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# *Shakespeare Survey 72 Shakespeare and War*

Edited by Emma Smith

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'Shakespeare and War' was the topic of the 2018 International Shakespeare Conference held in Stratford-upon-Avon. A selection of papers is included in this 72nd volume of *Shakespeare Survey*, which features a notable change, as Emma Smith takes over from Peter Holland, who had been in charge of the yearbook's editorship since 1999.

Founded in 1948, *Shakespeare Survey* has published a number of intriguing and thought-provoking articles which have now become classics of Shakespeare criticism. The last issue, which resolutely follows a presentist trend, is absolutely up to standard and particularly rich: it comprises forty black-and-white illustrations, no less than eleven articles on the main theme, and other papers on a variety of topics written by such renowned scholars as Gabriel Egan or Lisa Hopkins. The book's closing section, which is devoted to reviews proves, as usual, remarkably helpful for Shakespeare scholars.

As regards war, *Henry V*, with its 'Francophobic' depiction of the battle of Agincourt, is certainly Shakespeare's most iconic play. No wonder if Ramona Wray opens the volume with an essay in which she examines *Henry V* in the aftermath of 9/11 in order to see how it can connect 'with the anxieties of present-day audiences' [3]. She focuses, in particular, on Thea Sharrock's 2012 British television film, which notably foregrounds the 'psychic disturbance triggered by exposure to battle' [13]. Randall Martin comes next with an exploration of *Troilus and Cressida*. In an article entitled 'Economies of Gunpowder and Ecologies of Peace : Accounting for Sustainability', he promotes an ecocritical perspective on the treatment of war and argues that 'Shakespeare's sceptical attitudes towards spoils as an alleged offset to the costs of war began to represent the sustainability of peace as a positive reason of state' [18]. Interestingly, he suggests that some images of 'dissolving land' in *Troilus and Cressida* [18] would have reminded the early modern playgoer of the 1601-1604 siege of Ostend. Elisabetta Tarantino offers another angle on the issue of war and examines the Italian sources of *Twelfth Night*. Doing so, she pays special attention to a comedy

entitled *La Strega* (i.e. *The Witch*, printed in 1582) by Antonfrancesco Grazzini (1505-1584), then known as Il Lasca. As she examines new intertextual clusters involving Giordano Bruno's 1582 *Candelaio* (a play fraught with references to the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre), she explains how they 'function as a denunciation of war and its human cost' [33]. Michael Hattaway then convincingly dwells on Shakespearean battle sequences and contends that 'onstage fighting was often avoided' and even 'implicitly disparaged' [48]. He remarks that, against all odds, sieges did not require sophisticated stagings, as just '[t]wo levels might amplify the effects of a "skirmish" or "excursion", or the penetration of a walled city' [50]. Battles, he acknowledges, were in fact 'probably less prominent in the histories than we think' [59]. Ros King, as to him, is interested in 'the repetition of war motifs in Shakespeare's writings, and the uses and meanings to which the play are currently being put in therapeutic interventions with veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)' [64]. King insists on the principles used by Shakespeare to narrate his war scenes, on the fundamental ambiguity of their contents, and he examines the impact of Shakespeare on US soldiers who, back from the war, feel unable to cope and desperately need to express their emotions. Eoin Price adopts a totally different perspective as he seeks to understand why Shakespeare was apparently 'consigned to silence' [76] during the English Civil War of the mid- seventeenth century. For some, Shakespeare already seemed old-fashioned and his works did not accord well with the seriousness of the war. Yet, it is Shakespeare who is now challenging our views on war, while many Restoration playwrights have been entirely forgotten. And few are those who nowadays study Beaumont and Fletcher for example... In 'Antic Dispositions: Shakespeare, War and Cabaret', Irena R. Makaryk 'maps out some of the connections between the characteristics and strategies of the early avant-garde cabaret and its subsequent use when married with Shakespeare [...] as direct engagement with [...] the madness of the war' [86]. The author deals with the little-known cabaret culture of the Ukraine and analyses a 'tragi-farcical *Macbeth*' [90] produced in 1924 before considering the Dakh Daughters, a female company created in 2012, and whose repertoire also includes adaptations from Shakespeare. Ernst Lubitsch's *To Be or Not to Be* (1942), with its '[c]omedic representation of the Nazi oppression' [98], is the focus of the next article by Reiko Oya, who shows how the film director portrayed 'the Polish underground movement' [102] and how his work challenged Hitler's 'military agenda' [*ibid.*]. Zoltán Márkus also examines screen adaptations, but he includes theatrical productions as well as he turns to '*Hamlet* in London during World War II'. Three *Hamlets* were produced in 1944, and John Gielgud, in particular, played a mature Hamlet at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket. The author suggests that the period rehabilitated the Bard, so much so that he could now serve England's national interests. In a stimulating article, Diana E. Henderson examines Shakespeare in the wake of the #MeToo movement and sheds fresh light on the famously disturbing wooing scene in *Richard III*, when the title part seduces Anne Neville during the funeral procession of her father-in-law, King Henry VI—a process which Henderson calls 'the gaslighting of Lady Anne' [124]. How do we view Shakespeare's Lady Anne now? the author asks in sum. She provides several examples, including Thomas Ostermeier's 2015 production, and finally offers a surprising parallel example, that of Virginia Woolf, whose *Three Guineas* (1938) was misunderstood at the time of its publication. Christina Wald, as to her, pays close attention to '[T]he motif of the soldier returning from war' [136] in Shakespeare's plays, and she compares the patterns of the 2011 TV series *Homeland* and *Coriolanus*, noticing that '[c]lose ties to the war and the enemy make the soldier a problematic

returnee figure' [141]. She notably explains that '[j]ust as Coriolanus is associated with the founding myth of Rome, including fratricide', in the TV series, Nicholas Brody, the UMSC Sergeant, 'places himself in a historical- mythical genealogy of the defence and re-founding of the USA' [145].

The thirteen remaining essays cover various topics and include not only up-to-date issues such as digital texts and tools (Gabriel Egan), maternal feelings in Shakespeare (Elizabeth Mazzola) Shakespeare as a possible treatment for autism (Sonya Freeman Loftis), or *The Tempest* of the twentieth-century British composer Michael Tippett (Michael Graham), but also more traditional issues—at least on the face of it—like Julius Caesar's similarities to Christ (Lisa Hopkins), the physicality of *King Lear* (Peter J. Smith), the nature of Shakespearean character with a special emphasis on *The Merchant of Venice* (Elena Pellone and David Schalkwyk), or the Senecan nature of Feste's stoicism (Judith Rosenheim).

The third and last section of the volume provides an apt recap of recent Shakespearean events. In an extensive review of Shakespeare's 2018 performances in England, Paul Prescott assesses productions outside London (including those of the Royal Shakespeare Company) while Stephen Purcell examines Shakespearean performances in the capital. Purcell succeeds in making us (re)discover a glimpse of Nicholas Hytner's fascinating *Julius Caesar* at the new Bridge Theatre, which featured 'Antony and Caesar as populist rabble-rousers versus an out-of-touch and complacent "liberal elite"' [291]. Allusions to Trump's politics as well as to the Brexit issues were there barely veiled. Next, James Shaw lists all the professional Shakespeare production of the British Isles for 2017, and in a much-awaited subsection entitled 'The Year's Contributions to Shakespeare Studies', Charlotte Scott discusses several books including Patricia Parker's *Shakespearean Intersections: Language, Contexts, Critical Keywords* (University of Pennsylvania Press) and Brett Gamboa's *Shakespeare Double Plays : Dramatic Economy on the Early Modern Stage* (Cambridge University Press). Russell Jackson, who concentrates on performance studies, looks at books such as Antony Sher's *Year of the Mad King: The Lear Diaries* (Nick Hern Books), Paterson Joseph's *Julius Caesar and Me: Exploring Shakespeare's African Play* (Methuen Drama), Dominique Goy-Blanquet's *Shakespeare in the Theatre: Patrice Chéreau* (The Arden Shakespeare)—and much more. Peter Kirwan, who reviews editions and textual studies, has the last word, and concludes on laudatory comments on Gabriel Egan's *The Struggle for Shakespeare's Text* (Cambridge, 2010).

There has been a revival of books on the subject of war in Shakespeare over the last few years, including Paola Pugliatti's *Shakespeare and the Just War Tradition* (Routledge, 2010)—perhaps because, in times of war and constant terror, Shakespeare's plays lend themselves to cogent commentaries, more than four hundred years after their creation. This new, special issue of *Shakespeare Survey* is a worthy addition to the list as it is a most useful collection offering many new insights into Shakespeare's plays. It proves particularly instructive, often original, and always pleasant to read.