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“Global Performance and Adaptations of *Richard III*”

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Richard One Hundred and Eleven: Victor Séjour's Shakespeare for the Boulevard

As a Creole of colour born and raised in pre-abolitionist Louisiana, the novelist and playwright Victor Séjour may, after Edward Said and others, be presumed to have brought a note of eccentricity and otherness to the Parisian theatre culture he joined as a young man. In fact, the response to his early work was deferential and polite, suggesting no conflict with the Napoleonist theatrical mainstream that mentioned its author in the same breath as Hugo, Dumas, Musset and others. Focusing on Séjour's version of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, the paper proposed offers an against-the-grain reading of one of his most bizarre tragedies, where an apparent reverence for Shakespeare and adoption of the now tired Romantic commonplaces of historicism and the gothic sit uncomfortably beside the vaudevillesque elements of slapstick, disguise and popular song. The fact that the play was first performed at the 'boulevard' theatre of Porte-Saint-Martin, rather than as part of the repertoire of the Comédie-Française, may have been what conditioned these artistic choices; but so too, I argue, was Séjour's own 'exilic' impulse to challenge the social and aesthetic status quo by foregrounding some of its major contradictions, making the boulevard the appropriate venue. Pre-dating the more conspicuously 'political' phase of Séjour's production, *Richard III* rehearses some of the issues that would be important to later appropriations of the play.

Keith Gregor teaches English and Comparative Literature at the University of Murcia, Spain. He has published widely on Shakespeare's reception in Europe, especially Spain, with articles in journals such as *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Multicultural Shakespeare*, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, *SEDERI*, *Comparative Drama*, and chapters in books such as *Shakespeare's History Plays: Translation and Adaptation in Britain and Abroad* (CUP, 2004), *Shakespeare and European Politics* (U. Delaware P., 2008), *Shakespeare in Cold War Europe: Conflict, Commemoration, Celebration* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), *Migrating Shakespeare: First European Encounters, Routes, and Networks* (Arden Shakespeare, 2021). With Ángel Luis Pujante he has edited the first Spanish versions of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*, and with Juan F. Cerdá and Dirk Delabastita, *Romeo and Juliet in European Culture* (2017) for the "Shakespeare in European Culture" series, published by John Benjamins. He has also published the monograph *Shakespeare in the Spanish Theatre, 1772 to the Present* (Continuum, 2010) and edited the collection *Shakespeare and Tyranny: Regimes of Reading in Europe and Beyond* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014). For the last two decades he has been a member and sometime head of the "The Reception of Shakespeare's Work in Spanish and European Culture" project at the University of Murcia.

Stella Achilleos

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History and Historiography in the 2019 Greek-language production of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, directed by Paris Erotokritou for the Cyprus Theatrical Organization

Paris Erotokritou's production of Shakespeare's *Richard III* for the Cyprus Theatrical Organization (THOC) was brought to stage in 2019, with the use of Nikos Hatzopoulos's modern Greek translation of the play, claiming a distinctly special position in the theatrical history of Shakespearean productions in Cyprus: that of being the first (recorded at least) non-anglophone modern production of *Richard III* staged on the island. This long avoidance of the play by local producers presumably relates not so much to the challenges of staging one of Shakespeare's longest plays (*Hamlet* doesn't seem to have had the same fate), but to those of presenting one of Shakespeare's history plays to an audience relatively unfamiliar with English history of the Middle Ages. Indeed, *Richard III's* absence from the island's theatrical history seems to reflect an overall avoidance of Shakespeare's histories, as local productions of Shakespearean plays more frequently seem to involve the dramatist's more popular and more well-known to Cypriot audiences comedies and tragedies, with *Othello*, rather unsurprisingly given the play's local resonance, ranking among those Shakespearean plays that Cypriot audiences are most familiar with.

Stella Achilleos is Associate Professor of Early Modern Studies at the University of Cyprus, Cyprus. Her research interests include the intersections between early modern literature and political philosophy (with special focus on the concept of sovereignty), early modern utopian thought, and the early modern discourses of friendship. She has published widely within her areas of expertise and her current research projects include a book-length study on violence and utopia in the early modern period.

Stuart Hampton-Reeves

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English Nationalism and *Richard III* in Germany: The English Shakespeare Company on Tour

I want to reflect on what happens in non-anglophone performances of Richard in the context of history play cycles, where the character develops over two or three plays from brutal but loyal son to the machievil of *Richard III*. How does this narrative reflect the wider sociopolitical moment and place of performance - do non-anglophone audiences see in this wider, grander design a sense of their own anxieties about modernity? My focus is the English Shakespeare Company's late-80s German tour of its seven play *Wars of the Roses* cycle, which adds an intriguing extra layer of cultural complexity as the production explored English national identity in the 20th century, freely mixing imagery from both world wars to show Richard (played by Andrew Jarvis) as a modern-day Thatcherite individualist emerging out of the collapse of imperialism. The ESC performed the plays several times, most notably in early 1989 (on the cusp of reunification) when Bogdanov joined Ernst Schumacher for a public seminar on the politics of the history plays. How did German audiences respond to the ESC's narrative about national identity and how did the context of post-war Germany recontextualise Jarvis' performance as Richard? The politics of these productions and their relationship to national identity has been much discussed - this paper explores how this was received by German audiences still in the shadow of the second world war.

Stuart Hampton-Reeves is Professor and Head of School of Creative Arts, Performance and Visual Cultures at the University of Warwick and writes mainly about 20th century Shakespeare in performance, including books on the *Henry VI* plays, *Othello* and *Measure for Measure* as well as a monograph on Peter Hall.

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Richard III, America's War on Terror, and Korea's Candlelight Revolution

My essay rests on a premise that scholars of intercultural Shakespeare have been emphasizing for years: that the culturally specific contexts of both production and reception can inform Shakespeare performances with radically different meanings and estrange the plays in unique ways. To illustrate how estranged a play can become, I will look at two productions of *Richard III* that were produced and performed under very different circumstances: first, the British company Propeller's 2011 extremely violent and graphic version that toured abroad and was performed in Boston (where I saw it) with the backdrop of The War on Terror; and second, a production in 2017 in Seoul, Korea (where I saw it) starring a famous, charismatic movie actor with the impeachment trial of President Park Geun Hye and the so-called Candlelight Revolution in the background. The pairing of the two productions will be framed by examining something the two, perhaps unexpectedly, shared: an effort to maintain the storyline in ways that advanced the Tudor, providentialist vision of history, or what might be called the Authorized Version of the play. I will argue that the two productions, precisely by following the text and the outlines of the Authorized Version, produced endings that ruptured any sense of triumph or renewal. In this context, I will focus in particular on the effects of the unmitigated onstage violence of the Propeller production and of the many ways in which the movie star playing Richard in the Korean production played against expected type. In so doing, my essay will examine further how the two productions served to provoke reflections in the audience about what might be called the Authorized Versions of their own histories.

Yu Jin Ko is Professor of English at Wellesley College. His publications have centered on Shakespeare, especially Shakespeare in performance across the globe. A particular goal that has driven both his teaching and scholarship has been fostering collaboration between academia and the theatre. He is the author of the books, *Shakespeare's Original Stage Conditions and their Afterlives: From the Wooden O to the Yards of Seoul* (2024) and *Mutability and Division on Shakespeare's Stage* (2004); he also co-edited *Shakespeare's Sense of Character: On the Page and From the Stage* (2012), a collection of essays by scholars and theatre practitioners. He has also written numerous articles on Shakespeare in performance, including reviews of performances in the West, and essays on Korean and other East Asian adaptations (e.g., "Macbeth Behind Bars," *Borrowers & Lenders*; "The site of burial in two Korean *Hamlets*," *The Shakespearean International Yearbook*; and "Intercultural Intermediality: The Unspoken Text in Intercultural Film Adaptations of Shakespeare," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern English Studies*). He was also the co-translator of a book of personal essays by the artist Wonsook Kim titled *In the Garden*.

Zoltán Márkus

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Subverting Subversion: *Richard III* in National-Socialist Berlin

On March 2, 1937, an intriguing stage production of *Richard III* opened at the Schauspielhaus in Berlin. Several aspects of the production generated gossip in the metropolis: Richard's bodyguards were reminiscent of SS storm troopers; Clarence's murderers wore uniforms similar to those of SA troops; Werner Krauss's Richard reminded many in the audience of Goebbels himself; whereas the Scrivener's speech in Act 3, Scene 6, was addressed directly to the audience, thus emphasizing the speech's relevance to the current times in Nazi Berlin. Numerous postwar memoirs and studies have emphasized the blatantly transgressive aspects of the production. But if this staging of Shakespeare's history was so obviously critiquing topical political issues, why was it not quickly taken off of the program of the Schauspielhaus? How was it possible that the production continued to play for almost two years (and through three theater seasons) until February 11, 1939? In order to find answers to these questions, this paper looks at the cultural significance of Shakespeare's *Richard III* in National-Socialist Berlin, in general, and in the context of this specific production, in particular. Central to its explorations are the ways in which this production of *Richard III*, a play heavily invested in tackling subversion, was considered subversive after World War II.

Zoltán Márkus is associate professor of English at Vassar College, NY. His publications have focused on the cultural appropriation of Shakespeare, foreign Shakespeare, Shakespeare in translation and in performance studies. His current book project, *Shakespeares at War: Cultural Appropriations of Shakespeare in London and Berlin during World War II*, is a comparative study of Shakespeare's cultural reception in these two cities during the Second World War. His most recent publications are "The Folgers' First Folios" in *Shakespeare 20* (2024) and "Celebrating Life: Translation as an Act of Survival" in *Shakespeare in Succession: Translation and Time* (Eds. Sergio Costola and Michael Saenger, McGill-Queen's UP, 2023).

Alexander Thomas Mika

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Performing the “Holy Fool” in M. A. Ulyanov’s *Richard III*

First staged in 1976 at the Vakhtangov Theater in Moscow, M. A. Ulyanov’s *Richard III* offers an interpretation of Shakespeare’s tyrannical titular character that is deeply invested in issues of performativity. Ulyanov, who directs and stars in this production, recognizes and accentuates Richard of Gloucester’s penchant for embodying various roles that suit his needs. In this production, he takes on characteristics of a “Fool for Christ,” or “Holy Fool” (*yurodivy*): an archetypal figure in Russian literature and culture. Traditionally, Fools for Christ are depicted as eccentric outcasts who challenge societal norms and deliver uncomfortable truths to sources of power. In turn, their marginal status and humility protects them from repercussions (much like the Fool in *King Lear*). Ulyanov’s Richard exploits the traits of such a figure by making outrageous holy oaths, prophecies, and accusations that shock those around him into submission. Ulyanov’s development of Richard’s Machiavellian performances of piety in Shakespeare’s play into those of a Holy Fool domesticates the character for Russian audiences. By using the cultural currency of the *yurodivy*, this production underscores the ways Richard manipulates religious and social-political values for his own ambitions. At the same time, however, Ulyanov makes it abundantly clear that the other characters are not fooled by Richard’s antics; they nevertheless resign themselves to his whims. The production thus also raises urgent questions about the structures and bystanders that underestimate and enable such tyrannical figures as Richard to seize power.

Alex Mika is a third-year PhD student in the Penn State English Department studying Shakespeare’s cultural legacy via literary, cinematic, and dramatic adaptations of his works. He is especially interested in exploring the ways in which Russian literary and dramatic figures have engaged with Shakespeare’s plays to complicate the notion of the “original” text and its subsequent iterations by self-consciously presenting their works as both instances of Shakespeare and as distinct, original texts.

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“I want you to say ‘no’”: *RD3RD* and the Practicing of Dissent

Writers and critics have long turned to Shakespeare’s *Richard III* in order to explore and examine the rise of tyrants and authoritarianism, both historical and contemporary. In his 1941 play *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, a satirical allegory of Hitler’s political ascendancy set in the world of 1930s Chicago, Brecht explicitly compares his titular mob boss protagonist to Richard III. David Edgar’s *Dick Deterred* (1974) casts Richard Nixon as the hunchbacked Plantagenet, and Richard Loncraine’s 1995 film version, starring Ian McKellan, imagined the play in a 1930s fascist England that was unambiguous in its parallels to Nazi Germany. In his October 2016 *New York Times* op-ed “Shakespeare Explains the 2016 Election,” Stephen Greenblatt would turn to *Richard III* to make sense of Donald Trump’s securing of the Republican nomination for president of the United States, and Greenblatt would subsequently, albeit cagily, expand the analysis into an entire book (2018’s *Tyrant*) once Trump had been elected president. This paper will discuss *RD3RD*, a 2018 adaptation of *Richard III* directed by Anton Juan and Ricardo Abad that addresses the authoritarian populism of then president of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte. Staged at Anteneo de Manila University, *RD3RD* is a notable non-Western addition to the tradition of using *Richard III* as an allegory for authoritarian politics and leaders. However, as I will argue, it is perhaps most notable for its solicitation of audience participation and engagement in order to consider the actions that are necessary for counteracting authoritarianism. Juan and Abad’s adaptation added a choral figure to the play who asked audience members to give specific verbal responses to events on stage. The adaptation thus engages with Augusto Boal’s concept of the “spect-actor” and considers how the explicit performance of dissent, rather than a passive spectatorship, is necessary for the efficacy of Shakespeare and drama as a political tool.

Jonathan Shelley is an assistant professor in the English Department at St. John Fisher University. His research interests include theories and depictions of friendship in early modern prose, poetry, and drama; the history of technical writing in the Renaissance, specifically forms of dance notation in the 17th and 18th century; ethics pedagogy in the writing classroom; and higher education in prison. Since joining the faculty at Fisher, he has served as an instructor for the Rochester Education Justice Initiative and teaches incarcerated students in state prisons in Western New York. He is currently teaching a course on Shakespeare at Attica Correctional Facility. His publications include:

- “Shakespeare in Reentry.” *Scholarly Activism in the Public Humanities*, edited by Molly Todd and Jason Cohen, Michigan State UP (forthcoming)
- “The Swamp and the Scaffold: Ethics and Professional Practice in the Writing Classroom.” *The WAC Journal* 33, 2022. Co-authored with Dori Coblentz.
- “Lies, Evasions and Friendly Networks in Mary Wroth’s *Urania*,” *SEL: Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 61.1, 85-102, 2021.
- “Between the ‘triple pillar’ and ‘mutual pair’: Love, Friendship, and Social Networks in Antony and Cleopatra,” *Renaissance Papers*, 2018.

Richard III and the Shadow of the Velvet Revolution

Jitka Štollová

The story of *Richard III* is a personal tragedy of a disabled individual set against the background of a national renewal. This dual narrative finds a striking parallel in the life of Czech actor Jan Potměšil, who played the protagonist between 2000 and 2019. His award-winning portrayal of Richard III explored the play's themes of hope and despair, closure and beginnings, and the interplay between ability and disability. Potměšil's own life was deeply shaped by a spinal injury sustained after attending an anti-Communist demonstration during the Velvet Revolution in 1989. This life-altering injury not only redefined his personal and professional identity but also positioned him as a compelling advocate for exploring representations of disability on stage. Despite the physical and emotional challenges that came with his condition, he returned to the stage, performing in several plays that directly confronted themes of (dis)ability, including *Flowers for Algernon* (based on Daniel Keyes' short story) and *Richard III*.

Drawing on archival material as well as personal interviews with Potměšil, this paper examines the production of *Richard III* as a unique convergence of the actor's lived experience and the fictional character's struggles. Potměšil's perspective as a disabled individual infused his portrayal of Richard III with striking authenticity, challenging audiences to rethink their perceptions of both the historical figure and disability itself. Additionally, this paper explores how shifting societal attitudes toward disability—coinciding with social changes during the production's run—influenced the creative choices made by the director and the actor. The play became not just an artistic endeavour but also a cultural dialogue about the visibility, agency, and dignity of disabled individuals.

Ultimately, this study highlights the juxtaposition of individual and collective narratives of transformation. It compares the historical context of Richard III's story—set against the end of the Wars of the Roses—with the momentous political changes of the Velvet Revolution and the fall of Communism. In both cases, the intersection of personal and societal upheaval creates a compelling narrative of renewal and resilience, while centering disability as a lens through which to view these transformative moments.

Jitka Štollová is a Core Fellow at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies. Previously, she held Junior Research Fellowships at Trinity College, Cambridge and Jesus College, Oxford. Her research focuses on history and historiography in the early modern period, book history and paratexts, as well as the influence of Shakespeare on the works of Václav Havel. Her articles on these topics were published in *ELR*, *Studies in Philology*, and *The Review of English Studies*.