impulse.

Although by no means does this paper suggest that there can only be one singular correct way of approaching Shakespeare, still a relational consideration between these two currents, so to say, may prove conducive to more politically engaged reconsiderations of Shakespeare's "universal", "global", and "international" area of influence. The Scottish context as in the Edinburgh International Festival's 2016 engagement with Shakespeare is useful, especially in light of a more civic, culturally and ethnically inclusive national ideal that Scotland espouses as opposed to a growing insularity and disenfranchisement from

<sup>26</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) 30.

<sup>27</sup> Holderness 39.



continental Europe that Westminster politics are going towards. Reading the dramatic selection that EIF 2016 made with regards to its homage to Shakespeare, it is not difficult to see a correlation between Edinburgh's aspiration to bring international art to a national audience and national culture to international audiences alike, and its espousal of the dramatically diverse and expressive international Shakespeare productions. Correlation does not grant causation. Yet, taking the socio-political specificity of Scotland into account, a Scottish bid at presenting Shakespeare internationally can pave the way for reconsidering the catalysing role Shakespeare plays at the intersection of nationalism, identity and appropriation.

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